SANCTIFICATION: THE BIBLICAL BASICS

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This introduction to the much neglected and frequently misunderstood theme of biblical sanctification serves as the foundation upon which the subsequent four essays rest and out of which they arise. First a "primer on sanctification" defines the comprehensive biblical basis for and the implications of sanctification for the Christian’s life temporally and eternally. Second, a Scriptural perspective on sanctification highlights the various patterns of sanctification in one’s Christian journey. Third, biblically emphasized particulars of sanctification help to distinguish between the past, present, and future elements of a Christian’s experience. Ultimately, this essay concludes that sanctification in its full biblical breadth encompasses a Christian’s beginning in salvation and a Christian’s continuation in growing to be like Christ which reaches perfection with a true believer’s glorification after death.

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The New Testament employs a variety of terms/expressions referring to believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Most frequently used in contemporary terminology is “Christian” (Christianos). However, this name appears in Scripture only three times (Acts 11:26, 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16). The precise connotation of this term (positive or negative) remains uncertain; however, it applies only to those who have believed in and followed the way of Christ Jesus.

A favorite term employed in the Gospels and Acts was “disciple” (mathēs) which appears over 250 times, most often used of those who followed Christ. From its connection to “Christians” in Acts 11:26, it can be concluded that the use of “disciple” preceded that of “Christian” and, more importantly, defined a

Christian as an authentic disciple of Christ.

Throughout the NT, spiritual family imagery of the “new birth” is suggested by the frequent use of “brother” (ἀδελφός, adelphos) and the rare appearance of “sister” (ἀδελφή, adelphē; Phil 2; 2 John 13) in reference to a spiritual relationship in Christ. Another striking expression is “slave” (δοῦλος, doulos) in contrast to Christ as “Lord” (κύριος, kurios).  

Each of the above four terms seems rather appropriate and obvious. However, one additional reference to a believer is not—“saint” (ἅγιος, hagios). It is the most surprising, the most intriguing, and the least deserved. Used sparsely in the Gospels and Acts, “saint” is the preferred terminology in the epistles and Revelation.

Why are Christians, disciples, brothers/sisters, and slaves called “saints” or “holy ones”? They were not holy before salvation; they are not holy as God alone is during their lives on earth; and they will not be without sin until after death in heaven. But Scripture clearly, frequently, and emphatically declares believers to be “saints” or “sanctified ones.”

The concept of “holy” or “sanctified” serves as bookends in the canon. “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it…” (Gen 2:3). “[L]et the one who is holy, still keep himself holy” (Rev 22:11). More to the point, God commanded Moses, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev 19:2), and Peter repeated the mandate, “[B]ut like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘you shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet 1:15-16). This idea of “separated out,” “devoted to,” and/or “holy” permeates all of Scripture, both Old and New Testaments. One writer went so far as to gush, “‘Sanctification’ is one of the most resplendent words in our Christian vocabulary; and the New Testament doctrine of sanctification is one of the supreme distinctive of our Christian faith.”

Why “saint”? It is the one name out of the five mentioned previously that focuses on God’s attribute of holiness (cf. Isa 6:1-8) and His design that all true believers in Christ increasingly demonstrate and emulate this quality as their certificate of Christian authenticity (cf. Heb 12:10).

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Sanctification: The Work of the Holy Spirit and Scripture

In the discussions that follow, the salvific implications of sanctification and holiness will be explored as they appear in such familiar biblical texts as:

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.  
Matt 5:48

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.  
Rom 8:28-30

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.  
Phil 1:6

Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.  
1 John 3:2-3


Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy.

Jude 24

A PRIMER EXPLAINING SANCTIFICATION

Three distinct word groups in the NT synonymously describe “salvation” in terms of that which is past, present, and future. The following chart with representative Scripture illustrates this pattern.

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### Sanctification: The Work of the Holy Spirit and Scripture

|         | teleioo  
|         | teleios  
|         | sōzō  
|         | sōtēria  
|         | sōtērion  
|         | hagiazō  
|         | hagiasmos  
<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>hagios</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Past</strong></td>
<td>Heb 10:14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”</td>
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<td>Titus 3:5</td>
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<td>“…[H]e saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit…”</td>
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<td>1 Cor 6:11</td>
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<td>“And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”</td>
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<td><strong>Present</strong></td>
<td>2 Cor 7:1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.”</td>
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<td>Phil 2:12</td>
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<td>“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling…”</td>
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<td>1 Thess 4:3-4, 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor…. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.”</td>
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†The New Testament word group (ἐνεποίηκα, hagiazō) is very similar in usage to the Old Testament word group (שָׁנַח, qādaš).
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<th>Future</th>
<th>Heb 12:23</th>
<th>Rom 13:11</th>
<th>1 Thess 5:23</th>
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<td></td>
<td>“...[A]nd to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect....”</td>
<td>“Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.”</td>
<td>“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”</td>
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The data above can be best summarized with these ten observations/conclusions.

1. “Salvation,” “sanctification,” and “completion”/“perfection” are used synonymously in Scripture as word groups with significant salvific importance.
2. Salvation is part of sanctification in its broadest sense and sanctification is a part of salvation in its fullest sense.
3. Therefore, salvation and sanctification are inseparable. You cannot have one without the other.
4. Each of the three previously mentioned word groups can be used to describe the past, the present, and/or the future.
5. Each of these three word groups can be used to describe inauguration, continuation, and/or culmination in the context of redemption.
6. Each of these three word groups can be used to describe the part or the whole of salvation.
7. Unless one balances this biblical tension, then erroneous conclusions will most certainly be reached in developing a correct soteriology.
8. A person is said by Scripture already to be what a person is actually becoming.
9. A person is commanded in the Bible to be now what one cannot completely/fully be until eternity.
10. The key to maintaining clarity in the midst of possible interpretive confusion is to identify correctly the individual parts in each biblical text.

R. C. Sproul brings these great truths of justification, sanctification, and glorification into focus.
How much time elapses before the sinner begins to become pure? The answer is none. There is no time lapse between our justification and the beginning of our sanctification. But there is a great time lapse between our justification and the completion of our sanctification.

Luther used a simple analogy to explain it. He described the condition of a patient who was mortally ill. The doctor proclaimed that he had medicine that would surely cure the man. The instant the medicine was administered, the doctor declared that the patient was well. At that instant the patient was still sick, but as soon as the medicine passed his lips and entered his body the patient began to get well. So it is with our justification. As soon as we truly believe, at that very instant we start to get better; the process of becoming pure and holy is underway and its future completion is certain.10

PATTERNS DEFINING SANCTIFICATION11

This introductory essay deals with sanctification in its several parts and its whole as a context for the writings that follow. By the editorial design of this issue, the subsequent articles will focus primarily, but not exclusively, upon “progressive” sanctification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Primary Divine Agents</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Son</th>
<th>Holy Spirit</th>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Thess 4:7 “For God has not called us for impurity, but in sanctification.”</td>
<td>1 Cor 1:2 “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those I in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours….”</td>
<td>2 Thess 2:13 “But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”</td>
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10Sproul, Holiness 214.

11This study has sought to proceed in the spirit of Steven L. Porter’s methodical reminder: “On the Renewal of Interest in the Doctrine of Sanctification: A Methodological Reminder,” JETS 45/3 (September 2002):416. “In particular, I maintain that there is a proper theo-methodological approach that addresses in a principled way doctrinal issues which are logically prior, systematically pervasive, and theologically fundamental to an evangelical theology of Christian spirituality.”
<table>
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<tr>
<th>2. Time Sequence</th>
<th>Past Acts 20:32  “And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”</th>
<th>Present 1 Thess 4:4  “[T]hat each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor…”</th>
<th>Future 1 Thess 3:13  “[S]o that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.”</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. Primary Means</td>
<td>Gospel Eph 5:26  “…[T]hat he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word…”</td>
<td>Scripture John 17:17  “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”</td>
<td>Resurrection Rom 8:23  “And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”</td>
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<td>4. Effects</td>
<td>Inauguration Heb 10:10  “And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”</td>
<td>Continuation 2 Cor 7:1  “Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.”</td>
<td>Culmination Rev 22:11  “Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Primary Results</td>
<td>Position</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Acts 26:18</td>
<td>“[T]o open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rom 6:22</td>
<td>“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.”</td>
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<td>1 Thess 3:13</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Personal Outcomes</td>
<td>Justification 1 Cor 6:11 “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”</td>
<td>Sanctification 1 Thess 4:3 “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality....”</td>
<td>Glorification Rom 8:28-30 “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the first-born among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called he also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.”</td>
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Someone might ask, “So what? This dry theology seems detached from vibrant spiritually!” But, just the opposite is true! William Ames (1576-1633), arguably the finest of Puritan theologians, rightly wrote, “Theology is the doctrine or teaching of living to God.”

Systematic theology yields God’s plan for “spiritual” theology. Christian doctrine translates into Christian living. All of theology, all of Christian living can be biblically discussed, developed, and discerned in a very real sense by beginning with what the Bible says about “sanctification.” The concept of sanctification could be considered the “alpha and omega” of redemption.

PASSAGES ILLUSTRATING SANCTIFICATION

This section allows Scripture to speak for itself concerning the three time perspectives of sanctification: positional, progressive, and perfective.

Inauguration—Positional

1. Acts 20:32
“...I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

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2. Acts 26:18
“[T]o open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

3. 1 Cor 1:2
“To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours....”

4. 1 Cor 1:30
“And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption....”

5. 1 Cor 6:11
“And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

6. Eph 5:26
“[T]hat he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word....”

7. 1 Thess 4:7
“For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.”

8. 2 Thess 2:13
“But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.”

9. Heb 10:10
“And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

10. Heb 10:14
“For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”

11. Heb 12:14
“Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”
12. 1 Pet 1:2
“…[A]ccording to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with His blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

**Continuation—Progressive**

1. John 17:17
“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

2. Rom 6:19
“I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.”

3. Rom 6:22
“But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.”

4. 2 Cor 7:1
“Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.”

5. 1 Thess 4:3
“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality….”

6. 1 Thess 4:4
“[T]hat each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor….”

7. 2 Tim 2:21
“Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.”

8. Rev 22:11
“Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy….”
Culmination—Perfective

1. 1 Thess 3:13
“[S]o that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.”

2. 1 Thess 5:23
“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

PRINCIPLES SUMMARIZING SANCTIFICATION

1. A salvific work inaugurated by God and participated in by all three members of the Godhead.
2. A salvific work that is continued by God in this life unto completion in heaven.
3. A salvific work that cannot be separated from salvation and/or glorification.  
4. A salvific work of God that is empowered by God’s Word and God’s Spirit.
5. A salvific work of God which once begun cannot be lost, stopped, or undone.
6. A salvific work of God that prompts a holy response of biblical obedience from those who are genuine saints.
7. A salvific work of God that does not eradicate sin from the believer until glorification.
8. A salvific work that provides confident hope in this life because of a certain eternal hope in the next life.

Almost four centuries past, Thomas Watson wrote eloquently about the primacy and centrality of sanctification in Scripture and in the Christian life,

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13 Ryle, Holiness 30. “In what, then, are justification and sanctification alike: a. Both proceed originally from the free grace of God. It is of His gift alone that believers are justified or sanctified at all. b. Both are part of that great work of salvation which Christ, in the eternal covenant, has undertaken on behalf of His people. Christ is the fountain of life, from which pardon and holiness both flow. The root of each is Christ. c. Both are to be found in the same persons. Those who are justified are always sanctified, and those who are sanctified are always justified. God has joined them together, and they cannot be put asunder. d. Both begin at the same time. The moment a person begins to be a justified person, he also begins to be a sanctified person. He may not feel it, but it is a fact. e. Both are alike necessary to salvation. No one ever reached heaven without a renewed heart as well as forgiveness, without the Spirit’s grace as well as the blood of Christ, without a meetness for eternal glory as well as a title. The one is just as necessary as the other.”
The main thing a Christian should look after is sanctification. This is the *unum necessarium*, “the one thing needful.” Sanctification is our purest complexion, it makes us as the heaven, bespangled with stars; it is our nobility, by it we are born of God, and partake of the divine nature; it is our riches, therefore compared to rows of jewels, and chains of gold.\(^\text{14}\)

SANCTIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION:
A UNITY OF DISTINCTIONS

Andrew V. Snider
Assistant Professor of Theology

The task at hand is to relate justification (being declared righteous) to a biblical understanding of sanctification (being made righteous). When God declares a sinner as righteous, the action begins with His own character and is accomplished by His own action. All His ways are perfect, just, and upright, qualities that stem from His holiness. His redemptive acts, including His justification of sinners, are marked by His love as exemplified in Rom 8:31-39. Justification is a declaration by God of the sinner’s status before Himself, imputing to him the righteousness of Christ through faith. Holiness is the key concept of sanctification as seen in the consistent biblical emphasis on God’s people being a holy people. Positional sanctification is a determination by God that a sinner is set apart as a member of God’s holy people. Progressive sanctification speaks of a growth in practical holiness when believers obey God’s command to grow in Christlikeness. Understanding the correct relationship between justification and progressive sanctification is important: sanctification does not cause justification and justification does not cause sanctification. Yet there is great importance in seeing that the two arise from the same soteriological reality of Christ’s substitutionary atonement and the resultant union of the believer with Christ.

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Introduction

The doctrine of justification has been the topic of a tsunami of literature in recent decades. There are “new” and “fresh” perspectives, and yet still many who seek to defend the traditional Reformation formulation. The famous words of Luther (it is “the article of the standing or falling of the church”) and Calvin (it is “the main hinge on which religion turns”) have become aphorisms of the traditional view. The dizzying array of arguments and counterproposals can seem impenetrable to the
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uninitiated. Indeed, one could be forgiven for wanting to skip past yet another article on this well-traversed subject.

However, the following study will not enter into that discussion. Rather, it will be its task to relate justification (according to the “old” perspective) to a biblical understanding of sanctification, a topic which has had less direct treatment of late, as attention has turned to related matters of “spirituality” or “spiritual formation.”

Since the reformers first carefully distinguished between being declared righteous and being made righteous, comparing and contrasting justification and sanctification has been considered a key element in expressing the gospel faithfully. This can be seen particularly in Calvin, who considered this distinction at some length.

This study, after first summarizing the basics of justification and sanctification, will seek to avoid two extremes in relating these key doctrinal themes. First is the tendency to conflate them so that they are nearly identified—the idea that sanctification causes justification or growth therein, or the less serious error of seeing justification as the cause of sanctification. The second and opposite error is to separate them so widely that their soteriological connection is asserted barely and without adequate theological argument. Such misses a key biblical principle. Capitalizing on an array of biblical texts and Calvin’s concept of “twofold grace” will show that justification and sanctification are distinct aspects of the gift of salvation related to each other because they both flow from the atonement and a believer’s union with Christ.

Justification: The Basics

Justification is a legal term that is used in the NT to describe how a sinner

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1Peter Toon projected in 1983 that “what is likely to happen in the near future is a general consensus among biblical scholars of all kinds as to the meaning of righteousness and justification in the Bible, especially in the Pauline letters” (Peter Toon, Justification and Sanctification [Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1983] 140). The intervening years have shown his well-intentioned and enviable optimism to be profoundly misplaced.

2Literature in this field is even more diffuse than on justification. Though it will not be the goal of this study to sort out “spirituality” from “spiritual formation” and relate both to sanctification, that would be a worthwhile effort. Brian Colmery has made some strides in this direction (“True Spirituality: In Pursuit of an Evangelical Spiritual Theology” [Th.M. thesis, The Master’s Seminary, 2010]).

is made acceptable to God.\(^4\) In salvation, God declares a sinner to be righteous—a consideration that begins in His own character and is accomplished by His own action.

Where It Starts: the Character of God

It is not unusual to begin a discussion of justification with sin—the problem that justification is intended to overcome.\(^5\) This is certainly not inappropriate, but since justification is an act of God, it seems at least as appropriate to begin the discussion with the attributes of God which motivate this action. For when considering any of God’s actions, it is important to take seriously the principle that all of God’s acts flow first of all from His purposes and His character.

First, since justification involves declaring a sinner to be right with God (i.e., righteous) and therefore acceptable to Him, justification is an act performed by a righteous and just God. Repeatedly in the OT, God is honored as the one who is entirely and quintessentially righteous. This means that all his ways are perfect, just, faithful, and upright (Deut 32:4; Ps 145:17).

Another approach is to see God’s ethical righteousness as the outworking of His holiness.\(^6\) Because God is wholly other, His actions manifest the otherness of His being as absolute moral purity. Strong puts it as follows:

Holiness in God must, consequently, be defined as conformity to his own perfect nature. The only rule for divine will is divine reason; and divine reason prescribes everything that it is befitting an infinite being to do. God is not under law or above law—he is law. He is righteous by nature and of necessity.\(^7\)

Or, as Culver has more recently expressed it, “The righteousness by which God orders His world is neither something created, external to Himself, nor something

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\(^4\) As noted above, the purpose of this article is not to defend assertions such as this against the more recent formulations of justification. Although the discussion continues, this writer considers such formulations to have been substantially answered in such varied works as D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: A Fresh Appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001 and 2004); Guy Prentiss Waters, *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2004); John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2007), and others.

\(^5\) A recent example is Guy Prentiss Waters, “Justification Defined,” *Churchman* 123/1 (Spring 2009):67-81. See also Bruce Demarest’s similar starting point in *The Cross and Salvation* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1997) 362-63.


\(^7\) Strong, *Dogmatic* 291. [Andy, should this be Shedd instead of Strong?]
other than God Himself in any manner whatsoever. His righteous acts are His character in action; God is law unto Himself.”

So God is righteous in that everything He thinks, says, and does, and is perfectly consistent with His own character—for “he cannot deny himself” (2 Tim 2:13).

The rendering of consistent and sound justice is also a key aspect of God’s righteousness—God always treats others rightly. As the rightful Sovereign of the world, “righteousness and justice are the foundation of [his] throne” (Ps 89:14; cf. Ps 119:137-8). This is the normative side of God’s righteousness—His character is not just the standard for His own thoughts and actions, but is also the yardstick for all His moral creatures. This principle is found in its simplest and most explicit form in the command, “Be holy for I am holy” (Lev 11:44), an imperative that is emphatically reiterated for the church in 1 Pet 1:15-16.

God’s own righteousness, then, is the standard for all God’s moral creatures. And because YHWH himself is righteous, He loves expressions of this uprightness and moral rectitude in the attitudes and actions of his creatures. The psalmist says that YHWH “is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face” (Ps 11:7). The problem for humankind, of course, is that “there is no one who does good” (Ps 14:1), not even a single person (Rom 3:10-12).

So God, who is perfectly righteous in all that He is and does, desires that His moral creatures reflect this righteousness back to Him in their lives. But they are utterly unrighteous and cannot do this. At this point it could be said that justification is not necessarily called for—a God who is essentially committed to perfect justice because of His righteousness could simply execute the judgment that creaturely unrighteousness merits: death (Rom 6:23a). Instead, another of God’s attributes is expressed alongside (and in perfect harmony with) His righteousness in order to provide a better solution: His love also motivates justification.

Throughout Scripture God’s love is portrayed as a motivation for His redemptive acts. God chose Israel simply by setting His affections on them (Deut 7:7; 10:14-15), and despite their many wanderings, He continued to love them in covenant faithfulness (e.g., Hos 11:1-9; Mal 3:1-12). The NT portrays this redemptive love as fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God (John 3:16; Rom 5:8; 1 John 4:9).

Though simply stating the broad biblical truth of God’s love as a motivation for His saving acts in history is enough, a theological step further would relate His redeeming love directly to the doctrine of justification. This connection is evident in how Scripture connects God’s righteousness with His omnibenevolence.

Exodus 34 presents one of the key moments in redemptive history, a

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*Unless otherwise noted, all English Bible quotations are from the English Standard Version.*
moment where God speaks directly about His attributes in order to reveal the motives for His actions. In the wake of the golden calf incident and the subsequent punishment through the sword and divine action (Exodus 32), God announces that He will keep His promise to give Israel their new land, but will not accompany them in a personal manifestation of His presence (33:1-3). Moses goes to the tent of meeting to plead for understanding (v. 13) and for God’s personal presence with His chosen nation (v. 15). Finally, Moses presents His climactic request: “I pray You, show me your glory” (v. 18).

God’s answer to this request is a personal revelation of His attributes just prior to His renewal of the covenant with Israel (34:6ff.). This divine self-revelation in turn forms the basis for the OT understanding of the character of God, as is demonstrated by its repeated deployment across the chronological and canonical scope of the OT (Num 14:18; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jon 4:2; Nah 1:3; Neh 9:17). It is a declaration of the character of God that “carries almost creedal force.”

The relationship of God’s love to justification is implicit in YHWH’s self-disclosure. Of the six attributes he lists, the first five are various expressions of His love: compassionate, gracious, patient, generous in merciful covenant faithfulness, and forgiving. The last of the list could be called righteousness or justice: even though YHWH is eminently loving, patient, and forgiving, He does not leave guilt unpunished. This leaves a tension in God’s self-revelation: how can He be forgiving if He is unremittingly just?

The answer, of course, is the fully-developed NT doctrine of justification. No NT passage that explicitly ties God’s love to his acts of justification, but the two are closely associated in multiple contexts, two of which will be mentioned here. The first and clearest is Rom 8:31-39. As Paul draws this section of his letter to a close, he speaks of his certainty that God can and will bring His plan of redemption to completion. He formulates this as a series of rhetorical questions: “if God is for us, who can be against us?” (v. 31), “who shall bring any charge against God’s elect?” (v. 33), and, climactically, “who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (v. 35). The matter is summed up in terms of this final question—absolutely nothing can separate the believer from “the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (v. 39). So God’s forgiving, justifying work is expressed by Paul as God’s love in Christ.

Another place where Paul implies God’s love as a motivation for justification is Rom 3:21-26. As he is explaining how justification is by faith in

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11 The phrase “abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness; keeping steadfast love for thousands” seems to be an extended affirmation of YHWH’s extensive hesed rather than an affirmation of two different attributes (hesed and emet). Dividing the phrase into two attributes seems to add nothing to the interpretation (see e.g., Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006] 716).
Christ, Paul says that justification comes “by his grace as a gift” (v. 24). But such a gift could give the impression that God is simply overlooking sin, so Paul explains that this is why God put forward Jesus “as a propitiation by his blood” (v. 25). In previous times the Father “could tolerate the sin of human beings only because he looked forward to the death of his Son as an atonement for sin. . . . God’s righteousness has been vindicated in the death of Jesus. These comments by Paul demonstrate that the question he asked was not, how can God justly punish human beings, but rather, how can God justly forgive anyone?”

This points to the gracious intention of God’s omnibenevolence: God is by nature loving and forgiving, and Paul feels that he must explicitly show how this gracious disposition harmonizes with His righteousness. In other words, God cannot be a “justifier” if He is not also “just” in doing so. His conclusion in verse 26 (“that he might be just and the justifier”) demonstrates this harmony: the requirements of God’s righteous character are met in Christ’s sacrifice.

It is important to see that justification flows from the character and purposes of God as a manifestation of His goodness and love as well as His righteousness. Because the debates on the nature of justification tend to focus on legal conceptualities (imputation vs. impartation, what it does rather than who does it), it is easy to forget the fire of God’s love from which the heat of justification arises.

What It Is: A Declaration by God

Because of the astonishing volume of literature that seeks to define justification, and because the present purpose is simply to reiterate the basics, the next step in the study will be rather brief. Justification is a declaration by God concerning the sinner’s status before God.

First, justification is a forensic declaration. The forensic element in justification is clear in Scripture and well-noted in the Christian tradition. In the OT the verb *sdq* conveys the idea, as in Deut 25:1, where the judge’s job is to “decide between [two disputing parties], acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty.” Accordingly, a repeated warning is issued in the OT against convicting the

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13 Other passages that associate justification and God’s love in Christ include Rom 5:8-9 and Titus 3:4-7. In fact, the latter context appears to apply the divine attributes of Exod 34:6-7 to Jesus Himself, with the resolution of God’s love and righteousness found explicitly in the truth of justification.

innocent and acquitting the guilty (e.g., Isa 5:23; Prov 17:15).

The corresponding NT verb, *dikaioô*, contains the same idea, perhaps most explicitly in the aforementioned instance of Rom 8:33-34, where the opposite of *dikaioô* is *katakrinô*—to condemn: “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn?” In sum, the legal semantic environment of justification in both OT and NT brought Morris to the “conviction that the basic idea is one of acquittal.” 15

As a forensic declaration, then, justification is a pronouncement made concerning the status of a person’s relationship to a particular legal standard. One is either in compliance with the standard (“innocent”) or not (“guilty”). The standard in justification, of course, is the law of God, which in turn is an expression of God’s own righteous character. Justification is God’s declaration that the sinner is held to be in accord with God’s own righteousness (more on this below).

Finally, justification is portrayed in Scripture as an accomplished fact. It is not a process that requires cooperation and enhancement, but rather is an action of God that is viewed as complete. This is seen clearly in Paul’s use of *dikaioô* in passages such as Rom 5:1, where the aorist passive participle is used: “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (cf. the “now” in Rom 3:21). Because justification has been accomplished, Paul can talk about the key enduring benefit of this divine action—peace with God. Eight verses later the same construction appears, reinforcing the view that Paul sees justification as a definitive accomplishment of God, completed by means of a declaration concerning the sinner’s standing before God and His righteous law. 16

How It Works: Divine Imputation

Justification is a matter of imputation: God regards the sinner to be something that in his actual experience he is not—righteous. This gives rise to the old objection that if justification is viewed as an imputation, it constitutes a legal fiction, which is an impossibility for a truth-telling God. But the objection misses the point that God is rendering a ruling on the sinner’s behalf because of the work of

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15 Morris, Apostolic Preaching 260. See also Anthony N. S. Lane, “Justification by Faith,” in Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 416, who also helpfully recalls that although justification is a forensic concept, “[T]his does not mean that our relationship to God can be reduced to legal terms but rather that such terms provide one important way among others of describing the salvation that we have in Christ.”

16 This is not to deny that believers “eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness” (Gal 5:5), implying a completion of God’s work of justification in the eschaton. Far from casting doubt on the certainty or completeness of God’s justifying action, Paul’s statement here shows that “righteousness is an end-time gift, a verdict from the day of judgment, which has now been pronounced in the lives of believers on the basis of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ” (Schreiner, Paul 208).
someone else. Thus, in order to understand justification one must see that it is rooted in substitution.\(^{17}\)

Justification is possible only because a substitute has been provided. The basis for God’s declaration of righteousness is the righteous substitute, Jesus Christ. The OT looks forward to this role of the Messiah specifically. In Isaiah 53 the Servant will bear the sins of many (v. 6) and suffer unjustly, yet willingly like a sacrificial lamb (vv. 7-9). In YHWH’s plan, this suffering will count as a sin offering (v. 10) and the result is that many will “be accounted righteous” (v. 11).

In the NT, Peter makes the connection implicitly yet clearly between substitution and justification when he describes the cross-work of Christ by saying in 1 Pet 3:18 that He “suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous \([\text{dikaios huper adik} \; \omega]\), to bring us to God.” Here we have the language of righteousness and substitutionary atonement together. The righteous one took the place of the unrighteous. His suffering “was the penalty due to the sins of the unrighteous that He bore in their stead, or the propitiation necessary for their sins that He offered on their behalf.”\(^{18}\) The dependence of justification on substitution cannot be overstated and will be seen in the background of most of what follows.

Specifically, then, how is imputation involved in the declaring of a sinner righteous? This is best expressed from two perspectives: forgiveness and imputed righteousness. The first of these gathers up and summarizes much of what has been said so far: justification first of all involves forgiveness of sins—or, in forensic (and rather inelegant) terms, the non-imputation of sin. The sinner moves from “guilty” before the bar of the Divine Judge to “not guilty” or “in full compliance.”

Besides the language of courtroom acquittal already delineated, accounting terminology is used to describe what God does for the sinner in his act of justification. This language of “crediting” is used to express both aspects of justification under consideration here. Paul employs David’s description in Ps 32:1-2 of one of the blessings of justification. In this text, one whose “lawless deeds are forgiven” (Rom 4:7) is the person “against whom the Lord will not count his sin” (v. 8). In context, this is what it means to be justified—God no longer counts those sins against the sinner, i.e., He forgives them.\(^{19}\)

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\(^{17}\) Morris shows this relationship in his classic work, but he makes the point in just a few paragraphs at the end of his extensive study of justification (Morris, *Apostolic Preaching* 296-98). Demarest brings it out a bit more directly (Demarest, *Cross* 368-70).


\(^{19}\) Paul uses *logizomai* again in 2 Cor 5:19, where the concept of “not counting trespasses against” serves as a synonym for forgiveness that results in reconciliation with God.
Combined with other contexts in which justification is described in terms of deliverance from sins (Rom 3:21-26, where the issue is sin being propitiated; 5:1-11, where the emphasis is that justification through Christ’s death brings peace between God and his enemies; 8:31-34, where release from condemnation is the point), it is clear that justification is about overcoming the problem of sin.

But this is not the whole picture. Paul speaks of justification not only as the non-imputation of sin but also as the imputation of righteousness. Specifically, he describes justification as the sinner being credited with the righteousness of God in Christ. He uses the same accounting terminology (logizomai) in Rom 4:3, 5, 6, 9 to assert that justification involves righteousness being credited to a sinner. In Phil 3:9 Paul speaks of this righteousness very specifically as coming from God (ek theou) and not from works of the Law. And in Rom 5:17 righteousness comes to the sinner as a gift (dôreas) from God. What this means is that the justified sinner is accounted, regarded, accepted, as righteous before God the Righteous Judge.

But again the specter of “legal fiction” arises—how can God accept as righteous those who clearly are not? To answer this question, the principle of substitution is important in observing how it appears in Paul’s doctrine of imputed righteousness. This is most explicit in Paul’s statement of the truth that the Father “made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21 NET). God is able to account sinners as righteous because they are represented before Him by Jesus, who functions as a substitute for them (hyper hêmôn).

This application of the principle of substitution appears throughout Paul’s writings in the doctrine of union with Christ. Imputed righteousness in justification means that because the justified sinner has been united to his Substitute, the Father regards that Substitute’s righteousness as belonging to the justified one. In other words, “we…become the righteousness of God in Him.” This link is made throughout most of the passages already cited with regard to non-imputation of sin and imputation of righteousness—the justified sinner is justified only because he is

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21 For an excellent yet concise discussion of whether faith constitutes the righteousness credited to the sinner in justification, see John Murray, The Epistle to the Romans, 2 vols. in 1, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968) 353-59.

22 Romans 10:3 serves as a partial parallel here, contrasting righteousness a sinner’s own attempts at righteousness with God’s righteousness.
“in Christ.”

Indeed, whenever justification is discussed, union with Christ is not far away in the context. “For Paul union with Christ is not fancy but fact—the basic fact, indeed, in Christianity; and the doctrine of imputed righteousness is simply Paul’s exposition of the forensic aspect of it.” Carson agrees when he says that the theme of union with Christ rightly understood is a comprehensive and complex way of portraying the various ways in which we are identified with Christ and He with us. In its connections with justification, “union with Christ” terminology . . . suggests that although justification cannot be reduced to imputation, justification in Paul’s thought cannot long be faithfully maintained without it.

To summarize, then, justification is a declaration by God in which the sinner is forgiven and receives an “alien righteousness,” the righteousness of Christ.

What It Brings About: Peace with God

Several of the passages cited in this study so far describe the specific effects that justification brings about, and it is important to summarize those to complete this basic sketch of the doctrine in order to compare and contrast it with sanctification.

First, being declared righteous before God brings reconciliation between God and the sinner. This is Paul’s heading for Romans 5 as he transitions from the discussion of justification in the previous chapter: it is because Christians are justified that they have peace with God through Christ. Reconciliation is also the theme of 2 Cor 5:18-21. It has already been noted that this context contains both negative imputation (“not counting their trespasses against them,” v. 19) and positive imputation (“that we might become the righteousness of God in Him,” v. 21). Although the verb dikaiō̂ is not used, the passage is assuredly about justification. And the point is driven home as a plea: Because Christ has laid the foundation for reconciliation (v. 18), “we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (v. 20). Justification removes the enmity between God and the sinner.

Second, and related to reconciliation, justification brings salvation from divine wrath. Romans 5:9 links the two explicitly: “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of

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23This point helps take much of the energy out of the “imputation vs. impartation” debate. If believers become the righteousness of God in Christ, the righteousness clearly is inherent in Him, not them, so what they receive is a status of righteousness. “When we have grasped the fact that the righteous are those accepted by God, some of the controversy concerning imputed and imparted righteousness seems beside the point. What difference does it make whether we impute or impart a status?” (Morris, Apostolic Preaching 271-72, emphasis in the original).

24J. I. Packer, EDT 596.

25D. A. Carson, “The Vindication of Imputation” 77.
God.” No one who has been declared to have a right standing with God must fear divine wrath, for “if the obstacle of our sin has already been removed so that we now stand not guilty before him, then we can be confident that we shall be saved through Christ from God’s wrath.” Moreover, because the dikaiōthentes (carried forward from 5:1) shows that this justification is an accomplished fact, “those who have been pronounced righteous by God can rejoice already in their deliverance from His wrath.”

Finally, justification qualifies one for eternal life. Of course, this is implied in the two previous results of justification—one who is at peace with God and saved from his eschatological wrath is one who partakes of God’s eternal favor. However, Paul makes this more explicit in Titus 3:7. Paul extols the Trinitarian truth of salvation by grace in vv. 4-6, then speaks of the purpose of this salvation in terms of justification. “[S]o that being justified [aor. pass. ptc. dikaiōō] by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Paul says that salvation, particularly identified as being declared righteous, grants one the blessing of inheriting eternal life.

Summary

Justification, then, is God’s own action, a forensic-type declaration concerning a sinner’s relationship to God’s own standard of righteousness. It is based on the redemptive work of Christ alone and is appropriated only by faith.

A more detailed theological narration of justification would go like this: God, who is righteous in Himself and is the normative standard of righteousness, lovingly provides His Son as a substitute for unrighteous sinners so that they can be made acceptable to Him. This substitute lives a sinless life in obedience to the Father, qualifying Himself to be the perfect sacrifice and high priest on behalf of sinners. Offering Himself as the spotless Lamb of God, He is put forward by the Father as the propitiating sacrifice which is made available to sinners who may appropriate this sacrifice for themselves in faith. Upon exercise of this faith, they are united to the Son by the Father so completely that He considers the Son’s efficacious death to be that of those who actually deserved it. The result is that the Father, the God who is righteous, sees those sinners as having His own righteousness, because

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26Schreiner, Romans 263.
29In this study the principle of sola fide will be stipulated rather than explained.
He sees them in His divine Son. The sinner is justified.

Now, because he is at peace with God, because he is accepted by God, because the penalty of sin has been paid and the power of sin has been broken, the justified sinner is expected to live as a growing testimony to the reality of God’s righteous, redemptive love and presence in the world. This process is called sanctification.

Sanctification: The Basics

In order to establish the relationship between justification and sanctification, it is necessary to outline in brief the key elements of the doctrine of sanctification. The key concept in sanctification is holiness, and the doctrine of sanctification articulates the biblical theme that God’s people are holy people. As Graham Cole notes, the holiness of God’s people plays a critical part in the story of redemption:

The canonical plotline reveals the story of God’s reclaiming a fallen world and establishing a new heavens and earth in which righteousness is at home (2 Pet. 3:11-13). That new world will see God’s holy people living in God’s holy presence in God’s holy city in God’s holy way (Rev. 21:1-4). The activity of God in sanctifying a people for himself is integral to that story.\textsuperscript{31}

This vital aspect of the story of redemption is traditionally expressed in two categories: positional or definitive sanctification, and progressive or conditional sanctification.

Positional Sanctification

Since the basic meaning of holiness is set-apartness or otherness,\textsuperscript{32} the first aspect of sanctification is the fact that God’s people are set apart from the world and identified as belonging to God. Positional sanctification is “the indicative of salvation.”\textsuperscript{33}

The idea that God’s chosen people are “holy unto the Lord” occurs repeatedly in the OT context of God’s covenant with Israel (e.g., Lev 20:26). In the

\textsuperscript{30}Because the other articles in this issue of the MSJ develop the particulars of sanctification, to stay focused on the topic at hand and avoid redundancy, this section will be much shorter than the previous one on the basics of justification.


\textsuperscript{32}In the OT, the noun qdš “connotes the essential nature that belongs to the sphere of God’s being or activity and that is distinct from the common or profane” (Naudé, \textit{NIDOTTE} 3:879).

\textsuperscript{33}Demarest, \textit{Cross} 407.
NT, believers in Jesus Christ are called saints, which carries forward the OT idea of set-apartness by means of the holiness/sanctification (*hagios*/*hagiazō*) word group. The concept of Christians being “holy ones” dominates Paul’s writings (40x) when he is referring to the church, and the term also is used frequently in John’s Apocalypse (13x) to refer to God’s people. That the term portrays God’s people to be set-apart ones is made explicit in texts like 1 Cor 6:1-2, where a categorical disjunction is posited between the saints on one hand and “the unrighteous” and “the world” on the other.

The language of being “called” reinforces this sense of separation. In Rom 1:7 and 1 Cor 1:2 Paul greets his readers as those who have been “called to be saints.” The latter passage reinforces the idea by identifying them as those who have been “sanctified in Christ Jesus.”

Moreover, God’s people are those who have been “delivered…from darkness and transferred…to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col 1:13). “Believers have been transferred from the realm of the profane into the arena of the holy because they belong to God the Father and Jesus Christ.” And the writer of Hebrews emphasizes that this sanctification is a *fait accompli*, an objective reality, when he says, by God’s will “we have been sanctified [perf. pass. ptc. of *hagiazō*] through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10).

Positional sanctification is often compared to justification, for it is another perspective on the action of God in response to saving faith: justification is the declaration of righteousness that makes the sinner acceptable to God; positional sanctification is the determination by God that the justified sinner is now set apart unto Himself as one of His holy people.

**Progressive Sanctification**

The “imperative” corresponding to the “indicative of sanctification” is progressive sanctification. Although God’s people have been marked out by him to be separate from the rest of the world, and even though this is an objective reality, God’s people are commanded to live accordingly: “You shall be holy to me, for I the LORD am holy and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine” (Lev 20:26; cf. 19:2; 1 Pet 1:15-16). Paul’s writings everywhere assume that implementing this imperative is a progressive work.

Progressive sanctification is unlike justification and positional sanctification in that it is a cooperative work between God and the believer. First, progression in

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34 Schreiner, *Paul* 219.

35 Distinguishing justification and positional sanctification in this way does not position them in an *ordo salutis*. The point is to appreciate the unique features of each perspective on the divine accomplishment of salvation.
practical holiness is made possible by the work of God in the believer—“it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” as He “works out” his salvation (Phil 2:11-12). Indeed, this is a work begun by God, and it is He who “will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (1:6).  

The work of God in sanctification is attributed to the Holy Spirit (1 Pet 1:2; 2 Cor 3:18), the cooperation of the believer is described as “walking in the Spirit” (Rom 8:4; Gal 5:16, 25), and the result is the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22-23). And as this passage demonstrates, the progression of sanctification depends on the work of the believer in response to and in cooperation with the work of God.

