

EXEGETICAL FALLACIES: COMMON INTERPRETIVE MISTAKES EVERY STUDENT MUST AVOID

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Students of the Bible often make mistakes that can be avoided if they are aware of errors that others have committed. One of the errors is the “Evidential Fallacy” which fails to approach the text with the presumption that it is accurate. Another mistake is the “Superior Knowledge Fallacy” which occurs when one, in approaching difficult texts, practices textual emendation to accommodate the critic’s ignorance. A third mistake is the “Word Study Fallacy” which uses imaginative extrapolations to find unjustified meanings in individual words. The “Fallacy of Reading Between the Lines” reads into the Scriptures what one thinks the text implies. Another mistake occurs in improper explanations of the two tenses of Hebrew verbs, the perfect (or qatal) and the imperfect (or yiqtol). Occasionally in the NT, the “Fallacy of Ignoring Particles” causes an interpreter to miss emphasis that is conveyed by Greek particles. Sometimes a translation leaves out words found in the original language causing the “Fallacy of Reduction.” Correct interpretation results from close attention to details of the text in avoiding the mistakes mentioned above, as well as others.

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Introduction

Over twenty years ago, D. A. Carson published his volume entitled *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984). In it he covers the areas of word-study fallacies, grammatical fallacies, logical fallacies, and presuppositional and historical fallacies. This writer believes that the book should be required reading for every Bible student. Although Carson might be faulted in his own exegesis for some of the examples he employs, he does a respectable job of covering the issues. Why, then, go over ground already covered by Carson? Repetition is instructive, but it can also

be boring, unless the presentation has some new twists. Therefore, this article's focus will be on its subtitle: "Common Interpretive Mistakes Every Student Must Avoid." Forty-five years of preaching, forty-one years of teaching, and over twenty years of Bible translation ministries have provided an abundance of personal examples. Lest this article become a litany of *mea culpas*, however, the author will not reveal how many of the following mistakes have been his own at one time or another.

The Evidential Fallacy

In the evidential system of American and British jurisprudence the concept of *prima facie* (literally, "at first view") evidence is very important. *Prima facie* evidence is evidence that is sufficient to raise a presumption of fact or to establish the fact in question, unless evidence of equal veracity is presented in rebuttal. Included in this evidential system is the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and that witnesses must present facts, not opinions. In the area of biblical studies this evidential methodology stands in opposition to the hermeneutics of doubt (or, the Troelschian principle of skeptical criticism).¹ As Robert Dick Wilson observed, "[O]ur text of the Old Testament is presumptively correct, ... its meaning is on the whole clear and trustworthy."² Whether discussing the Old Testament's historical narratives or the Gospel narratives, evangelicals should approach the biblical text with a presumption of factuality.

One of the greatest fallacies students of Scripture can commit is failing to recognize adequately the *prima facie* nature of biblical evidence. It is fallacious to condition acceptance of the biblical text upon corroboration by external evidence. When the student encounters interpretive problems in the biblical text, he must allow the text to speak and must accept the testimony of the text with a presumption of accuracy. Therefore, reading about the Chaldeans in Gen 11:28-31, for example, should not bring doubt about the veracity of the text even though the extrabiblical Assyrian records do not mention Chaldeans until the 9th century B.C. The Assyrian evidence is not contemporary with Moses (the author of Genesis 11) nor with Babel (the historical setting of Genesis 11). Acceptance of Assyrian evidence over biblical evidence denigrates the biblical record and treats it with skepticism rather than as *prima facie* evidence. As Kenneth Kitchen points out, inconsistency dominates the appeal to Assyrian historical texts, since the Egyptian pharaohs of the period from the

¹See V. Philips Long, "Historiography of the Old Testament," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, eds. David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999) 154, 169.