The cooperative nature of progressive sanctification is clear throughout the NT epistles. Paul refers to growth in holiness as putting off the old self and putting on the new self, which is “created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:22-24), which in context is portrayed as a continual process. In 2 Cor 7:1 Paul’s exhortation on the basis of God’s gracious saving work is to “cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.” Even though Paul knows that final holiness will not be realized by any believer prior to being glorified, he nevertheless enjoins the church to strive toward that goal so that they will “advance constantly in holiness.”

The believer must not think that this work is easy. Rather, it is portrayed as a struggle: Peter says that one must be “applying all diligence” (2 Pet 1:5 NASU); the writer of Hebrews claims that one must “strive” for holiness (Heb 12:14). Even Paul, who goes to great lengths to show the extreme incongruity of a Christian sinning in light of his identification with Christ’s death and resurrection (Romans 6), goes on to lament how he himself is fully engaged in the struggle (Rom 7:21-4).

And yet the work of God is still overarching and prior to human effort. It must never be forgotten that human effort in progressive sanctification depends utterly on the prior work of God in redeeming sinners and setting them apart unto Himself, and on the victory God grants in Christ (Rom 7:25). “There is no such thing as self-sanctification. It is a work of God into which he nevertheless calls for and makes use of the cooperation of the whole Christian community.”

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36The latter passage (along with 1 Thess 5:23-24) shows that progressive sanctification also has a future hope—i.e., that God himself will bring it to completion when Jesus returns (cf. Schreiner, Paul 221). On Paul’s certainty of this hope, see Peter T. O’Brien, Commentary on Philippians, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 63-65.


38Peter Toon, Justification and Sanctification (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1983) 40.
Sanctification and Justification: A Unity of Distinctions

Summary

The doctrine of sanctification, then, is concerned with the holiness of the believer. Positional sanctification, similar to justification, is a determination by God that a sinner is set apart as a member of God’s chosen, holy people. It is therefore only and entirely the action of God. Progressive sanctification is that growth in practical holiness—one could say behavioral righteousness—that involves the obedience of the believer to God’s commands to grow in Christlikeness.

Ensuring the Distinction

At last, what has been said to the question asked at the beginning may be applied: what is the relationship between justification and sanctification? Much of the answer to this question has been implied in the foregoing discussion, so the remaining task is to draw this all together and answer a few relevant questions. What remains will compare, contrast, and relate justification and progressive sanctification. First, a few words about how these must be kept distinct.

Sanctification Does Not Cause Justification

The first point of distinction, and a hallmark of the Reformation, is that sanctification is not the basis for justification. Holy behavior does not bring God’s favor and His declaration of righteousness.

A sustained argument against the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification is beyond the scope of this study, but a few representative statements will be cited so that application can be made to the present discussion. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says “Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.”  Justification, which is conferred in baptism, “conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy” (§1992). Further, “Justification establishes cooperation between God's grace and man's freedom” (§1993). On this basis, in the Catholic view, one’s justifying righteousness can wax, wane, or be destroyed completely. The practice of the sacraments will preserve and increase one’s justification.

But given even the basic discussion presented above, this is impossible, for sinners cannot participate in gaining a status of righteousness before God. Justification can never be on the basis of “works done by us in righteousness,” but is always and only “according to his own mercy” (Titus 3:5).

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39The Catechism of the Catholic Church, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015_
_INDEX.HTM (accessed 6/23/2010), §1989, cf. §2019. Remaining citations will be parenthetical and will refer to this official online version.
In the face of such teaching, Calvin formulated a profound rationale for maintaining the distinction between justification and sanctification: to preserve the goodness of God. Cornelis Venema explains,

Unless justification is carefully distinguished from repentance [Calvin’s term, interchanged with “regeneration,” for progressive sanctification], God’s goodness and his free grace in Christ will not be properly appreciated, and it will become impossible to insure the believer’s confidence and rest in God’s mercy alone as the sole basis for salvation. Accordingly, Calvin primarily distinguishes between justification and sanctification in order to preserve the gratuitous character of God’s grace in Christ and to provide a basis for the assurance of salvation. If the gospel benefits of justification and sanctification are confused, Calvin is convinced that some credit for righteousness will inevitably be transferred to us, and God’s mercy will be called into question. Since justification is God’s free gift, and since we never possess a perfect righteousness of our own, it is conceptually confused to say that our justification is partially or wholly dependent upon sanctification.

Calvin’s insight is deep and biblically grounded: if justification depends on human accomplishment and is yet portrayed as the gift of God, the obvious imperfection of human righteousness will be imputed to God and His goodness will be doubted. Maintaining the distinction between being declared righteous and growing in practical holiness is therefore a matter of faithfulness not only to the gospel but to the very goodness of God.

Justification Does Not Cause Sanctification

The second point of distinction is in the reverse direction: sanctification, strictly speaking, is not caused by justification. This error is not as serious as the previous, but it is still a matter of understanding the gospel and Christian life rightly.

It has already been noted that justification and positional sanctification are similar—declaration of right standing with God and a determination that the sinner is now set apart unto God. Both are the objective, monergistic accomplishment of God. The relationship of justification and progressive sanctification is a bit trickier. If one posits that justification gives rise to sanctification, then it seems natural to conclude that justification is—or effects—an inward change in the sinner. But this is precisely the error that the reformers were trying to avoid: formulating justification in terms of an inward change that brings about practical holiness that in turn makes the sinner acceptable to God.

That justification and progressive sanctification are inseparable realities is indisputable in Paul’s understanding. This connection is very clear in Rom 6:15-23.

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40 Venema, “Calvin’s Understanding” 80.
On the basis of his foregoing discussion of justification, Paul shows that believers were slaves to sin but now are slaves to righteousness, and the fruit of this is “sanctification” (v. 22). “This, in fact, is the subject of the present section of the Epistle (chapters vi-viii). Those who have been justified are now being sanctified; if a man is not being sanctified, there is no reason to believe that he has been justified.” In other words, “sanctification is not merely the completion (correlate or implicate) of justification; it is justifying faith at work. In the faith counted for righteousness, actual righteousness is born.” So the two are inseparable. But does this mean that justification causes sanctification?

The problem with an affirmative here is that progressive sanctification does not appear to be an effect of a forensic declaration. Justification brings about certain objective benefits (righteous standing, acceptance with God, peace with God, etc.), so it could be said that justification sets the stage for sanctification. But the most that could be concluded from this is that holy living should arise from a gratitude for these objective benefits.

However, it is common to go beyond this and assume that if sanctification does not cause justification, the reverse must be true. What, then, is the nature of the connection of these two inseparable aspects of the gospel?

**Discerning the Unity**

The importance of keeping justification and sanctification distinct has been outlined, but their unity must also be properly upheld in order to reflect the fullness and unity of the gospel message.

**Importance of the Unity**

Though blurring the distinction between justification and sanctification is perilous to the gospel itself, overdrawing the distinction is also a potential pitfall. It is possible to overemphasize this distinction to the point that it becomes a separation. Justification and sanctification can become so distinct that they are no longer vitally connected.

The result of such a misstep could include the notion that one believes in Jesus as Savior at one time, then may or may not bow to Him as Lord at some point later in life—the myth of the carnal Christian. This amounts to the idea that one can experience justification by faith alone and enjoy the benefit of a righted relationship with God, but never grow in personal holiness. But it has already been shown that this is inconceivable in NT thought.

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41 Bruce, *Romans* 142-43.
42 R. E. O. White, *EDT* 970.
United in Christ the Substitute

The answer to this overcorrection is to see that justification and sanctification are parts of the same whole, or—perhaps better—that they both arise from the same soteriological reality: substitutionary atonement and its application in the attendant reality of union with Christ. Justification and sanctification both flow from the cross of Christ as a part of His whole redemptive work. They are both granted as part of the blessing of salvation, which can be summarized in the Pauline theme of union with Christ.

On the one hand, as already shown, justification depends on substitution—the Father is able to see a justified sinner as righteous because that sinner is united with Christ and therefore appears under the divine righteousness which Christ has as the Son of God. On the other hand, union with Christ the substitute lays the foundation for progress in practical holiness. Paul makes this point forcefully in Rom 6, the teaching of which could be summarized, “Christ’s death counts as our death, and Christ’s life is now our life. Therefore, we are accepted in Christ and are partakers of his resurrection life.” The result of this, as already noted, is “sanctification” (v. 22). So it could be said that justification and sanctification are both rooted in substitutionary atonement and the application of it: union with Christ.

The comments of some who see justification as the basis for sanctification even show that they are really attributing this relationship to a common source in substitutionary atonement. Schreiner provides a ready example from his comments on sanctification in Romans 6: “The forensic and the transformative [i.e. justification and sanctification] are not merged together here, but we do see that the legal is the basis of the transformative.” But then immediately he goes on to talk about how the “cross-work of Jesus Christ, in which he fulfilled the law by offering himself as a sin offering, has as its goal the obedience of the believer (Rom 8:1-4).” This move shows that instead of seeing God’s legal declaration of righteousness as the basis for sanctification, Schreiner actually sees substitutionary atonement as the common source for both.

Calvin’s way of formulating justification and sanctifications as a “twofold righteousness” or a “double grace” nicely summarizes this biblical truth. Calvin insisted on seeing both of these benefits of salvation as coequal gifts from God that flow from a common source—the cross. “By partaking of [Christ], we principally receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ’s blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ’s spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life.” So, for Calvin, “Sanctification does not come, as it were, from justifica-

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43Schreiner, Paul 209.
44Calvin, Institutes 3.11.1.
tion; it comes, like justification, straight from the cross. The double grace of
salvation is integrated, not by allowing sanctification to encroach on justification, nor
by relegating sanctification to second fiddle status, but by tracing both to Jesus
Christ. Thus, “Sanctification is salvation, just as much as justification is salvation.
It is grace. Nor is it optional, or dispensible, but necessary and inevitable.” Therefore, the unity of justification and sanctification is found “in the saving work
of Jesus Christ. Pastorally, this means that the believer is driven to the person of
Christ for both righteousness and holiness, and that the preacher’s proclamation of
free forgiveness and exhortation to obedience both rest upon Christ.” Viewing
justification and sanctification as “two kinds of righteousness” thus has substantial
merit for a theology that is unified, properly systematic, and pastorally practical.

Conclusion

Beginning with the divine motivations for the act of justification, and
following through the desire of God for His people to be holy in their everyday lives
have shown the distinctions between justification and sanctification. Such
distinctions are important for maintaining an orthodox gospel. These distinctions
could be summarized as follows:

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45 Rainbow, “Double Grace” 103.
46 Ibid., 104.
47 Ibid. Expanding on this slightly shows the way that both depend on Christ found in His role as
our substitute. Calvin makes this more explicit in, e.g., Institutes 2.16.7
48 See also the helpful conclusions of Lane, “Twofold Righteousness” 221.
The importance of maintaining the unity of these two aspects of salvation is evident. The points of convergence can be expressed by saying that justification and sanctification are both

- Enabled by Christ’s substitution
- Rooted in union with Christ
- Empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Appropriated by faith
- A reflection of the character of God.

In the end, the attributes of a righteous God, the source of justification and sanctification, are reflected in the lives of those who are justified and sanctified. God who loves sinners and calls them out of their sin and identifies them with His Son, who is their Substitute. In that identification, the sinner is declared to be righteous because of the Substitute’s death, and he is given new life in the Spirit because of the Substitute’s resurrection. From the fountainhead of God’s grace in substitutionary atonement come both justification and sanctification.
SANCTIFICATION: THE WORK
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SCRIPTURE

William D. Barrick
Professor of Old Testament

Sanctification is inseparable from regeneration; where there is one, the other must also exist. Sanctification is the process of making holy, whether in the OT or the NT. God’s holiness is complete, comparable to no one else, and is incompatible with sin. Man’s holiness is progressive as it seeks to match the holiness of God in dedicating everything to Him. Both Testaments multiply references to God’s holiness as the foundation for human holiness. The believer progresses in his own sanctification through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and through attention to the Scripture, but humans also have a role in sanctification. They must live out what they possess by the grace of God.

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Introduction

James calls believers to be alert to the harm of being spiritually adulterous or friends with the world (Jas 4:4). Instead, the believer should seek to be a friend of Christ—he ought to submit to God, draw near to God, cleanse his hands, and purify his heart (vv. 7–8). As the children of God, Christians must demonstrate a Christlikeness in their behavior—a behavior that avoids entanglement with the world. In his “Forward” to the Shepherds’ Conference 2002 reprint edition of J. C. Ryle’s classic book, Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, & Roots, John MacArthur writes,

More than a century has passed since Ryle’s Holiness was first published, and today the book is more timely than ever. All the erroneous notions Ryle confronted still flourish among evangelicals. Wrong notions about sanctification are still frustrating believers in their quest for genuine practical holiness. And that is why this superb nineteenth-century work is still a fitting antidote to much of what ails mainstream evangelicalism at the
beginning of the twenty-first century.¹

Ryle summarized the issue of sanctification by declaring, “He that is born again and made a new creature receives a new nature and a new principle, and always lives a new life. . . . In a word, where there is no sanctification there is no regeneration, and where there is no holy life there is no new birth.”² Positional sanctification involves what is initial, inward, and permanent at salvation. Positional (or, initial) sanctification demands progressive sanctification—the demonstration of an outward and progressive holiness in the life of the saint. In regeneration (the new birth), both the incorruptible seed of the Word of God (1 Pet 1:23) and the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8; Titus 3:5) play a role. Accordingly, the same two agents involved in initial sanctification bring about the progressive sanctification of the believer.

Defining Sanctification

Linguistically, conceptually, and theologically, holiness comprises the root of sanctification. By definition, sanctification refers to the process of making holy. Thus, a proper understanding of sanctification must start with the meaning of “holy” (Hebrew: יִצְרָאֵל qāḏêš; Greek: ἁγιός, hagios). Potentially, two different Greek words convey the concept of holiness. In the ancient Greek games, when judges found it impossible to determine a victor, the presiding officials assigned the prize to one of the gods, thus making that prize “holy” (ἱερός, hieros), in other words, set apart to a deity, because no one but a god could determine who had won. Thus, hieros could refer to a “dead heat”—a tie without resolution.³ In the New Testament (NT), the same Greek root occurs in words for “priest” (ἱερέας, hieres; Matt 12:4) and “temple” (ἱερόν, hieron; Matt 4:5). Paul employs a form of the adjective in 1 Cor 9:13 to speak of “sacred service” and in 2 Tim 3:15 to identify the “writings” (Scripture) as “sacred.” Scripture writers do not use hieros as the most common Greek term for holiness, but the term is available to them.

Hagios occurs far more frequently (over 230 times in the NT). It forms the foundational root for “holiness” (ἅγιος, ἑαγιός; 1 Thess 4:3-7), “sanctification” (ἅγιασμός, hagiasmos; 1 Thess 4:3-7), and “make holy” or “sanctify” (ἅγιαζω, hagiazō; John 17:17). “Saint” translates hagios when it is used as a title for the Christian believer.

First, holiness refers to that which is totally other, that which one dedicates completely to God alone. The Scriptures identify holiness as an attribute fundamental

²Ibid., 21.
to God’s character. According to James Montgomery Boice, “The Bible itself . . .
calls God holy more than anything else. Holy is the epithet most often affixed to his
name” (cf. Rev 15:4 and Matt 6:9). Indeed, the title “the Holy One” (Job 6:10, יְהוָה קָדוֹשׁ, qādōš) appears to be one of the oldest names for God. Occurring most often in the
title “the Holy One of Israel,” this name comprises the key divine title in the Book
of Isaiah (1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; etc.—a total of 30 times). Holiness sets God apart
from His creation; it distinguishes Him from everything. God’s holiness, therefore,
involves proclaiming Him as “Wholly Other.” In other words, as D. A. Carson
declares, “not to revere God as holy is not to revere God as God.”

Secondly, holiness identifies God’s absolute moral perfection. He is without
sin. In short, the two aspects of God’s holiness identify Him as both incomparable
to others and incompatible with sin. As William Shedd explains, God’s holiness
cannot be defined the same way as man’s holiness. Christians’ holiness, as believers
who have been sanctified and proceed to grow in holiness, relates to their conformity
to God’s own moral standards or, as Shedd puts it, “moral law.” “Holiness in God
must, consequently, be defined as conformity to his own perfect nature. . . . He is
righteous by nature and of necessity.” His sanctity consists of the purest and highest
form of holiness.

Biblical Demonstration of God’s Holiness

Until a person understands what the holiness of God involves, he will have
difficulty comprehending what his own holiness should involve. The OT depicts God
as unique and absolutely incomparable—He alone is God, the Exalted One, the Most
High, the Creator, the King, and the Redeemer (Isa 40:12-28; 41:1-29; 43:1-13; 44:6-
8; 45:1-7; 45:18–46:13). The Servant passages in Isaiah focus on the identification
of God as God alone, unique, the Only One, sovereign, Lord and Master of creation,
of history, of redemption, and of judgment. These passages in Isaiah provide comfort
for the people by majoring on this description of God. Only in that kind of God can
hope reside. Since He has perfect control over all things, His people can rely on Him
for peace, rest, comfort, and forgiveness.

Being completely righteous and holy, God loves righteousness (Ps 11:7; cp.
v. 6), but hates sin (Amos 5:21-23). Sin is an abomination to God. It is what He

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Theology, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1986) 125.
H Publishing, 2006) 56: “By holy at least two things are meant: (1) that God is separate from all else that
exists . . . and (2) that his holiness is translated into moral and ethical perfection.”
7 William G. T. Shedd, Dogmatic Theology, 3 vol., Classic Reprint (1888; reprint, Grand Rapids:
abhors. Sin is violent, disobedient, immoral, crass, crude, and filthy. Sin produces guilt and separates from God. Therefore, He judges sin and sinners in His wrath (Isa 5:16; Ezek 28:22—to execute judgment means to manifest holiness; Rev 6:10). Divine wrath exhibits divine holiness; by it God shows that He is holy (Num 20:13—to judge means to prove holy; 1 Sam 6:20). Only One Who is sinless has the right, authority, or capacity to judge sin. Divine judgment originates in God’s total otherness and His total uniqueness and control. When God spoke to Job out of the whirlwind, He asked Job if he had been present when the Lord created the earth and all things that are in it (Job 38:4). Then God asked Job whether he had ever commanded the dawn (v. 12), bound the chains of the Pleiades (v. 31), led forth the constellations in their seasons (v. 32), or fixed the ordinances of the constellations over the Earth (v. 33). God confronted Job with his having spoken as though he should be justified while God should be condemned (40:8). Coming to the end of His revelation to Job, God suggests that Job clothe himself with majesty (v. 9), pour out his anger on the proud (v. 11), and tread down the wicked (v. 12). Only the Creator can judge the wicked. Unless Job had created and had control over creation, he cannot judge the arrogant and wicked. Job can save himself only if he can both create and judge as God has done and will do (v. 14). Hannah confessed such things of God in her prayer: “There is no one holy like the Lord, indeed, there is no one besides You” (1 Sam 2:2). Only the Creator can judge; only the Judge can redeem.

A proper view of the saints’ sanctification must include an accurate understanding of the holiness of God. His holiness is the foundation of believers’ holiness, as Peter’s admonition recalls: “but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior” (1 Pet 1:15). MacArthur concurs: “If we don’t understand the holiness of God, we won’t understand our own sinfulness.”

Once the student of Scripture has identified the concept of holiness, he can develop the meaning of sanctification by applying the biblical concept of holiness to sanctification. MacArthur makes the connection by stating that “Sanctification does not mean perfection. It means separation. It speaks of being set apart from sin and set apart unto God.” Thus, John Walvoord writes that the “three main ideas of consecration, separation, and purification combine in the central idea of holiness.”

### Securing Sanctification

By what means does the believer progress in sanctification in this life? How

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<sup>4</sup> John MacArthur, Jr., *God: Coming Face to Face with His Majesty* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1993) 47.


does he become more set apart to God and set apart from sin? Scripture speaks of living a life of holiness as an obligation, not an option.

**Substantiating Synergism in Sanctification**

Three agents work together (i.e., synergize) to sanctify the believer: the Spirit, the Scriptures, and the saint. The saint cannot attain sanctification without the Spirit and the Scriptures. Those two agents are primary in the process of making the believer more and more holy.

**The Spirit’s Role.** All three Persons of the Godhead act as agents of sanctification: (1) The Father provides ultimate sanctification (1 Thess 5:23), (2) the Son involves Himself in initial/positional sanctification (Eph 5:26), and (3) the Spirit provides initial/positional sanctification (2 Thess 2:13). To examine progressive (outward) sanctification, one needs to remember the continuity of sanctification between the two testaments.

In the OT, God reveals that the Holy Spirit provides the solution to impurity stemming from the sinful human spirit (Ps 51:10-12; cp. Isa 32:15-17). David’s confession of his sin involves a plea that the Spirit of God would aid in his forgiveness, restoration, and sanctification. Without the Spirit of God, David cannot experience purification or sanctification. The NT merely expresses the Holy Spirit’s role with greater clarity and specificity; it does not reveal a new or different agent for sanctification. As with many doctrines, the NT expands upon that which God has already revealed in the OT and clarifies the relationship of those doctrines to the completed redemptive work of Jesus the Messiah. God does not change the means of sanctification in the NT. Instead, He increases the visibility of the Holy Spirit’s role and explains what necessitates the Spirit’s involvement. The Lord explains the foundation of sanctification in Christ’s work that allows one to live a new life.

By reason of the frequency of mention in the NT, the Holy Spirit appears to act as the primary divine agent for progressive sanctification. In the words of Millard Erickson, progressive sanctification means “the continued transformation of moral and spiritual character so that the life of the believer actually comes to mirror the standing which he or she already has in God’s sight.” Association of the Holy Spirit with sanctification occurs in Romans 8:1-16 though neither ἁγιάζων

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(hagiazein) nor ἁγιασμός (hagiasmos; see 6:19, 22) occurs in these verses. Related passages include 1 Cor 6:11; 1 Thess 4:7-8; 2 Thess 2:13; and 1 Pet 1:2. Sanctification is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit whereby He produces in the believer “a positive likeness of Christ.”

According to Rom 15:16, the Holy Spirit sanctifies Paul’s gospel ministry to the Gentiles. Thus, sanctification involves more than just the process of making the believer holy—it also includes the attribution of holiness to the service and ministry of the believer. In other words, the believer’s service for God depends for its acceptability upon the sanctifying ministry of the Holy Spirit. Cranfield views this text as a reference to an offering made by Christ with Paul assisting and that the gift of the Holy Spirit sanctified the Gentile Christians. He also notes that

The verb ἑρμάζειν occurs in the Pauline corpus only here and in 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; 7:14 (bis); Eph 5:26; 1 Th 5:23; 1 Tim 4:5; 2 Tim 2:21. All these occurrences are in the passive except for those in Ephesians and 1 Thessalonians. It is God who sanctifies (makes ἁγιός).

Positional sanctification (cf. 1 Cor 6:11) enables Christians to obtain progressive sanctification. As John MacArthur explains, “To be sanctified is to be made holy inwardly and to be able, in the Spirit’s power, to live a righteous life outwardly. Before a person is saved, he has no holy nature and no capacity for holy living.” Philippians 2:12-13 mentions this same process. It is God who energizes the believer to desire and to perform God’s will. That work consists of “working out” one’s salvation (v. 12). That outworking takes what has already been planted within and makes it visible in how one lives. In other words, it is the salvation that is already accomplished by Christ that must be made manifest in how the believer lives—initial sanctification displays itself outwardly in progressive sanctification.

Elsewhere MacArthur also writes, “This is the Spirit’s work, to set us apart from sin, 7:18).

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17 Erickson, *Christian Theology* 875, 967-68.
18 Cranfield, *Epistle to the Romans* 2:757.
19 Ibid.
21 The Greek for “work out” in Phil 2:12 is κατεργαζομαι (katerygazomai). In Rom 1:27 the internal unnatural desire is worked out in indecent acts of homosexuality and in 7:8 the law causes the sinful nature to display itself in covetousness. Likewise, the absence of good internally results in the absence of an outworking of good in the life (7:18).
Sanctification: The Work of the Holy Spirit and Scripture

consecrate us, make us holy. He is conforming us to the image of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). Indeed, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) consists of the virtues inherent in the Savior’s own character, His love, His joy, His peace, His patience, His kindness, His goodness, His faithfulness, His gentleness, and His self-control.

However, the Holy Spirit is not the only agent for sanctification. The Triune God employs union with Christ (1 Cor 1:2, 30), the Word (John 17:17; Eph 5:26), the death of Christ (1 John 1:7; Gal 6:14), and a believer’s choice (Heb 12:14; 2 Tim 2:21-22) to accomplish progressive sanctification.²³

The Scripture’s Role. The Word of God acts as the co-agent of sanctification both initially and progressively. What is the exact role of the Word of God in the process of present, progressive sanctification? Sometimes the disagreement comes down to whether or not Mosaic Law possesses a role in personal sanctification. Does Mosaic Law possess a role in personal sanctification?

The Lutheran tradition seeks to avoid confusing law and gospel, since such confusion can result in an increase of legalism.²⁴ As Moisés Silva points out,

> Even the Lutheran standards recognize the so-called “third use of the Law,” namely, that although believers have been “set free from the curse and constraint of the Law, they are not, nevertheless, in that account without Law, inasmuch as the Son of God redeemed them for the very reason that they might meditate on the Law of God day and night, and continually exercise themselves in the keeping thereof” (The Formula of Concord, 1576, Article VI).²⁵

While Mosaic Law does not provide the Christian’s primary authority for living a godly life (cp. Gal 3:13, 23-25), God has assigned a role for all Scripture, including Mosaic Law (2 Tim 3:15-17; cp. Matt 7:21; Mark 3:35).²⁶ The profitability of the Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16-17) results from the fact that the Word of God rebukes,

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²³Chafer, Systematic Theology 7:278.
²⁵Ibid. See, also, Anthony A. Hoekema, “The Reformed Perspective,” in Five Views of Sanctification, by Melvin E. Dieter et al., Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987) 85-86. “The Christian life, we conclude, must be a law-formed life. . . . The law, therefore, is one of the most important means whereby God sanctifies us” (ibid., 88).
reproves, corrects, and instructs in righteousness. Those Scriptures consist primarily of the OT. Therefore, they include the law. The law is profitable and of use in equipping the man (or woman) of God for every good work. Iain Murray concludes that “the law, ended for our justification, is far from ended in sanctification.”

Psalm 19:7-13 (Hebrews 8–14) presents the OT’s own revelation concerning the role of special revelation (especially the torah of the OT) in the saint’s sanctification. The psalmist declares that special (written) revelation converts the soul (v. 7a), thus making the naive wise (v. 7b; cp. 2 Tim 3:15, “the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation”). This produces joy of heart (v. 8a; cp. 1 Thess 1:6) and illumination (v. 8b; cp. Eph 1:18). Verse 9a then describes the Word of Yahweh as enduring—attributing to special revelation a quality rather than continuing the identification of the work performed by the Word (vv. 7-8). Verse 9b unexpectedly alters the verb to a perfect, in contrast to the preceding five participles. Most translations treat the verb as a stative (“are righteous”). The same Hebrew verb root (ָזְדָּק, zdq) occurs once in the Niphal (Dan 8:14) where it has the meaning “made right” or “justified.” Therefore, if the same factitive sense carries over to a context like Psalm 19:9 (Hebrews 10), the final clause might be translated as “made right completely.” The following context (vv. 10-13) focuses on how the Word warns Yahweh’s servant (v. 11), so that he does not commit sins of ignorance (v. 12) or arrogance (v. 13). Instead, the servant can become blameless (v. 13)—the same quality attributed to Yahweh’s instruction (v. 7). “Make righteous completely” falls within the realm of progressive sanctification. Shedd says that “holiness is a general term denoting that quality in God whereby God is right (rectus) in himself, and in all his actions.”

The clearest text occurs in the high priestly prayer of Christ in John 17:17, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.” Thus, the Word of God sanctifies. Both in the OT and in the NT, the Word of God produces holiness. OT law demands sanctification, a life of holiness. Interestingly, the text in Ps 19:9, like John 17:17, describes the Word as “truth” just before specifying that it “makes righteous completely.”

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29 Shedd, Dogmatic Theology 1:364.
Sanctification: The Work of the Holy Spirit and Scripture

A similar function of the Word of God appears in Paul’s first epistle to Timothy when he writes concerning food, 

“[F]or it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer” (1 Tim 4:5). The Word of God can and does make something, or someone, holy.

The Saint’s Role. Silva identifies the basic issue involving agency in sanctification as a matter of the human role in sanctification. What role can people play? Obviously, they cannot sanctify themselves. Without the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, no one can be holy. Roman Catholicism stresses the cleansing power of baptism and good works. Meanwhile, advocates of the Victorious Life Movement focus on the believer’s passivity in sanctification. Philippians 2:12-13, while stating that God does work in the believer, also indicates that God empowers the believer to work at the task of manifesting inward godliness or holiness outwardly. In fact, an imperative governs the entire statement: κατεργάζεσθε (katergazesthe), “work out” (v. 12). The force of this verb appears in Rom 4:15 where Paul explains how the Mosaic Law produces (works out) wrath. In Rom 7:8 the apostle uses the same verb to express how sin works itself out in covetousness. In verses 17 and 20 indwelling sin works out its effects in the apostle’s life. Again in Rom 15:18 the indwelling Christ accomplishes the proclamation of the Gospel to the Gentiles through the apostle Paul.

Silva admits that Sanctification requires discipline, concentration, and effort, as is clear by the many exhortations of Scripture, especially those where the Christian life is described with such figures as running and fighting (1 Cor 9:24-27; Eph 6:10-17). On the other hand, men must always resist the temptation to assume that they in effect sanctify themselves, that spiritual power comes from within them and that they may therefore rely on their own strength. This is a difficult tension, though no more puzzling than the paradox of prayer (“Why pray when God, who knows our needs and who is all-wise and sovereign, will always do what is best anyway?”). Yet perhaps the real “secret” of holiness consists precisely in learning to keep that balance: relying thoroughly on God as the true agent in sanctification while faithfully discharging one’s personal responsibility.

How can a believer be holy?

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32 Ibid.
33 Cf. Bruce Demarest, The Cross and Salvation, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1997) 424-29. Demarest summarizes the saint’s involvement in the following fashion: “Sanctification is a cooperative venture; the Spirit blesses believers with sanctifying grace, but the latter must faithfully cooperate therewith. Faith alone justifies; but faith joined with our concerted efforts sanctifies” (425).
First, the believer possesses initial sanctification (1 Cor 6:11). Initial sanctification provides a basis for the believer’s participation in the process of progressive sanctification. Being sanctified and justified, the believer must live out what he or she now possesses by the grace of God. Secondly, the Scripture exhorts the believer to complete his holiness (2 Cor 7:1). This completion involves more than mere cleansing or purification. Charles Hodge interprets 2 Cor 7:1 so as to identify the saint’s role in his or her own progressive sanctification. He explains that, although the Scriptures often ascribe to God the role of purification, such references do not exclude the agency of God’s people. Indeed, “If God’s agency in sanctification does not arouse and direct ours; if it does not create the desire for holiness, and strenuous efforts to attain it, we may be sure that we are not its subjects.”

Paul refers to the sanctification process itself in 2 Cor 3:18 by referring to the Holy Spirit’s transformation of believers into Christlikeness from the time they have been justified until they are glorified. Such Christlikeness comes by degrees, “from glory to glory.” Unlike initial sanctification, it is not instantaneous. This is progressive sanctification—it develops over time. “Holiness, in a word,” observes Bruce Demarest, “is Christlikeness daily manifested in the midst of a godless world.” Additional NT texts that relate progressive sanctification to Christlikeness include Rom 8:29; Gal 4:19; and Eph 4:13, 15.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews utilizes an imperative to convey instruction for sanctifying oneself—believers must pursue sanctification: “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord” (12:14). Thus, as MacArthur explains, “We dare not view sanctification as something optional.” Note the kind of holiness about which the author of Hebrews writes, “without which no one will see the Lord.” All too commonly, believers pursue a public display of holiness that says more about what they think of themselves rather than how they view God. Ostentatious devotional exercises might include public praying and giving merely for the purpose of gaining the approval of men, rather than providing evidence of holiness.

As Iain Murray declares, “The regenerate man loves God, loves holiness, loves the Bible, loves the godly, because it is his nature to do so.” However, pursuit involves more than just loving and desiring holiness or attempting to display outwardly what one already has inwardly through justification and initial sanctifica-

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39 Murray, *The Old Evangelicalism* 23.
tion. The believer must pour his energy, his efforts, his minds, and his being into being holy. Human agency can never accomplish self-sanctification, since only divine power can sanctify.⁴⁰ In summary,

a. The Spirit of God makes us holy (sanctified) as we behold (fix our attention on) God’s holiness in Jesus Christ.

b. When we fix our attention on our Savior’s holiness, we become like Him—we begin to delight in imitating His holy example (cf. 1 Thess 4:1-3).

c. Our sanctification is gradual and increasing in this life.⁴¹

d. Total holiness becomes our character only when we at last see Jesus (1 John 3:2).

How should believers manifest the incomparable aspect of holiness?

Christians belong irrevocably to God. They are His people. Therefore, they should live in a fashion that demonstrates a difference from the lives of unbelievers. The OT and levitical law propagate such teaching. God’s covenanted people must behave differently than unbelievers. Such behavior involves every area of life, whether in the toilet or at the dinner table. Old Testament believers must eat differently, dress differently, talk differently, think differently, and live differently in every area of life. However, rebellious Israel insisted on trying to be more and more like the unbelieving nations around them. New Testament believers possess a similar mandate to live in a way that will cause the unbeliever to ask the reason for the hope by which believers live (1 Pet 3:15). No other people should live life the way they do.

How should believers manifest the incompatible aspect of holiness? They should avoid and hate sin. Their behavior should display the character of God rather than of fallen mankind. Demarest recommends four means of overcoming sin and growing in Christlikeness: (1) Identify God’s part and a Christian’s part in sanctification, (2) be filled with the Spirit, (3) cultivate the fruit of the Spirit, and (4) imitate Christ.⁴² Eugene Merrill speaks of the effects of the believer’s sanctification as follows, “When God’s holiness is recognized and displayed, it has the effect of silencing the prideful claims of arrogant and rebellious men.”⁴³ That is what happens when believers live a holy life.

⁴⁰Chafer, Systematic Theology 7:278.
⁴¹Ryle, Holiness 24-25.
⁴³Merrill, Everlasting Dominion 58.
Sorting the Strata of Sanctification

Believers must beware of making biblical references to initial sanctification appear as though they are texts referring to progressive sanctification. At first blush, Eph 5:26 (“so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word”) might speak of the Word of God as the sanctifying agent for the church. A careful examination of the text, however, demonstrates that the Word of God cleanses the church in salvation and prepares her for positional sanctification. This Ephesians text contains within it the debates that plague the issue regarding the differentiation of justification and sanctification. Three purpose clauses (each introduced by ἵνα, hina) follow on the declaration that Christ loved and gave Himself on behalf of the church (v. 25). The text identifies the three purposes as (1) to cleanse the church by the Word (v. 26), (2) to present the church to Himself (v. 27a), and (3) in order that the church might be holy and blameless (v. 27b). Grammatically, “the word” relates to the “washing,” which, in turn, relates to “cleansed.” Hoehner observes that “[c]leansing deals with the negative aspect, that of being cleansed from defilement of sin, whereas sanctification is the positive aspect, that of being set apart to God. They are two sides of the same coin.” Thus, Eph 5:26 refers to positional sanctification, “which serves as the basis for” progressive sanctification.

To what does “the word” refer in this text? Only once in Paul’s eight uses does ῥῆμα (hrēma) mean something other than words from either God or Christ. Hoehner argues that here it refers to “the preached word of Christ’s love for the church.” Although the apostle obviously speaks about an ultimate holiness in the future for the church, “application to the present church is no less appropriate. Although in the future, sanctification will be complete, but the process is ongoing. Holiness of life for believers is enjoined (4:17-32).”

First Peter 1:2 (“according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure,” NAU) contains direct reference to initial sanctification. In the following context, however, Peter makes it clear that this sanctification must be expressed or displayed outwardly: “but like the

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44 For the various grammatical relationships and argumentation pro and con, see John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (1883; reprint, Minneapolis: James and Klock, 1977) 417-20.
46 Ibid., 757.
47 Ibid., 755.
48 Ibid., 756.
49 Ibid., 761.
Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY’” (vv. 15-16; cp. Phil 2:12-13).

Conclusion

When invited to participate in a manner of living that belonged to pre-salvation days, believers need to respond, “I regret that I cannot attend, because I died recently.” They died in Christ. Their life now is His, not theirs.

Where one stands depends on where one sits. We are seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph 2:6). In the U. S. President’s State of the Union speech, Republicans sit on one side and Democrats on the other. They sit where they stand politically. The believer’s position consists of Christ’s holiness; therefore, he ought to walk in that holiness and be transformed by degrees into His glorious image. Sanctification is the work of the Triune God (especially the Holy Spirit), the Word of God, and the believer. Believers must manifest God’s holiness in every area of life and must grow in that holiness from the time of salvation to the day of departure from this world.
SANCTIFICATION:
THE BIBLICALLY IDENTIFIABLE FRUIT

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As in past centuries, Christians still speak frequently about the need for sanctification, yet no mutually agreed upon description of sanctification has emerged. The present discussion has chosen to describe the term in relation to what the Bible says about “fruit.” “Fruit” is used widely in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, referring to edible products from the ground as well as human offspring. In both the OT and the NT the word is used metaphorically to depict human actions. Other terms related to fruit also take on metaphorical meanings to speak of human behavior. Romans 6:22 and 7:4 link such terminology with the sanctification of believers. The contexts of these verses confirm a close tie between fruit and both past sanctification and the present lives of Christians in their progress toward Christ-likeness. Galatians 5:22-23 relate the Holy Spirit’s role in producing the present sanctification of believers.

* * * * *

Introduction

The apostle Peter exhorted his Christian audience, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet 1:14-16). 1 Just as OT believers were called to reflect the holy God in their character and behavior (Lev 11:44; 19:2; 20:7), NT believers are called to the same standard. 2 This holy life-style

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1 All English citations of Scripture are from the NASU.

2 R. C. Sproul (The Holiness of God [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1985] 202) writes, “We were created to shine forth the holiness of God.” To do so, the believer needs to understand the holiness of the God he was created to reflect. Thus, Sproul allots 188 pages (9197) to explaining the holiness of God and its implications for (fallen, believing) man before describing what holiness is supposed to look like.
that is to characterize the Christian is defined by theologians as an aspect of “present or progressive sanctification.” The need for the believer to grow in progressive sanctification is underscored by the exhortation in Heb 12:15, “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.”

The seriousness with which Christians in the past responded to this appeal for progressive sanctification (i.e., holiness) is articulated by J. I. Packer:

There was a time when all Christians laid great emphasis on the reality of God’s call to holiness and spoke deep insights about His enabling of us for it. Evangelical Protestants, in particular, offered endless variations on the themes of what God’s holiness requires of us, what our holiness involves for us, by what means and through what disciplines the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, and the ways in which holiness increases our assurance and joy and usefulness to God.

Packer adds,

Formerly, then, holiness was highlighted throughout the Christian church. But how different it is today! To listen to our sermons and to read the books we write for each other and then to watch the zany, worldly, quarrelsome way we behave as Christian people, you would never imagine that once the highway of holiness was clearly marked out for Bible believers, so that ministers and people knew what it was and could speak

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4 David Peterson (*Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness*, NSBT, ed. D. A. Carson [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995] 74) reminds the Christian, “The present imperative, ‘pursue’ (12:14, Gr. διέκατε), stresses the need for earnest, ongoing effort in response to the promises of God. It is not a call for the readers to achieve peace and sanctification by their own endeavours [sic] but to realize the practical benefit of what has been available to them in Christ.” Later, he adds, “No Christian should doubt the need to give practical, everyday expression to the holiness that is our status and calling in Christ. Only those who trust in the sanctifying work on the cross, and take seriously the warning to ‘pursue holiness’, will ‘see the Lord.’ . . . On the other hand, it is possible to be so zealous for ‘progress’ that one’s attention shifts from God’s grace to human effort. Moral growth and development will be God’s gift to us at different stages of our lives, but spirituality must not be measured in terms of the rate of change. We are to go on exhibiting what we know of God’s character and will, motivated by the certainty of his acceptance, cleansing and enabling in Christ, together with the promise of entire sanctification when we meet him, face to face. Progress may be seen as we exercise ourselves in that godly devotion which issues from a true knowledge of God in Jesus Christ” (ibid., 91).

5 Packer, *Rediscovering Holiness: Know the Fullness of Life with God* (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2009) 12. Culver (*Systematic Theology* 755-57) offers historical support for Protestantism’s concern with the believer’s progressive sanctification even though he admits the doctrine has not always been well stated.
of it with authority and confidence.  

However, even in past centuries, from the sixteenth century Reformers to the nineteenth century evangelical expositors when “the highway of holiness was clearly marked out for Bible believers,” there was no agreement concerning exactly what the visible evidences of progressive sanctification were. The late-nineteenth-century evangelical Anglican, J. C. Ryle, wrote,

I now proceed to take up . . . the visible evidence of sanctification. In a word, what are the visible marks of a sanctified man? What may we expect to see in him? This is a wide and difficult department of our subject. It is wide, because it necessitates the mention of many details which cannot be handled fully in the limits of a paper like this. It is difficult, because it cannot possibly be treated without giving offence. But at any risk, truth ought to be spoken; and there is some kind of truth which especially requires to be spoken in the present day.

This discussion of what sanctification looks like (i.e., the visible evidence) in the Christian believer continues to be a part of the interchange on the doctrine of sanctification in contemporary evangelicalism. Thus, the need for a further review

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6 Packer, Rediscovering Holiness 13. In an earlier work (J. I. Packer, Keep in Step with the Spirit [Old Tappen, N.J.: Revell, 1984] 99-101) he had advanced four reasons why he thought personal holiness had become a secondary matter for contemporary evangelicals: 1) Evangelicals today are preoccupied with controversy; 2) Evangelicals today are disillusioned with what has long been put to them as “holiness teaching”; 3) Evangelical talent today is preempted so that when holiness is discussed, it is often not dealt with as weightily as it deserves; 4) And most disturbing of all, Evangelicals today are evidently insensitive to the holiness of God Himself.

7 John Charles Ryle, Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, & Roots (1879; reprint, Moscow, Idaho: Charles Nolan, 2002) 29. Ryle continues by stating ten visible evidence of sanctification (the first five are negative and the last five positive): Sanctification is not 1) talk about religion; 2) religious feelings; 3) outward formalism and external devoutness; 4) retirement from our place in life; 5) occasional performance of right actions; but sanctification is 6) habitual respect to God’s law, and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as a rule of life; 7) an habitual endeavour [sic] to do Christ’s will; 8) an habitual desire to live up the standard which St. Paul sets before the churches in his writings; 9) habitual attention to the active graces which our Lord so beautifully exemplified; and 10) habitual attention to the passive graces of Christianity (ibid., 29-36).

8 See the interchanges by Protestant Evangelicals on the subject of sanctification in Melvin Dieter, et al., Five Views on Sanctification (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987) and Donald L. Alexander, ed., Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1988). Peterson (Possessed by God 12) affirms that these two volumes provide an excellent introduction to the subject of sanctification. However, he feels that more work needs to be done at the level of biblical interpretation. He writes, “Indeed, a major failing of many expositions of the subject has been the lack of a thorough and systematic investigation of the relevant terms and their use in Scripture.” His work seeks to address this weakness. Gregory A. Boyd and Paul R. Eddy (Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002] 146-64) survey the teaching, biblical, and supporting arguments, and defenses of the Lutheran, Reformed, Keswick, and Wesleyan Views. James M. Howard (Paul, the Community, and Progressive Sanctification: An Exploration into Community-based
of the biblically identifiable fruit of progressive sanctification is beneficial and to that subject this discussion now proceeds.

The Biblical Understanding of “Fruit” and Related Terms

There are many NT terms that could be studied as an introduction to the attitudes and actions that should be visible in the life of the Christian believer. For example, the term “to walk” (περιπατέω, peripateō) is used to describe and define the conduct expected of a saint (see Rom 13:13; Gal 5:16; Eph 2:10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15; Col 1:10; 2:6; 4:5; 1 Thes 2:12; 4:1, 12; 1 John 1:7; 2:6; 3 John 3, 4). Or the concept of “put off/put on” can be traced as it gives insight into the pre- and post-Christian behavior of a believer (see Eph 4:22-32; Col 3:8-17). Further, the commands given to the saint to obey could be listed (see John 13:35-35; 1 John 2:3-11; 3:23-24; 4:21; 5:2-3; 2 John 4-6). However, in an article like this a choice is necessary; the determination, therefore, is to see what the Bible teaches about the term “fruit” and related terms as the avenue taken to describe what the NT teaches about progressive sanctification in relation to its visible outcomes in the life of the Christian.

The Term “Fruit”

The term “fruit” appears numerous times in the Bible. The noun forms (Heb. תְּפִלָּת, tephilat; Gr. καρπός, karpos) are found about 122 times in the OT and 65 times in the NT. The verbal forms associated with these nouns (i.e., “to bear, or bring forth fruit”) appear 29 times in the OT and 8 times in the NT. As can be observed, it is the noun form that is used predominantly, although the verbal and adjectively usage is found as well. “Fruit,” the noun, is the result of “to bear or bring forth fruit,” the verb, and this can be described as “fruitful,” the adjective. In both the OT and NT, the opposite concept/term “unfruitful” is also found (2 Kgs 2:19; Eph 5:11; Tit 3:14; 2 Pet 1:8).

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Transformation within Pauline Theology, Studies in Biblical Literature, ed. Hemchand Gossai [New York: Peter Lang, 2007] 11-40) surveys and critiques approaches to progressive sanctification represented by the Wesleyan, Reformed, Pentecostal, and Keswick views, along with the more recent proposals of Larry Crabb, Stanley Grez, and David Peterson.

The term “fruit” is widespread in Scripture. It is introduced in Genesis 1 and its final use is found in Revelation 22. In both its first and final biblical usages it refers to the edible produce of trees: “Then God said, ‘Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them’; and it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good” (Gen 1:11-12), and “Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding it fruit every month; and the leaves were for the healing of the nations” (Rev 22:1-2). According to Gen 1:29, “Then God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you,” God created the plants and trees for the purpose of giving humans and animals what they could eat so that their lives might be sustained. Here is the most basic meaning of “fruit,” the edible product of a tree. In Revelation 22, in the eternal state, the tree of life will bring forth its “fruit” on a monthly cycle. It is not stated explicitly that it was for mankind to eat, but that probably is implicit because that is why God gave fruit from trees in the first creation. This tree will sustain the life of the nations as it is eaten. This basic meaning of “fruit,” the edible product of a tree, is found throughout the OT and NT (Lev 23:40; 26:4, 20; 27:30; Neh 10:35. 37; Ps 1:3; 148:9; Eccl 2:5; Ezek 36:20; Matt 7:17-19; 21:19; Rev 22:2).

The basic meaning of “fruit” can also be extended to include all of the edible produce from the ground/land, including plants, vegetables, and grains as well as trees (Gen 4:3; Deut 7:13; 26:2, 10; 30:9; Ps 107:34, 37; Jer 7:20; Jas 5:7). In a few cases in the OT, “fruit” refers to the product of a tree which is not edible, i.e., the cedar (Ezek 17:9, 23) and the cypress (Hos 14:8). In two passages, the fruit from the ground (i.e., the edible produce from the ground) is distinguished from the trees (Jer 7:20; Mal 3:11).

10In its most basic sense, “fruit” is found on a woody growth in OT usage. “Fruit” was especially associated with: 1) an olive tree (Jer 11:16) ; 2) a vine (Is 37:30; 65:21; Ezek 17:8-9; 19:10; Zech 8:12); or 3) a fig tree (Prov 27:18; Joel 2:22). From these came three staples of the Israelite diet, olive oil, grapes, and figs.

11Robert L. Thomas (Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary [Chicago: Moody, 1995] 484) concurs with this understanding. He writes, “Though eating the fruit of the Tree of Life is unmentioned here, the implication is that this is what brings immortality, the same as was true for Adam and Eve originally (Gen. 3:22). Conditions of future bliss will mean a return to the original glories and privileges of God’s presence with man, before sin raised a barrier that prevented direct contact.”

12Kedar-Kopfstein, (‘(ttÇ’ 86-87) conjectures, “The noun peri referred originally to ‘that which comes forth, is brought forth, produced,’ and in the OT refers concretely to the product of every ‘fruit of the ground’ containing the seed of further growth (Gen. 1:29; 4:3). . . . The term peri refers especially to edible fruit. . . . As a comprehensive term in its own right, peri can refer to the overall produce of a land, especially Israel. . . . The semantic scope narrows where peri, as is frequently the case, is used in the sense
Three derived meanings of “fruit” occur from its basic, essential meaning of the produce from a tree and/or the ground. First, “fruit” is used often in the OT in the phrase “fruit of the womb,” i.e., children (Gen 30:2; Deut 7:13; 28:4, 11; 30:9; Ps 127:3; Isa 13:18). The noun “fruit” can also be used alone of both human (Ps 21:10; Hos 9:16) and animal (Deut 28:4; 30:9) offspring. One usage of the verb “bear fruit,” especially when it appears with the verb “to multiply,” is to bear offspring, either human (Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7; 17:20; 28:3; 35:11; 47:27; 48:4; Exod 1:7; Lev 26:9; Jer 23:3) or animal (Gen 1:22; 8:17). This usage of “fruit” as offspring is found only once in the NT (Luke 1:42). Thus, from its basic meaning of produce from the tree or the ground, “fruit” came to be used in the Bible of the produce from the womb, either human or animal.

Second, beginning in the OT and becoming its predominant usage in the NT, particularly in the NT letters, “fruit” is used metaphorically to refer to the actions produced by a person, the fruit of one’s life, i.e., behavior, conduct. This concept, introduced in the OT (Prov 1:31; 11:30; Isa 10:12; Jer 21:14; 32:19), is picked up and developed by NT authors (Matt 3:8; 7:16-20; Rom 6:21-22; 7:4; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9; Phil 1:11; Heb 12:11). Closely related is the idea of “fruit” as the product or result of one’s thoughts (“the fruit of plans,” Jer 6:19), speech (“the fruit of the mouth,” (Prov 12:14; 13:2; 18:20), or actions (Isa 1:10; Jer 17:10; Hos 10:13; Mic 7:13). Third, in the NT, “fruit” can also refer to the outcome or result of one’s actions (Rom 1:13; Phil 1:22) or the wages earned (i.e., produced) by those actions (1 Cor 9:7; Phil 4:17; 2 Tim 2:6).

In Matt 7:15-20 the words of Jesus, in the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, speak of the natural fruitfulness of trees and are applied to the produce of individual lives. He says, “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits” (Matt 7:15-20). “The vivid imagery of this section is drawn from both animal (Matt 7:15) and plant (7:16-20) life and is meant to portray the false prophets who endanger the journey of the disciples.”

David L. Turner, Matthew, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) 216. Turner also presents a chiastic structure of Matt 7:16-20 with a literal, word for word translation:

A From their fruit you will recognize them. (v.16)
B They don’t gather from thorn bushes grapes or from thistles grapes, do they?
prophets to animals; even though they outwardly appear as sheep, “a common OT metaphor for the people of God (cf. Pss 78:52; 100:3),” 14 they are in reality vicious wolves, ferocious natural enemies of the sheep. 15 Jesus then continues by using the extended plant or tree analogy. Because the false prophets will profess to be servants of God, the believers will only discern their true nature as they evaluate their speech and actions. Verses 16a and 20 repeat verbatim the same truth, inclusio. Here “fruit” is used in a metaphorical sense referring to the produce of the false teachers. Their practice will not match their profession; their actions will reveal their true character. However, in verses 16b-19, “fruit” is used with its literal meaning. From a distance, berries on a thorn bush might appear as grapes and flowers on a thistle might be mistaken for figs, but upon nearer and closer inspection, the reality of the vine and the fig tree is clear by the nature of their fruit. Thus a judgment can be made from their fruit concerning which trees need to be retained and which need to be cut down and burned. The essential principle taught in Matt 7:16-20 is: just as natural fruit, the product of a tree, gives visible evidence of the tree’s life and character, so does the metaphorical fruit, the words and actions of humans, give evidence of their life and character. This is a principle that applies not only to false prophets, but to professing Christians too (cf. Jas 3:12).

Related Terms

A number of other terms are used with “fruit’ in the OT. Fruit is found on the “branch” (ὴμῆρι, dâliyôt, Jer 11:16; Ezek 17:6, 7, 23; 31:7, 9, 12; nêq, ânâp, Lev 23:40; Ps 80:11; Ezek 17:8, 23; Mal 4:1) of a “tree.” The tree gains nourishment through its “roots” (ψιφ, shôresh, 2 Kgs 19:30; Job 18:16; 30:4; Isa 37:31; Jer 12:12; Ezek 17:7, 9; 31:7; Am 2:9; Mal 4:1). As Kedar-Kopfstein observes:

Fruit together with leaves (Ps. 1:3) and branches (Ezk. 36:8) are part of the image of the healthy tree whose roots have spread far out (2 K. 19:30; Jer 17:8). The destruction of such a tree begins with the withering of its root and ends with the drying of the foliage and its failure to produce fruit (Ps 1:3; Hos 9:16; Am 2:9). The merism in these and similar passages evokes the entire tree by mentioning merely it roots on the one hand and

14 Donald L. Hagner, Matthew 1–13, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1993) 183. These false prophets are professing believers in Israel’s God.

15 “Despite their outward appearance and profession, these persons are in fact the mortal enemies of those who belong to the flock” (ibid.).
An important OT term is the verb סָמָה (sāmah), meaning “to sprout, to grow” when used in reference to trees, plants, and grass (Gen 2:5, 9; 41:6, 23; Ex 10:5; Ps 104:14; 147:8). A healthy tree is one that sprouts from the seed in the ground and then grows, putting forth more and more branches filled with fruit. This same image of seed sprouting, crops growing, with a final harvest is pictured in the parable recorded in Mark 4:26-29.

Psalm 1 describes the blessing of a righteous man, a godly man who lives in accordance with God’s requirements. He is a man who does not conduct his life according to the counsel or direction of the wicked, the enemies of God and His standards (v. 1). Rather, he gains his directives for life from the law of Yahweh, a law in which he delights and meditates continually (v. 2). This man is pictured as a sturdy, well-nourished, fruitful tree (v. 3). He prospers and will not perish when the wicked man is judged (vv. 3b-6). Thus, the Bible itself uses here the image of a fruitful tree to describe a godly man.

This imagery of a tree rooted in rich soil bearing abundant fruit is used by many writers to picture the Christian’s progressive sanctification. The following description from Kenneth Prior, incorporating the language of John Owen from his work On the Holy Spirit, illustrates this usage.

In other words, a Christian grows from within as a living organism. John Owen observes the way in which Scripture so frequently likens the Christian’s growth in grace and holiness to the growth of trees and plants. Here is one of the comparisons he makes: “These trees and plants have the principle of their growth in themselves. They do not grow immediately from external adventitious aid, but from their own seminal virtue and radical moisture. It is not otherwise in the progress of holiness; it has a root, a seed, a principle of growth in the soul. All grace is immortal seed, and contains in it a living grace principle, John 4:14. That which has not in itself a life and power of growth is not grace. And therefore whatever duties men perform, as directed by natural light, or urged by convictions of the word, if they proceed not from a principle of spiritual life in the heart, they are not the fruit of holiness.” It is important to notice the depth at which a Christian grows. It is not just a matter of forming fresh habits in life, although this may well have to take place. Rather, Christian growth is internal and springs from the innermost being of the Christian where the Holy Spirit of God is at work. Growth which is nothing more than the forming of fresh habits could be like tying fruit to the branches of a tree.

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16 Kedar-Kopfstein, “נַפָה” 87.
17 Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “סָמָה,” in Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, 2 vols., eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., & Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody, 1980) 2:769-70. Kaiser notes the usage of this term in the human, rather than the ground/tree, context. “Especially significant are the passages related to the coming up of a shoot from the root or seed of David, i.e. the future messianic person (II Sam 23:5; Jer 33:15; Ezk 29:21; Ps 132:17; Zech 6:12).” To these passages, he adds Isa 4:2 and Jer 23:5-6 in his discussion of Messiah.
Sanctification: The Biblically Identifiable Fruit

of a tree—utterly superficial.

This leads naturally to another comparison which John Owen makes: “The growth of trees and plants is secret and imperceptible, and discerned only in the effects and consequences of it; the most watchful eye can discern little of its motion; and so it is in the progress of holiness. It is not immediately discernible either by those in whom it is, or by others who observe it, except by its fruits and effects.”

Is there NT warrant to link the imagery of “fruit” to sanctification in this way? One passage leads to an affirmative answer.

**An Association of “Fruit” with Sanctification**

 *(Romans 6:22; 7:4)*

“Although the terminology of sanctification is found only in 6:19 and 22, these chapters [Romans 6–8] have often been characterized as a classic statement of the doctrine.” Four times in these three chapters, Paul uses the term “fruit” (the noun is found in 6:21 and 22 and the verb in 7:4 and 5). Significantly, in Rom 6:22, the terms “fruit” and “sanctification” are used in the same clause, literally, “[Y]ou have your fruit leading to sanctification.” Thus, the verses, Rom 6:22 and 7:4, demonstrate an association of “fruit” with sanctification in the NT.

**The Context: Romans 6:1–7:6**

In Romans 5, Paul declares the benefits that accrue from God to the justified ones. Believers enjoy reconciliation with God (5:1-11) and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness (5:12-19). For the saints, grace abounded and now should reign “through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (5:20-21). However, Paul then deals (6:1b) with the question, “Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?” His answer (6:2a) is an emphatic, “May it never be!” In the following verses, Paul explains why Christians can no longer have a life-style of sin (6:2b-10), and follows the explanation with his first imperative in the letter (6:11).

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21 See the discussion of these verses in Harrison & Hagner, “Romans” 11:103-17; MacArthur, *Faith Works* 111-21; and Peterson, *Possessed by God* 95-105.
In these verses, Paul writes of the definitive,\textsuperscript{22} progressive, and (possibly) future\textsuperscript{23} sanctification of believers.

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<th>Verse</th>
<th>Definitive Sanctification</th>
<th>Progressive Sanctification</th>
<th>Future Sanctification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:2b</td>
<td>We who died to sin</td>
<td>Shall we still live in it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:3</td>
<td>All of us who have</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>been baptized into Jesus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christ have been</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>baptized into His death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:4</td>
<td>We have been buried with</td>
<td>So we too might walk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Him through baptism into</td>
<td>in newness of life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6:5</td>
<td>We have become united</td>
<td>We shall also be in</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with Him in the likeness</td>
<td>the likeness of His</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of His death</td>
<td>resurrection (Murray)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We shall also be in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the likeness of His</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>resurrection (Moo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:6</td>
<td>Our old self [man] was</td>
<td>so that we would no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>crucified with Him that</td>
<td>longer be slaves to sin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>our body of sin might be</td>
<td>(Murray)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>done away with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>so that we would no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>longer be slaves to sin</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Murray)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:7</td>
<td>He who died is freed</td>
<td>He who died is freed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from sin (Murray)</td>
<td>from sin (Moo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:8</td>
<td>We have died with</td>
<td>We shall also live with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christ</td>
<td>Him (Murray)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>We shall also live with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Him (Moo)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:11</td>
<td>Dead to sin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alive to God in Christ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jesus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two observations are significant. First, Paul’s emphasis in 6:2b-11 is on definitive sanctification. At conversion, signified here by baptism, believers were united with Jesus Christ in His death. Just as Christ died to sin, i.e., He was

\textsuperscript{22}\textsuperscript{22}This terminology and the interpretations in the chart (except as noted) are adapted from John Murray, \textit{The Epistle to the Romans}, NICNT, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959, 1965) 1:211-26.

\textsuperscript{23}\textsuperscript{23}Moo, \textit{The Epistle to the Romans} 353-81. The present writer agrees with Moo’s interpretations when they differ from Murray’s in the chart below.
separated from the rule of sin\textsuperscript{24} (10), so with Him the Christian has also been separated from the rule of sin (6, 11). And just as Christ now has been raised from the dead and lives to God, i.e., He lives to glorify God (10), so Christians are enabled through union with Him in His resurrection to live life-styles that glorify God (11).\textsuperscript{25} Second, believers are called to consider (imperative) these truths (indicative) as reality (11). Christians can and do live as “slaves of righteousness” and no longer as “slaves of sin” as they respond obediently to these known truths (6:16-23).

Paul follows his first, essential imperative (6:11) with three others (6:12-13). Along with regarding themselves in the same way as God does as dead to sin and alive to God (11), the believers must not allow sin to reign in their bodies (12), nor go on presenting the parts of their bodies to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present themselves as alive from the dead and their body parts as instruments of righteousness (13; cf. Rom 6:19; 12:1). Christians are not responsible to die to sin and be alive to righteousness, but they are commanded to act on the basis of their union with Jesus Christ to make sure that they no longer behave under the authority of sin. Their new position under grace, i.e., the new era in which freedom from the power of sin is available, means that sin shall no longer reign over them (14).

Once again (6:15), Paul deals with a question, “Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?” and again answers with the emphatic “May it never be!” His basic point is, “Whatever is the power you willingly yield yourselves to ... you are slaves of the power you obey, and you only have two powers from which to choose”(6:16).\textsuperscript{27} In analyzing 6:16-23, Paul associates the two powers with the believer’s former and present conditions:

\textsuperscript{24}Moo explains, “While, however, it is true that Christ did not need to be freed from sin’s power in the same way that we need to be, a close parallel between the situation of Christ and the Christian can be maintained if we remember that Paul is continuing to speak of sin as a ‘ruling power.’ Just as death once had ‘authority’ over Christ because of his full identification with sinful people in the ‘old age,’ so that other power of the old age, sin, could be said to have had ‘authority’ over Christ. As ‘a man of the old age,’ he was subject to the power of sin—with the critical difference that he never succumbed to its power and actually sinned” (ibid., 379).

\textsuperscript{25}“The point of the argument in 6:6-10 is that the hope of physical resurrection is as much an empowerment for godly living as the certainty that, on the cross, sin’s penalty was paid. Those who belong to the crucified and resurrected Lord Jesus need no longer live as helpless slaves of sin” (Peterson, \textit{Possessed by God} 99-100).

\textsuperscript{26}“What is commanded needs to be carefully noted. We are not commanded to become dead to sin and alive to God; these are presupposed. And it is not by reckoning these to be facts that they become facts. The force of the imperative is that we are to reckon with and appreciate the facts which already obtain by virtue of union with Christ” (Murray, \textit{The Epistle to the Romans} 1:225-26).

\textsuperscript{27}Peterson, \textit{Possessed by God} 101.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Formerly</th>
<th>Presently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:16</td>
<td>Slaves of sin resulting in death</td>
<td>Slaves of obedience resulting in righteousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:17-18</td>
<td>You were slaves of sin</td>
<td>You became slaves of righteousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:19</td>
<td>You presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness resulting in further lawlessness</td>
<td>Now present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:20-22</td>
<td>When you were slaves of sin, what benefit were you deriving from things . . .</td>
<td>But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God you derive your benefit [of which you are now ashamed] resulting in sanctification the outcome is eternal life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:23</td>
<td>The wages of sin is death</td>
<td>The free gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, two observations are significant. First, in verses 18 and 22, Paul affirms that the Roman believers had evidenced progressive sanctification since their conversion. He commends their obedience (17-18; cf. 16:19). The Roman Christians were known for their faith (1:8) and their maturity (15:14). In fact, the presentation of Paul in this letter was only a reminder to these saints (15:15). However, second, Paul makes it clear that their sanctification was not yet complete. Something was still lacking in their faithful obedience to God (19a; cf. 1:11b). As they had obeyed by presenting themselves as slaves to God for righteousness in the past (16, 17-18), they needed to persevere in obedience by continually presenting themselves as slaves of righteousness that would result in their further sanctification (19). Their ultimate sanctification awaited their glorification to eternal life in the future (22, 23).

In chapter 7, Paul explains the relationship of the NT believers to the Mosaic Law. In the same way that union with the death of Christ resulted in a

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28 What needed to be strengthened among the believers at Rome (1:11) and what “their weakness of the flesh” (6:19) was have perplexed commentators. See Schreiner (Romans, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998] 52-55) for a discussion of 1:11 and Moo (Romans 403-4) for 6:19.

29 “The noun ἁπάζων occurs in the NT nine other times (v.22; 1 Cor 1.30; 1 Th 4.3, 4, 7; 2 Th 2.13; 1 Tim 2.15; Heb 12.14; 1 Pet 1:2). It denotes God’s work in the believer, his ethical renewal. In spite of some opinions to the contrary, the word, as used by Paul, indicates a process rather than a state, and is better represented by ‘sanctification’ than ‘holiness’ or ‘consecration’” (C. E. B. Cranfield, The Epistle to the Romans, ICC, 2 vols. [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975, 1979] 1:327).
‘dethroning’ of sin for the believers (6:2-10), it has also resulted in the Christians’ death to the Law and joining to Jesus Christ (7:1-4). Thus, the former sinful passions aroused by the Law were producing death, but now the brethren serve in newness of the Holy Spirit (7:1-6). Paul develops further the Holy Spirit’s role in the life of believers in Rom 8:1-30.

**Romans 6:22**

Romans 6:22 is the only verse in the NT where the terms “fruit” and “sanctification” are mentioned together. Paul introduces the term “sanctification” in 6:19 in contrast to the term “lawlessness.” The parallel structure shows the contrast:

Just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness resulting in further lawlessness, so now (you) present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification.

In their pre-Christian experience, the Romans actively gave their bodies over the practice of impurity, probably sexual immorality (cf. 1:24), and lawlessness, the disobedience of God’s standards (cf. 1:28-32). This activity led only to (eis indicating result) further lawlessness. However, if believers would obey the Lord by giving over their bodies and allow God’s standards to rule over them, this would lead to their progressive sanctification, their growing set-apartness to God and from the ways of the world. “Committing ourselves as slaves to doing what is right before God (‘righteousness’) results in living that is increasingly God-centered and world-renouncing.”

Verses 20-22 are closely connected to verse 19 by “for” (gar). Paul is explaining the urgency of his command in the previous verse. Believers should present their bodies as slaves to righteousness because of their new status. A similar contrast as in verse 19 between their pre-Christian experience and post-conversion reality is presented in verses 20-22.

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30 Thomas R. Schreiner states, “Romans 6 stressed that the power of sin was broken when believers died with Christ, and now in Rom. 7 the power of the law is also shattered through his death. . . . The law no longer has authority over them, because they have died with Christ to the law’s rule” (Romans 352).

31 Moo, Romans 405.

32 This chart is based on Moo, Romans 407. There is debate as to how verse 21 should be punctuated. The NAU (along with Murray and Schreiner) places a question mark after “ashamed.” However, the parallelism cited above supports Moo (and Cranfield) in the placing of the question mark after “then,” and translates, “Therefore, what fruit did you have then? That of which you are now ashamed whose outcome is death.” No matter how one interprets the punctuation, a strong contrast between the shameful past and the “sanctification” in the present is affirmed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-21</td>
<td>&quot;then&quot;—slaves of sin, free from righteousness</td>
<td>&quot;fruit&quot; bringing shame</td>
<td>death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>&quot;now&quot;—free from sin, slaves of God</td>
<td>&quot;fruit&quot; bringing sanctification</td>
<td>eternal life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just as their pre-Christian “fruit” (behavior, conduct) now brings them shame as they recall it, in the same way their Christian “fruit” results (eis) in their progressive sanctification as in verse 19. The end of the shameful actions is eternal death, but their progressive sanctification will culminate in eternal life. “Fruit,” here, is implied to be the visible evidence showing that progressive sanctification is taking place in believers’ lives.

**Romans 7:4**

In the OT, the law given to Israel at Mount Sinai provided them with God’s guidance and regulations. Israel was loved, called, and delivered by the Lord (Deut 7:7-8) and separated from the nations and to the Lord before the giving of the Law at Sinai (Ex 19:4). However, Israel could fulfill her calling as a “holy nation” by obeying the stipulations of the law given by the Lord through Moses at Sinai (Exod 20:1–Num 10:10). The visible fruit of sanctification for national Israel was to be obedience to the Mosaic Law.

However, Paul to this point in Romans has not only declared that the Law cannot justify, a truth confirmed in the OT (3:19-20, 28; 4:1-8), but has also implied that it is impotent to sanctify as well (5:20-21; 6:14). He will call the law “holy” and the commandment “holy and righteous and good” (7:9), but the law was “weak as it was through the flesh” (8:4). Though given as a sanctifying agent by the Lord, the law was unable to curb the sinful tendency of Israel (7:7-25). Instead of sanctifying the nation, the law rather testified to the utter sinfulness of Israel. Thus the Law became an agent of “sin” (7:8-11). The NT believers are united to Christ to “bear

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33 “To be ashamed of one’s past evil ways is a vital element in sanctification” (Cranfield, *Romans* 1:328).

34 “That Israel’s faithfulness to the covenant [at Sinai] is required should in no way be understood to mean that Israel worked for her salvation in the Old Testament. The entire scene at the mountain and the subsequent laws are predicated on verse 4 [Ex 19], what God has done. The Israelites are not to keep the law in order for God to save them. They have already been saved; God has brought them out of Egypt. The law he now gives is the subsequent stage in Israel’s developing relationship with God. It is what is expected of a people already redeemed. It is law, but it is based on the prior establishment of the relationship between them by God’s good pleasure. The people do not earn their salvation; but once saved, they are obligated to set in a manner worthy of their high calling. This is true in the New Testament as well (Eph. 4:1; 2 Thess. 1:11)” (Peter Enns, *Exodus NIVAC* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000] 387).
fruit” to God, but not by obeying the Mosaic law. 35 In fact, Paul echoes his teaching concerning sin in chapter six with the Law in chapter seven as the following chart shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romans 6:1-23</th>
<th>Romans 7:1-6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Sin”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Law”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:2 “we who died to sin”</td>
<td>7:4 “you were made to die to the law”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:4 “we might walk in newness of life”</td>
<td>7:6 “we serve in the newness of the Spirit”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:7 “he who has died is freed from sin” 6:18, 22 “you have been freed from sin”</td>
<td>7:6 “we have been released from the law”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:14 “sin shall not be master over you”</td>
<td>7:1 “the law has jurisdiction over a person”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:18, 19 “slavem of righteousness” 6:22 “enslaved to God”</td>
<td>7:6 “we serve in newness of the Spirit”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:22 “you derive your benefit” [lit. “you have your fruit”]</td>
<td>7:4 “we might bear fruit for God”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The structure of 7:1-6 also echoes that in 6:1-23. Paul begins the paragraph (1-3; cf. 6:1-14) by reasserting the principle that human death frees one from the “lordship” of the law. In the same way, believers were made by God to die to the “lordship” of the law through their union with Christ in his death. This death also allowed them to be joined (as in a marriage) to the resurrected Jesus. This union with Jesus Christ is to result in “fruit,” conduct that glorifies God (v.4). 36 He then (5-6; cf. 6:15-23) identifies the law with their former life and their release from the law with their present life. Whereas previously the law was used by the flesh to arouse the sinful passions that resulted in spiritual death, now the release from the bondage of the law means the Christians can as slaves to God enabled by the Holy Spirit live godly lives.

**Specific Visible Fruit (Romans 12:3–15:13)**

Paul did not leave the Romans to guess what being slaves of righteousness

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35 Peterson writes, “The view that we are not under the law as a means of salvation but remain under it as a rule of life is not a distinction that Paul makes” (Possessed by God 104). For a discussion of the viewpoints of the role that the OT Law should have in the NT believer’s spiritual life, see Wayne G. Strickland, ed., Five Views on Law and Gospel (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993).

36 Although some commentators view the “fruit” as spiritual seed, i.e., “offspring” resulting from the Christians’ “marriage” to Jesus Christ, this seems to be pressing the analogy of 7:2-3 too far. As Cranfield points out, this is not “seed” to Christ, but to God (v. 4) and Paul continues by writing of “to bear fruit for death,” and the idea of a marriage producing death would be foreign to this context (v. 5) (Romans 1:336-37).
enabled by the Holy Spirit would look like in their visible conduct. After renewing the imperative of 6:19 to present their bodies to God (12:1) and further commands to not be conformed to this age, but to be transformed as examples of the righteous living associated with the coming age (12:2), Paul proceeds to spell out the obligations of the Roman Christians with imperatives and imperatival participles (12:3–15:13). The believers were commanded to think and act with humility (12:3-8), abhor evil and cling to what is good (12:9-21), obey the governing authorities (13:1-7), act in love toward one another (13:8-10), put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh (13:11-14), and accept one another to the glory of God (14:1–15:13). Paul makes it clear that sanctification should have visible fruit in the lives of the Roman saints.

Thus, Rom 6:22 and 7:4, in particular, provide NT warrant to link the concept of “fruit” with “sanctification.” Progressive sanctification will be evident in the “fruit” of a Christian’s life. A description of this “fruit” is presented in Gal 5:22-23 to which the present discussion now turns.

The “Fruit” Resulting from the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

“The expression ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ is a metaphor used by Paul to describe virtues that manifest the realities of life in Christ. Paul does not speak about the fruit of faith, but he does speak explicitly of the ‘fruit of the Spirit.’” Galatians 5:22-23 is the only text in the NT that explicitly mentions the “fruit of the Spirit.” However, in these verses Paul presents a list of virtues associated with Christian believers that contrast with the “fleshly” life-style (5:19-22). This close contrast of non-Christian vices and Christian virtues is common in Paul’s letters (Eph 4:25-32; Col 3:5-17; 2 Tim 2:22-25; Tit 3:1-3). Therefore, Gal 5:22-23 lists a sample of virtues or graces that were especially needed by the believers in Galatia when Paul wrote.

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38 David S. Dockery, Fruit of the Spirit,” in Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne & Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, Ill., InterVarsity, 1993) 316. Dockery’s article is a helpful, concise introduction to Gal 5:22-23 (ibid. 316-19).


40 When compared with other “virtue lists,” certain characteristics are missing in Gal 5:22-23, such as truth, honor, right, purity (Phil 4:8), compassion, and humility (Col 3:12). No list in the NT gives a complete accounting of every attitude and action that should be identified with the Christian.
The Identifiable “Fruit”

In the context of Galatians 5, Paul exhorts the believers to “walk by the Spirit” (16, 25; cf. Rom 8:4). As they allow themselves to be led by the Holy Spirit (18; cf. Rom 8:14), Christians are not subject to the Mosaic Law (cf. Rom 7:4-6). The result of this Spirit-leading would be the Spirit-produced “fruit” (22-23), rather than the “deeds” of the flesh (19-21). Here, the “fruit” is viewed as entirely the outcome of the Holy Spirit’s activity; however, other NT passages exhort saints to put these practices into their life-style. This is an obvious outworking of the principle of Phil 2:12-13 and 2 Pet 1:3-11; God has given believers everything they need for the Christian life of godliness, but they must to be diligent to put these God-given gifts into practice in their own lives.41

The following chart defines the “fruit of the Spirit” in Gal 5:22-23 and also displays where these traits are commanded of believers in the NT.

41 Jerry Bridges (The Practice of Godliness [Colorado Springs, CO.; NavPress, 1983] 76) writes, “I once read a statement to the effect that there is nothing a Christian can do to develop the fruit of the Spirit in his life; it is all the work of the Holy Spirit. Sensing at best, such a statement failed to present a balance of scriptural truth. I took out my concordance and looked up various passages that referred to one or more of the nine character traits listed as fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. For every one of those traits I found one or more passages in which we are commanded to exhibit them” (The Practice of Godliness [Colorado Springs, CO.: NavPress, 1983] 76). This book not only explains the “fruit of the Spirit,” but also gives many excellent insights into the application of these truths to the life of the contemporary Christian.
### The “Fruit”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The “Fruit”</th>
<th>The Definition[^1]</th>
<th>Exhortations to Christians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Love        | The decision to and resulting action of putting God and others before oneself | Matt 22:34-40  
John 13:34  
1 Cor 16:14  
Eph 5:2  
Col 3:14  
1 John 4:7 |
| Joy         | An inner sense of well-being resulting from hope in God / Christ that leads to exultation | Rom 12:12,15  
Phil 3:1; 4:4  
James 1:2  
1 Pet 4:13 |
| Peace       | A state of wholeness and serenity resulting from harmony with God and man | 2 Cor 13:11  
Eph 4:3  
Phil 4:7-8  
Col. 3:15  
2 Tim 2:22 |
| Patience    | Endurance of wrong without anger; Long-suffering | Eph 4:2  
Col 3:12  
2 Tim 4:2 |
| Kindness    | A gracious attitude and actions | Col 3:12  
2 Tim 2:24 |
| Goodness    | A magnanimous attitude resulting in generosity | Rom 12:9, 21  
Gal 6:10  
Eph 4:28 |
| Faithfulness| Loyalty, reliability | Rev 2:10 |
| Gentleness  | A humble submission to God’s will resulting in forbearance | Gal 6:1  
Eph 4:2  
Col 3:12  
1 Tim 6:11 |
| Self-control| Restraining of one’s passions | 2 Pet 1:5-6 |

### The Character of the “Fruit”

It is significant that these characteristics are developed in Christians by the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Godhead. He produces in the believer the very attributes which characterize Jesus Christ, the Son, and God the Father. This is not a surprise given that the believer is exhorted to be like Christ (1 Cor 11:1; 1 John 2:6) and to be godly (1 Tim 2:2; 4:7-8; 6:11; 2 Pet 1:3). As the saint grows in

[^1]: These definitions result from the scanning of Dockery, “Fruit of the Spirit” 318; F. F. Bruce, Commentary on Galatians, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 251-56; Richard N. Longenecker, Galatians, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1990) 260-63; and the pertinent articles in TDNT and NIDNTT.
Sanctification: The Biblically Identifiable Fruit

Sanctification, he more clearly reflects the triune God in his character and conduct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The “Fruit”</th>
<th>Examples of Christ-likeness</th>
<th>Examples of God’s Nature$^{43}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>John 15:11, John 17:13 Heb 12:2</td>
<td>Ps 104:31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>John 14:27, John 16:33, John 20:19, 21</td>
<td>Ps 29:11 (28:11 LXX) Ps 85:8 (84:8 LXX) 1 Cor 14:33 Phil 4:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td>1 Tim 1:16, 2 Pet 3:15</td>
<td>Jer 15:15 LXX 2 Pet 3:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Matt 11:30, Tit 3:4</td>
<td>Ps 25:7 (24:8 LXX) Ps 34:8 (33:8 LXX) 1 Pet 2:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faithfulness</td>
<td>Rev 1:5</td>
<td>Ps 33:4 (32:4 LXX)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control</td>
<td>Is 53:7, 1 Pet 2:23</td>
<td>Ex 34:6 (i.e. &quot;slow to anger&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Example of the Instruction in Progressive Sanctification:
The “Fruit” of the Christian Walk in Colossians

Each of the 21 NT Epistles can be described as an author led by the Holy Spirit giving a lesson in progressive sanctification to his audience. Here is an example in a quick “walk” though Paul’s letter to the faithful brethren at Colossae.$^{44}$

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$^{43}$ See Grudem, *Systematic Theology* 185-209. Grudem discusses God’s communicable attributes, including love, peace, patience, goodness, and faithfulness.