²Robert Dick Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, rev. by Edward J. Young (Chicago: Moody, 1959) 9.

patriarchs to Moses also do not appear anywhere in the Assyrian records.³

In other words, one errs when he automatically assumes that every major interpretive problem is due to an inaccuracy within the text itself. As we deal with problems in the biblical text, we must assume that it is accurate until proven otherwise by equally accurate, equally authentic, and equally ancient evidence. For example, when one reads in the superscription to Psalm 60 that Joab slew 12,000 Edomites, he ought to accept that as *prima facie* evidence. Of equal standing are the records in 2 Sam 8:13 and 1 Chron 18:12. The former reveals that David slew 18,000 Arameans; the latter declares that Abishai slew 18,000 Edomites. Are these three contradictory accounts or three complementary accounts? Perhaps the differences in the individuals involved reflect the chain of command. David, as king, was commander-in-chief. Joab, being next in command as the chief of the armies, was the field commander and Abishai, a subordinate officer to Joab, was over one contingent of the field army participating in this particular action. Variation in the numbers of enemy casualties might reflect different methods of calculating the casualties at separate levels of the chain of command or different times for certain counts prior to a settled statistic. Possibly, the different casualty counts indicate different engagements within the greater battle or even a series of battles. As for the difference between Edom and Aram, we should keep in mind that both Edomites and Arameans participated in the campaign against David's forces (see 2 Sam 8:5; cp. 1 Kgs 11:17 [the Aramean Hadad with Edomites]). The target area was Edom, but Arameans were present and had also created a diversion in Aramea (Syria) where David had gone to quell the uprising.

Another example from the OT helps illustrate the difference between what current archaeologists and historians are saying about the text as compared to a proper understanding of the text itself. Consider the exodus from Egypt. Grant Osborne mentions the lack of primary physical evidence for the exodus.⁴ He then observes that "there is a fair amount of secondary evidence for such a migration and *sufficient data to accept the historicity of the events.*"⁵ That kind of thinking is antithetical to the concept of *a priori* evidence and demeans the authority and accuracy of Scripture. The Scripture is itself sufficient evidence to accept the historicity of the events. One need not wait for "sufficient data to accept" any declaration of Scripture.

In his *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New versus the Old*, Robert Thomas

³"If Assyrian mentions are the *sine qua non* (the absolute criterion) for a king's existence, then Egypt and her kings could not have existed before the specific naming of (U)shilkanni, Shapataka, and Ta(ha)rqa in 716-679!" (K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003] 12).

⁴Grant R. Osborne, "Historical Narrative and Truth in the Bible," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48/4 (Dec 2005):685.

⁵*Ibid.* (emphasis added)

addresses this tendency among some evangelical interpreters to exercise the secularist mindset, resulting in the magnification of “the human element in inspiration above the divine.”⁶ Integrating ant-supernaturalistic secular disciplines with biblical interpretation is fraught with pitfalls. As Thomas points out, the issue is not whether we ought to consider extrabiblical evidence, but whether we should allow such evidence to supersede the text or cause the exegete to revise (as opposed to refine) his interpretation of the biblical text.⁷

The Superior Knowledge Fallacy

Exegetical problems most often arise from human ignorance rather than any fault in the text itself. It has become customary among evangelical scholars to resort to textual emendation in order to explain some difficult texts. For example, Alfred Hoerth resorts to scribal glosses for the mention of “Chaldeans” in Gen 11:28⁸ and a later “editorial touch” in his treatment of the phrase “in the land of Rameses” in Gen 47:11.⁹ His preference for later textual revision as an explanation makes his accusation against critical scholars (“To accept the biblical account is now said to be naïve”¹⁰) ring hollow. It also contradicts his own principle that it is not a sound practice to emend “the biblical text to make the identification fit.”¹¹ Scholars too often pursue many such textual emendations merely because the interpreter has insufficient knowledge to make sense of the text as it stands. Ignorance should never be an excuse to emend the text to make it understandable to the modern Western mind. Above all, the evangelical exegete/expositor must accept the biblical text as the inerrant and authoritative Word of God. Adhering consistently to this declaration of faith will require an equal admission of one’s own ignorance and inability to resolve every problem. Ignorance, however, should never become the excuse for compromising the integrity of the Scriptures. Our first assumption should be that we are in error instead of applying the hermeneutics of doubt to the text.