Paul addressed the Christian believers as “saints” (1:2) acknowledging their positional sanctification.

Paul gave thanks to God the Father because the word of truth, the gospel, which the Colossians had believed, was bearing fruit, particularly in their growing love for all the “saints” generated by the Holy Spirit (1:3-8).

Paul unceasingly prayed that the Colossian believers would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will for the purpose that they would “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord,” “bearing fruit,” “increasing,” “strengthened,” and “giving thanks.” [Note that Paul was praying for their progressive sanctification.] Paul affirmed that God the Father qualified them for an inheritance in Christ’s kingdom through His Son’s redemption (1:9-14).

Paul declared the creative and reconciling work of Christ and his own role in the proclamation of God’s truth to the Gentiles. Paul labored in his God-given ministry so that he might ultimately “present every man complete in Christ” [ultimate sanctification] (1:15–2:5).

Paul commanded the Colossians to conduct their lives (“walk”) in accordance with the teaching they had received concerning Christ and not allow anyone to lead them astray with mere human teaching that depreciated the truth concerning Christ (2:6-15).

Paul exhorted the believers to put into practice the truth concerning their position in Christ and not to submit to mere human self-effort approaches to living a God-honoring life (2:16–3:4).

Paul commanded the believers to act in accordance with their identification with Christ’s death by putting off their previous ungodly lifestyle and putting on their new Christ-honoring behavior (including kindness, gentleness, patience, love, and peace [cf. Gal. 5:22-23]) (3:5-17).

Paul commanded that these general godly attitudes and actions should be manifested in daily living, in marriage, parenting, working, praying, and speech (3:18–4:6).

Paul sent his final greetings and final appeals to the Colossians (4:7-18).

**Conclusion**

The positionally sanctified believer will evidence a growing godliness and
Christ-likeness as he learns and obeys Holy Scripture enabled by the Holy Spirit. This obedient life-style is the visible “fruit” of progressive sanctification. This progressive sanctification will culminate in his completed sanctification when Jesus Christ appears and he is transformed into His likeness (1 John 3:2); then, growing Christ-likeness will become total Christ-likeness in character. Peterson describes this process well:

The call of Scripture is to live out the practical implications of our sanctification by pursuing holiness as a lifestyle. We are to do this by looking back to the cross and forward to the resurrection, when by God’s grace we will share his character and life completely. We are to grow in our knowledge of God and his will, so that we might better reflect his holiness in every aspect of our lives. We are to ‘keep in step with the Spirit’ (Gal. 5:25 NIV), so that the fruit of the Spirit may be revealed in us. As God’s ‘holy and beloved’, we are to abandon the values, attitudes and practices that belong to the ‘old self’ and be clothed with ‘the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge, according to the image of its creator’ (Col. 3:10).

The application of this truth to the Christian believer is well stated in these sobering words of Ryle:

Such are the visible marks of a sanctified man. I do not say that they are to be seen equally in all God’s people. I freely admit that in the best they are not fully and perfectly exhibited. But I do say confidently that the things of which I have been speaking are the spiritual marks of sanctification, and that those who know nothing of them may well doubt whether they have any grace at all. Whatever others may please to say, I will never shrink from saying that genuine sanctification is a thing that can be seen, and that the marks I have endeavoured [sic] to sketch out are more or less the marks of a sanctified man.

The Christian believer is to “pursue . . . sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.” He is to seek to be holy, for his God is holy.

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45 The NT believer is called to obey the commands given in the letters of the NT, including those in Revelation 2–3. He is also to evaluate the relevance of OT commands and those given by Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels to his life in light of these epistolary imperatives.

46 Peterson, Possessed by God 136-37.

47 Ryle, Holiness 36.
THE PASTOR’S SANCTIFYING ROLE IN THE CHURCH

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“A holy minister is an awesome weapon in the hands of God.”

The most identifying and echoing designation of a spiritual leader from the New Testament is that of a pastor. Though the modern understanding of the term is typically associated with a leader or preacher in the church, the origin of this term comes from the humble profession of caring for sheep. In the Greco-Roman world of aristocracy and religious context of Jewish hierarchy, the title “pastor” was not intuitively complementary. Against the grain of first century models of leadership Jesus Himself, the paradigmatic example of humility (Phil 2:5-11), described His own leadership and care for believers as that of a shepherd (John 10:11, 14).

Shepherding sheep involves constant movement of sheep. Psalm 23 provides a remarkable description of the Lord Himself as the Chief Shepherd—the believer’s personal pastor. He moves the sheep to green pastures, to quiet waters, to the path of righteousness, through the valley of the shadow of death, to a prepared table, and ultimately to Himself forever. According to the author of Hebrews, the path into the presence of the Lord, our Shepherd, is through sanctification: “Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). Just

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1Andrew A. Bonar, Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M’Cheyne (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2004), 282.


3Laniak notes that “a balanced diet may require moving several times in the course of a given day.” Timothy S. Laniak, Shepherds After my Own Heart (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006), 54.
as the Lord in Psalm 23 leads His sheep to enjoy His presence forever, this verse establishes the trajectory of pastoral ministry and direction for His under-shepherds. If no one will see the Lord without sanctification, then the pastor’s chief responsibility is to serve as a resourceful guide for this path.

Instruction about sanctification, accountability to the process of sanctification, and exemplifying personal sanctification should be among the highest priorities for a pastor. Sanctification is the dimension of salvation that consumes the whole of a believer’s life. A survey of the major gospel tracts and evangelistic training programs reveals an accent on justification and glorification. Most overtures to the gospel highlight the blessing of the forgiveness of sin in being right before God (justification) and the hope and promise of Heaven (glorification). Surprisingly, the necessity of sanctification is often absent. Yet, sanctification is an essential component of the gospel of Jesus Christ and occupies the largest concern of a Christian’s life on earth.

The Hebrew and Greek semantic domain of sanctification yields a three-fold understanding of the concept. (1) A once-for-all positional separation unto Christ at the point of salvation (1 Cor 1:30, 6:11). (2) Believer’s practical holiness which involves repentance from sin and progress toward righteousness (1 Pet 1:15-16, 2:24). (3) Consummate holiness in Heaven where each believer will resemble the likeness of Christ—holy, sanctified, and completely separated from the presence of sin and its consequences (1 Thes 3:13, Heb 12:14, Rev 22:15). Biblical sanctification is three dimensional—positional, progressive, and realized. Each of these dimensions invokes pastoral responsibilities. However, pastoral responsibilities should not be confused with pastoral abilities. Only God can sanctify. Faithful pastors simply participate in the Holy Spirit’s desire and work to sanctify Christians. It is no surprise that the Apostle Peter directs an unmistakable imperative to pastors and elders when he writes: “shepherd the flock of God” (1 Pet 5:2). Pastors are called to be undershepherds of the Good Shepherd so the sheep know and love Him. Sanctification is the connective tissue between the sheep and the Savior.

**Biblical Foundations for Sanctification**

Our understanding of holiness is based on the holiness of God. In 1 Samuel 2:2 Hannah declared, “There is no one holy like the Lord,” because, as Moses affirms, He alone “is majestic in holiness” (Exod 15:11). The roots of understanding God’s holiness go back to the Book of Leviticus. God directs Moses to command the people, “You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy” (Lev 19:2). Peter repeats this truth by mandating New Testament believers to be holy as God is holy.

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2. ἀγαθός refers to things set apart for God’s purpose dedicated, sacred, and holy. Friberg, Analytical Lexicon, 32.
(1 Pet 1:15). The believer is set aside for God and is to be transformed into His character. God’s holiness is the foundation for all thinking on holiness. But this is no casual holiness. A.W. Tozer writes,

We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of something or someone very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God’s holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God’s power, and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.6

Arthur W. Pink reiterates Tozer’s observation when he says, “An ineffably holy God, who has the utmost abhorrence of all sin, was never invented by any of Adam’s fallen descendants.”7 The holiness of God might be the best apologetic for Scripture. Would any sinful human invent a God who hates the sin the flesh so loves?

Isaiah heard the seraphim’s refrain, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord” (Isa 6:3). The simple repetition highlights the emphasis on God’s holiness in heaven. Eight hundred years later the apostle John envisions the same scene in Revelation 4:8, “And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is the LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.” God’s distance from an unholy creation is punctuated as these angels honor his moral perfection and uniqueness. Correspondingly, an understanding and pursuit of a believer’s sanctification begins with seeing the distance between man’s sin and God’s holiness. In 2 Corinthians Paul confronts the church in Corinth for intermingling with the world, stressing that righteousness and lawlessness, light and darkness, and Belial and Christ, have nothing in common (2 Cor 6:14-18). The climax of this polemic is in chapter 7 verse 1 where Paul says, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” The promises he refers us are mentioned in chapter 6 verse 18, “I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me.” Sanctification is rooted in the believers’ understanding of God’s holiness and His expectation for His children’s holiness which is ingrained in their sacred relationship with God the Father.

There is no imperative for a pastor/elder/overseer to sanctify believers. Every part of a Christian’s holiness—past, present, and future—results from God Himself and His power. The commands to be holy are given to the individuals who will give a personal account to God. However, every part of a pastor’s ministry connects with

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sanctification. He preaches the gospel and calls sinners to repentance (positional sanctification). He admonishes ungodliness and encourages righteousness in the saints (progressive sanctification). He motivates by exciting hope with thoughts of Heaven (realized sanctification). Therefore, the sanctifying role of the pastor in the New Testament is seen by inference and implication.

There are at least six dimensions of the pastor’s sanctifying role that are implied biblically and which will be examined in this article.

1. The Pastor’s Desire

In Galatians 4:19 Paul expresses his intense desire for Galatians’ sanctification when he says, “My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you.” He uses the same root as in 2 Corinthians 3:18, ἐνομίζω, (form) to refer to the process by which a sinner changes into Christ likeness. This is Paul’s concentrated and deep desire. It is so all encompassing that the verb he borrows to communicate his feelings refers to the intense pains of childbirth (ὠᾶμην). A pastor’s desire should be to see his congregation resemble Christ. Pastors are the intermediary agents in the business of creating replicas of Jesus.

Here is the problem. Pastors simultaneously maintain expectations that are too high and too low of their flock. Theologically, this refers to an over-realized eschatology and under-realized eschatology. Eschatology affects every dimension of a person’s faith in Christ. Often the eschatology is over-realized, that is, there is an expectation that this earth will be like Heaven in ways that it can never be. Heaven will be a place with no sin, no struggles, do doubt, no tears, unmitigated joy, unending happiness, and a place where faith is replaced by sight. The thought and hope of Heaven are intended by God to pull believers like a magnet toward Him. However, often Christians reverse the polarity and pull the characteristics of Heaven into this world. Legalism is the likely result. Rules are created to force resistant wills to conform to Heavenly perfection. When this fails, pastors become frustrated, unhappy, and even surprised by the difficulty their congregation is having to live as strangers and aliens in this world (1 Pet 2:11). This over-realized eschatology led to the Wesleyan error of perfectionism.

On the other end of the spectrum is under-realized eschatology. The world is a comfortable place and heaven is a distant thought. Instead of living the abundant life Jesus promised, believers lose heart and wonder if there is anything satisfying in

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9 This concept was adapted from Thomas R. Schreiner’s New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 23.
Christianity. The challenges of practical Christianity dominate. There is an increasing distrust of Jesus’ teaching from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:7)—that there could be kingdom living here and now. This results in a defeatist mentality that leads to giving into the fight with sin and succumbing to temptation.

The paradox is that many times both dominate a person’s thinking. The balance is maintained by desiring to see Christ formed in God’s people. Every pastor’s desire and purpose should be what Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:11-13, “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ” (emphasis mine).

1. The Pastor’s Example

Robert Murray M’Cheyne reportedly said, “The greatest need of my people is my personal holiness.” John Calvin echoed, “The calling of God brings holiness with it.” The importance of a pastor’s exemplary life on his people cannot be overstated. Paul connects theology with life when he tells Timothy, “Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you” (1 Tim 4:16). To Titus Paul writes, “In all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified” (Tit 2:7). Paul’s message to each of his disciples was clear: maintain purity in life. It could not be clearer than Paul’s words to the Corinthians and Thessalonians to whom he says: imitate me as I imitate Christ (1 Cor 11:1, 4:16; 1 Thess 1:6). The parallelism is undeniable—the people of God are to imitate their pastors and imitate the Lord. In Hebrews 13:7 the author repeats the mandate, “Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.” As laymen imitate their spiritual leaders, the most worthy characteristic to imitate is his desire to know Jesus and be conformed to His likeness. Andrew Murray said, “The knowledge of the greatness and the glory of Jesus is the secret of a strong and holy life.”

Pastors are involved in their own fight for sanctification and holiness. Paul provides an extended confession to the Philippians of his battle with sin and his pursuit of total knowledge of Christ. He says,

Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on

toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained. Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things (Phil 3:12-19).

Paul is clear; his personal holiness is driven by a desire to attain God’s intention for his salvation and to lead an exemplary life for those under his spiritual care.13

Even more pointedly in 1 Corinthians 9:26-27 Paul expresses the sacrifices he makes and the intensity with which he runs the Christian life. “Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.”14 Impure living disqualifies the man of God from the ministry. The point is not loss of eternal life, rather disqualification from involvement in the work of the eternal Gospel.

Conversely, in 2 Peter 2 the Apostle describes false teachers. Both the life and ministry of a false teacher are characterized by a lack of holiness. Their influence is described as “entangling” their people in the defilements of the world (v. 20). In other words, they have an un-sanctifying ministry and this is a result of comprising with the world. Christian leaders can sacrifice their leadership by attempting to relate, befriend, and please their people instead of influencing them with a life of unswerving holiness. A holy life demands rejection and ridicule, or admiration and imitation. Alfred E. Garvie said it this way,

If the preacher is to preach holiness, he must himself desire holiness, and must impress his hearers as one who is seeking after holiness. Not only does a reputation inconsistent with the sacred functions of the preacher rob his message of its life and power, but a man’s character will, in spite of himself, affect the tone and content of his preaching. A consummate hypocrite may possibly give the impression of the holiness he does not possess.15

The Bible never calls the pastor to preach something he does not practice. In fact, Jesus condemns the religious leaders of his day for teaching one way but living

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13Cf. 1 Tim 4:12.
14Cf. 1 Tim 6:11-12 where Paul writes about the positive pursuit of a pastor after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance, and gentleness.
another (Matt 23: 3). Jesus promises hell to those who permit hypocrisy to take root in their hearts which leads to self deception and damnation (Matt 7:21-23). A pastor is to sanctify his people by example.

3. The Pastor’s Preaching

Preaching is the means God uses to sanctify his people. In John 17:17 Jesus prays that God would “sanctify them [disciples] in the truth” and he defines truth to be God’s Word. This then becomes the fundamental reason to preach the Word of God—progressive holiness of God’s people. Isaiah’s response to God’s holiness was to preach! (Isaiah 6:8). It is the Word that is the means for the Spirit of God to sanctify believers.

Paul’s charge to Timothy is a timely reminder of Scripture’s role in sanctification. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Sanctification of believers is a byproduct from pastors seeing a holy God in their studies and preaching a holy God from their pulpits. Preachers are to preach the holy nature of God and holy expectations of God. Thomas Scott said,

Leave out the holy character of God, the holy excellence of his law, the holy condemnation to which transgressors are doomed, the holy loveliness of the Saviour’s character, the holy nature of redemption, the holy tendency of Christ’s doctrine, and the holy tempers and conduct of all true believers: then dress up a scheme of religion of this unholy sort: represent mankind in a pitiable condition, rather through misfortune than crime: speak much of Christ’s bleeding love to them, of his agonies in the garden and on the cross; without showing the need or the nature of satisfaction for sin: speak of his present glory, and of his compassion for poor sinners; of the freeness with which he dispenses pardons; of the privileges which believers enjoy here, and of the happiness and glory reserved for them hereafter: clog this with nothing about regeneration and sanctification, or represent holiness as somewhat else than conformity to the holy character and law of God: and you make up a plausible gospel, calculated to humour the pride, soothe the consciences, engage the hearts, and raise the affections of natural men, who love nobody but themselves.¹⁶

If the purpose of preaching is to provide the Spirit words with which to resurrect dead souls, then the holiness of God must be preached. George Marsden evaluates the content of the preaching during the Great Awakening and the effect it had on listeners. He writes the following:

¹⁶ John Scott, Letters and Papers of the Late Revered Thomas Scott (New York: John P. Haven, 1825) 289.
In the midst of debates over the Great Awakening, Edwards, made a revealing comment about the effects of preaching. During intense periods of awakenings, evangelists often preached to the same audience daily, or even more frequently. Opponents of the awakening argued that people could not possibly remember what they heard in all these sermons. [Jonathan] Edwards, responded that ‘The main benefit that is obtained by preaching is by impression made upon the mind in the time of it, and not by the effect that arises afterwards by a remembrance of what was delivered.’ Preaching, in other words, should be designed primarily to awaken, to shake people out of their blind slumbers in the addictive comforts of their sins. Though only God can give them new eyes to see, preaching should be designed to jolt the unconverted or the converted who doze back into their sins (as all do) into recognizing their true estate.  

This is quite a statement from Edwards about preaching. His point is that the effect of a sermon should be an exercise of the reason during the preaching of the sermon more than by the exercise of memory afterwards. This insight should change the preacher’s thoughts about moments of preaching. Preaching that brings listeners face to face with the truth of a Holy God drenches souls in sanctifying grace. And for the unbeliever, the preacher is God’s tool to resurrect the dead heart.

4. The Pastor’s Discipleship

The pastor’s mandate for discipleship originates with the Great Commission. Jesus left the church, especially its leaders with the task of disciplining and making disciples. In Matthew 28:18-20 the disciples proceed to Galilee to testify to Jesus’ ascension. But before they watch him depart they hear the famous words instructing them to ‘go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Disciple making is the means to effective sanctification. Preaching, counseling, and comforting are all segments of discipleship, the purpose of which is holiness.

Jesus’ command involves initiation and follow up. Evangelism is making disciples while equipping is the process of maturing the disciples. The leading verb in this passage is “make disciples” (manthano). The aorist tense indicates urgency and the comprehensive nature of the command. This command is modified by three participles “go” (poreuthentes), “teach” (didaskowntes), and “baptize” (baptizontes). The participle “go” is best interpreted as being contemporaneous with the imperative to “make disciples” as it precedes the finite verb (make disciples) and has the aorist

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tense similar to the finite verb. The latter two participles should be seen as “participles of means,” indicating the means by which the imperative will be accomplished. In other words, Jesus is saying: as you are going, make disciples through your teaching and identify them through baptism. The goal of all discipleship is to create independent dependence on Christ. Everyone who comes to Christ is instantly a kind of new born baby believer. They don’t know what to do or think or say, but they have a wonderful amount of enthusiasm for the Lord. The pastor’s role is to move the believer from this state of infancy to a place of visible imitation of Jesus, which is most evident in a sanctified life.

This is why believers are called “saints” in the NT. The term “saints” itself is the noun form of the verb ἅγιασθαι, which is the main NT verb that is translated as “holy.” Paul addresses the Romans (1:7), Corinthians (1 Cor 1:2, 2 Cor 1:1), Colossians (1:1), Ephesians (1:1), and Philippians (1:1) as saints. Believers are saved and called with a “holy calling” (2 Tim 1:9) by the grace of God. The pastor is to explain to his disciples what this “holy calling” is. The holy calling is God’s goal for every believer. He predestined saints to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29). Ephesians 2:10 says, “[W]e are created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” Peter reinforces believers’ holiness as God’s plan for our salvation, “He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed” (1 Pet 2:24). Paul explicitly tells the Thessalonians that anyone who is not living sanctified lives is out of God’s will (1 Thes 4:3) because “God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification” (4:7). This purpose is rooted in the authority of Jesus, knowledge of God, and empowerment by the Holy Spirit.

Not only must a pastor preach the value God places on holiness but the extent to which God is willing to go to accomplish that holiness. God disciplines His children “so that we may share His holiness” (Heb 12:10) and the reason behind it is because without sanctification “no one will see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). The significance the preacher places on holiness in his people is a glimpse into his understanding of God’s character and how seriously he wants his flock to see God.

Paul went from house to house (Acts 20:20, 31) teaching the whole counsel of God so that he might present that church “complete in Christ” (Col 1:28). Spiritual maturity is the goal which Paul defines as participating in the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13). William G.T. Shedd notes, “[The clergyman] is not only a preacher, whose function it is to impart public instruction before an audience, but he is also a pastor, whose office it is, to give private and personal advice from house to house, and to

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19 Wallace, Greek Grammar 645. In addition to being aorist and preceding the aorist imperative, both of which are characteristic of a participle of attendant circumstance, the Gospel of Matthew is narrative which is the primary genre where such participles appear in the NT.

20 Wallace, Greek Grammar 628-30.
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make his influence felt in the social and domestic life of his congregation. Effective discipleship is solidified by an investment of one life into another. Paul was not intimate solely with the Ephesians; the Thessalonians experienced the same commitment and love. Paul compares his devotion to the Thessalonians as a nursing mother’s care (1 Thes 2:7) in that the affection was so strong that he was “well-pleased to impart to [them] not only the gospel of God but also [his] own [life], because [they] had become very dear to [him]” (2:8). The end result of these efforts is a sanctified and holy people of God.

5. The Pastor’s Prayer

If sanctification is a work of God, then a pastor should intercede for his people for God’s sanctifying grace. Samuel is a premier example of intercessory prayer. When Israel asked for a king, God was displeased with their request (1 Sam 8:7-8). Samuel knew this and informed Israel of God’s response (1 Samuel 12), but since it was impossible to reverse their desire to reject God as their king, he urged Israel to prove their loyalty through wholehearted service (1 Sam 12:20). He encouraged them not to vacillate from their commitment to God in favor of other sources of security. While listening to their repentance, Samuel encouraged Israel to remain faithful to God, and pronounced the famous word, “Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way” (1 Sam 12:23). Samuel’s commitment to his responsibility of shepherding God’s people is to pray for them lest he sin.

Daniel functioned as the pastor of exiled Judah and offered a prayer of repentance on behalf of his nation (Daniel 9). He said, “We have sinned, committed iniquity, acted wickedly and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances, moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our king, our princes, our fathers and all the people of the land . . . open shame belongs to us, O Lord, to our kings, our princes and our fathers, because we have sinned against You . . . indeed all Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, not obeying Your voice; so the curse has been poured out on us, along with the oath which is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, for we have sinned against Him . . . we have sinned, we have been wicked” (Dan 9:3-15). Daniel admits corporate iniquity, waywardness, rebellion, rejection of prophetic warnings, disobedience, and wickedness. But he does not stop with mere confession! He repents on behalf of the nation. He seeks corporate forgiveness, “so now, our God listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for your sake, O Lord, let your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary . . . O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive!” (Dan 9:17, 19). Pastors would do well to follow Daniel’s example and pray for their people; pray for their holiness, for their separation from the world, and appeal for

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God to send His Spirit to move on the hearts of His children and produce Christ likeness in their lives.

This was Paul’s prayer for the churches he planted. In Eph 6:18 Paul offers such a prayer. In the context of spiritual warfare, he closed the section with four references to prayer in a single verse, highlighting the necessary role of prayer for holy living. Although Paul incorporates all believers in intercessory prayer for the purpose of communal sanctification, it is self evident that the pastor is included.

To the Colossians Paul confessed that he regularly thought of them and prayed that they would be filled with God’s wisdom and understanding. He plead with God to empower the Colossians to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (Col 1:10a) and that they would have a single ambition, “to please Him in all respects” (Col 1:10b).

Paul’s desire and prayer for the Philippians was similar to that of the Ephesians and Colossians. The most personal and tender letter from Paul to his flock is to the church in Philippi. He opened his letter with the following words: “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Phil 1:9-11). The goal of abounding love in knowledge and discernment is sincerity and blamelessness on the day of Christ. He appealed to them to “conduct [themselves] in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ” (Phil 1:27). Even his reminder about humility has its goal of proving to be “blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world” (Phil 2:15). There is to be a distinction between the life of the believer and the life of the unbeliever. Unbelievers should sense this moral chasm between their actions and those of believers, which should create evangelistic opportunities in a world headed to hell.

Paul’s prayer was the same for the Thessalonians. Just before he launched a section on sanctification and its relation on moral purity, he admitted to the Thessalonians that he had been earnestly praying day and night so that the Lord “may establish [their] hearts without blame in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints” (1 Thess 3:13). In his second letter to the same church he wrote, “To this end also we pray for you always, that our God

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will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Thess 1:11-12). Samuel, Daniel, and Paul affirm that a pastor’s praying for his people is the litmus test for his theology of sanctification. The pastor who does not pray believes that the work of God can be accomplished in the power of the flesh.

6. The Pastor’s Leadership in Public Worship

Spurgeon said, “The church is the dearest place on earth.” The corporate meeting of the saints should solicit pure worship from their hearts. But public worship is a reflection of private worship. Nevertheless, it is the pastor’s duty to foster an environment where worship is a sanctifying experience.

Order. The pastor is to maintain order in the church. To the Corinthians Paul wrote that order must be maintained during the exercise of the gifts because God is a God of order not confusion (1 Cor 14:33). In relation to the Ephesian church, Paul instructs Timothy regarding the role of men, women, deacons, elders, and the pastor in the corporate gathering (1 Tim 2-3, 5). Order is expected during public worship and the pastor is to maintain it. As one of the elders, the pastor is to evaluate other leaders’ qualifications for ministry (Tit 1:5-9). Paul informs Titus that order in the church stems from order in each elder’s personal life, including his own.

Communion. The Lord’s Supper is both a corporate and an individual time of repentance for the church. Moses prayed on behalf of Israel’s and Aaron’s sin, repentance, and holiness (Exo 32-34, Deut 9:18-20). As noted above, Daniel prayed on behalf of exiled Judah, admitting their sin, iniquity, rebellion, and disobedience (Dan 9). Communion functions as a time of self examination (2 Cor 13:5) and confession so that the church would remain pure (1 Cor 11:27-32), experiencing approval from her Lord. It is the pastor’s responsibility to lead the church in a time of confession and rejoicing for the forgiveness of the confessed sin.

Music. The church’s music should reflect and promote the holiness of God. David set apart specific Levites to lead the congregation in holy worship of God (1 Chron 25:1). Since musical taste of the congregants is on a broad spectrum, the pastor has the spiritual responsibility to shepherd this dimension of worship. He in fact is the true worship leader. The content and style of worship music must be regulated by the pastor’s spiritual maturity, shepherding influence, wisdom, and sense of the holiness of God.

Ministerial Effort. If the pastor desires to know what the men in the church will be like in ten years, he only needs to look in the mirror. Through discipleship he is developing spiritual clones of himself. Jesus said “A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40). If

ministerial excellence is to be expected, excellence must be exemplified. The defining characteristic of Paul’s ministry was agony, labor, and effort (Col 1:28). The Greek words behind the English translation imply strenuous effort and dedication. Epaphras was an example of such effort of whom Paul says that he always labored earnestly for the Colossians (Col 4:12). It is the pastor’s responsibility to set the pace and fan the members’ level of intensity in ministry, encouraging them unto excellence. If it bears His name, it deserves our best.

Sanctification as Imitation of Jesus

In 2 Corinthians 3:18 Paul lays out one of the most comprehensive and succinct statements on sanctification—without using the term. He explains, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.” Progressive sanctification is essentially the process of being conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ. The passive verb μεταμορφώμεθα (“are being transformed”) signifies divine agency behind the entire process of sanctification. The means by which God accomplishes this metamorphosis is the believer’s vision of the glory of the Lord (τὴν δόξαν κυρίου). This may be the most imperatival verse about sanctification and the term “sanctification” is not even mentioned.

Becoming conformed to the image of the Lord involves both reflection and imitation. “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1). Paul’s pastoral desire for the Corinthians to be more like Jesus drew them to his own example. Volumes could (and have) been written about the countless nuances and applications of sanctification, but the goal and process of a believer’s holiness can be reduced to imitating Jesus. Likewise, a pastor’s own imitation of the Lord is the summary and capstone of his ministerial responsibility. When a pastor can say, “Imitate me as I imitate Christ,” it is fair to say that his sanctification is worthy of emulation.

Conclusion

The foundation for the sanctifying role of pastoral oversight is laid in the priests’ role in Leviticus. Nadab and Abihu were chosen to represent the holiness of God. They continued in the lineage of their father Aaron who represented God to the people and the people to God (Exod 29:45-46). These two brothers were among the select group who had approached Mount Sinai when Moses went up to speak with God and receive from Him the tablets of stone that contained the Ten Command-

24 Paul uses κοπάω and ἀγωνιζόμενος to describe his commitment to ministry. The former emphasizes toil, labor, struggle, and physical exhaustion, while the latter highlights the process of the struggle and contending for a prize (Friberg, κοπάω, ἀγωνιζόμενος, Analytical Lexicon 4:235, 4:34).

25 Paul uses ἀγωνίζομαι to indicate Epaphras’ commitment. The term means contending for a prize and exerting all effort. Friberg, ἀγωνίζομαι, Analytical Lexicon 4:34.
ments. Nadab and Abihu were men with large reputations. As freshly ordained priests, they had spent the week previous to the events of Leviticus 10 in the tabernacle with God preparing for their priestly service. With their own eyes they had seen fire come out from the Holy place and consume the burnt offering in 9:24. But in the middle of the frenzy of Leviticus 9, the two brothers forget the holiness of God and make a deadly mistake. The story is recorded in chapter 10.

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron, “It is what the Lord spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.’ So Aaron, therefore, kept silent. (Lev 10:1-3)

Behind Aaron, Nadab and Abihu were next in experience and familiarity with the things of God in the tabernacle and its worship. However, when they failed to regard the holiness of God, treating Him dishonorably, God took their lives. Priests were holy men of God representing the holiness of God to the people of God. When these first generation priests ceased to fulfill this responsibility, God intervened. Aaron’s sons are canonized for all eternity as a horrific example of mistreating, and underestimating, the holiness of God. Similarly, the pastor is a man of God who preaches the holiness of God and motivates God’s people to the same standard of holiness.

The foundation of a pastor’s role in the sanctification process of his people begins in his own heart. Just as failure in spiritual leadership is rooted in mishandling God’s holiness (Nadab and Abihu), success is grounded in taking the holiness of God seriously. To be a faithful aid in sanctification then, the preacher must be pursuing his own holiness in every area of his life. Alfred Garvie’s words serve as a fierce reminder for every pastor who cares about personal holiness, the sanctification of our congregants, and our God who is wonderfully holy. Garvie writes,

Life is made up of the sum total of many little things. A preachers’ ethics should therefore be of the highest order. He must resolutely refuse to compromise with sin in his own life. Once sin is trifled with, it is tolerated and then practiced. One must therefore rule himself with an iron hand, and not temporize with evil in any shape or form. It is fatally easy to condemn in others what one allows in one’s own life. Herein is seen the constant need for a life of individual prayer, devotion, self examination, humility of heart, self judgment, and self sacrifice on behalf of others. This is not easy, but it is the price each must pay for usefulness.26

26 A. E. Garvie, Citation [Rick, we need the work cited and the page number.]
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS
ON BIBLICAL SANCTIFICATION

Compiled by Dennis M. Swanson
Director of the Seminary Library

The 2010 Faculty Lecture Series at The Master’s Seminary was on the subject of “Biblical Sanctification.” The following bibliography is a compilation of the contributors’ research and some additional material.

The bibliography is not designed to be exhaustive, but rather to lead the reader to sources that represent varied views on this subject, with a strong foundation of materials supporting the biblical and historical position that these articles promote.

The works are divided into four kinds: (1) Reference and Lexical Works; (2) Monographs and Multi-Author Works; (3) Journal and Periodical Literature; (4) Unpublished and Online Resources.

Part One: Reference and Lexical Works


Part Two: Monographs and Multi-Author Works


Hughes, Philip Edgcumbe. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Grand


Laniak, Timothy S. *Shepherds After My Own Heart*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006.


Oswalt, John N. *Called to Be Holy: A Biblical Perspective*. Nappanee, Ind.: Francis
Asbury, 1999.
________. “Response to Hoekema,” in *Five Views of Sanctification*. Counterpoints.
The Master’s Seminary Journal


Part Three: Journal and Periodical Literature


Part Four Unpublished and Online Sources


The commentary series of which this volume is a part targets primarily the needs of “scholars, ministers, seminary students, and Bible study leaders” with clergy and seminary students most in mind (9). It is confined to *Song of Songs* by Richard S. Hess (2005), *Proverbs* by Tremper Longman III (2006), *Psalms* (3 vols.) by John Goldingay (2006, 2007, 2008), *Job* (unpublished), and *Ecclesiastes*. Bartholomew is H. Evan Runner professor of philosophy and professor of religion and theology at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ontario.

A lengthy general introduction (17-99) opens the volume, providing readers with discussions of Ecclesiastes’ canonicity (18-20), history of interpretation (21-43), authorship and date (43-54), social setting (54-59), text (59-61), genre and literary style (61-82), structure (82-84), reading Ecclesiastes in relationship to Proverbs, Job, and the Torah (84-93), message (93-96), and its relationship to the NT (96-99). Each section’s commentary consists of three sections: “Translation” (Bartholomew’s own with technical footnotes providing detailed explanation regarding textual criticism, grammar, translation, and literary devices), “Interpretation” (supported by both bibliographical and technical footnotes), and “Theological Implications.”

As Bartholomew reminds his readers, “Very few scholars nowadays defend Solomonic authorship” (39), and he does not choose to depart from that modern view (47)—primarily due to what he views as Greek influence on Ecclesiastes (54). However, he admits that precision in dating the book “will depend on one’s interpretation of Ecclesiastes as a whole and of its social setting” (53). While psychoanalytic and sociological readings (41-42) of Ecclesiastes appear to dominate recent treatments of Ecclesiastes, this commentator avoids that approach—at least until his postscript in which he states that “Ecclesiastes cries out for a psychological reading” (377). Bartholomew also evades interpreting the book as pessimistic (67). Instead, he believes that ultimately “Qoheleth affirms joy, but not of course cheap joy” (95). In addition, he identifies the narrator and implied author as one and the same person (79).
“Vanity” (KJV, hebel in Hebrew) stands as one of the key words in Ecclesiastes. Commentators and translators alike have struggled to express its meaning in English. Laying aside such options as “absurd,” “meaningless,” “useless,” and “a puff of breath,” Bartholomew settles on “enigmatic” (93-94, 105-7). His suggestion has real potential, since the same concept seems to be expressed by the image of grasping at the wind. It is not that life does not have meaning, it is just that its meaning too often cannot be comprehended or grasped (106).

In his discussion of “Ecclesiastes and the New Testament” (96-99), the author observes that one of the messages of the book is exactly “what the Reformed tradition means by total depravity: precisely not that everything is as bad as it can be, but that the fall affects every aspect of created life” (96). Such an approach to one of the theological themes of Ecclesiastes is intriguing to say the least. Unfortunately, Bartholomew does not make this one of the topics for discussion in any “Theological Implications” section.

Many commentators believe that the carpe diem passages (2:24-26; 3:10-15, 16-22; 5:18-20 [17-19]; 8:10-15; 9:7-10; 11:7–12:7) represent a hedonistic response to Qohelet’s frustration and despair. Bartholomew, however, understands them to be far more positive in affirming a believer’s enjoyment of God’s good creation (80-81).

Bartholomew provides discussion for most of the major interpretive cruxes in Ecclesiastes. His detailed treatments of the cruxes furnish readers with well-crafted arguments leading to the author’s ultimate conclusion. Examples of such exegetical care occur in his treatments of 1:4-11 (109-12), 3:1-8 (160-65), 3:10-11 (166-67), 5:8-9 [7-8] (216-18), 9:7-10 (303-5), 11:1-2 (335-37), and 12:11 (366-69). However, sometimes the detail is absent and the treatment remains inconclusive and flat. An example would be the so-called moderation text in 7:16-18 (255-57). When the reader arrives at 12:1-7, he will find that Bartholomew rejects the traditional interpretation regarding a description of aging and death in favor of a metaphorical description of eschatological judgment in the day of Yahweh (348-53).

The sections presenting “Theological Implications” vary greatly. After 1:1-11 Bartholomew deals with the relationship of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as well as the concepts of wisdom and hebel (112-17). Following 1:12-18, the topic becomes the autonomous viewpoint of Qohelet’s epistemology and a brief discussion of what the author terms “the legitimate role of suspicion” (125-27). The interpretation of 2:12-23 concludes with a discussion of the repetitiveness of history (145-48); a description of shalom (153-57) complements the interpretation of 2:24-26; time, creation order in time, and historicism wrap up the chapter on 3:1-15; and the issue of oppression (including a detailed statistical survey of the oppression of children in modern times, 192-93) occupies Bartholomew’s treatment of implications following 4:1-16 (192-200). The tone of most of these “Theological Implications” tends to be philosophical, doubtless due to the author’s vocation as a professor of philosophy and his own personal interests. For the reader with a commensurate interest, these sections will be enjoyable. This reviewer, however, found the section dealing with

The volume concludes with a postscript titled “Postmodernism, Psychology, Spiritual Formation, and Preaching” (375-89), an impressive bibliography (391-420), and indexes for subjects (421-30), authors (431-38), and “Scripture and Other Ancient Writings” (439-48). In the postscript Bartholomew reveals that he has preached Ecclesiastes only in “a one-hour session as well as over a series of four one-and-a-half-hour sessions” (388)—quite unlike Michael Eaton (TOTC, IVP, 1983) who had preached through the entire book in a prolonged series. Bartholomew advises preparing congregations for Ecclesiastes by “a good working knowledge of Proverbs . . . as well as a robust doctrine of creation” (388).

The lengthy introduction, careful interpretive treatment of most cruxes, adherence to the Masoretic Text instead of suggesting numerous emendations (cp. 166, 217), moderately heavy discussions of theological implications, and healthy bibliography all commend this volume to students, teachers, and preachers alike. The majority of the text outside the cruxes receives little attention in the “Interpretation,” and the best attention occurs within the footnotes to the “Translation.” Taking all these things into consideration, the volume makes a significant contribution to the study of Ecclesiastes, but falls short of a more exhaustive exegetical commentary.


The 1998 publication of Bauckham’s *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* becomes the first chapter of the book under review. Six other essays, compiled over a ten-year period, and an exegetical/theological note have been added. All are independent, self-contained essays. Because they are all connected to Bauckham’s theme in his first book, some degree of overlapping occurs. To the author, these are working papers moving him towards the completion of a much more comprehensive study than that done so far—a study to be entitled *Early Jewish Monotheism and New Testament Christology* (xi). Interested in the “strict” monotheism in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism? Then a good deal of fresh material will be provided by the book being reviewed. Interested in NT Christology? Then the work has further grist for the mill as well. The author observes that the Jews of the period mentioned “drew the line of distinction between the one God and all other reality clearly, and were in the habit of distinguishing God from all other reality by means of certain clearly articulated criteria” (3). A paragraph or two later, he writes “[H]igh Christology is possible within a Jewish monotheistic context, not by applying to Jesus a Jewish category of semi-divine intermediary status, but by identifying him directly with the one God of Israel, including Jesus in the unique identity of this one God” (3). In fact, this was
perhaps unprecedented in Jewish theology. “Their self-conscious monotheism was not merely an intellectual belief about God, but a duty of belief and praxis, involving the exclusive worship and exclusive obedience to this one God” (5). Monolatry and monotheism in tandem! Identifying Jesus with God is the important fact hammered home repeatedly in all these essays.

The author brings out in his treatment of high Christology the exalted Jesus participating in God’s unique sovereignty, and that Jesus also shares God’s exaltation above all angelic powers, being given the divine name Yhwh and being worthy of worship (22-25). Further, His pre-existence and his involvement in creation is not overlooked (26-30). Chapter One, with its multiple cross-references, is worth absorbing in a slow and thoughtful reading. The next chapter, Essay #2, deals with the problems of monotheism. Twelve pages interact critically and thoroughly with Nathan MacDonald’s Deuteronomy and the Meaning of Monotheism (62-74). MacDonald asserts that Deuteronomy simply does not present a doctrine of a monotheistic God. To him this doctrine comes from the Enlightenment. He may affirm the uniqueness of Yhwh but without denying the existence of other gods. He acknowledges that two statements in Deuteronomy 4 on there being no others besides Himself (4:35, 39) mean that Yhwh is unique (the only god who is God) and is the only god for Israel. However, this points to unrivalled power throughout the cosmos rather than a reference to the sole, alone, absolutely unique One (62-70). These other gods are non-effective deities, impotent nonentities, mere puffs of air, and powerless. The question on whether or not these divinities really exist is left unengaged. The scorn of the prophets and the psalmist heaped on idols and casting aspersion on their total inability to do or say anything valid is powerful and true. Bauckham expresses disappointment with MacDonald and his failure to deal systematically with Yhwh’s uniqueness vis-à-vis the other gods (65).

Essay #3 is entitled “The ‘Most High’ God and the Nature of Early Jewish Monotheism.” The key question is, How is the uniqueness of one God to be understood? Inclusive monotheism has God as the highest member of a class of beings to which He belongs. Exclusive monotheism on the other hand understands His uniqueness in terms of the absolute difference in kind from all other reality. Of course, exclusive monotheism does not exclude acknowledging the existence of many heavenly beings created by the one sovereign Lord. Special attention is given to the interpretation of Deut 32:8-9. Additional and separate treatment is also accorded to the Most High in early Jewish literature. The section on the Most High and the gods is quite instructive. One interesting reminder: “the difference of use between Palestinian and Diaspora Jewish literature must be related to the fact that the title ‘Most High’ . . . was in widespread use by non-Jews” (120-21). This made it a term for the God of Israel which Gentiles would readily understand and a term that could, for apologetic purposes, connect with Gentile usage. This is no doubt why it was in regular use by or for Gentiles in Diaspora Jewish literature. Several lists depicting the use of “Most High” in this literature are added for information.

Essay #4 is a “meaty” chapter, basically treating the prevalence and
centrality of the worship of Jesus in early Christianity, in terms of prayers, doxologies, and hymns. These are followed by brief descriptions of pagan perceptions of Jesus and their unfavorable response to the exclusive divinity of Jesus (127-40). Comments on 1 Cor 8:6 and Revelation show that the worship of Jesus was really divine worship, which was preceded by or accompanied by a rejection of polytheism. In Revelation, John represents Jesus as one who shares in the glory due to God. He is not just an alternative object of worship. Particularly interesting in the section “Missionary Christianity in the Apocryphal Acts” is that traditional Jewish monotheistic formulae intended to assert monotheistic worship against paganism are employed for the same purpose of proclaiming the deity of Christ. That the Christians were persecuted and martyred for “atheism” is a good reminder of an historical fact often forgotten that “atheism” meant the exclusive worship of the one Lord of heaven and earth, Yhwh of Israel, to the exclusion of all other gods (145). A repetitive note sounds when the author takes up patristic Christological development (146-50). One is left with the conclusion that either Christians were worshiping a creature, or Jesus belongs to the being of the one God who alone may be worshiped (150). That the early church clung tenaciously to the Jewish understanding of monotheism is the concluding observation.

Essay #5, “The Throne of God and the Worship of Jesus,” is a thorough presentation of “God’s heavenly thrones and other thrones,” “sitting and standing in heaven,” and “in the heights of heaven.” Again God’s absolute sovereignty over absolutely every reality is clearly pointed out. Again stress is upon monotheism which is “representative of one of the essential characteristics definitive of the divine identity” (164). Bauckham also takes time to look at “Figures on the throne,” namely wisdom, Moses, the Son of Man, and Jesus (167-82). The conclusion is the same as previously given, but what one realizes is that the repetitive note arises from a thorough examination of different materials, which nevertheless endorse the author’s thesis of divine identity applied to Christ in both Jewish and early Christian literature. Psalm 110:1 draws little more than a passing glance from Jewish writers, which is not the case with Christian writers of that time, who considered it a foundational verse. These men understood that the church’s doctrines were to be exegetically based. That is obviously why the conclusion being drawn by them came about.

Essay #6 covers Paul’s Christology of divine identity, and advises that early Christology was framed within the familiar Jewish framework of creational, eschatological, and cultic monotheism (185). An informative set of lists of Pauline references and the use of Yhwh is inserted into the main text—with an acknowledgement that it is based on Gordon Fee’s 2007 book on Pauline Christology. Eight OT references, accompanied by at least two NT passages, with a short explanatory paragraph of each, are used to introduce eschatological monotheism (191-93). Creational monotheism brings under its purview Rom 10:13 and Phil 2:6-11 as well as pertinent citations from Isaiah. Then 1 Cor 8:5-6 receives attention, stressing allegiance to the one and only true God in a polytheistic religious environment (210).
Six categories in a listing of Yhwh texts with Jesus as referent, provides material which the author says should be examined in far more detail than can be given in this essay. The reader will probably stop and look over a few verses to see what is taking place between the NT and the OT verses. Bauckham considers his proposal of divine identity as going beyond the standard distinction between functional and ontological Christology. The thinking is not of divine essence or nature in Jewish theology but of divine identity; thus Jesus is intrinsic to the unique and eternal identity of God. One more set of listings of Yhwh texts with Jesus as referent, but outside the Pauline epistles, provide more information for personal study and reflection. However, one cannot avoid taking into his study of Jesus Christ, the questions of divine and human natures, of essence and co-inherence, and the kenosis. Bauckham’s treatment impressed this reviewer as being careful to tie all these important points of doctrine together for a complete picture of Jesus Christ, very God of God and very man of man. Obviously, this was not the author’s intention to deal with a specific period of time and its literature and doctrinal emphases.

Essay #7, a chapter in a forthcoming book edited by Bauckham and MacDonald, presents the divinity of Jesus in the letter to the Hebrews. The book just mentioned will be entitled The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology (Eerdmans, forthcoming). Again, the reader finds the repeated theme that Jesus is identified with God. Also, one has to remember that “for Jewish monotheistic faith what was most important was who God is rather than what divinity is, and thus Jesus shares the divine identity of Israel’s God (233).

Essay #8, “God’s Self-Identification with the Godforsaken: Exegesis and Theology,” is a study of the cry of dereliction (Matt 27:46; Mark 5:9). It is an appropriate thought-provoking close to a book so filled with an emphasis upon the worship of Christ Jesus.

A wealth of information pours forth from Jesus and the God of Israel in both text and footnotes. One can be forgiven if he stands a little ashamed after reading it at how much of Second Temple material he has forgotten or did not know and how much of early Christian and Jewish literature of which he was unaware. Bauckham’s gathering of all that information together is undoubtedly highly commendable. Read this book to fill in gaps in a knowledge of that early period in church and biblical history and perhaps even in the history of the development of Christology.


A work such as this has been greatly needed for some time. Verbal aspect has become increasingly prominent in the study of Greek grammar and NT interpretation over the last twenty years. The two works most responsible for bringing this
field of study to the attention of exegetes were the monographs of Stanley Porter and Buist Fanning (*Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* [Peter Lang, 1989] and *Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek* [Clarendon, 1990], respectively). Many Greek teachers were trained before these books were published, so their teaching may not reflect the new understanding of Greek verbs found in the two works. Most of the remaining teachers were trained by such teachers, so they may have had only minimal (if any) exposure to verbal aspect. Thus, the exegetes trained by any of these have had a corresponding lack of exposure to aspect theory. However, discussions of verbal aspect will be found in an increasing number of theological books, commentaries, and journal articles. Therefore, Greek teachers, students, and pastors need a bridge between their traditional education and the modern approaches.

Campbell wrote his book to provide such a bridge. Both Porter’s and Fanning’s monographs are slight revisions of their doctoral dissertations, whose technical nature and high prices make them inaccessible to most students of the NT. Campbell’s work, however, is affordable and readable. He has simplified the material enough so that a newcomer can grasp the concepts, but in doing so, he has not sacrificed accuracy. Moreover, Campbell is a gifted writer, which greatly facilitates the reader’s understanding of the material.

Campbell, who is lecturer in Greek and New Testament at Moore Theological College in Australia, is well-qualified to produce such a work. His doctoral dissertation at Macquarie University dealt with verbal aspect, a revision of which has been published as *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament* (Peter Lang, 2007). This monograph is also surprisingly easy to read. Campbell accepts Porter’s theory (contra Fanning) that Greek verbs do not grammaticalize time, even in the indicative (that is, the aorist indicative does not convey past time, the present indicative does not convey present time, etc.). But Campbell is no mere disciple of Porter; he has many unique ideas that contradict both Porter and Fanning at points. Campbell also wrote a second technical monograph dealing with aspect, *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament* (Peter Lang, 2008). In *Basics of Verbal Aspect* Campbell is able to avoid technical arguments by referring the reader to his other works. This is an advantage for the reader who wants to understand the issues, but it is a disadvantage for the reader who is looking for reasons to accept Campbell’s approach.

This book divides into two parts. The first five chapters deal with verbal aspect theory in general. Verbal aspect is defined as “viewpoint” (19). An author may view an action from the outside (perfective aspect), or he may view it from the inside (imperfective aspect). Traditional grammars classified the so-called verb tenses (aorist, imperfect, etc.) according to *Aktionsart* or “kind of action.” However, Campbell claims that *Aktionsart* is a function of context, while a verb’s form conveys only aspect. Traditional grammars also saw temporal reference as a secondary feature in the indicative, but as mentioned above, Campbell rejects this.
Chapter two offers a brief history of verbal aspect’s rise among Greek scholars, while the next three chapters classify the Greek verb forms. Campbell sees the aorist and future forms as perfective, while the present and imperfect forms are imperfective. The perfect and pluperfect receive a chapter of their own, since their aspectual nature is hotly contested. Porter says that the perfect has a third aspect, which he calls stative. Fanning sees the perfect as perfective, with some additional features as well. Campbell argues that the perfect is actually imperfective.

The second part of the book deals with the exegetical impact of aspect. Campbell examines how the root idea of a verb form (i.e., aspect) interacts with various contextual features to produce different kinds of action. A unique feature of these chapters is the inclusion of exercises (with answers at the back of the book). These are very helpful for understanding how aspect interacts with contextual and lexical features to produce meaning. Thus, this work could serve as a supplemental textbook for a course in Greek exegesis. Of course, if one does not accept Campbell’s approach to verbal aspect, he may find some of the exercises less than helpful.

This reviewer was not fully convinced by Campbell’s approach, especially as it relates to time in the indicative. Even traditional grammarians understood that the tenses did not always convey the same temporal reference. For example, although the aorist indicative was viewed as a past tense, it was recognized that an aorist indicative could refer to the future. In this case, the past tense verb used of a future event conveyed an added level of certainty that the event would indeed occur. Similarly, the present tense could be used of a past event (the historical present). This was understood as a more vivid way to communicate the narrative. Aspect theorists have devised a theory without such exceptions to the general rules of tense usage. However, a theory of language with no exceptions is probably flawed. Any language, Greek in particular, is a complex system which develops over time and depends heavily on the inclinations of the individuals who speak the language. Exceptions are to be expected, and may actually provide insight into an author’s intended meaning. Campbell’s own admission that the future tense actually conveys future time is further evidence of the temporal nature of the other Greek indicative verb forms.

Moreover, if the verb forms convey aspect and there are two aspects, why are there more than two verb forms? Campbell’s answer is the concept of “ remoteness.” Thus the present is imperfective with proximity, the imperfect is imperfective with remoteness, the perfect is imperfective with heightened proximity, and the pluperfect is imperfective with heightened remoteness. On the other hand, the aorist is perfective and remote. In this scheme, there is an abundance of imperfective forms, but there is no perfective form indicating proximity or heightened remoteness. Furthermore, if the ideas of proximity and remoteness are so important, why are there fewer verb forms found outside the indicative? It is possible that remoteness was originally part of the Greek verbal system rather than temporal reference. However, Campbell acknowledges that temporal reference is a part of the verbal system of Modern Greek. The question is, When did the verbal system change from...
remoteness to past time reference? (Campbell asks the same question himself on page 132.) The evidence demonstrates that this process was well under way by the time the NT was written.

On the other hand, an aspectual approach does have some advantages over the traditional Aktionsart approach. The aspectual emphasis on the author’s subjective viewpoint as opposed to the more objective presentation of the action suggested by Aktionsart, is helpful. Aspect theory may also avoid some of the abuses of the traditional approach (such as the fallacy that the aorist always means “once-for-all” action). Anyone interested in the study of the NT should familiarize himself with verbal aspect, and Campbell’s book is an excellent place to start.


I have read so many books and articles on the mode and subjects of baptism from both “Baptist” and “Presbyterian” perspectives that I was a bit hesitant about what this book could contribute. I was overwhelmed, however, when I encountered the vast amount of information in it that should make it go down as “the last word” on the subject. *Baptism in the Early Church* is without a doubt the most exhaustive examination ever written about the baptismal teachings and practices of the earliest Christians.

Everett Ferguson is a senior scholar at Abilene Christian University, already well known for his admirable *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (3rd edition). He has been honored with the Distinguished Service Award by the North American Patristics Society—just one indication of how highly he is regarded in the world of patristic scholarship. This massive study of well over 900 pages leaves no baptismal stone unturned. Ferguson has plowed through the NT for every reference to baptism, providing a full analysis of each text that contributes to the meaning, mode, and subjects of baptism (99-200). In addition he deals thoroughly with the Jewish antecedents of baptism, including a survey of the mikvaot installations uncovered in Israel (60-82). He proceeds century by century discussing every mention of baptism in the successive church fathers through Augustine in the fifth century (201-818). He also deals with the material culture of baptism, namely the numerous depictions of baptism in various art forms (various pages) and also the surviving baptismal fonts in the remains of the earliest churches (819-52). His thorough discussion of the patristic texts and the art and architecture of baptism is probably the most original contribution of his work and contributes greatly to knowledge about this often debated subject.
One will never need another book on baptism, although handing this one to a beginner would probably be a serious example of overkill. A primer it is not. Perhaps a condensed version would be quite useful in churches. As it stands, this book will serve mainly academics and pastors desiring to delve deeply into the issues.

By the way, if anyone is wondering about the controversy over the mode and subjects of baptism, Ferguson’s marshaled evidence points overwhelmingly to immersion (usually trine) of believing adults as the dominant practice well into the fifth century. The first reference to infant baptism was by Tertullian, who mentioned the practice in the late-second century. He referred to it, however, as a practice that was different from that of the church as a whole. In any case it did not become widespread for nearly five centuries.

This reviewer would like to add some personal experiences to the data assembled by Ferguson. I have debated and discussed this subject with Presbyterians for years. I am quite familiar with their arguments for pouring, even many of them arguing for that mode in the NT. On the other hand, whenever I have had contact in academic meetings with critical scholars from various denominations and a discussion of the practice of baptism arises, they always have acknowledged that the ancient practice was immersion. No question about it ever arose for those who are interested mainly in historical matters, not denominational arguments. It is only in evangelical circles that some will argue for pouring as the original mode. The critical scholars, many of whom may be in churches where pouring or sprinkling is practiced, always acknowledge that the original and ancient mode was immersion. To them the evidence is so clear that the issue is not even discussed. Such is the overwhelming evidence that is so thoroughly examined in this book. While pouring might be found on occasion, it was the exception and not the rule. During a personal visit to Calvin’s Cathedral in Geneva last December, I examined the excavations under the church and there at the earliest level was a baptistery that was clearly intended for immersion.

A closing word is in order about the pattern followed in the Didache, the oldest Christian writing outside of the canonical NT scriptures. Immersion in the trinitarian “name” (chap. 7) was commanded for those who had been taught the basics of their new life (chaps. 1-6). While pouring on the head was permitted in special circumstances, it was clearly exceptional and not the preferred practice among the teaching of the apostles. The preferred practice was immersion in cold, flowing water. Ferguson’s abundant evidence indicates that such was the almost exclusive practice by Christians for centuries.

The question that must be faced is this: If baptism in the NT was by pouring and if infants were included in the ordinance, why then did the church get it wrong for nearly 500 years, but then return to the NT practice in the Dark Ages?

Gorman is professor of sacred Scripture and dean of the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at St. Mary’s Seminary and University, Baltimore. In this revised and expanded edition he pays greater attention to what he terms “theological interpretation” (1). Also, he adds a sample exegesis paper on an OT text (2, 264-75). Gorman also edited a companion volume titled *Scripture: An Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation* (Hendrickson, 2005).

“Part One: Orientation” (7-59) introduces the reader to the concept of exegesis. The first chapter (“The Task,” 9-33) describes exegesis as an investigation of the many details of the text of Scripture (10-11), a conversation with past and present readers of the biblical text (11), and an art requiring intuition, imagination, and sensitivity (12). Gorman selects an eclectic employment of synchronic, diachronic, and existential approaches (23-24). Seven basic elements comprise his exegetical process: survey (overview and introduction), contextual analysis (historical and literary), formal analysis (form, structure, and movement), detailed analysis, synthesis, reflection, and expansion together with refinement (26). Gorman rightly declares, “Wise exegetes prepare a careful initial exegesis of the text on their own before consulting the experts” (31).

The second chapter (“The Text,” 34-59) asks two questions: “How is a text selected for exegesis?” and “Which translations and editions of the Bible are best for exegesis?” (35). Gorman prefers the NRSV, NAB, TNIV, and NET Bible (44-46). He advises caution with useful translations like RSV, NIV, NASB, REB, ESV, and HCSB (46-49). He classifies the NLT, NJB, CEV, GNB, and *The Message* as unacceptable for basic exegesis, though useful for some study (49-51). Lastly, he identifies KJV, NKJV, and LB as unacceptable for exegesis (51). Summarizing the benefits of a variety of study Bibles (52-57), Gorman settles on *The Catholic Study Bible*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2006) as the best (57).

“Part Two: The Elements” (61-172) consists of seven chapters presenting each of the seven elements of Gorman’s exegetical process. The first element (survey) involves reading the text, getting first impressions, making a provisional translation, and writing a brief introduction (63-68). The second element (contextual analysis) looks at the historical, cultural, literary, and canonical contexts of the text (69-81). Formal analysis comprises the third element (83-100). In this step the exegete looks at the literary form, the structure of the text, and how the text moves from one unit of the structure to another. He notes that special literary devices such as repetition, antithesis, parallelism, inclusio, and chiasmus sometimes demarcate structural patterns (91-94). Narrative follows much the same type of pattern that exposition exhibits (94-96).
Element four (detailed analysis) stands at the heart of the exegetical method (101-25). By means of bullet-pointed lists, Gorman identifies the basic questions involved in performing a detailed analysis of the biblical text (103-4, 112, 113-14, 118, 119-20, 122). This approach to the task enables the student to walk through the process question by question—a very effective pedagogical technique. Detailed analysis includes lexical analysis (word studies) and syntactical analysis. It is at this point that the author recommends some form of diagrammatical analysis (113). Gorman inserts various aspects of the historical-critical method (source, form, tradition, and redaction criticism) into this element of the exegetical process (116-19). The position he takes regarding such methods recognizes their value while being cognizant of their limitations and problems (117). Intertextuality (both textual/canonical and cultural) also finds a role in this fourth element of the exegetical process (119-21).

The fifth element (synthesis) occupies the seventh chapter of the volume (127-38). Synthesis consists of seeing the forest rather than focusing on the trees (129). In this section Gorman handles the issues of plurality of interpretations (129-31) as well as ambiguity and polyvalence (131-36). He relates these issues to authorial intent, sensus plenior, reader response, and evocative communication (as compared to propositional communication).

Chapter eight, covering the sixth element (“Reflection: Theological Interpretation”), fills a significant portion of the material (139-66). The process focuses on the exegetically significant question, “So what?” (139). Five possible interpretive postures represent the attitudes potential in exegetes: antipathy, appreciation coupled with noncommitment, discernment or inquiry, suspicion, and consent or trust (140-43). Gorman takes the last posture. He then presents eight principles for the theological interpretation of Scripture (148-55) before discussing a potential ninth principle, the missional hermeneutic (155-58). Throughout this chapter the author emphasizes the biblical exhortation for the reader to become a doer of the Word (Jas 1:22) or, as he puts it, “a living exegesis of the text” (160; cf. 163-65).

The seventh element of the process (expansion and refinement) involves a brief statement about the use of exegetical tools (167-72). This general introduction precedes the final section of the volume, “Part Three: Hints and Resources” (173-232). The tenth chapter offers suggestions for students preparing exegesis papers (175-79). Gorman briefly explains the errors to avoid and what a student needs to accomplish for each of the seven elements of the process. The final chapter lists resources for exegesis, arranged under nine headings corresponding to the first nine chapters of the book (181-232). Gorman’s choices reflect theological ecumenicity. Though he does list some conservative or evangelical sources, he avoids directing students to resources like the following: Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *From Exegesis to Exposition* (Baker, 1998); Robert L. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics* (Kregel, 2002); Robert L. Thomas, *How to Choose a Bible Version* (Mentor, 2000, 2004); *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *A History of
Israel from the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars (Broadman & Holman, 1998); and Eugene H. Merrill, A Kingdom of Priests (Baker, 1996). About The Expositor’s Bible Commentary (Zondervan, 1976-1992), Gorman writes, “This classic set by conservative evangelical scholars based on the NIV is responsible work but somewhat predictable in exegetical and theological perspective. It should therefore be used with some caution and balance from other perspectives” (225). He provides an informative description of all major CD-ROM resources (192-95).

At the end of each of the first nine chapters, the author provides a summary, some practical hints, and suggested assignments for practice (e.g., 31-33, 58-59, 66-68). Four beneficial appendices round out the book: “Tables of Exegetical Methods” (233-40), “Practical Guidelines for Writing a Research Exegesis Paper” (241-46), “Three Sample Exegesis Papers” (247-75; examples from John 11:45-53, 2 Cor 12:1-10, Psalm 84), and “Selected Internet Resources for Biblical Studies” (277-81).

Unlike Chisholm’s From Exegesis to Exposition, Gorman does not deal with the biblical languages or with the specific details of original language exegesis. Despite this lack, his ecumenical approach, and depreciation of evangelical sources, evangelical students will find Gorman’s volume useful. He provides a practical page-by-page outline of what a 15-page exegetical paper should look like (29, 241-46), gives good pointers on constructing an outline (90), and literally walks the student through the process with key questions, summaries, and hints. The three papers in the third appendix also faithfully replicate the author’s process.


The Concordia Commentary series represents an impressive series of commentaries for those pursuing biblical studies. The stated purpose of the series is to “assist pastors, missionaries, and teachers of the Scriptures to convey God’s Word with greater clarity, understanding, and faithfulness to the divine intent of the text” (xv). Contributors to this series belong to conservative Lutheran denominations. Four convictions serve as guidelines for each commentary (and author) (xv-xvi). First, the editors and authors believe that the Old and New Testaments place their focus on Christ. They refer to these volumes as Christ-centered or Christological commentaries. Second, they believe that Law and Gospel are the overarching doctrines of the Bible and that is what these commentaries seek to unfold. Third, they accept without reservation that the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are, in their entirety, the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Fourth, since God gave the Scriptures for the benefit of all humanity, their living context is the church.
The author of this volume on Joshua presently teaches at Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary in Mankato, Minnesota. Prior to this, he has pastored churches in other states and also served as a missionary in Zambia.

After a brief bibliography (6 pages) and a helpful introduction (36 pages), the bulk of the volume focuses on the interpretation of the text of Joshua (almost 800 pages). Each pericope of Joshua is treated under three headings: translation, textual notes (sometimes longer than the commentary), and commentary. The textual notes treat issues of grammar, syntax, word meanings, as well as text-critical problems. Every major section of Joshua begins with an outline and a brief overview of the section. Each section concludes with a brief backward look, summarizing that section. A number of excurses are scattered throughout the commentary. After the commentary proper, Harstad provides a number of potential preaching texts and themes from Joshua, a thorough glossary of key terms, eleven maps, and abundant indices (subjects and passages). Eleven figures are scattered throughout the introduction and commentary. Throughout the commentary proper are fifteen icons that highlight some aspect of the message of Joshua. Some of these are tied to the theme found in Joshua and others point to interpretive conclusions that cohere with the Lutheran perspective of the authors (e.g., baptism, Lord’s Supper, ministry of Word and Sacrament, the church, etc.). An example of one of the more interpretive conclusions involves Harstad’s connection of crossing of the Red Sea as a baptism for the nation of Israel with Christian baptism (cf. 1 Cor10:2) (173). Finally, as part of their understanding of Law and the Gospel, the authors are amillennial and conclude that the ultimate fulfillment of OT promises takes place through the church (7, figure 1).

With a commentary this large, only select issues can receive attention. Harstad accepts the early date for the Exodus from Egypt (ca. 1446 B.C.), placing the beginning of Israel’s conquest of Canaan to ca. 1406 B.C. Harstad defends Rahab’s decision to lie in protecting the spies (Joshua 2) as something intended for the good of the spies (something Luther calls an obliging lie). The intent of the speaker of the lie determines the appropriateness or sinfulness of a lie, according to this view (115-18). When discussing the events that took place at Gilgal, Harstad connects circumcision with Christian baptism as the event that brings a person into relationship with the covenant (243). In Joshua 10, Harstad views the “long day” of Joshua as a miracle in which God caused more hours of sunlight in order to facilitate Joshua and his army’s devastation of the southern coalition of Canaanite cities. He makes no effort to explain the mechanics of the miracle because the text of Scripture does not provide an explanation. When commenting on Joshua 11 and 13, Harstad correctly points out that Joshua’s conquest of the land of Canaan was not totally comprehensive. When it says “the land had rest from war” (11:23), chapter 13 refers to parts of the land of Canaan that were not yet conquered and passes on the responsibility for conquering those areas to each individual tribe. This is an important point to understand because various scholars suggest that Joshua’s claim
to have conquered the entire land of Canaan contradicts the reality found in the book of Judges.

As part of his commendable attempt to explain the contemporary relevance of various parts of Joshua, Harstad makes applications that do not seem to be the main points of OT passages. For example, he connects the “landlessness” of the Levites with the situation of pastors who live in parsonages and do not own their own homes (509). However, the Levites were set aside for a different reason with a role different from pastors. Also, what about pastors who have jobs or own their homes?

The commentary offers a number of helpful features. Harstad’s belief in inspiration and inerrancy as an important theological underpinning for his interpretation adds to the value of his work. He also interacts with historical, geographical, and archaeological issues at numerous points. His textual comments provide helpful technical information about the Hebrew text, raising issues that clearly relate to one’s interpretation of the passage. Also, this commentary is huge and costs the same as another volume in this series that is half the length. One of the greatest frustrations is totally understandable. Harstad’s Lutheran belief system shows up repeatedly in the application he makes or the way he interprets various OT institutions and theological realities. This should be no surprise since the series is written for a Lutheran publisher. It will serve as a helpful resource as long as it is used carefully (good advice for any commentary).


Hill serves as professor of OT studies at Wheaton College (1984-present) and Walton taught for 20 years at Moody Bible Institute before joining Wheaton Graduate School as professor of OT (2001-present). Zondervan published the first edition of A Survey of the Old Testament in 1991 and the second in 2000. Hill and Walton mix general and special introductions together rather than keeping them separate. Following a longer curriculum approach, they provide sections on OT geography (Chapter 2, 34-54), OT historical backgrounds (Chapter 9, 180-201), archaeology (Chapter 19, 356-71), and the formation (text, transmission, and canon) of the OT (Chapter 26, 480-99). Although their materials address a number of significant issues, a few escape notice. For example, Hill and Walton do not cover the orographic effect on the weather patterns of Palestine. Methods of field archaeology also are noticeably absent.

On a seminary level, professors must choose what to teach as part of a course in Old Testament Introduction (OTI). They must also select the textbook(s) that will provide at least the core material for the course’s content. Professors who opt for the shorter curriculum deal with canonicity, textual criticism, higher critical
methodologies, and archaeology. The longer curriculum adds inspiration and inerrancy, ancient Near Eastern history and culture, and ancient Near Eastern and Palestinian geography. Teachers might elect to include topics absent from the required curriculum for the degree (normally the M.Div.) in order to fill the vacuum and to round out the student’s exposure to the breadth of OT studies.

Unfortunately, the title for Hill and Walton’s volume (*A Survey of the Old Testament*) creates some confusion. OT survey usually involves more special introduction topics like authorship, date, background, structure, and theme for individual OT books—thus distinguishing it from OTI. Dillard and Longman’s *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (2nd ed., Zondervan 2006) serves as an OT survey textbook.

Gleason Archer’s *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (3rd ed., Moody, 2007) has not changed substantially in thirty or forty years. It omits major OTI topics like history and geography and focuses primarily on the documentary hypothesis rather than exposing the student to the wider range of higher critical methodologies. R. K. Harrison’s *Introduction to the Old Testament* (reprint, Hendrickson 2004) also has not kept pace with developments in the field of OT since its first edition in 1969.

In contrast, *A Survey of the Old Testament* expresses an up-to-date evangelical stance in regard to significant areas of OT studies. It integrates the examination of higher critical methodologies with specific sections of the OT most affected by higher critical views. Two appendixes handle the more general discussions of higher critical methodologies (“Appendix A: Critical Methodologies,” 753-60, and “Appendix B: The Composition of the Pentateuch,” 761-69). Hill and Walton provide a balanced discussion of various existing viewpoints on such matters as the dating of the exodus from Egypt (105-8). Throughout the book the authors engage the reader in discussion concerning the relationship of the OT to the NT (e.g., 117, 118, 120).

All of the accouterments of pedagogically sound textbook production make their appearance: annotated bibliographies (concluding each section of the text; e.g., 73-75), visual presentations of key issues by means of charts and tables (e.g., “Comparison of Chronological Systems,” 66), “Questions for Further Study and Discussion” as well as a bibliography “For Further Reading” concluding each chapter, attractive and pertinent color photos, maps, and charts illustrating the text.

Hill and Walton’s third edition updates chapter bibliographies (“For Further Reading”). For example, at the end of Chapter 4, “Genesis” (97-98), Walton adds nine entries and eliminates eight from the second edition. Entries involving volumes within a series lack a consistent formatting. Sometimes the author of a chapter abbreviates the series titles or omits series titles entirely. This reviewer would prefer that series titles consistently appear as an acronym (e.g., AB for Boling’s *Joshua* and NICOT for Woudstra’s *The Book of Joshua*, 233).

In the second edition the final section (“Epilogue”) contains two chapters (“Toward the New Testament,” 555-61, and “What We Have Learned,” 562-70). The third edition provides three chapters: “What We Have Learned” (a brief OT

Weaknesses still manifest themselves in this third edition. For example, Hill and Walton deny Mosaic authorship to large sections of the Pentateuch (60, 79, 104, 165). They make no reference to sources dealing with the creation/evolution debate in Genesis 1–11 (97-98). Their map of the Red Sea crossing ignores any potential deep water crossings (109). The authors also elected not to include the “Berekhyahu son of Neriyahu” bulla from the City of David (see photo and caption, 538) as a reference to an OT individual by name in contemporary materials (368). In addition, they provide no response to critical views on the historical accuracy and integrity of Jonah (631-35) or on the unity of Isaiah (520-22). In the consideration of the Psalter’s headings, they make no mention of the superscription and subscription to Habakkuk 3 and its significance to the discussion (420-32, 664). Hill and Walton conclude the textbook on a negative note when they declare that “the question of historical reliability [of the Pentateuch] remains” (769). They indicate that the “current form” of the Pentateuch’s poetic sections “range from the thirteenth to the eleventh centuries BC” (60; cp. 377), but contradict the observation by giving a fifteenth-century date for the exodus in the chart on page 103.

Some omissions appear to be more accidental in nature. For example, Daniel 2:4–7:28 is missing from the list of Aramaic sections of the OT (481; but cp. 333). Emanuel Tov’s Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible (2nd ed., Fortress, 2001) should have been added to “For Further Reading” at the end of “Formation of the Old Testament Scriptures” (499). Lastly, the authors (or, was it an editor’s decision?) fail to provide a Scripture index. This is an unfortunate omission since it markedly reduces the academic usefulness of the volume as a textbook.

The reviewer and a colleague both require this volume for the seminary OTI course that they teach. Students benefit significantly from the visual information conveyed in the third edition’s photos and charts. Two graduates of The Master’s Seminary provided a number of the photos (Todd Bolen: 6, 40, 41, 45, 61 et al.; Fred Mabie: 100, 108, 111, 128, 180 et al.). A laminated key for A Survey of the Old Testament (Zondervan, 2007) serves as a helpful supplement to the volume.

This work by Lessing is part of a joint effort in the Concordia Commentary series to help pastors, missionaries, and teachers to a clearer understanding and greater faithfulness in handling the Scriptures.

The author of this volume is professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, where he also directs the graduate school. He also pastored two churches for fourteen years before joining the faculty of Concordia.

For an overview of the features shared by each of the commentaries in this series, see above the review of the volume on Joshua by Harstad. Here are a few features of this volume that differ from the other Concordia Commentaries reviewed in this issue of MSJ. As with Wilch’s commentary on Ruth, Lessing has almost seven hundred pages to devote to explaining the nine chapters of Amos compared with Harstad’s almost one thousand pages to discuss twenty-four chapters of Joshua. Unlike Harstad, but like Wilch, Lessing does not provide an outline of the entire book that shows the flow of argument. He divides the book into major sections and at the beginning of each large section identifies each pericope. Like Harstad and unlike Wilch, Lessing intersperses several helpful excurses throughout the volume. His final excursus is “Preaching Like Amos.”

Lessing broadly categorizes other studies of Amos as utilizing three different approaches. “Behind the text” includes considering the impact of archaeology and ANE history on the book of Amos. Unfortunately, many studies of Amos draw on anthropology and sociology to misread the text and use Amos’ message for some unbiblical agenda. “Within the text” focuses on what is written in the extant, finished text of Amos. “In front of the text” focuses on strategies for applying the text of Amos to the modern day. Lessing seeks to avoid the abuses of all three, but makes use of all three approaches to Amos (and does a fine job at it). At the end of his introduction, Lessing summarizes three specific methods of interpreting Amos: form criticism, redaction criticism, and rhetorical analysis. On the one hand, Lessing rejects the speculative and subjective conclusions offered by form and redaction criticism (although he manifests an awareness of prophetic genres). On the other hand, he makes good use of the rhetorical structure of Amos.

After commenting on Amos 1:1-2, Lessing provides two excurses on Hebrew poetry and the land. In his treatment of the “land,” Lessing correctly recognizes the important role this motif plays in the message of the OT. However, Lessing concludes that Israel will never be restored to the land of promise. In the final restoration of the new Israel in the new heaven and earth, the Lord will regather his landless people to Himself. Then Lessing uses nine truths to show the “spiritual” manifestation of the OT function of land in the NT. Finally, he summarizes and rejects the dispensational belief that God will fulfill His promises to national Israel, in part, by restoring the nation of Israel to the land of promise. Unfortunately, Lessing does not cite the best scholarly representatives of dispensationalism (besides Ryrie) and incorrectly describes dispensationalists as believing in two ways of salvation. Of course, his theology significantly impacts his explanation of Amos 9:11-15 and its use in the Book of Acts (596-600). There again, the only
dispensationalists cited by Lessing are Scofield and LaHaye and Jenkins, rather than some of the many modern dispensationalist articles and books that interact with the Amos 9 and Acts 15 issue.

Notwithstanding the above issue, Lessing provides his readers with a marvelous exegesis and exposition of the Book of Amos. He interacts with word plays and recognizes important aspects of the structure of various prophetic oracles in Amos. His commentary is a great contribution to the scores of studies already written on this important prophetic book.


This author is professor of exegetical theology and director of the graduate school at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. He also has extensive pastoral experience.

For an overview of the features shared by each of the commentaries in this series, see above the review of the volume on Joshua by Harstad. Lessing’s volume on Jonah is quite similar to the other Concordia Commentaries reviewed in this issue of *MSJ*. After a thorough introduction, Lessing devotes ca. 350 pages to his commentary proper. As with the other volumes in this series, he does not provide an outline of the entire book, but provides a basic outline of each major section (in this case, each chapter) of Jonah. At the outset of his treatment of each chapter, he provides a brief introduction to the chapter. He follows the basic format of all the volumes in this series by giving a translation, textual notes, and the commentary itself. His textual note section is lengthy and helpful. He also includes seven excurses scattered throughout the commentary that deal with important issues relevant to one’s understanding of Jonah: “Yahweh, the Creator God,” “Mission in the OT,” “the Sign of Jonah,” “the Trinitarian Basis of OT Solidarity,” “Sheol,” “Death and Resurrection Motifs in Luther’s Baptismal Theology,” and “When Yahweh Changes a Prior Verdict.” With regard to the genre of Jonah, after summarizing numerous views on this issue, Lessing concludes that Jonah is narrative history and presents historical fact.

Observations offered by Lessing in his commentary include a description of the sailors who greatly feared Yahweh after he calmed the seas (1:16). Lessing suggests that the sailors came to know and believe in Yahweh as their God (139). Although they do recognize Yahweh’s sovereignty over the sea, it seems more likely that they added Yahweh to their collection of gods that they worshipped. Lessing also provides a nice summary of the major interpretations of “a walk of three days” (3:3b) (294-96). However, after delineating the most commonly held views and pointing out the weaknesses of each, he does not seem to come to a conclusion
concerning which one is best. As part of his discussion of 4:11 and the “more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left,” Lessing also concludes that this is not talking about children but refers to Ninevites who are relatively ignorant of God and His Word (387-88, 411-12).

Of the four volumes of the Concordia Commentary series reviewed in this issue of MSJ, Lessing’s volume on Jonah offered this reviewer the most help with exegesis and exposition. Although the commentaries are quite large (10 inches tall and all over 400 pages of text), they are priced similar to smaller commentaries. Lessing’s volume on Jonah will provide its users numerous insights into the message of the prophet Jonah.


In an engaging style, the senior designer at IDEO in London, Neil Martin, has written on different subjects which are a challenge to the Christian faith and life. His introduction advises that two questions are being answered by his book: What does the Bible say about the place of struggles in the Christian life? And how can the biblical material be used as a weapon to tackle some of the most common and important examples? Chapter One answers Question One. Chapters Two through Six answer Question 2. He asks a major question for many people, but perhaps one which is not always voiced openly, or understood: “Should We Expect to Struggle with the Christian Faith?” He lays out in six bullet points the reasons why the answer is in the affirmative, namely, difficult questions to answer, feelings not keeping pace with faith, admission that we are still sinners, living in non-Christian societies, affected by own temperament and circumstances, and forgetting to count one’s blessings. A good description of each follows, with sound advice and exhortation. A selection of appropriate Scriptures provide biblical content or examples.

For the first reason he refers primarily to Asaph, to Job, and their situations. This is no selecting one verse, making a single comment, and then moving off on his own tangent. Martin deals with the texts. Pithy statements, thoughtful ones, occur, e.g., “without diligence in Christian practice, we have no right to expect Christian confidence” (16). Concisely, the subjects of sin, the fall, and its impact are described, particularly as relates to the Christian who is not yet free from sin’s clutches. The reader will find himself nodding in agreement with so much being said by Martin. He notes the temperamental diversity among people, and does not swallow the myth of the ideal Christian temperament (30). Chapter One, then, augurs well for the chapters to come. Each chapter thereafter has had its structure determined by the six reasons why the believer should expect a struggle with the faith.
Chapter Two’s main heading, “Tackling Struggles with Belief in God” (43), indicates the apologetic flavor of its content. A short summary of three arguments for the existence of God is followed by turning to the Scriptures to highlight the intuitions of God and of spiritual realities. Martin recognizes that humanism and atheism are in conflict with theism, and each other, too. From this point on and for the next thirty or so pages, Martin masterfully sets before the reader evolution, scientific-worldview as a whole, philosophy, and psychology, all of which undermine the theistic worldview. In these pages he is not loathe to take on Richard Dawkins as well. The reader grasps just how committed Dawkins is in his aggressive opposition to Christianity.

Chapter Three treats the question concerning the authenticity of the Bible. Martin began the discussion with the historical reliability of the Bible by asking if Jesus was fact or fiction, if the disciples embellished or misrepresented His story, and if later editors or translators corrupted or misconstrued His story (107). At one point, Martin remarks that sound documentary evidence assures the believer that Jesus did live in Palestine and did do all that the Bible says of Him (128). All in all, the chapter is instructive with a good number of Scripture references.

Chapter Four, the longest one in the book, tackles divine sovereignty, responsibility, and divine justice (147-217). Notably, this chapter quickly affirms God’s attributes of greatness and goodness and His aseity. Theodicy questions are summed up in seven bullet points: how could a good and just God who controls everything allow for evil, an eternal heaven and an eternal hell, the saving of some and not others, and condemn them, etc. Martin opens his discussion not in the order developed around those questions in Chapter One, but begins with believers living in a non-Christian society. With emphasis on self-help groups, on feeling good, and having one’s needs meet, it is not surprising that people have a less than accurate picture of God and are troubled by “the sovereignty of God.” Immature believers—although Martin does not use this term—think they are better than they are and think they are deserving of more than they deserve. In fact, this in turn begins questions on whether or not God knows their needs. Martin’s unfolding of the free will and human responsibility debate under the two categories of determinism and indeterminism is well done, but in places the reading slows down in order to understand fully what he has written. Moral determinism deals with the link between moral causes and moral effects, and operates according to motives and reflects human consent. The important point is that it never causes actions against one’s own will. Genesis 50 and John 8 offer support here. Pretty much in standard Reformed theology fashion, he tackles the the doctrine of election. Finite human minds cannot venture to understand the infinite mind of God (190-91). He comments that human responsibility makes human choices significant; divine sovereignty gives them meaning. Their combination is a paradox that is thoroughly justified (191). Finite minds will not handle responsibly all the biblical data on God unless it fits that finite mind’s stereotype of what He should be like. Under three headings Martin sums up what finite minds think, namely, that God is an overreacting, vengeful tyrant
The only missing factor is identifying who it is that paints such a picture of God. Is it the believer, even an immature one? Or the unbeliever who would not accept biblical truth without distorting it? The rest of the chapter closes out the discussion by noting that the whole thing will not seem just until things are looked at from God’s perspective. Again he sums up a response by observing that there can be no justice and no grace without goodness and no salvation without grace (201-2).

The content was fine, but it seemed as though the book had dragged out the subject long enough. This reviewer several times paged ahead (to see just how much more needed to be said), sighed, and kept going [pun intended]. The last two chapters dealt with overcoming struggles with assurance and those struggles in Christ. Frankly, one wonders what has gone wrong in discipling and teaching if a professed believer struggles too often with lack of assurance. He remarks at the end of the book, “Knowing Jesus better is the thing we must pray for and work for above all else in our struggles—there is simply nothing like it to help and encourage us in our efforts to Keep Going! It will be a good exercise to read through Keep Going.

Iain H. Murray. *A Scottish Christian Heritage*. Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth, 2006. xi + 403. $28.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Director of Seminary Library.

In one of his later works the Scottish nationalist and poet Hugh MacDiarmid (the penname of Christopher Murray Grieve, 1892-1978) wrote, “Scotland Small?” Our multiform, our infinite Scotland small? Though small in terms of geography, Scotland has exerted an influence within Christianity and Christian theology remarkably out of proportion to its size. So significant has the Scottish contribution to Christian theology been, an entire reference work, the *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (IVP, 1993) with nearly 1,000 pages, was produced to catalogue the contribution of this nation.

In this current work, Iain Murray has prepared a singular volume of “people and movements” in Scotland that made a lasting impact on Christianity, not only in that country but around the English-speaking world. Murray has divided his work into three sections: *Biographical* where he examines the lives of John Knox, Robert Bruce, Thomas Chalmers, James MacDonald, and Horatius Bonar; *Missionary* where he examines the work in the New Hebrides as “an illustration of the missionary spirit” and also the work of Robert Moffat in Africa; and *Church Issues* where he examines preaching, the problem of elders, church unity in Scotland, and what he calls the “tragedy of Free Church in Scotland.”

As is the norm in Murray’s works, this volume represents thorough research and is well written. The biographical entries are excellent and Murray has avoided having his narrative sidetracked by minor or insignificant details of the lives (a tendency that has occasionally hindered the author in the past). The accounts of
Bruce, Chalmers, and Bonar are particularly well done and will help reintroduce some exceptionally important men of church history to a new audience.

The section on Scottish preaching (313–37) is perhaps worth the price of the book itself. He deals with the real observations that Scottish preaching was often viewed as “wearisome” (313). Murray admits that some of the criticism was legitimate, but it also is largely overstated since the traditional Scottish preaching was much more multifaceted than it is normally given credit for. He quotes the American J. W. Alexander, who though also critical of the preaching style as occasionally tedious, also remarked that Scottish preaching was “at once expository, doctrinal, methodical, and impassioned” (316).

In the last section Murray takes up the story of the “downgrade” of the Free Church, mainly in the selection of new faculty, such as Robertson Smith, James Denney, and A. B. Bruce, who opened the door to a decline of evangelical theology in favor of higher criticism and the “New Theology” at Aberdeen and other denominational schools. The period of these changes in Scotland corresponded to what was happening in the Baptist Union in Great Britain in the Downgrade Controversy and in the United States as the Modernist controversies were beginning to consume the mainline denominations, particularly the Presbyterians.

Murray’s section here is another reminder that past fidelity to orthodox and evangelical theology does not ensure a continuation down that path. The path, as Murray notes, was the same regardless of what locale in which it occurred: a new and popular set of professors in the seminaries who had the desired academic credentials but were clearly abandoning orthodoxy; an administration or denominational structure that was slow or unwilling to confront error; the marginalization of those who spoke out against the error; and then a new generation of pastors and church leaders who were trained in a deficient theology.

In his introduction Murray states, “[T]he best Christian books never leave us as mere spectators” (ix). This recommended book is one that will read quickly, facilitated by the author’s crisp prose, but if read well, it will leave an impression that by examining the past, one can be freed from being a mere spectator of the future.


Isaiah in NICOT takes a clear stand in defense of the unity of the Book of Isaiah, and The Bible Among the Myths stands unashamedly on the side of divine inspiration of the OT and its distinct character as compared to ancient Near Eastern literature.

In his “Introduction” (11-18) Oswalt calls for the acceptance and defense of the historical and theological veracity of the OT (16-17). The Bible claims to be divine revelation. He defends that biblical claim and argues that it ought to be given the attention it deserves, instead of allowing disbelief in the Bible to occupy a privileged position in the discussion (18). Part 1 (“The Bible and Myth,”19-107) consists of five chapters establishing the differences between Scripture and myth. Part 2 (“The Bible and History,” 109-94) presents five chapters dealing with the issues involved in the Bible’s relationship to history and historiography.

Oswalt declares that changes in scholarly opinion resulting in the classification of the Bible as myth have come about through a shift in theological assumptions and worldview, not by means of any discovery of new data in the recovery of ANE literature (31). The first step one must take to respond to this shift involves establishing a definition for myth (31-46). After dealing carefully and exhaustively with the potential definitions of myth and identifying the best definition, he proceeds to demonstrate that “Whatever the Bible is, whether true or false, symbol or literal, it is not myth” (46).

In reality, Oswalt concludes, “[S]imilarities between the Bible and the rest of the literatures of the ancient Near East are superficial, while the differences are essential” (47). The very features common to myths (especially in the ANE) prove the distinct nature of biblical revelation (57-62). The biblical worldview differs diametrically from the views of extrabiblical cultures and their myths (63). The characteristics of biblical thought (e.g., monotheism, iconoclasm, the Spirit as first principle, absence of conflict in creation, a high view of humanity, God’s reliability and supra-sexuality, etc.) prove the distinction (64-81).

Scholars repeatedly appeal to correspondences between ANE literature and the Bible. For example, the Enuma Elish (a Babylonian creation account) supposedly proves that the writer(s) of the biblical creation account in Genesis aligned it with the Babylonian account. However, a basic comparison of the elements and characteristics of both accounts reveals that the similarities are artificial. Oswalt reminds his readers, “In fact it is important to point out that the Enuma Elish is not about ‘creation’ at all” (101). Genesis speaks of God creating something that did not exist before; Enuma Elish recounts the emergence of the world from pre-existent chaotic matter. Some scholars associate tehom (“the deep”) in Genesis 1 with the Canaanite chaos monster Tiamat because of similarity due to lexical origin. However, the potential association only demonstrates that Hebrew is a Semitic language, not that the writer conscientiously made either direct or indirect reference to Tiamat (102). Overdrawn similarities often continue outside Genesis in other OT literature like the Psalter. No matter how many claims some scholars make regarding Canaanite influence on the literature, imagery, and concepts of the biblical psalmists, evidence in the Ugaritic literature consistently manifests a clear distinction from
anything in the biblical text or a total absence of any analogue (104-7). As Oswalt puts it, “the undoubted similarities . . . do not indicate a common way of thinking” (107).

This reviewer admits to a certain frustration with The Bible Among the Myths. With each passing page, he kept expecting a treatment of the matter of the Bible’s borrowing or employing ANE myth, mythical characters, and mythical imagery. A quick check of the “Author Index” (203-4) found that Oswalt makes no reference to the work of Elmer Smick on mythology in the Book of Job. Smick’s work must be considered foundational to such a discussion, so why its conspicuous absence? With the transition from the superb treatment of the topic of myth in the first half of the book to the topic of history, the direction of investigation continues down a separate path. Having established that the Bible is not myth, Oswalt does not resolve how biblical writers might have employed ANE myths. The second half of the volume presents a contrast between a conservative and biblical historiography as opposed to a non-conservative or postmodern historiography. The discussion is valuable, but leaves the reader hanging with unanswered questions about whether the Bible utilizes ANE myths.

One of the most helpful aspects of Oswalt’s comparative analysis of the Bible’s approach to history vs. the ANE’s approach to history (146-47) replicates differences identified by John Walton in Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context (Zondervan, 1989). The tenth chapter of The Bible Among the Myths concludes by describing the views of four scholars with regard to biblical history: John Van Seters (172-75), Frank Cross (175-77), William Dever (177-81), and Mark Smith (181-84). Oswalt concludes that these scholars (and others) have not presented “a convincing explanation for the unique features of the biblical worldview and the ways in which that worldview affects the understanding of reality in the Bible” (184). The only satisfactory viewpoint regarding the nature of biblical revelation resides in its uniqueness in the world, not its apparent similarities to ANE literature and worldviews (192, 194).

This volume represents a distinct and high view of Scripture, its inspiration and veracity. Oswalt exposes the evolutionary, humanistic, and antisupernatural characteristics of opposition to the Bible’s uniqueness as divine revelation. He makes a significant contribution to the discussion of myth and history related to the Bible.


Reading Veiled Honor took me back to my fifteen years of missionary service in the Muslim nation of Bangladesh. Time and again the images conjured up by Mary Laurel Ross in Saudi Arabia found their counterparts in my own and my
wife’s experiences living in a Muslim land. This volume contains information gained only through living among and interacting with Muslims within their own cultures. Ross presents a fair and balanced viewpoint—sensitivity to the Muslims’ view of their own culture and beliefs as well as the objectivity of a keen outside observer. The author interweaves pertinent historical data with her own personal encounters. Cameos of those whom she came to know and love accent her poignant plea for change in the status of women living under the veil in Islam.

A second group of cameos introduces readers to some key figures in the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the author informs her readers, attended a Baptist college in North Carolina where non-Muslim students tossed his shoes and the shoes of other praying Muslims into the campus lake (20). This humiliated and frustrated individual became the engineer for 9/11. His nephew, Ramzi Yousef, carried out the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center in New York (29). Abdullah Azzam (23), Osama bin Laden (45-46), Mohammed Atta (230), and Ziad Samir Jarrah (298) make their appearances in brief but informative introductions. One full chapter chronicles the life of Mohammed, the founder of Islam (“Allah’s Messenger,” 317-27). The only noticeably incomplete and potentially misleading piece of information that this reviewer detected occurs in this chapter (322). The author’s description of the Battle of Badr (A.D. 624) provides no name or date for it and implies it was just a normal military engagement (other than the outcome). However, the Battle of Badr stands as the equivalent of Israel’s exodus from Egypt—the defining event for an entire religion. In actuality the battle was a raid by Mohammed’s followers on a large and rich Meccan caravan from Palestine. Receiving information about the raid, the Meccans sent a force two to three times the size of Mohammed’s followers to defend it. However, Mohammed’s force of a little more than 300 obtained the victory. The sword thus became a symbol of the power of Allah and of Islam.

In a chronology of the Islamic world’s recent history, Mrs. Ross points out that 1979 holds a special place (47). She briefly describes each of the events to provide readers with a feel for the historical foundation of current events. Her husband (a U.S. Air Force fighter pilot) brought his family with him to his assignment as a military advisor to the senior staff of the Royal Saudi Arabian Air Force. With that setting in mind, the author provides a concise but insightful history of the Royal House of Saud and each of its kings (165-69, 329-39).

One chapter recounts her family’s experiences with their Bangladeshi houseboy (81-97). This reviewer’s fifteen years in Bangladesh provides full confirmation of the author’s observations regarding Bangladeshi household help, Bangladeshi society, and the desire of Bangladeshis to go to America. Nothing was a surprise—not even Sa’eed’s attitude that a houseboy really knew better than the woman of the household (our American author) how to clean kitchens and bathrooms (87).

In her chapters on “Shari’a” (117-45) and honor killing (“In the Name of Honor,” 303-10), Mrs. Ross paints a vivid picture of the abuse of females in the
Muslim world. One horrendous tragedy symbolizes the oppression of females in the Islamic world: a March 2002 fire in a girls’ school in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (125). Because the girls did not have access to proper attire that would allow them to exit the building, the religious police would not allow them to leave the burning structure. Fifteen teen-aged girls perished in the flames. Only members of the Jordanian royal family have dared to speak in opposition to the practice of honor killings (307). The Muslim concept of honor justifies both the abuse of women and radical Islamic terrorism (310).

In an “Afterword” (363) Mrs. Ross pays tribute to Neda Agha-Soltan the victim of a sniper during Iranian anti-government demonstrations in the streets of Teheran in June 2009. A Muslim woman’s voice and death cry out for freedom from oppression and abuse.

Every person with an interest in learning about Islam and about the Middle Eastern Muslim cultures should read Veiled Honor. Although women will find it particularly appealing, men also need to read the volume. If a reader desires to pursue this topic further, the reviewer recommends following up with Lifting the Veil: The World of Muslim Women by missionaries Phil and Julie Parshall (Waynesboro, Ga.: Gabriel Publishing, 2002).

The end materials for Veiled Honor include an informative “Glossary” (365-70), a list of “Sources” (371-78), and end notes (379-90). In keeping with Mrs. Ross’s journalistic style and current events approach, internet and media references dominate the sources. An improvement for future editions might be the inclusion of more materials from published books like the one by the Parshalls.


The first change experienced users will note involves the rearrangement of the order of exegetical steps in Stuart’s 12-step procedure:

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The first change experienced users will note involves the rearrangement of the order of exegetical steps in Stuart’s 12-step procedure:
Procedurally, the new arrangement represents a welcome improvement. Minor alterations include a significantly expanded list of “Abbreviations” (ix-x) beyond the third edition’s 6-entry list. Two former appendixes now precede the indexes. “A List of Common Old Testament Exegesis Terms” (177-80) corrects an alphabetizing problem at the beginning of the third edition’s glossary, but neither adds to nor subtracts from the entries. “A List of Frequent Hermeneutical Errors” (181-83) was not alphabetized in the third edition, but now is. A larger and more readable (though not as attractive) Hebrew font appears where the text includes Hebrew words and phrases (9, 35, 47).

Stuart’s discussion of illustrative examples for the various steps in his exegetical procedure remains the same, virtually unchanged from the earlier editions. This reviewer hoped the author might at least update the sources to which he appeals during the presentation of those examples. Under his discussion of structure, the author adds discourse analysis and text linguistics to his section dealing with rhetorical criticism (121-23). A better revision consists of a section for resources dealing with life in Bible times (171).

Throughout the volume the author omits key reference works that have gone out of print and inserts more recently published sources. Such changes increase the usability and value of the book for active exegetes. *Biblia Hebraica Quinta (BHQ)* finds its place alongside earlier editions of the Hebrew Bible based on Codex Leningradensis B19A. Stuart includes descriptions of current Hebrew text projects such as *BHQ* (97-98), HaKeter (98), and the Oxford Hebrew Bible Project (98-99).

This fourth edition is not your father’s *Old Testament Exegesis*. It contains a treasure-trove of online resources including OT bibliographies (2, 86, 91, 155-61), Septuagint resources (92, 102), Dead Sea Scrolls resources (93), Targum and Aramaic resources (94, 102, 109), Sumerian literature (130), topical concordances (144), and a variety of databases that provide more than just bibliographic references (161-62). Stuart suggests on a number of occasions that readers “google” various topics (92, 94, 102, 134, 154). His single most substantial revision arises in the discussion of “special reference sources” (152-65) under “Secondary Literature” (152-75). The fourteen-page discussion replaces three pages of material in the third
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edition and introduces the reader to the use of the Web as an essential resource for locating secondary literature. Here is the guide to dependable online resources which no exegete with access to the internet should ignore.

*Logos Bible Software* makes its debut in this fourth edition (101, 103). Stuart ranks it third after *Accordance* (for Macintosh) and *BibleWorks* (Windows) in technical adeptness, but praises *Logos* for providing the greater library of secondary literature (111). An updated and expanded list of Bible software programs and providers closes out the list of aids and resources (172-75).

Disturbingly, Stuart still fails to list *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, or *The Master’s Seminary Journal* among the journals to which he directs the reader (165-66). Although “Exegesis Aids and Resources” (83-175) includes the Samaritan Pentateuch among the critical text editions (93), Stuart still fails to include it in his discussion of the ancient versions (88-89). Regardless of any such shortcomings in this fourth edition, the quality and quantity of improvements will guarantee the continued use of this volume by many teachers, students, and pastors for years to come.


Erich von Fange is professor emeritus of Concordia University, Ann Arbor, Michigan. He earned his Ph.D. as a Kellogg Fellow at the University of Alberta. He enjoyed teaching in Lutheran schools and colleges for 44 years, retiring in 1988, but continues to write on creation/evolution issues. This volume demonstrates his wide-ranging knowledge, intense research skills, and voluminous reading. For those truly interested in the debate between creation and evolution, this book will prove to be a rewarding excursion into the multitude of topics addressed within its covers.

The author verbalizes his purpose clearly: “First, how does the Bible fare as a framework for the ancient world in the light of scientific discoveries. . . . Second, is evolution ‘fact’ as many claim, or is it a type of mantra smothering all efforts to discover real truth?” (20). A sense of the breadth of the volume comes from a listing of its topics: archaeology, metallurgy, paleontology, agriculture, chronology, miracles, anthropology, the scientific method, evolution hoaxes, animal domestication, extinctions, natural history of horses, paleo-botany, the influence of Darwinism, astronomy, and ancient mysteries and riddles together with the theories they spawn. The author provides sources for most of the evidence he presents (via endnotes arranged by chapters, 363-92).

As von Fange puts it, he wrote this book “to inform and assure the reader that science was never the problem. There is a vast difference between science and speculation posing as science” (21). Details gathered over more than forty years of
teaching flow from the author as well-known and familiar facts, yet their massive quantity does not slow the flow of the text. Reading is a pleasure, not a burden. One detracting aspect appears repeatedly, however—many details lack proper references and some details find support in either questionable news media accounts or very outdated material. Improved, more exact, and up-to-date documentation would increase the length of the volume significantly, but would generate a greater willingness on the part of the reader to accept the factuality of the evidence. For example, the claim that Darwin looked forward to the elimination of lower human races and the potential influence this view had on the Nazi slaughter of Jews (130) possesses no direct reference to Darwin’s own words. Instead, the endnote merely cites a secondary source by Stanley Jaki (374 n. 46). Another glaring absence of documentation comes in the listing of the statistics for extinctions by geological era (165). The author refers to a specific United Nations report, but fails to cite it directly—relying instead, upon a news article in the Ann Arbor News (166, 376 n. 6).

I wish these were rare occurrences, but unfortunately, they occur so frequently that a careful reader will begin to feel a degree of discomfort with the dependability of some evidence thus presented.

Each chapter concludes with questions for reflection and discussion (22-23, 47-48, 60-61). The following is an example of these questions: “We can also see remarkable variation occurring when we sit down at a mall and watch the people go by. Is it possible that we are gradually changing into some other species if we give this process enough time? Why or why not?” (134, #8). The reader knows by these questions that the author desires interaction with the reader and interaction between readers—it is a volume that enlists the reader in research, discovery, and reasoning. Great teaching and successful learning consist of just such personal involvement in the subject matter.

Each reader will discover his or her own favorite chapter. The chapter about Joshua’s long day (93-100), revealing the misinformation that swirled around biblical circles some years ago, admits to hoaxes on the creationist side of the debate. On the other hand, “The Incredible Piltdown Hoax” (137-60) exposes hoaxes on the evolutionist side. The story of the Piltdown hoax reads like a masterful whodunit (the title, in fact, of one of the chapter’s sections, 152)—a very engaging and fascinating read alone worth the price of the book. “The Art of Misquoting Archbishop Ussher” (101-14) provides even more fodder for thought.

The penultimate chapter (“Science and Deception,” 333-53) commences von Fange’s critique of what too often poses as science (cf. 21). He identifies evolution’s three disastrous failings as “the science that consists of an unshakable faith in what this science is going to prove some day,” evolution’s “borrowed concepts from nineteenth century physics that physicists discarded long ago as useless,” and evolution’s failure to “invite us into the laboratory as with other sciences” (334-35).

Regardless of the shortcomings of In Search of the Genesis World, the volume provides an invaluable compendium of a wide range of topics in the cre-
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The author writes well and incites his readers to think deeply, carefully, and consistently (which might be the very reason why its shortcomings might become evident). The volume makes a valuable contribution and deserves a place alongside other good creationist materials.


The author of this volume is professor emeritus at Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catherines, Ontario. He has served as a pastor or professor in the United States, Canada, and Germany. He has also been involved with various Lutheran mission agencies and committees.

For an overview of the features shared by each of the commentaries in this series, see above the review of the volume on Joshua by Harstad. Here are a few features of this volume that differ from the commentary on Joshua. Whereas Harstad was able to devote almost a thousand pages to a biblical book with 24 chapters, Wilch devotes 464 pages to a book with four chapters. His introduction section occupies almost a third of the volume. In addition to the customary issues covered in introductions, he devotes numerous pages to motifs, theology, and relevance (75 pages of 106 pages of introduction).

As with other volumes in this series, Wilch divides the Book of Ruth into major sections. Each section has a translation of that passage, textual notes, and commentary. In this volume, the textual notes are fairly extensive. However, Wilch never provides an outline of the entire book. He identifies each major section, but never attempts to demonstrate the flow of the entire book. One unique (and odd?) feature of the volume is Wilch’s arrangement of almost every section of Ruth as some kind of chiasm.

Wilch’s commentary is a great resource for students of the Book of Ruth. His textual notes deal with word meanings, syntax, and textual issues that might clutter up his exposition of the text. Although he writes for a Lutheran publisher, he includes less distinctively Lutheran observations than Harstad did, which makes his volume more usable to a wider audience. His observations throughout the volume are clear and helpful. He provides a measured “Christotelic” understanding of certain parts of Ruth, but generally does not overplay that aspect of Ruth’s message. This commentary offers a solid exposition of Ruth.

A significant volume just received just before printing this issue of the *MSJ*. 

This work by a TMS graduate is included because of its outstanding endorsements, two of which are given below:

“Rynold Dean’s work on evangelical hermeneutics and the NT use of the OT gives a detailed analysis of the question at hand that leads to a needed refinement in how we talk about the NT writers’ use of the Old. In particular, while correctly supporting grammatical-historical interpretation, he wisely argues that we should not speak of adding meaning to the Old Testament text. In this way, he helps to get past all of the slippery categories that have arisen which do not provide aid for clarity. In light of this, Dean’s work is worth the reading in order to rethink the categories that have plagued much of the discussion of the NT use of the OT.”

Dr. Mike Stallard, Dean, Baptist Bible Seminary, Clark Summit, Pa.

“Ryne Dean has given us a finely wrought critical analysis of the current intramural debate among evangelical scholars over the New Testament use of the Old Testament. E. B. White’s dictum ‘clarity is style’ makes this an elegant book as in brief space the author deftly presents the current veins of scholarship in clearest prose with an even-handed evaluation. His own insight as to the correlation that is inherent in the New Testament use of the Old Testament in its grammatical-historical context will enrich the ongoing discussion. This is an essential read for anyone who is concerned with understanding the whole Bible.”

Dr. R. Kent Hughes, Senior Pastor Emeritus, Wheaton College Church, Wheaton, Ill.

This book will be of general interest, both because Dr Packer rightly has many admirers around the world and because anything that addresses the future of evangelicalism seriously has to be of importance. The twelve chapters, by different contributors, consist of material first given in honour of Jim Packer at Beeson Divinity School in 2006. A concluding chapter gives the subject’s own “Reflections and Response.” In this reviewer’s opinion a worthy biography of Packer has yet to be written.

Though the authors of this book mean to “celebrate his life”—and include not a little interesting biography—this work is not intended to fill that need. In some respects the book is surprising. It contains the kind of high praise not usually expressed in a man’s lifetime, such as “this will be known as the Packer Era because J. I. Packer has been the towering figure of this era” (139). The explanation for this perhaps over-the-top praise seems to lie in one of the main themes of the book, namely that Packer was right to seek to move contemporary evangelicals towards sympathy with Christian traditions other than their own. For doing this, his reputation has suffered in some circles, and Timothy George (and most of his fellow contributors) evidently intends to rectify that supposed injustice. Two of the contributors are Charles Colson and the late Richard John Neuhaus, the originators of the Evangelical and Catholics Together program (ECT). Speaking of ECT, Colson says, “I think now most people applaud it” (131). So little was Neuhaus concerned to placate any doubtful evangelicals that he gives us repeated references to John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

There is much in Packer that is not related to this area of controversy. No one will find a whisper of it in his greatest book, *Knowing God*. Many of us eagerly spread that book, content to leave aside the question how its “Puritan” standpoint can be consistent with some other later writings. Some of the contributors to the book we are reviewing may be under the misapprehension that Packer cannot be admired unless there is agreement on the controversy. The chapter by Mark Dever helps to show this is not so. It is therefore regrettable that this book should rather closely tie Packer’s permanent usefulness to the churches with an issue on which we think he
is mistaken. What is the mistake? Not that a Roman Catholic may be a Chris-
tian—who in his senses would deny it?—but that the official Roman teaching is a
safe guide to Christ for all to follow. Dr. Packer’s position is that he differs with
Rome on the doctrine of the church, and it is that which “makes anything like
reunion impossible” (184). If that is the only discrepancy between Rome and
Scripture, then continuing division may be deplored; but traditional Protestant
and evangelical belief has been that Rome is false to Scripture on the way of salvation
itself.

We are thankful for Packer’s opposition to liberalism, yet what liberalism
has done to the churches is far too little recognized in these pages. The damage has
been done, not by “modernity” or “postmodernism,” but by plain disbelief in the
word of God. That is why the ecumenical agenda has proceeded—as Dr Lloyd-Jones
said long ago—without any basic agreement on “What is a Christian?” The same
omission exists in the ECT documents.

It is not the purpose here to summarize the material in this book. We hope
many ministers and serious Christians will read it for themselves. There is one
chapter, however, on which we need to dwell because of its serious inaccuracies; it
is the contribution of Carl Trueman on “J. I. Packer: An English Nonconformist
Perspective.” The greater part of this chapter has to do with Packer’s parting from
Lloyd-Jones. The main issue here is simple: who departed from whom? Lloyd-Jones
parted from Packer, says Trueman, by the address he gave at the Evangelical
Alliance meeting of 1966. The facts are against any such interpretation. Packer and
Lloyd-Jones continued to work together at the Puritan Conference in 1967, 68, 69,
and would have done so in 1970 had it not been for the publication of Growing into
Union (London: SPCK, May 1970). In this book Packer endorsed teaching that
belongs to the Roman Catholic tradition and not to the Thirty-nine Articles of the
Church of England.

The issue between Lloyd-Jones and Packer was not, as Trueman represents
it, ‘separatism versus the Church of England’; it was maintaining historic evangelical
belief versus ecumenical alignment. Dr Trueman makes some points that are true and
insightful, but his main case is simply wrong, and his reliance on the unworthy
opinions of Dr Gaius Davies (who was no firsthand witness to the discussions of the
1960s) very regrettable. He reports: “Davies argues that Lloyd-Jones could not stand
competition and could not bear not to be in overall control…. A split with Lloyd-
Jones was always a likely outcome: after all, Packer was the only man within Lloyd-
Jones’s orbit who could pose a serious challenge to his leadership” (123). We would
like to know of one evangelical minister present at that time who holds such an
opinion and regret that Packer could let it stand without comment in his concluding
chapter. It is false and has misled Dr Truemen to support a slander.

Trueman attacks Lloyd-Jones’s thinking for offering an alternative to
Packer’s position which was “little more than an evangelical, anti-Roman form of the
very doctrinal indifferentism he rightly saw as the poison of 1960s mainstream
ecumenism” (122). He bases the charge on the grounds that Lloyd-Jones had nothing
to say on sacraments, church government, and such like. This is a complete misreading of the situation, as anyone could confirm who attended the Westminster Fellowship during the years when just such matters were discussed, at Dr Lloyd-Jones’s direction. Certainly he did not believe those subjects were the issue in the 1960s. A much greater danger concerned him. But that he trivialized their importance is quite wrong. Part of his concern that Presbyterian denominations should belong (as they did) to the British Evangelical Council was that he was concerned that the convictions of these denominations would be found alongside men of Baptist and Independent persuasion. In other words, Lloyd-Jones’s convictions on church issues were (as with Whitefield in the 18th century, and Spurgeon in the Downgrade Controversy) devoted to what was more fundamental.

Carl Trueman thinks Packer should have left the Church of England and taken on the leadership role among the men Lloyd-Jones had led. Given the beliefs Packer endorsed in 1970, that could never be. God had another and a wider ministry for his servant. If it is overstating it to say that Jim Packer became “the bishop of evangelicalism, at least in North America” (131), it is surely true that, under God, he has been the means of doing much lasting good. The best of us are inconsistent in measure; in differing from our friend, as I do, I believe I am adhering to the conviction that has played such a large part in his own ministry.


The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary series (J. Gordon McConville and Craig Bartholomew, eds.) combines theological exegesis and theological reflection in a paragraph-by-paragraph commentary on the biblical text. The Psalms commentary by Grogan apportions the material in the usual distribution

In his “Introduction,” Grogan briefly discusses the world of the Psalms (1-2) and affirms that George Adam Smith’s Historical Geography of the Holy Land “has never been bettered” for understanding the geographic background (2). In his treatment of textual criticism (3-4) he expresses confidence in the Masoretic Text. Poetry and parallelism form the topics in “Sense Rhythms of the Psalms” (4-6). A series of sections deal with the variety of critical methodologies employed by scholars for the study of the Psalter: “Historical and Source Criticism” (6-10), “Psalm Genres and Form Criticism” (10-19), “Redaction Criticism” (19-21), “Canonical Criticism” (21-29), “Rhetorical or Literary Criticism” (29-31), and “Reader-Oriented Criticism” (31-32). Within the section on historical and source criticism, Grogan includes an examination of the psalm superscriptions (8-10). He concludes that the superscriptions “belong to the biblical text” (8), but fails to mention the work of James Thirtle (The Titles of the Psalms: Their Nature and Meaning Explained, Henry Frowde, 1904) and omits any reference in the entire volume to Bruce K. Waltke’s “Superscripts, Postscripts, or Both,” Journal of Biblical Literature 110/4 (1991):583-96. The author returns to the issue of the superscriptions in an insightful excursus on “The Davidic Psalms” (34-39), in which he supports the concept that David himself “updated” his psalms for use in Temple worship (37). Grogan maintains Davidic authorship for the Davidic psalms as a whole (39). Under the topic of “Rhetorical or Literary Criticism,” he proposes a succinct topical summary of each of the five books of the Psalter (31) that many readers will find welcome and useful. Cautioning against getting swept up too much in the various critical methodologies, the author reminds readers that “the higher our view of biblical authority is, the more tentative we should be, lest we elevate some particular system of literary study to a position above the biblical text itself” (33).

The exegetical section of this volume bears some semblance to the type of commentary offered by Robert Davidson in The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms (Eerdmans, 1998), a work which Grogan cites frequently. Grogan spends but a page or two on most individual psalms and sometimes three or four pages for the longer psalms (including Psalm 119). His comments cite the Hebrew text (see 62 concerning 16:2-4 and 209 concerning 132:1-9) and his footnotes demonstrate the extent of his research (see 42 n. 2, 65 n. 94, 99-100 n. 16, and 135 n. 12). Contrary to current practice in many commentaries on Psalms, he does not ignore the superscriptions in his comments. He often comments on
interpretive or translational problems (e.g., 49 n. 30 regarding 5:3, 73 n. 136 regarding 22:16, and 131 n. 167 regarding 71:15). Speaking to the governing tone of his commentary, he identifies one’s desire for the living God as “an essential, indeed, the essential, ingredient” (42, emphasis his) in the reader’s approach to the biblical text of the Psalter.


Throughout this commentary the author exhibits an affinity to conservative, evangelical commentators and theologians. His views are thoroughly evangelical. Both of these factors produce a volume that replaces the liberal theological product of Hans-Joachim Kraus’s classic work, Theology of the Psalms (Augsburg, 1986). Grogan’s theological treatise finds many similarities to Michael E. Travers, Encountering God in the Psalms (Kregel, 2003; see the review in MSJ 18/1 (Spring 2007):138-39) and James Luther Mays, The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms (Westminster John Knox, 2004), who share the same conservative and evangelical stance.

Grogan’s commentary on Psalms provides an excellent resource for students, informed laymen, pastors, and teachers. Everyone who teaches or preaches from the Psalter will benefit from referring to this volume quickly and often. For this reviewer, Psalms is Grogan’s best work yet.

In 1927, a group of Los Angeles church leaders, concerned with the drift and foment within the American church scene, committed themselves to establishing an institution anchored on the fundamental truths that were being abandoned by a growing number of seminaries. Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary was established as a statement and vision against the rising tide of modernism and liberalism. Today, that fledgling Baptist school is The Master’s College and Seminary.

The turbulent years of the twenties was to give birth to another academic institution. Founded in 1924, a mere three years prior to LABTS, the Evangelical Theological College in Dallas, Texas was also launched in the midst of the growing swell and storm within the American church. Today, that institution is known as Dallas Theological Seminary.

John D. Hannah is well-qualified to address a history of Dallas Theological Seminary. Scholastically, Hannah’s doctoral research at the University of Texas (Dallas) resulted in his excellent dissertation, *The Social and Intellectual History of the Origins of the Evangelical Theological College*. This fine treatment of the social, cultural, and theological milieu that birthed Dallas Seminary provides the archival spadework behind the volume under consideration.

Furthermore, Hannah has been a participant-observer; both as a student at Dallas and as Distinguished Professor of Historical Theology for forty years—a significant percentage of the institution’s history. As such, Hannah’s insights by both archival and anecdotal insight are profound. His distinguished career as both a scholar and professor positions him well to guide the reader through Dallas’ history.

*Uncommon Union: Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism* is organized structurally around the commonly utilized thread of presidential leadership. Like most, institutional histories, Hannah begins by setting the stage for the institution’s genesis—theologically, culturally, and socially. This is followed by development of the issues and challenges facing Dallas’ five presidents. The text takes advantage of rich primary archival resources providing a refreshing scholarship given the secondary and tertiary sources commonly used in other Christian institutional histories.

Hannah does have the unenviable task of writing his history while gainfully employed by the same institution. This challenge is openly and clearly acknowledged in his introduction to the work (16). *Uncommon Union* must thread the fine line between historical honesty and accuracy with present administrative sensibilities, particularly in regards to the “living history” whose actors are still on, or near, the Dallas stage. This results in a subtle shift from a reflective history early in the work, to a more descriptive history in the more contemporary era. Hannah skillfully and masterfully avoids the trend to begin with humble origins, move to a period of institutional struggle and emergence, and then conclude with the institution as a paradigm of academic arrival, interestingly coinciding with the current administration. The histories of other institutions tell the wonderful tales of by-gone days to warm the hearts and recollections of alma mater to alums, or are written as public
relation pieces to be used by development offices in courting prospective donors. *Uncommon Union* is not hagiography. Hannah is transparent and honest—a daunting challenge for any historian reflecting on the institution with which he is so deeply associated.

In reviewing the work, several observations emerged. First, this reviewer would have recommended to the editor that the rich quantitative data provided would be better presented in tabular form rather than in the narrative. At times, descriptive statistical data breaks the flow of the fine discussion occurring in the narrative, particularly in the latter half of the work. Tables could present statistical information in a visually-comprehensible format that would be more meaningful to the reader without altering the narrative flow.

Second, the assumption might be that *Uncommon Union* would only interest individuals connected with Dallas. Hannah’s unfolding of the turmoil and upheaval that birthed the seminary, as well as the issues and challenges that molded it, would be of interest to anyone concerned with the forces that have shaped the modern American church scene. As the subtitle suggests, the union between Dallas Theological Seminary and the shaping of American Evangelicalism is profound. The influence of the legions of “Dallas Men” (and later women) have left an indelible mark on evangelical thought and ministry.

Finally, readers may be surprised to find that Dallas Theological Seminary is not as monolithic as they thought; those assuming that Dallas is Arminian in theological orientation may be surprised to find out about its Presbyterian and Calvinistic roots. Readers may be surprised to find that their perceptions of Dallas are in fact wrong.

*An Uncommon Union: Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism* is more than a mere institutional history: it is a *tour de force* of an institution that has both shaped, and been shaped, by American Evangelicalism. It is a window through which one can view and understand the American theological landscape. Its graduates serve influential positions of leadership worldwide, shaping a wide diversity of institutions and ministries. Dallas Theological Seminary’s historical legacy and contribution mirror the evangelical soul, and, together, the two form an “uncommon union” as it has shaped American Evangelicalism.


After an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion, one comes to the end of a very thorough examination of passages on hope in the NT. Current views have been critiqued. Tables and charts make their contribution to understanding what is being explained or outlined. An extensive set of instructive footnotes makes its mark
in that the bulk of the data which would be in the main text of a dissertation but which obviously became footnotes. At times, it seemed that the comment made in the footnote was only indirectly related to the subject matter, but the comment showed the author’s awareness of the original languages and the movement of thought/argument in a biblical book/epistle, if not also the debates through the ages. The contemporary question of too many Christians is, “Do I know for sure that I will spend eternity with God?"

The history of assurance begins with the thoughts of Thomas Aquinas, followed by those of Martin Luther, of John Calvin, and of John Wesley. These four theologians were chosen because contemporary opinions regarding assurance grow out of the views held by these scholars (50). Disagreements among the scholars today result in three major views being identified, namely, Present Only View (POV), the Time of Conversion View (ToC), and the Composite View (CV), all of which headings or labels were original with the author (51). The major difference between the views is that the POV rejects the idea of present assurance of final salvation being possible. The other two views agree that it is possible (51). Only the objective promises of God form the basis for assurance, so says ToC. The believer’s life style after conversion is rejected as a means of assurance. The CV, as its label suggests, synthesizes the other two views. The objective and subjective are combined, causing some debate with the other two (52).

Chapter Two then goes on to explain the three views in more detail. POV, as anticipated, holds to genuine believers falling from grace and not persevering in faith and obedience, and asserts that one cannot know whether or not he is part of the elect. ToC proclaims the objective work of Christ as the only basis for assurance (57). The linkage between faith and assurance is strong enough to declare that assurance is of the essence of saving faith, and saving faith on the other hand is necessarily antecedent to good works (62). Inserted at the end of Chapter Two (71) is a very helpful diagram showing how the three views relate to the objective and subjective “Means of Assurance” and the possibility or impossibility of having “Security of Final Salvation.”

From this point on the author states his intention to evaluate the three views in the light of the biblical theology of hope and to pinpoint the one closest to Scripture. Four chapters examine “hope.” “Abraham and Hope” which basically gives consideration to Paul’s use of Abraham in Romans 4 and then in Hebrews 6 (ch. 3). “Hope” in the NT Historical Texts (ch. 4), is followed by “Hope in the Paul’s Writings” (ch. 5) and closed off with “Hope in the General Epistles” (ch. 6). Seven tables on references to hope under various categories appear in each of the four chapters (74, 75, 101, 107-8, 135, 198-99, 206-7), as noted above, making their contribution to the clarity of what is being expressed. The lengthy footnotes are almost intimidating at first, but then one recognizes that the format allows for a swift reading of the material, and if need be, the reader can stop and wade through the information given in the notes. Hoskinson well observes that Abraham’s life proves that growth is fundamental to justifying faith. Constantly, points made from the text
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are applied to one or more items in the different views. A comparative critique is conducted through these chapters as well. The study of hope in Chapter Four introduces the reader to five mundane references in Luke and Acts, two OT citations, and then the rest of the occurrences being treated under “Redemptive/Salvific Hope” and under the heading “Hope as a Cornerstone in Paul’s Defense.” The latter is a subset of the former heading, since it is a reference to his redemptive hope, although stated while defending himself before the authorities no less than four times (127). His hope for the resurrection was one of the grounds for his incarceration. His message is consistent with the Word of God:. His hope for the future is based upon the Truth.

Note is made too of the Messiah having first to rise from the dead. God’s promises of the future provide hope. In the writings of Paul hope is to be found mentioned numerous times (134-68). A wealth of information on this topic fills these pages. The table of references shows 45 under five categories, which includes hope and the believer’s conversion, sanctification, and eschatological future. Hope as a divine gift and individual/mundane references are also noted. This is a ‘rich’ section and worthy of being read slowly and thoughtfully with Bible and Greek text at hand. Two broad statements succinctly summarize the teaching in the Pauline writings: “God is the originator of the believer’s hope,” and “The believer’s hope is inextricably tied to his perseverance in faith and obedience” (167).

The job would be left incomplete were the examination of hope in the General Epistles to be omitted. Fourteen references from Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, and 2 and 3 John receive attention.

The book’s conclusion reviews the contemporary views spelled out on its pages. An appendix on assurance as of the essence of saving faith closes off the book which is a pleasure to read. The final sentence of Chapter 6 is a worthy ending to this review: “[F]ar from being irreconcilable foes, the promises of God and the endurance of the Christian form a twofold means by which the believer may enjoy present assurance of his final salvation” (195).

Preach it!


The title of this very recent publication could also be used to describe Dr. MacArthur’s deep concern at the shameful redefinition of both the gospel message and the ministry. He is certainly not ashamed of the gospel, but he is ashamed of the caricaturing taking place and the errant methodology being promoted. John MacArthur makes it quite clear that he does not write in anger, but with the prayer that the book would challenge the common way of thinking about the issues covered
in the book, so that the reader would go back to the Scriptures (34).

Having read a portion of the 1993 edition of his book, the author was moved to upgrade and update, but not to enlarge its contents by more than two additional chapters (11 and 12) and one more appendix (App. 2). A major reason for not just reissuing the book was to highlight the unchanging nature of its message (24). Presumably, it is the gospel message which is always relevant and beyond review and redefinition.

The reader will find his normal rate of reading will have to slow down, for very good reason, and that is to absorb the host of historical and biographical information as well as a multiplicity of exegetical and interpretive comments accompanying the many cross-references to appropriate passages of Scripture. The reader will find no text taken out of context to support a pretext. It is certainly not the writing of someone who has become an expert in some sphere of knowledge and is now using his own thoughts and proposals, his self-developed formula, in evaluation and measurement. It is not a question of “MacArthurism” versus other “isms” or theories either. Rather, such a critique as offered in *Ashamed of the Gospel*, is the end result of mastering the divinely inspired text. No! More correctly stated it is “the result of being mastered by the divinely inspired biblical text.”

“What does the Bible say?” points to the right source for critical data on the gospel message and the church’s philosophy of ministry and relationship with the world around.

The reader will be introduced to a wide variety of issues within the evangelical world, e.g., post-modernism, the emerging church, pragmatism and its detrimental effect, adopting marketing strategy for ministry, user-friendly churches, the audience as the message-determinant, the Down-Grade Controversy in Spurgeon’s time, worldliness which relegates God and His Word to a subordinate role in the church, the loss of interest in preaching, especially that which confronts the sinner and calls for repentance, and a biblical philosophy of ministry, *et. al.*

Such serious issues are covered in twelve chapters (220 pages) and four appendices (71 pages). Chapter titles prime the reader as to what will be discussed therein, e.g., “The User-Friendly Churches” (ch. 2), “The Sovereignty of God in Salvation” (ch. 8), or “Carried About by Every Wind” (ch. 11), and in the Appendices, “Spurgeon Speaks to Our Time” (App. 2) or “Charles Finney and American Evangelicalism” (App. 3). Memorable expressions occur here and there, and may even be added to a preacher’s file of quotations or function mnemonically.

“The new philosophy is straightforward: The church is in competition against the world, and the world is very good at capturing people’s attention and affections. The church, on the other hand, tends to be very poor at ‘selling’ its product. Evangelism should therefore be viewed as a marketing challenge…” (37).

“To be a Christian is to be a warrior. The good soldier of Jesus Christ must not expect to find ease in this world: it is a battlefield” (272).

“There has never been a time when biblical Christianity was not threatened with worldliness and false doctrine” (117).
“Ecclesiastics have altered the gospel, and if it had not been of God, it would have been stifled by falsehood long ago” (266).

Lest some think a book of this nature leaves one despondent and depressed at finding out how much is still wrong with so many evangelical churches, the final words of the book indicate the attitude and demeanor applicable to the man of God facing the reality of much turmoil over the issues identified above: “There are, thankfully, many knees that have not yet bowed to the Baal of pragmatism. May God bless them and make them fruitful. I for one have absolute confidence that no matter how many religious hucksters and marketeers may come and go, and no matter how much wood, hay, and stubble is going to burn up, the Lord is building His church, “and the gates of hell [margin] shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18)” (232).

Ashamed of the Gospel (3rd ed.) stands as a model of how fruitfully Scripture correctly interpreted can be brought to bear critically upon the church in the world. It yields too the type of questions a candidate for a pastorate should be asked, or what a candidate should ask of the elders and other church leaders interviewing him.


Kenneth A. Mathews is professor of OT at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University. Before going to Beeson Divinity School in 1989, he taught at Criswell College and was an adjunct professor at Dallas Baptist University. He is an ordained minister in the Southern Baptist Convention. As an acknowledged expert on the Dead Sea Scrolls, textual criticism, biblical Hebrew, and the literary study of the OT, Mathews co-authored The Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll (American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985) with David Noel Freedman. He also co-authored Foundations for Biblical Interpretation: A Complete Library of Tools and Resources (Baptist Sunday School Board, 1999) with David S. Dockery and Robert B. Sloan. Mathews serves as the associate general editor for the OT in the New American Commentary series for which he wrote the two Genesis volumes (Broadman & Holman, 1996, 2002).

Kent Hughes serves as the general editor for the Preaching the Word series of expository commentaries for both OT and NT. The series engages the biblical text as the authoritative Word of God. It provides readable expositions of the biblical text that include practical application. In the preface to this volume, Mathews observes that OT scholars tend to ignore the relationship of the text to the NT’s gospel (11). Throughout this volume on Leviticus, he carefully identifies and develops that relationship without ignoring the exegesis of the text within its own context. Students
in Mathews’ doctor of ministry (D.Min.) seminars stimulated his enthusiasm for this commentary by agreeing that “if a person can preach from Leviticus effectively, a person can preach from anywhere in the Bible!” (13).

*Leviticus* presents a section-by-section commentary that sometimes provides a verse-by-verse treatment. Mathews covers the twenty-seven chapters of the Book of Leviticus in twenty-three expositions. The first exposition poses an introduction focusing on only the first verse of the book (15-21). The next five expositions cover Leviticus 1–7 (23-72). From that point on, each chapter of Leviticus receives its own exposition with the exception of the twelfth exposition treating Leviticus 13:1–15:33 (123-32), the fifteenth exposition (Lev 18:1-30 and 20:1-27; 155-65), and the seventeenth exposition (Lev 21:1–22:33; 177-87). Also, the author first expounds Lev 23:1-3 (189-98), then handles 23:4-44 in a second message (199-208). The endnotes (249-63) reveal Mathews’ careful exegesis and technical resources. He has not ignored any of the major commentaries or resources, but has paid closest attention to dependable evangelical commentators and scholars. The volume concludes with a “Scripture Index” (265-78), a “General Index” (279-83), and a very practical “Index of Sermon Illustrations” (284-87).

The author limits references to Hebrew in the body of his expositions, but will not shrink from using it when he deems it necessary (e.g., 29, 47, 62). Every page exudes his passion for preaching and his careful application of biblical truth to the modern hearer. The following examples demonstrate Mathews’ skill in bringing the text to bear on the hearer or reader:

The difference between unintentional and willful sins is not so much the sin per se but the attitude of the offender toward his sin (53).

Our sin cannot be satisfied by any act of penance, sincere or not (59).

[T]he trend toward casual dress and laid-back behavior in our culture has also left its mark on the perception of how to handle the “holy” (61).

The overarching lesson is the importance of proper worship in the presence of God made possible through the gracious relationship God has with his people (123).

To confuse or reject the Creator’s design is to deny the lordship of God (157).

*Holy living* before God and *honest living* before our neighbors are the two pillars upon which the whole of God’s demands rest (167).

Mathews points out that the sabbaths in the Levitical system were not Israel’s to do with as they wished. The Lord established the sabbaths for Himself, not for the people. Thus Scripture rarely refers to them as “your sabbath(s)” (meaning
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Israel's), but overwhelming as “my sabbath(s)” (meaning the Lord's). “The convocations were focused on the worship of God—they are his special times” (190).

When his exposition encounters problematic texts in Leviticus, Mathews does not ignore or skip over the interpretive issue—he tackles it directly and provides a coherent and biblically faithful conclusion. Examples of such treatments include the issue of the meaning of “cutting off” (69-70), the matter of Aaron’s silence after the deaths of Nadab and Abihu (96-97), the question regarding what God designed the levitical food laws to accomplish (103-7), and determining the meaning of “Azazel” in 16:8, 10 (138-39). The author also does not hesitate to explain (in simple terms) the occurrence of a sophisticated wordplay in Lev 7:35 (71) or a sound play in 9:24 (90-91). Repeatedly, Mathews takes note of significant aspects of teachings in Leviticus that many commentators ignore—e.g., the significance of the eighth day in Levitical law and the NT (84).

Although the volume appears to be relatively free of typos and other kinds of mistakes, there is one instance of mentioning “five special items” (76) with only four being identified (76-77). Matters of questionable or incomplete interpretation occur, but rarely. In his treatment of the purpose for the dietary laws, Mathews mentions the clean and unclean categories of animals in the time of Noah. He indicates that such an early classification must be due to “an intuitive awareness of what was appropriate for an offering presented to the Lord” (104). He fails to discuss the possibility that the categories of animals came through divine revelation either to Noah or to earlier generations.

Another issue arises in the author’s discussion of the uncleanness or impurity of a woman after childbirth (114-16). Mathews contends that the issue involves the concept of perfection (114). It appears that he has not taken into account adequately that the same birthing conditions would have existed even in the woman’s perfect, unfallen state. Multiplying and populating the earth must include giving birth as the divine means. How then could bearing children “reflect an unusual condition, not her typical healthy, whole state” (115)?

Limiting the function of the Urim and Thummim to answering mere yes/no questions (137) skips over a text like Judg 20:28 that seems to indicate a more detailed response from God. Actually, no one knows for certain how the Urim and Thummim were employed. God may have granted a detailed answer to a particular question in recognition of the Urim and Thummim’s presence, rather than by using them like common lots.

Bible expositors will benefit greatly from this commentary. Pastors and teachers alike should place it on study shelves where they keep their most valued resources at hand—right alongside Allen P. Ross’s Holiness to the LORD: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus (Baker, 2002), Mark Rooker’s Leviticus (NAC, Broadman & Holman, 2000), and Gordon J. Wenham’s The Book of Leviticus (NICOT, Eerdmans, 1979).

After twenty-eight years of teaching theology at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Rolland McCune published his theology notes, leaving behind a legacy of concise and instructive comments. This second volume covers Parts 5-8, i.e. “The Doctrine of Man,” “The Doctrine of Sin,” The Doctrine of Christ,” and “The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.” The author presents the origin of man without entering into extensive arguments of science and paleontology. No fuss, no bother, not a wasted word! He takes the biblical text at face value and teaches what it says. The *imago dei* is presented under Man’s personal, spiritual, moral, and physical (?) resemblance to God (26-28). Note the author’s question mark. Although he does not mention it specifically, McCune is obviously aware that the two terms, *tselem* and *demuth*, do point to an exact replica. In fact, a word study bears this out. However, that does not make it easier to explain. Hence the question mark.

He introduces the important consideration of Christ being the archetypical form God had in mind when He made man. The dots connect when it is remembered that Christ would need a body for the incarnation. An excursus in the book is on whether or not the image was lost in the Fall (29-30), but one wonders if this was so debatable that it warranted a special note. It is the author’s judgment call. McCune dealt with it succinctly with three footnotes showing his awareness of what several other writers had concluded.

Chapter 14, “The Original State of Man,” is just over four pages, with the material grouped under four categories, namely “Man’s Moral Nature, Man’s Mental Endowment, Man’s Dominion Over Creation, and Man’s Original Diet.” If there was to be excursus which would treat critically and biblically an area of knowledge which has become blurred today, that would be the arguments over theistic evolution and Fiat Creationism. Considering that fact that McCune is obviously a six-day young-earth creationist, he was obligated to react at the very least with those conservative evangelicals who have capitulated to science and have allowed it to change their interpretation of Scripture. The author in writing so succinctly and concisely and with clarity displays a mastery in summarization and in choosing what to focus on in place of lengthy arguments for and against the young earth as opposed to an old earth (3-10).

McCune opts in favor of traducianism over creationism and Federal Headship over against Seminalism. He presents arguments for and against each view, although he bills Federalism as being endorsed by all the arguments against the other views. He finds it problematical that Seminalism has to propose the “unindividualized” humankind all being in Adam. Unfortunately, David Turner’s doctoral dissertation (Grace Theological Seminary, 1982) has been overlooked. It would be
interesting to see what McCune’s reaction might be, especially on the gnostic aorist in the final clause of Rom 5:12.

Twenty short, one-sentence descriptions of the incarnation lay bare just how much material is available for study. Other than a footnote affirming that Jesus Christ was a genuine human and that He had come not in sinful flesh but rather in the likeness of ordinary, sinful humanity (102 n. 3), no systematic discussion follows up any one of these description. What follows is “An Exegetical Sketch of Philippians 2:5-8,” in which different explanations of the “self-emptying” are briefly noted. The preferred definition is that He voluntarily set aside the unqualified exercise of His attributes and took the form of a servant. McCune qualified the relinquishing of His attributes by noting that He made use of His attributes during His life, His act was voluntary, and He was perfectly cognizant of His pre-incarnate state (107-9). Actually, the author adds one more which is that Christ depended on the power of the Holy Spirit during the kenosis period.

Nothing startling or that different occurs in the chapters on the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, and the humanity of Christ (115-38). It is standard fare and perfectly acceptable for the Bible student who avoids following a scholar with a reputation for re-doing and re-formatting everything. The brief discussion on the theanthropic person of Christ and the hypostatic union passes muster. The notes on impeccability brushed aside Canham’s thought-provoking article in TMSJ 11 (2000), after citing only one part of his conclusions. It is worthy of more examination than it received (149). Canham’s arguments treat peccability in the context of the decrees of God, the four kinds of humanity, and the kenosis, as well as carefully defining various terms, e.g., “ability.”… Christ voluntarily set aside the unqualified exercise of His attributes and took the status of a slave.

McCune covers all the essentials in two chapters on the death of Christ and the meaning of His death. The particular vocabulary of redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation which goes with the atonement receives attention, as does the extent of the atonement. The entire obedience of Christ, both active and passive, are important aspects of His one indivisible life of obedience (199-204). Universality and limitation are two aspects in the atonement, which “being infinite, . . . made an actual (author’s emphasis) provision for all and not just a hypothetical provision” (205). Charles Hodge and John Owen both provide statements in favor of a universal dimension because of the infinite value of Christ’s sacrifice. It is fully sufficient for all the effects or all human beings (207), but then it is also clear that God’s intent was to limit the strictly redemptive provisions to certain ones, the elect, those whom He enables to exercise faith. He comments upon the effectual call and the gifts of faith and repentance. Something obtains for the believer that does not obtain for the unbeliever, the application of the atonement’s accomplishments and benefits (214). His reference to election and the effectual call is obviously very much involved in the application. If the application of the atonement is correlative with its accomplishments and provisions, and it is, then these entail both salvatory (sic) and non-salvatory factors, i.e., the restraining of sin and the general distribution...
of God’s benevolence. Before noting this, McCune had sketched out the universals to be reckoned with, namely the language of invitation, the love of God, the mandate to evangelize, the gospel message, objects of prayer, and [final] sanctification. Mark well that the author does not propose universal salvation. Far from it! This chapter on the atonement leaves the reader with no doubt that McCune has thought through the biblical statements of Scripture and sought to explain them without special pleading to make verses say what they do not say. The chapter closes with a very good précis of the atonement and the divine decrees (218-19). The reader will probably wish to review the material again thoughtfully.

The chapter on the resurrection of Christ and His ascension are standard fare, containing nothing provocative, unusual, or creative. Against those who propose a spiritual resurrection only, the bodily return of Christ is asserted.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit takes up eight chapters, the last one of which overlaps with eschatology—with what small amount of prophecy could be incorporated in just seven pages. Scanning the pages on the doctrine of the Spirit will reveal that the essentials have been summarized adequately. The author holds to the indwelling of OT saints, but rightly retains baptism of the Spirit for NT church-age saints. In so doing, he gives Pentecost its significance in relation to the beginning of the church. He also makes a point of the Spirit and His activity under the dispensation of Conscience, describing it as the articulation of the Spirit with the conscience of man, an arrangement which would come to an end with the Flood (287). It is a pity that McCune could not have gone further and provided some material on the Spirit in relation to the other dispensations—a table would have been more than adequate. In this day and age when dispensationalism is not receiving the respect it deserves, some extra information is almost obligatory. A cross-reference to literature treating the dispensations exegetically would have been a nice touch, and who knows but that it might pull some earnest young student away from classic Reformed non-dispensational amillennialism. McCune chooses only to mention briefly the Spirit in the Tribulation Period and during the Messianic Kingdom.

All in all, this book deserves mention as a good introductory survey of Systematic Theology or as a primer on Christian doctrine. No reason rules out its being used as the foundation of mentoring in theology or in a discipleship setting. Now that the skeleton has been provided, let the erstwhile student “put on the flesh” from a deeper study of Scripture. That would be quite an exercise in learning.

One does not need to look far today to note that there is a plethora of Greek grammars on the market, all with different purposes and goals of how to help a student become proficient in Greek. Some grammars emphasize the memorization of many charts and paradigms; others suggest reading the biblical text almost immediately; and still others are somewhere between.

William D. Mounce has published the third edition of his textbook, Basics of Biblical Greek, of which the first edition came in 1993. He is committed to keeping memorization to a minimum as he states in his preface, “Reduce the essentials to a minimum so the language can be learned and retained as easily as possible, so that the Word of God can be preached in all its power and conviction.” His desire is to encourage the student to be excited about learning the language so that he or she might become more mature in Christ.

He also has kept the organization of his text clear and helpful by teaching nouns, adjectives and pronouns first in chapters 5-14, then teaching the verbs and participles in chapters 15-36. Oftentimes, switching back and forth between nouns and verbs has been quite confusing to the beginning student, and generally, little children learn nouns more easily than verbs when they are learning their language.

One of the key changes in the third edition is that it is more pleasing in appearance. It is larger in size than the second edition and now has margins on the side of the page in which to take notes. Mounce has made the text easier to read, and also easier to find things in the chapter with the titles in larger print. He also has introduced “The Professor,” into his text, which is a cartoon character that appears in the margins. The purpose of “The Professor” is to add helpful thoughts or tidbits to the chapter material, such as numbers, days of the week, greeting one another, etc. All the chapters also have helpful overviews that precede each major section. The overview includes key thoughts for each chapter in that particular section. Furthermore, he has divided chapter 35 into two chapters in this edition, covering the non-indicative forms of ρόντα in chapter 35 and the other three key μυ verbs in chapter 36. Finally, in the Lexicon, Mounce has noted in blue the words that are actually in the text to be memorized, versus all the words in the Lexicon that are mentioned, which include all words used ten times or more.

Probably the most helpful thing that could be added to this text would be an English lexicon for all words fifty times or more and the Greek definition(s) given. Currently, Mounce lists all words used ten times or more that give English definitions of Greek words. But giving Greek definitions of English words would be particularly valuable for the beginning student who perhaps has forgotten a particular word and does not know where to look for it.

In evaluating Mounce’s workbook, one also finds much to commend, in particular, the sentences that are from the scriptures. He has twenty sentences in each lesson that move from elementary to more difficult. It would be helpful if he could leave more space for sentences 11-20. It is difficult to write the entire sentence in English in the space provided. Regarding the parsing, when he gets to verbs, he has chosen to parse in the following order: person, number, tense, voice,
mood. It appears from other textbooks that it is more common to parse the verbs
tense, voice, mood, person, number.

Both Mounce’s grammar and workbook have been and will continue to be
valuable tools for any student desiring to study Greek. He has made it enjoyable to
study and exciting to learn. They are both highly recommended by this writer.

John Piper. *Filling Up the Afflictions of Christ: The Cost of Bringing the Gospel to
the Nations in the Lives of William Tyndale, Adoniram Judson, and John Paton*
(Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2009). 126 pp. $17.99 (paper). Reviewed by Irvin A.
Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

This is the fifth book in the popular series entitled “The Swans are not Silent.” The title of the collection is adapted from Eraclius’ comments at the
retirement of St. Augustine in A.D. 430. As the successor to the esteemed Augustine,
Eraclius observed: “The cricket chirps, the swan is silent.” Contending that the
greatest voices of church history go on speaking, Piper contends, “if someone tells
their story and gives them voice” (9). He powerfully bids his readers to drink from
the reservoir of God’s faithfulness—in this case by recounting the trials endured and
the trials blazed by three men from previous centuries.

Piper introduces this trilogy with a treatise on the role of suffering in the
lives of Christ and the Apostles and then illustrated in the lives of these three men.
He contends, “Afflictions are not merely the result of missionary fruitfulness, but
also the means” (9-10). He adds: “God designs that the suffering of his ambassadors
is one essential means in the triumphant spread of the Good News among all the
peoples of the world…. Suffering and death to save others is not only the content but
it is also the method of our mission” (14, 15).

Utilizing Col 1:24 as the scriptural foundation of his thoughts, Piper
explains that “Paul’s sufferings fill up Christ’s afflictions not by adding anything to
their worth, but by extending them to the people they were meant to save” (22).
“Christ has prepared a love offering for the world by suffering and dying for sinners.
It is full and lacking in nothing—except one thing, a personal presentation by Christ
himself to the nations of the world. God’s answer to this lack is to call the people of
Christ (people like Paul) to make a personal presentation to the afflictions of Christ
to the world” (23).

The focus of Piper’s first biography is William Tyndale. Born in 1494,
Tyndale was an avid learner, becoming fluent in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German,
French, Spanish, Italian, and English. From his love for the natural power of
language grew a passion to translate the Scriptures into English so that “a boy that
driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than [the Pope] dost” (30). Thus
Tyndale was driven to uncover what lay hidden in the Latin Vulgate and thereby
liberate the life-saving gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone (40-42).
“Bible translation and Bible truth were inseparable for Tyndale, and in the end it was the truth—especially the truth of justification by faith alone—that ignited Britain with Reformed fire and then brought the death sentence to this Bible translator” (43).

Such passion led the British parliament in 1401 to make heresy punishable by burning at the stake. A few years later (1408), the Archbishop of Canterbury declared that translating the Scriptures into English or reading such translations were forbidden (43-44). Facing the heat of hatred, Tyndale fled in 1544 to the continent and went into hiding in Germany and the Netherlands.

Piper then turns his attention to the missionary endeavors of John G. Paton on the islands of New Hebrides. Known today as Vanuatu, this South Pacific country occupies a 450-mile stretch of islands between Hawaii and Australia. Known for their cannibalistic ways, the first missionaries were killed and eaten on November 20, 1839, only minutes after going ashore. Less than 20 years later (1858), Paton, together with his wife and infant son, landed on the island of Tanna. Within the year, his wife and son died of the fever, and by 1864, he was driven from the island.

Two years later, he and his second wife returned, this time to the island of Aniwa, where they labored together for the next 41 years. They learned the language, reduced it to writing, and translated the Scriptures. A hundred years later, over 90% of the Vanuatu population claimed to be Christian (56-58).

Paton went to New Hebrides against the wishes of his church elders. When told by one that he would be eaten by cannibals, he replied, “Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and … soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by Cannibals or by worms…” (58).

Piper attributed Paton’s great courage to his godly heritage (cf. Paton’s stirring tribute to his father, 70-72); his deep sense of divine calling—“Since none better qualified can be got, rise and offer yourself” (72); and his unshakeable confidence that the sovereign hand of a loving God controlled all adversities (74-78).

Lastly, Piper opens the biography of Adoniram Judson with the exclamation, “How few there are who die so hard” (85), noting that he was “a seed that fell into the ground and died again and again” (86).

After eighteen months of marriage, the 24-year old Judson sailed for India with his young wife. After a brief time with William Carey, they left for Burma—there to labor under the difficulties of discouragement, imprisonment, and diseases that would take the lives of his first two wives and seven of his thirteen children. Buoyed by the certainty of God’s sovereign providence in all of life, Judson remarked: “If I had not felt certain that every additional trial was ordered by infinite love and mercy, I could not have survived my accumulated sufferings” (87).

Judson entered Burma in 1813 and labored there until his death 38 years later. Though his nearly four decades were punctuated with numerous bouts of suffering and death, they were eventually rewarded with remarkable fruitfulness. Six years elapsed before there was a single convert, yet twenty years later thousands
were requesting tracts and copies of his Burmese Bible translation (96-97). Since that time, thousands of congregations have been established and hundreds of thousands have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, this is a book about missions and about the men who sacrificed their lives to proclaim the Good News, “to fill up what was lacking in the afflictions of Christ.” Each of these men gave their all. Though the length of their lives varied—Tyndale died at forty-two; Paton at eighty-two; Judson at sixty-one—the fruit of their lives continues on. Indeed, “the swans are not silent.”


Russell R. Reno is professor of theological ethics at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He authored *In the Ruins of the Church: Sustaining Faith in an Age of Diminished Christianity* (Brazos Press, 2002) and co-authored *Heroism and the Christian Life: Reclaiming Excellence* with Brian S. Hook (Westminster John Knox, 2000) and *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* with John J. O’Keefe (Johns Hopkins, 2005). He also serves as the features editor for the magazine *First Things* (available online at http://www.firstthings.com), and the general editor for the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (BTCB) to which this volume belongs.

BTCB enlists systematic, historical, and moral theologians to provide guidance for pastors and academics in reading the Bible doctrinally. Authors for the volumes adhere to the presupposition that “dogma clarifies rather than obscures” (11). According to Reno, “the Nicene tradition, in all its diversity and controversy provides the proper basis for the interpretation of the Bible as Christian Scripture” (11-12). In an attempt to provide a more balanced perspective, Reno asks that readers not gain an erroneous impression, since the “Nicene tradition does not provide a set formula for the solution of exegetical problems” (12). The editors do not hold commentators for BTCB “to any particular hermeneutical theory that specifies how to define the plain sense of Scripture—or the role this plain sense should play in interpretation” (13). Reno decries the current state of affairs in seminaries and churches providing “theology without exegesis and exegesis without theology” (13). The series employs a range of Bible translations, because “Philological precision and stability is a consequence of, not a basis for, exegesis. Judgments about the meaning of a text fix its literal sense, not the other way around” (14).

With the purpose, nature, and assumptions of BTCB in mind, Reno proceeds to explain his approach in this commentary on Genesis. His method identifies “some of the telling verses in Genesis” and then focuses his comments on
those verses (21). He divides his comments into five main portions that demonstrate the promise-driven nature of the text: (1) Creation: Genesis 1–2 (29-76), (2) Fall: Genesis 3–4 (77-110), (3) Dead ends: Genesis 5–11 (111-35), (4) Scandal of particularity: Genesis 12–33 (137-251), and (5) Need for atonement: Genesis 34–50 (253-91). Within the first of these divisions, Reno comments on 1:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 26a, 26b, 28, 31; 2:2, 5, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, and 24. In the second he selects 3:1a, 1b, 2, 4, 6a, 6b, 7, 14, 21, 24; 4:3, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, and 23. In the third he speaks to 5:1, 24; 6:2, 6, 8, 13, 14; 7:5, 9, 12; 8:16; 9:1, 9, 20, 22; 10:1; 11:4, 5, 10, and 31. Then, in the fourth he identifies and comments on 99 verses, portions of verses, or groups of verses. In the fifth portion Reno comments on only 35 verses. Comments vary in length. For example, the comment on 1:1 extends for about ten pages (29-39), whereas the note on 11:31 comprises a mere four lines (135).

Reno not only recognizes the fundamental significance of biblical teaching concerning creation (32-33), but indicates that the tension between science and theology has existed since the time of Augustine, who feared that scientists would laugh at his biblical view of creation (33). One cannot help but think that science in Augustine’s day would be laughed at by modern scientists and, meanwhile, the Bible has not changed—indicating the fallacy of adapting biblical interpretation to current science. In 1:3 and 4, Reno adopts an allegorical interpretive approach to the text (46-48) and at 1:5 he denies any temporal meaning for either “the beginning” or “day” (48). His treatment of 2:15 moves too quickly to spiritualization (68-69). Providing a concise summary of the various approaches to the translation of the divine title יְהֹוָה, the commentator discusses the theological plusses and minuses to modern translations of the title (64-67). He warns that “changes in traditions of translations, changes supposedly made to achieve greater clarity, can actually generate new forms of obscurity” (66). At 2:18 Reno departs from the chronological flow of the creation account to declare that “the scriptural witness is structured by a movement from very good to better still” (73). However, the error of his approach resides in his drawing an excessive dichotomy between “very good” and “not good.” In point of fact, the “very good” actually follows the “not good” chronologically. Interestingly, although the chosen texts and discussions provide plenty of opportunity to discuss the issue of homosexuality (cf. 56 and 74-76), Reno ignores the implications of the text and fails to offer even a mention of the issue.

Within this theological commentary, readers will find a number of worthy discussions. For example, in his development of 3:1a Reno’s discussion of free will

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12:1a, 1b, 1-2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 13; 13:7, 10, 14, 16, 17; 14:2; 14a, 14b, 18; 15:1-3; 4, 6, 8, 18; 16; 18:1-2, 2b, 4, 6, 11; 17, 2, 4, 5, 7, 11a, 11b, 13, 15, 18; 19:2, 4, 8, 12, 21; 23, 32; 29:12, 26, 31, 36; 40:2; 21:2, 10, 14, 27; 22:1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17; 23:2, 3, 6, 9; 24:1, 2, 6, 58, 67; 25; 1, 9, 22, 23, 34; 26:5, 18; 27; 27:5, 28, 28:2, 12; 29:1, 11, 26; 30:1, 14, 25, 32; 31:13; 32:7, 20, 24, 28, 32; 33:4.

34:1; 35:2; 36:1; 37:1, 2, 9, 23, 27; 38:6, 39:2, 40:9, 41:1-2, 57, 42:3, 8, 9, 28; 43:1, 14, 18, 30; 44:2, 33; 45:2, 7, 13; 46:4, 8, 34; 47:21; 48:5; 49:2, 8, 50:15, and 25.
proves thought-provoking and insightful (77-85). From time to time, the commentator notes parallelisms or repetitions in regard to significant themes—e.g., Abraham hearkening to the voice of Sarah just as Adam had listened to Eve (165). Readers will find an engaging discourse on fearing God in the treatment of 22:12 (200-205). On the other hand, many comments tend to be shallow, or at least incomplete, theologically. Commenting that the fall of mankind allows God to begin formulating a redemptive strategy (97), Reno ignores the biblical witness that indicates the existence of a redemptive strategy in God’s mind and purpose even before He created the world (Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:17-20). The commentator also omits any potential for divine revelation to Abel about sacrifice, assuming that “the impulse to sacrifice seems to follow from the sheer humanity of Cain and Abel” (97).

This reviewer read this commentary with interest and with benefit. It fails, however, to provide anything like an evangelical stance theologically, being heavily influenced by more liberal theologians. The volume presents a less than biblical theology approach due to its emphasis on philosophizing and human rationale. In addition, numerous typos and misspellings distract the reader—especially the nearly omnipresent “descendent” instead of “descendant.” Hopefully, future volumes will present a cleaner text in this regard.


An introductory essay (“What Is Theological Interpretation of the Bible?,” 15-28) by Vanhoozer opens the volume. He begins by observing that theological interpretation does not impose “a theological system or confessional grid” (16) or “a general hermeneutic or theory of interpretation” (17) or “a form of merely historical, literary, or sociological criticism” (17) on the biblical text. Vanhoozer explains that the current volume provides examples of interpreters who bridge the gap between exegesis and theology (17-19).

Each chapter focuses on the message of each canonical book rather than on its historical background or the process of its composition (25). Each author discusses some of the history of the book’s interpretation, the book’s theological message, its relation to the canon as a whole, and the unique contribution it makes to God’s people (25). Every chapter concludes with a brief bibliography for further reading. A few of the authors failed to provide readers with good evangelical sources (e.g., Brian E. Kelly, “Samuel,” 118; Paul L. Redditt, “Esther,” 147; McConville, “Jeremiah,” 219-20) and a couple were overly skimpy (e.g., House, “Kings,” 123—omitting his own volume in NAC; Christian M. M. Brady, “Lamentations,” 225; and Thomas Renz for “Nahum,” 285, “Habakkuk,” 290, and “Zephaniah,” 294).

This handy compendium might provide a good textbook for a survey of the OT in an adult Bible fellowship or a church’s Bible institute program. Its essays are well written and informative. Block’s essay on Deuteronomy presents an excellent survey of the biblical book and its interpretive history (67-82). Murray D. Gow’s essay on Ruth (102-10) points readers to a superb study of prayer and blessing in the book (106). Richard L. Schultz contributes an excellent study of Isaiah (194-210) that includes a great focus on the messianic prophecies. Interestingly, Walton takes a skeptical approach to the book of Jonah. He concludes that the repentance of the Ninevites was inadequate, shallow, and uninformed (272). However, the nomination for the most disappointing chapter goes to Wolters’ on Zechariah (300-304), because he expends way too little on the message and theological significance of this book that makes such a magnificent contribution in these two areas for both the OT and NT. A Scripture index (313-26) and subject index (327-36) conclude the volume.


Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Retired Professor of Theology

John Walton has put forward eighteen propositions in as many chapters in setting up a new alternative explanation of the creation account in Genesis One. They reveal that the author has given a lot of thought to his position, which obviously did not suddenly appear overnight. After reading the introduction and the first chapter on Proposition I, “Genesis 1 is Ancient Cosmology,” the “Summary and Conclusions,” as well as the “FAQs,” and taking note of the other seventeen
chapters’ headings, it became obvious that a short review would not be a sufficient response. Looking through the seventeen other propositions confirmed this. This book begs for a critical review in a journal article which would tackle it proposition by proposition, if not line by line in places. Walton is proposing nothing less than a major overhaul of the literality of Genesis One. His label for this “newly created” theory is the cosmic temple inauguration view. Basically this means that the cosmos has been assigned the function of being God’s temple, where he has taken up residence and has the world set up as His headquarters (162).

Supposedly in the ancient world the nations, including Israel, were much more attuned to functions of the cosmos than to its materiality. Genesis One proffers a record of functions and not of material creation. Sorry, but this reviewer is still unsure whether he understands it. In clear straightforward terminology, the historical narrative lays out what God actually did in six days of the creation week. Furthermore, it was the absolute beginning of everything!

Walton has succeeded in lifting Genesis One above the fray between science and theology (163), or so it appears. One cannot use Genesis to object to any mechanism offered by science since it is not an account of material origins, and in any case, science is in a constant state of flux. It provides, however, the best explanation of the data of the day (17). Nothing is gained by bringing God’s revelation into accord with the science of the day. The theological key is to acknowledge when science proposes something deemed substantial, “Fine, that helps me see the handiwork of God.” Relax theologian, our response to any proposal without fearing the discussion, is quite simply, “Yes, but there is no reason God could not have been involved in that process” (164). Teleological evolution crops up as an explanation of evolutionary processes having purpose and goal. Thus, evidence of design will be found. The upshot of all this is simply that neither Creationism nor Neo-Darwinism need relinquish any point they have made. Neo-Darwinists should no longer promote dysteleology as a corollary to the science, and should acknowledge its flaws and need of modification (167). On the other hand, Creationists can keep their theology of God’s total involvement in creation, and keep their literal reading of Genesis 1. All they need to do is “to acknowledge that traditional interpretations or understandings of English words do not necessarily constitute the most faithful reading of the text” (167). The “material phase” of the heavens and the earth occurred, so one is informed, before “in the beginning” over long eras during the prehistoric period. The Bible, thus, yields nothing by which the age of the earth could be determined, and the biblical record really does not cover the original creation (93-99). The question of physical death present before the Fall of Man has been disconnected from the Fall of Man. That the resurrection overcomes physical, spiritual, and eternal death goes unmentioned. Further, the original creation had everything in abundance without suggesting that the created order was essentially subjected from the outset to death, scarcity of resources, and struggle to survive.
Much is made of having to read Genesis in a way that is true to the context of the original audience and author, and preserves and enhances the “theological vitality of the text” (Preface). No revelation was given to the Israelites to change what they were already understanding of the cosmos. Were the words of Moses merely echoing contemporary Israelite understanding? Or, did these words instruct Israelites on what they were to believe in contradistinction to other nations’ “origins” literature? The Genesis text uses plain language and can be understood by men of every age. It's a timeless text. The order of events is clear, as is the time-span for God’s working in initial creation. So easily understood that anyone can see where the theories they have embraced are not in line with Moses’ inspired words. Walton, however, almost dialectically, remarks, “[I]t represents what the Israelites truly believed about how the world got to be how it is and how it works, though it is not presented as their own ideas, but as revelation from God” (15). But for what purpose was the revelation given? To give their point of view respectability and authority? Or was it to keep them deceived by the prevailing false views of origins? Walton comments that God was content for Israel to retain “the native ancient cosmic geography” (18). As for the location of the sun, the moon, and the stars, and as for the shape of the earth and the nature of the sky, none of these has any significance. If Israel alone of all the nations has received the divinely inspired literature on origins, then this revelation cannot contain false concepts, can it?

That is enough for now. There is enough material for this reviewer to function as a critic of the book. For optimum benefit, he would say, a thorough study of the biblical text is warranted before engaging with The Lost World. It will be a challenge not only in terms of grammar, syntax, and principles of hermeneutics, but also in terms of application to our day and how to relate science to the Bible or vice versa. No doubt others will pick up on this new perspective and extend the ideas of The Lost World of Genesis One. One last item: A Th.D. dissertation entitled “Genesis 1:1–2:3: A Textual and Exegetical Examination as an Objective Foundation for Apologetical and Theological Studies” by Bryan Murphy submitted to TMS in May, 2008, actually answered or countered much of Walton’s book in advance. Hopefully, Dr. Murphy will find time to have his dissertation published.


Paul Wegner is professor of Old Testament at Phoenix Seminary. His books include A Student’s Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible (InterVarsity, 2006), reviewed in MSJ 18/1 (Spring 2007):140-42, and Bible Introduction: The Journey from Texts to Translations (Baker, 1999, 2004). This brief volume seeks to remind seminarians and pastors of the benefits that accrue from utilizing Biblical Hebrew
in ministry. Wegner arranges the book around key questions that seminary graduates and active pastors might ask. Each chapter concludes with “Things to Consider” and “Further Reading” (e.g., 27-28, 66, 84-85).

Wegner first addresses the question, “How will knowing Biblical Hebrew help me in my ministry?” (13-28). His response includes the capriciousness of Bible translations (15-16) and an appeal to professionalism (17). In order to plan for success in the acquisition and usage of Biblical Hebrew, the minister must assess his motives (19-20), objectives regarding degree of fluency (20-22), and methods for learning Biblical Hebrew (23-27).

“What are the crucial tools that I should get?” comprises the second question that the author poses (29-66). Wegner identifies fourteen essential resources for the minister’s tool box (32-50): an English translation, a Hebrew Bible, guides to BHS, a parsing guide, a reading guide, a Hebrew-English lexicon, a Hebrew-English concordance, a beginning Hebrew grammar, a vocabulary list, a reference Hebrew grammar, a Hebrew syntax book, a Hebrew word study dictionary, a book on OT textual criticism, and a Septuagint. Focusing first on an English Bible version seems somewhat counter-productive to learning Biblical Hebrew. Although this reviewer agrees with most of the author’s recommendations regarding resource choices, the recommendation for a vocabulary list (44-45) should have included George M. Landes, Building Your Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary (SBL, 2001). Directing ministers to a Septuagint sends the wrong signal—it implies the insufficiency or inaccuracy of the Hebrew text. Recommending the quite outdated Brenton text (49-50) is also fraught with difficulties since individuals tend to canonize it and elevate it above better and more recent editions.

Following the fourteen essential tools, Wegner suggests the addition of resources dealing with OT background (50-55): a Bible encyclopedia, a Bible atlas, an OT introduction, an OT survey, an OT history, a chart book, and OT commentaries. Though the Anchor Bible Dictionary (Doubleday, 1992) might provide a scholarly Bible encyclopedia (50), evangelical ministers might prefer more conservative encyclopedias like International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Eerdmans, 1982) or Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible (Zondervan, 1995). Harrison’s OT introduction (51) is outdated, though still valuable. Hill and Walton’s A Survey of the Old Testament (Zondervan, 2000) is neither a survey (it is an OT introduction) nor the best edition of the volume (52)—see review in MS/21/1 (Spring 2010):117-19. As far as a reference recommending OT commentaries (54-55), the minister should obtain Jim Rossup’s Commentaries for Biblical Expositors (Kress Christian Publications, 2003). Wegner provides his own commentary guide in Appendix A (123-33).

The survey of electronic resources and computer software (55-65) provides a helpful listing with prices and a comparison of features. The recommendations for “Further Reading” (66) should include Douglas Stuart, Old Testament Exegesis: A
Reviews


Wegner’s third question is “What am I looking for and how do I find it?” (67-85). This chapter defines biblical exegesis (68-71) and identifies the steps involved in obtaining an understanding of the Hebrew Bible (72-84). The approach does not create confidence in Wegner’s ability to exegete the text or to train ministers in exegesis. First, reliance upon liberal higher critical methodologies like source criticism (73), form criticism (74), rhetorical criticism (75), and redaction criticism (76) leads the minister away from the authority and integrity of Scripture into the morass of skeptical hermeneutics. Second, identifying Dorsey’s The Literary Structure of the Old Testament (Baker, 2004) as a “helpful resource for determining literary structures” (72 n. 4), limits the literary research to but one literary device: chiasm—far too narrow to provide sound literary analysis. Thankfully, ministers may obtain some degree of help from the brief discussions of immediate context (76), textual criticism (77), lexical analysis (78-79), syntactical analysis (79), historical analysis (79-80), and theological analysis (80-83), and application (83-84). Appendixes B-E coordinate with some of these areas to provide worksheets and greater methodological detail (135-53).

Chapter Four examines the question, “How do I prepare an Old Testament sermon?” (87-112). The acronym “READ THE BOOK” (88) actually forces the order of the exegetical steps into an unnatural and irrational arrangement (88-89). Prayer should come first, not last. Ascertaining the original reading of the text cannot occur without first understanding the grammar and syntax of the text. A number of the headings for resources in the details for each exegetical step are unhappy. For example, placing the Holman Christian Standard Bible with translations like The Message and New Living Translation under “Other Popular Translations and Paraphrases” (93) implies that HCSB is a paraphrase. “Critical Commentaries on the Hebrew Text” (95) does not include any commentaries. The same misuse of “Commentaries” occurs repeatedly (97, 100, 102, 103, 107). In three places, Wegner identifies John MacArthur et al., Rediscovering Expository Preaching (Word, 1992) as a helpful resource on expository preaching (105, 109, 110).

The final question of the volume is “How do I reap the benefits of all the labor of learning Hebrew?” (113-22). Wegner offers a number of helpful ideas for maintaining Hebrew translation skills (114-17) and Hebrew vocabulary (117-19), as well as how to keep using Hebrew in sermons (120-21). Author (155-60) and Scripture (161-64) indexes round out the volume.

While Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching does provide some encouragement and guidance to students and pastors for maintaining their Hebrew, it falls short of providing an accurate guide for exegesis. Obtain this volume and refer to it often, but use it wisely. It provides information that is usable, but does not rise to the level of a required seminary textbook.

Here is a true gem in a paperback binding and at a reasonable price! Someone might object that more than $30, tax included, for a less than 300 page book is no bargain. Normally, this reviewer would agree with the critic of such commercial cost, but not in this case. Rodney A. Whitacre is Professor of Biblical Studies, specializing in New Testament, at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, has written and edited a work which provides for every student of the ancient Greek language (who has progressed beyond first year) direct, guided, and useful access to a goodly number of excerpts carefully culled from some of the leading lights in patristic Greek literary firmament. In so doing, Prof. Whitacre (hereafter RW) has rendered a profound service, yes, even a blessing, to all who wish or need to venture beyond the confines of the Greek NT in their effort to become acquainted with key figures in church history, the history of Christian doctrines, or the development of the Greek language.

After a Table of Contents (v-viii) offering a tantalizing glimpse of what is to come, a somewhat autobiographical Preface (ix-x) is followed by three pages of Abbreviations (xi-xiii). The abbreviations are absolutely indispensable for anyone not familiar with the typical scholarly and, of course, (Greek) grammatical usages, or secondary literature, such as grammars and lexicons, whose notations appear on virtually every page of the Greek texts. In a succinct Introduction RW has several sections describing the book’s goals, the meaning of the word “Patristic,” suggestions for how to approach reading the Fathers. He also explains how to use the notes which accompany each of the readings, and then offers suggestions for using the Reader—capitalized to distinguish from a reader of the book—and for bibliography leading to further readings in the Fathers (xv-xxiv).

Page one begins Part I, Greek Texts and Notes, with a one- to two-page introduction for each author or work, starting not surprisingly with the *Didache*. The fifteen introductions give a little historical background to the work and/or author, a summary of some of the content or themes of the whole work from which the excerpts are taken and a bibliographic entry of the specific edition used as the source. In the case of the *Didache*, for example, RW used a 2004 reprint of the 1891 edition J. B. Lightfoot’s *The Apostolic Fathers* (4). A feature instructors will find particularly helpful ends each introduction, namely, an entry indicating the level of difficulty. For the *Didache*, it is listed as “Easy [1]” (4), which indeed it is as compared to Clement of Alexandria, specified as “Upper intermediate to advanced [3-5]” (100). Immediately after each author/work introduction comes the Greek text, filling about the top 1/4 to 1/3 of each page with a dividing line below the last line of Greek to separate it clearly from the notes which take up the rest of the page. The notes contain much useful information including at times the specific page and/or section number from standard NT and classical lexicons and grammars, such as
BDAG or Smyth’s grammar for pre-Hellenistic Greek. The amount of information in the notes will be more or less useful depending on the expertise of the individual reader. This means that an advanced student or an instructor could read longer sections relatively quickly, while less experienced students or readers whose Greek has become “rusty” with disuse will depend heavily on all of the information, and may at times even need more. The overall effect is that much of the drudgery of constantly looking up words, either in a lexicon or a thesaurus at the back of the book has been eliminated. The downside to this feature is that any benefit one can derive from the constant discipline of looking words up the old-fashioned way is also removed. On the other hand, the best way to learn any language is to use it a lot, which the notes encourage by allowing one to read more of the text more quickly, without giving up understanding. In other words, the Reader is designed to “help increase their [i.e., the students’] fluency in reading Greek” (xv).

The readings begin chronologically with the Didache (A.D. 70-150; 5-24) and end with Symeon the New Theologian (A.D. 949-1022; 189-93), so covering the first millennium of Christianity, obviously with an eastern flavor, since Greek continued as a living language only in the eastern part of the Roman empire, as it metamorphosed into what we now refer to as the Byzantine empire. Universally known names are here, like Clement of Rome (25-33), Justin Martyr (69-78), Eusebius of Caesarea (109-15), Gregory of Nazianzus (139-55), and John Chrysostom (167-74), but less well known (to Protestant evangelicals perhaps) writers or works are also. The previously mentioned Symeon, Melito of Sardis (79-98), some of the Desert Fathers and Mothers (157-66) and Hesychios the Priest (175-186) fit into this latter category. Readings have been chosen for their inherent historical or theological interest, and writing as one who was trained dealing with the church fathers only in translation, this reviewer found it absolutely delightful to read Athanasius’s treatment of the purpose of the Incarnation (121-24). Just as when reading Scripture in translation something significant is often lost, it is the same for these patristic works. RW cites no less a Christian literary figure (of more recent times) than C. S. Lewis to the effect that when he (Lewis) read the De Incarnatione of Athanasius, he immediately recognized it as a masterpiece, apparently on both a literary and theological level (117).

Part II is entitled Translations of All Texts and contains RW’s own fairly literal translation of each of the excerpts (197-260). When one is faced with very challenging Greek constructions in places, these can prove very useful as a means of confirmation or correction of one’s own translation.

Appendix A gives a vocabulary listing of all the Greek words occurring fifty times or more in the NT (261-68). This is because RW assumes readers know these words from their study of first-year Greek, but he recognizes that these can be forgotten! This additional feature can thus make the Reader a stand-alone textbook, although one does occasionally need to consult a lexicon in order to correct an error, e.g., the word metiontes (108), which though indicated to be from the verb meteimi
= I am among, is actually from meteimi = to go after (cf. LSJ, 1119, s.v., II.2.b, where the precise form found in Clement’s Miscellanies is listed).

The next Appendix (B, 269-70) includes the most irregular principal-part forms for verbs appearing in Appendix A, while a third (Appendix C: 271) lists all of the excerpts in order of their level of difficulty, another feature particularly helpful for instructors or students working independently. A bibliography (273-79) divided into sections finishes the book and sets forth in one place all the Greek Resources cited, as well as the editions used for each section of Greek text.

Since this is a text designed to introduce the reader to the fathers of the Greek-speaking church and to help students of the language improve their Greek skills, this reviewer would like to give a standing ovation to the author-editor of the work. He has succeeded more than admirably on both counts. The caution to keep in mind is one that discerning, Bible-believing Christians must always carry with them in all aspects of life. Statements about theology or doctrines by these patristic writers must always be compared with and evaluated in the light of Scripture rightly interpreted. One cannot assume that the fathers have always properly understood the biblical texts, or even that because a writer is very good on, e.g., the Incarnation, he is therefore equally reliable on all aspects thereof or on other topics or passages of Scripture.

Apart from this caution and some minor quibbles about accuracy of parsing here and there, or formatting of the Greek font (cf. the first word on 67), it is a distinct pleasure for me to be able to commend this book to its intended audience in the strongest possible terms. Thank you, Prof. Whitacre, for bestowing this gift on the Greek-reading public, students, and instructors alike!

Ben Witherington, III. We Have Seen His Glory: A Vision of Kingdom Worship.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 166 pp. (paper). Reviewed by Andrew V. Snider, Assistant Professor of Theology.

This is the latest offering from the Liturgical Studies Series which is facilitated by John D. Witvliet and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Prominent NT scholar Ben Witherington III is concerned that there is no significant theological treatment of worship from the NT perspective. This book is his attempt to fill that gap with an eschatologically-oriented approach to worship, as the subtitle of the book demonstrates.

Chapter 1 is a meditation on John 4 and Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. The author draws the conclusion that God is seeking eschatological worshipers, those who realize that worship is now possible anywhere, because the Spirit has been poured out on all kinds of people. Witherington also drives home the point that worship is “the ultimate ethical act” and is in fact “the ultimate
fulfillment of the Shema, the Great Commandment, and indeed the First and Second Commandments” (7-8).

Chapter 2 centers on a sermon by the author which relates the worship experiences of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the apostle John in Revelation 4–5. The author makes several points related to the centrality of God and His glory in worship, rightly pointing out that true worship is a response to God’s initiative in revealing Himself and establishing relationship with His creatures.

The rest of the book follows this paradigm—meditations on key passages of Scripture and extrabiblical evidence with regard to worship: the Sabbath and Christian worship as a kind of work (chapter 3), the early church and its continuities and discontinuities with Judaism and the synagogue (chapter 4), Christian singing and praying from the perspective of Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 (including a focus on the Christological hymn fragments in the NT, chapter 5), preaching and the rhetorical world of the NT (chapter 6), a further consideration of the issue of worship and work (chapter 7), and the final chapter, which seeks to draw much of this together under the rubric of Kingdom-oriented worship.

The final chapter, in which the author tries to tie the discussion together coherently, is by far the best chapter in the book. Here Witherington recapitulates and reemphasizes the best themes of the book: worship must be theocentric and Christocentric instead of anthropocentric; worship should have a forward-look, an eschatological element that looks forward to the “not yet” from the perspective in the “already”; and Witherington’s strong and unapologetic call for deeper, stronger preaching.

Also on a positive note, his discussion of the Christological benedictions and doxologies of the NT is helpful, for one of the difficulties of worship theology is demonstrating biblically the transition from OT to NT worship. His discussion of the Lord’s Prayer follows this naturally, although the implications Witherington draws for NT corporate worship sometimes feel a bit strained.

The rest of the book, unfortunately, does not cohere well in that it is often unclear how the material being presented or argued contributes to the author’s case for eschatological, Kingdom-oriented worship. For example, Witherington’s lengthy consideration of whether the earliest Christians were averse to purpose-built structures for worship may be timely in view of the house-church movement, but it does not fit comfortably in this book. Also, on the topic of preaching, the author spends 11 pages (87-98) making an impassioned case for his larger agenda in NT interpretation: rhetorical criticism (cf. his New Testament Rhetoric [Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2008]) with no clear connection to the matter at hand.

In addition, certain suggestions made by Witherington regarding worship are left unclear or undeveloped. His assertion near the beginning that “eschatological worship dwells no more in the past” (9) is both reiterated and softened at various points in the book. The author makes no extended attempt to show how he balances this assertion with the obvious emphasis on the historical realities of the faith that must permeate all Christian worship. In the end, his weighty conclusion is not only
questionable but potentially dangerous: “[A]lthough eschatological worship in the
twenty-first century needs to remember the past, including the past works of Christ,
it must be essentially a form of forward motion, not retrograde action. We must go
boldly where we have not gone before. This means new liturgies, new hymns, new
praises, new forms of worship, new openness to the Spirit, and new forms of church
as well as renewed focus on the teaching and preaching office of the minister” (158).
The body of Witherington’s book does not come anywhere close to justifying such
a comprehensive and paradigm-shifting suggestion.

Other examples of unclear or undeveloped ideas could be cited, including
his notion that God does not want to receive glory, for that would be self-centered
(12-13, a notion that does not even sit well with the subtitle of the book). In this
category would also be Witherington’s repeated use of the language of vision-
catching: he is most anxious that the church “catch the vision” of Kingdom worship
(see especially chapter 2), but there is little in the book to help the reader tell
whether he or she has made progress in catching it.

To summarize, Witherington’s book contains an invigorating introduction
and a variously profound conclusion, but the journey from the former to the latter is
a bumpy one indeed, with many side excursions along the way. Though there are
significant insights on a number of topics (some directly related to corporate
worship, some apparently not), it does not receive this reviewer’s recommendation
as a must-have on the topic of the theology or practice of worship.

Christopher J. H. Wright. Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament.
Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007. 232 pp. $15.00 (paper). Reviewed by
William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Writing reviews too often devolves into an academic exercise devoid of
spiritual benefit. Reading Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament,
however, turned into a blessed journey of faith through the pages of the OT.
Christopher J. H. Wright is the international ministry director of the Langham
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writings include The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative
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Message of Ezekiel (The Bible Speaks Today, InterVarsity, 2001), Deuteronomy
(NIBC, Hendrickson, 1996), and Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament
(InterVarsity, 1995).

This volume arose from Wright’s teaching ministries in India and Slovenia,
for which he pursued a theme of knowing God in the OT (9-10). Since the OT
seldom refers to God as Father, the trinitarian understanding obtains some of its
content from “fatherly portraits and metaphors for God, even when he is not directly
called Father” (13). Wright makes the observation that the God whom Jesus knew “from his Bible as Yahweh was the God he knew in prayer as his Father” (17). Since NT believers pray to the Father, we too must become more aware of the Father’s character, attributes, role, and actions in the OT so as to enrich our own prayer lives.

Although the volume is well worth reading, its title leads the reader to expect more than it delivers. At least Chapters 1 and 4 deal directly with God as Father. In other chapters the topic is less evident, though sometimes present (e.g., 150). In the very first chapter (“Knowing God as a Father in Action,” 21-39), Wright lays out the OT teaching concerning God the Father as One Who carries (Deut 1:30-31; Isa 46:3-4), disciplines (Deut 8:2-5; Prov 3:11-12), pities (Ps 103:8-14; Isa 53:4-6, 12), and adopts (Pss 27:9-10; 68:4-6). Chapter 2 (“Knowing God Through Experience of His Grace,” 41-62) focuses on Deut 4:32-40 while considering the uniqueness of Israel’s experience relating to both revelation and redemption. God expected Israel to convey their experience both in teaching and in the writing of Scripture.

Looking at the divine judgments upon Pharaoh, Wright’s third chapter (“Knowing God Through Exposure to His Judgment,” 63-76) examines the meaning of the phrase “then you (or they) will know” in Exodus 7–11 (65). God proves to be sovereign and incomparable through these events. Chapter 4 (“Knowing God as the Father of His People,” 77-99) returns to the specific role of Yahweh as Father. He is Father of his son Israel (78-89) and he is Father of Israel’s king, including Messiah (89-98).

Since Wright emphasizes prayer in this series of studies, the fifth chapter (“Knowing God Through Engaging Him in Prayer,” 101-31) examines the intimacy both Abraham (102-20) and Moses (120-30) experienced with God through intercessory prayer. Wright points out that our lesson from a study of Abraham and Moses is that, “in the adventure of knowing God, there are depths of prayer that we have scarcely begun to paddle in” (131). Then Wright turns to “Knowing God Through Reflecting His Justice” (Chapter 6, 133-52). He focuses on Jer 9:23-24 and 22:13-17 as he gently attacks our all-too-often “limp evangelical pietism” (147) and declares that there is “no true knowledge of God without the exercise of justice and compassion” (151).

Chapter 7 (“Knowing God Through Returning to His Love,” 153-81) prospects the riches of Hosea. The prophet speaks of knowing God as Savior (13:4) and as Father (11:1-4). He also indicates that the knowledge of God can be lost through rebellion and the pursuit of idolatry (2:5, 8-9; 4:1-6). Israel can only be restored through repentance. Wright employs the context consistently to demonstrate that Hos 6:1-3 presents an inadequate statement of repentance (172-77). Israel had “faced their woundedness (Hos 6:2; cf. Hos 5:12-13) but not their waywardness” (173). True repentance requires confession of guilt (173-75) and radical ethical change (175-77).

The eighth chapter (“Knowing God in Expectation of His Victory,” 183-97) picks up the more than eighty times that the book of Ezekiel says “then you will
know” or “then they will know” followed by “that I am the LORD” or some other statement of who God is or what He has done (184). Wright limits this essay to a treatment of Ezekiel 38–39 about God and Magog. Rather than looking at the prophetic fulfillment in history or eschatological time, he elaborates the theological truths that the reader should obtain. Wright expounds Psalm 46 and Habakkuk in his final chapter (Chapt. 9, “Knowing God Through Trusting in His Sovereignty,” 199-222). Speaking of the current unrest in the Near East, he points out that Christian mission “has never depended on favorable circumstances, peace and tranquility” (222). Knowing God produces a sound faith exhibited in a healthy prayer life as well as the courage to continue the mission to make God known in the world.

Sometimes the content of this book could be strengthened by additional exegetical analysis or by recognizing the discontinuity of Israel and the church. However, its message is very clear and necessary. Christians too often neglect God the Father in their spiritual lives and doctrine. Revelation of God as Father arises first in the OT. Wright has at least opened the door to the study of God the Father in the OT. Each reader must pursue that knowledge in greater depth. Who is the God of the OT to whom Jesus prayed? He is the same Father to whom we now pray. Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament forms the catalyst for a further examination of this significant aspect of OT theology and its impact upon NT theology.


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theology.

176 pp. $18.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Cliff McManis, TMS alumnus and
Associate Professor of Theology, The Cornerstone Seminary.

The Right Reverend Dr. Tom Wright Lord Bishop of Durham, or more
popularly known as N. T. Wright, wrote this concise theodicy after giving five
lectures at Westminster Abbey on the topic in 2003 (10). Known for his massive
technical and scholarly works on NT studies, this volume is on a more popular level,
directed to the serious lay student, tackling the classic dilemma of the problem of
evil from a fresh approach.

The catalyst for pursuing the topic of evil included the events of 9/11 (9,
16) as well as other recent natural disasters (9). The book almost reads like a
personal polemic against President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair, and their
“immature” (28, 39, 99, 104) response to the terrorist attacks as they labeled specific
countries an “axis of evil” (16). Their response with a declaration of war against the
terrorists, according to Wright, was a “knee-jerk, unthinking, immature lashing out
which gets us nowhere” (26). Wright wants to set the political record straight, and
in that vein he formulates his proposed solution to the problem of evil in the vortex
of an almost exclusively political, corporate, and social context (41, 98). For Wright,
the problem of evil, and its solution, is primarily a political one.
In the first chapter Wright proposes the articulation of a “new” problem of evil (19). The original centuries-old syllogism for the problem of evil was intrinsically flawed, being metaphysical, abstract, and inane (17, 19). Wright’s new problem of evil that Christians need to grapple with is threefold: 1) we ignore evil when it doesn’t hit us in the face; 2) we are naïvely surprised by evil when it does; and 3) we react in immature and dangerous ways as a result (24). Bush and Blair are living effigies of those who have responded immaturely and dangerously to evil.

After supplanting the traditional conundrum of the problem of evil with his own contemporary and political rendition, Wright then proceeds to give a brief survey of how he thinks the OT relates to the issue (47-71). He informs the reader that the Bible is ambiguous on the matter (49, 74, 102). He avers that Scripture simply does not give complete answers as to what evil is, why it exists in the first place, how long it will last, why it is allowed to continue, and how long it will go on (44). He asserts, “The Bible simply doesn’t appear to want to say what God can say about evil” (45).

In chapter three, Wright moves to the NT, highlighting the Gospels (78-83) and the death of Christ (83-100). He says we need to reread the Gospels in a new way, accentuating the political overtones (79), to understand properly what God is trying to do with evil. As for the death of Christ and the meaning of the atonement, Wright champions the Christus Victor theme (95, 114), a recapitulation of the earlier Ransom theory. For Wright, Jesus’ death was not a penal substitution whereby He died as a substitute for sinners, incurring the penalty of the Father’s wrath in their stead. Rather, Jesus’ death was a confrontation with political (83), cosmic (102), and quasi-personal evil forces (81, 109) where He diffused evil, generically speaking, by exhausting it (89), wearing it down (102), and rendering it impotent. Jesus did not die for individual souls; rather, Wright claims, “Jesus died in a representative capacity for Israel,” a refrain he repeats frequently (90; cf. 85, 86, 88, 92, 93, 95). He further claims that the popular notion that Jesus died to rescue individual sinners, secure their forgiveness and present to them a future hope of heaven is actually a distortion of true biblical teaching that leaked into the church through the Enlightenment (77-78; cf. 117). He also goes on to say that Christ’s death did not secure a once-for-all justification, but rather Christ’s death merely “began the process of redemption” (98) which humans are to complete by “implementing the achievement of the cross” (102-03) through social justice and good works (104, 107).

In chapter four, Wright gives specifics as to how the church is to “implement the achievement of the cross” (102). He recommends a panoply of unexpected and even bizarre ideas. For example, we must follow suit with Desmond Tutu and usher in “community restoration and healing” (103). We must jettison capitalism which is “the exploitation of the poor by the rich” (104; cf. 23, 107, 123). We must use projection theory as taught by Carl Jung to quell non-personal organizational evil forces that are latent within various “companies, societies, legislative bodies, and even churches” (111-112). With John Lennon, we must “imagine” a future world without evil but rather one typified by community, beauty,
and healing (104, 114-115, 126). We must provide medical care, education, and work for the sick and the poor (122), and embrace “restorative justice” on a national level like New Zealand (124). We need to empower the United Nations and the International Criminal Court to resist war on an international level (125). And finally, we need to maximize the arts to make tangible the imaginations of a future world without evil (128).

In the final chapter, Wright explains how we will finally be delivered from evil on a personal and cosmic basis. The solution is “forgiveness” (132). The priorities of forgiveness that Wright wants implemented do not come from the Bible, but from three books: 1) Miroslav Volf’s Exclusion and Embrace (132); 2) L. Gregory Jones’ Embodying Forgiveness (134); and 3) Desmond Tutu’s No Future Without Forgiveness (134). Three keys of forgiveness that issue from these writings include the following: 1) we need to forgive ourselves (135, 163, 165); 2) God will be able to someday in the future forgive Himself for being an angry God for so long all throughout human history (136); and 3) we need to forgive criminals and terrorist nations (148-49).

N. T. Wright’s, Evil and the Justice of God, is commended on the back cover by J. P. Moreland, praising it, suggesting “it should be the first work consulted” on the problem of evil because of its “distinctively biblical approach.” This reviewer could not disagree more. Wright’s argumentation is religious, but not biblical. In fact, his approach undermines many core biblical doctrines including the following: biblical sufficiency (45) and perspicuity (101); the true meaning of the atonement, justification and imputation (95); the holy character of God (136); the immutability of God (136); the personhood of Satan (111); the reality of eternal hell (116); the implications of the curse at Adam’s fall (127); and biblical repentance (163), to name a few. As opposed to giving a strictly “biblical approach,” Wright’s work reads more like a primer on liberation theology and even toys with socialistic notions. To say this is disappointing coming from one of the most influential and popular Christian theologians of today is an understatement. Those who desire a truly biblical treatment of the problem of evil would do well to consult John Frame’s Apologetics to the Glory of God, Jay Adam’s The Grand Demonstration, and Randy Alcorn’s recent popular work, If God is Good.


This book has to be an example of the truncated or selective attention paid to the biblical account on the part of those scientists who are also evangelical believers, but who struggle to integrate biblical truth with their world of science. Their earnestness in dealing with the intriguing subject of the age of the earth is not
being questioned, but their approach to the biblical text is troublesome. Occasionally, they remind YEC (Young Earth Creationists) to be more precise in their statements, e.g., Adam was not created *ex nihilo*—he was made in part from previously created material (188).

Two chapters in “Part Two: Biblical Perspectives” noticeably totaled only 47 pages out of 495 pages of text, less than ten percent of the main text. Somehow, it seems to be too small a contribution from the biblical text. It was acknowledged that “from a biblical perspective, the issue of the antiquity of the earth boils down to the interpretation of Genesis 1” (169). At the least an exegetical study of Genesis 1–2 should have been either included or referred to. A few pages earlier it was concluded that the interpretation of Genesis 1 is particularly challenging and thus believers must study this crucial passage with humility and with an openness to new insights not seen before (166). From what source will the insights come? From a dual revelation theory? All the more reason to have the scriptural description of the six days of creation stand as the ruling paradigm by which the theories and conclusions of humans with regard to origins are critiqued.

Every word of the Genesis account is important and nothing can be omitted from consideration. Plenary verbal inspiration will not dictate otherwise. Furthermore, this is the only eyewitness account of the six days of creation. It is an inspired account too. What is wrong with the biblical account and teaching on creation that precludes it from being the ruling paradigm?

Challenges to the old earth position are made on biblical, scientific and philosophical grounds. With the biblical perspectives already treated, the authors go on to deal with each of the other two elements in the chapters following: eight chapters make up “Part Three: Geological Perspectives.” Here are attempts to refute arguments for a young earth and present the evidence for the “great” antiquity of the Earth (165, note the adjective). The final two chapters making up “Part Four: Philosophical Perspectives” wherein uniformitarianism, catastrophism, and empiricism are presented, and in the closing chapter, creationism, evangelism, and apologetics.

This reviewer does not purport to have sufficient knowledge of science to be able to interact with the chapters not dealing with the Bible. Skewed interpretation, so it is advised, is brought about by presuppositions, many times the interpreter being unaware of them exerting any influence upon his thinking. The solution is for each Christian to become hermeneutically self-conscious, realizing what is influencing his/her thinking as he/she studies the text (166). Appeals to be objective and wary of presuppositional bias when interpreting the creation account have not produced unified and harmonious understanding of the text. Far from it!

The authors’ basic reaction to the traditional view of six 24-hour days is formalized:

- by classifying Genesis as an historical genre in its own right, seeing the account laden with symbolic numbers, repetitive structures, allusions to
ANE concepts, anthropomorphic and metaphorical elements, as well as the literary convention of seven days (178).

• by noting the non-committal nature of the Bible about the age of the earth which then gives freedom to evaluate first the geological clues on its age (169).

• by accepting without apparent demur the supposed overwhelming and credible evidence for the antiquity of the earth (173).

• by proposing the simplistic “maxim” that God made everything, and then stressing that such is the point of Genesis 1—a conclusion that even children after reading Genesis 1 can easily grasp.

• by pushing aside, then, the sequence of events in Genesis 1 as being irrelevant or of little significance, in fact it is merely a list of seven days, or for the purposes of emphasizing that God had created it all (178, 202).

• by noting that the different proposals for interpreting the Genesis account do not mean that biblical inerrancy is being flouted (181-82).

• by touting the genealogies as having gaps in them making them inadequate at helping estimate an age or a span of time (168).

• by advocating that Scripture is a record of the deeds of God in history, and so its message concerns God’s redemptive plan and acts, and calling for the believer to understand the intent of the biblical text—“as readers approach Genesis 1 they need to ask what God and the human author intended to teach, and that means that both the redemptive thrust of the Bible and the ancient Near Eastern context in which it is embedded must be taken into account’ (179, 182, 210).

• by drawing insights from biblical scholars to show that Genesis 1 is “saturated with features” (?) making it highly unlikely that the author was addressing the scientific questions of his contemporaries and that he did not teach a young earth or was even interested therein (210).

• By focusing on bara not always signifying “instantaneous,” thus allowing for it together with divine fiat to indicate the inevitability of the event and not the immediate suddenness of its fulfilment, i.e., the “Let there be . . . and it was so” could mean that sooner or later what God called into being was accomplished (187-92).

Full and satisfying responses can be given readily to each one of the bullet points above, each point indicating a questionable area. A thorough analysis which coincidently responds to all these points would be Bryan Murphy’s Th.D. dissertation at TMS, “Genesis 1:1–2:3: A Textual and Exegetical Examination as an Objective Foundation for Apologetical and Theological Studies.” Bryan offers probably one of the most in-depth studies of the Hebrew and LXX texts of the Genesis account done to date. Hopefully, this will be put into print in the near future—this book under review demonstrates the need for it.
This reviewer took time to peruse swiftly two or so chapters in the next section, “Part Three: Geological Perspectives,” looking for references to YEC literature. What a pleasant surprise to find quite a frequent mention of YEC writings, the most recognizable names today being John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, John Morris, Stephen Austin, Duane Gish, Gary Parker, Larry Vardiman, and Walter Brown. Flood geologists, such as ICR researchers, it was specifically noted, because they worked in the field are geologically well informed (229). For the most part, criticisms of their conclusions and work were irenic, and at times a little patronizing. Obviously, their conclusions were not going to be accepted, but at least they were noticed. YEC were also featured in the preceding chapter, “Antiquity of the Earth: Twentieth Century to the Present” (ch. 5, 132-64).

To recommend The Bible, Rocks and Time without a proviso cannot be done, because the book has enough questionable areas, as indicated by the bullet points above. If one needs to know every bit of information on the Old Earth position, then by all means he should read the book to find out what others holding that position are saying. Search YEC literature for a response to and refutation of the points made in the book favoring an old earth position. Further, take the time to read beforehand as important preparation, Coming to Grips with Genesis (Master Books, 2009) and Kurt P. Wise, Faith, Form, and Time (B & H Publishers, 2002). This reviewer remembered John Woodbridge’s book Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal (Zondervan, 1982), which well addressed the problem of “accommodation” (Woodbridge, 19-30).

The authors failed to stake out a position on Genesis 1. Instead they proved to their own satisfaction that the Bible does not teach the Earth to be only a few thousand years old, neither does it deal with the scientific subjects of the day (210). A passing comment indicates that Young and Stearley favor the Framework theory and the Analogical-Day theory. A closing question: Why may the Genesis account be seen to demolish “the crude cosmogonies” of pagan nations (105), yet it could not be taken as presenting exactly what God did in bringing the world into being in six days? It may not be couched in scientific language but its description is faultless. Surely, detailed scientific terminology, hypotheses, and theories will come about as man “subdues” the Earth.

One wonders whether time and energy would be well spent responding fully to the science part of this book, if not the biblical perspective section. It could be done by cross-referencing material already in print. Perhaps, something along the lines of “Resources to refute/correct/challenge . . .” would suffice. In any event, this book could be used in a graduate seminar on creation-science to show how scientifco-exegesis puts a stumbling block into the way of literal, historical, grammatical interpretation of the biblical record. It will provoke a serious discussion of the relationship of biblical truth to science. Issues affecting inerrancy, infallibility, and inspiration, and general and special revelation will also come into play. Read alertly and cautiously!