According to Francis Andersen, “The notorious difficulties of the book of Job have been largely blamed on a corrupt text; but it is more likely, in this writer’s opinion, that much of the incoherence is due to the artistic representation of the

⁶Robert L. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New versus the Old* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002) 49.

⁷Ibid., 51.

⁸Alfred J. Hoerth, *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 59.

⁹Ibid., 156 n. 14, 166 n. 1.

¹⁰Ibid., 215.

¹¹Ibid., 225.

turbulent outbursts and hysterical cries of rage and grief.”¹² Because of his work with David Noel Freedman for the *Micah* volume in the Anchor Bible series, Anderson and Freedman decided that the unusual and sometimes “crazy” character of the text “was exactly that. It is an effective rendition of the sobs and screams of a person who has lost all self-control in paroxysms of rage and grief.”¹³ In other words, the classical Hebrew authors of both Job and Micah really did know the language better than modern Hebraists.

The Word Study Fallacy

Word studies are popular, easily obtained from available resources and an easy way to procure sermon content. However, word studies are also subject to radical extrapolations and erroneous applications.¹⁴ It is not always possible to strike exegetical gold by extracting a word from the text for close examination. Word studies alone will not suffice. Indeed, over-occupation with word studies is a sign of laziness and ignorance involved in much of what passes for biblical exposition in our times. Nigel Turner, an eminent NT Greek scholar, correctly summarized the issue as follows:

Just as a sentence is more revealing than a single word, so the examination of a writer’s syntax and style is that much more important to a biblical commentator. It is not surprising that fewer books have been written on this subject than on vocabulary, because whereas students of vocabulary can quickly look up lists of words in concordances and indices, in the field of syntax the study is more circuitous. There is no help except in a few selective grammars and monographs, so that the worker really must work his way through all the texts in Greek.¹⁵

Though we might decry over-emphasis on philology or etymology, we must recognize that the choice of individual words was significant to the writers of Scripture. It is legitimate for the exegete to ask, “Why did the writer choose this term

¹²Francis I. Andersen, “Linguistic Coherence in Prophetic Discourse,” in *Fortunate the Eyes That See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman*, eds. Astrid B. Beck, et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 147. Cp. John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 3: “The many rare words and textual disturbances make the Hebrew text of Job one of the most obscure in the OT. The ancient versions testify to the fact that many passages were unintelligible even to the earliest translators.”

¹³*Ibid.*, 148. Cp. Delbert R. Hillers, *Micah*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) 10: “But in the more corrupt passages of the book—and Micah is often placed among the worst books in the canon in this respect—so many conjectures have been proposed that it would be impossible to list them all even if it made any sense to do so.”

¹⁴See Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* 25-66 (“Word-Study Fallacies”) for a fuller discussion.

¹⁵Nigel Turner, *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965) 2-3.

as opposed to one of its synonyms?" Robert Renehan offers the following explanation:

Whether Euripides wrote δεῖ ["ought"] or χρῆ ["must"] in a given passage is hardly of metaphysical import. But we must assume that he made a choice between them. This is sufficient justification for concerning ourselves with the problem. It made a difference to the poet; it should make a difference to us. This planet, I do not doubt, shall never want for people to despise such problems and those who try to resolve them. Such contempt is founded upon the remarkable premise that one who manifests a concern for minutiae must of necessity be both indifferent to and unequal to profound problems. The Greeks, on the contrary, in their simplicity had contrived a word to express this reverence before even the smallest truth; and that word is φιλαλήθεια ["love of truth"].¹⁶

Study of the words alone will not present us with a consistent interpretation or theology. This is one of the misleading aspects of theological dictionaries/wordbooks. One learns far more about obedience/disobedience or sacrifice and sin from the full statement of a passage like 1 Sam 15:22-23 than he will from word studies of key terms like "sacrifice," "obey," or "sin" in the text. As a matter of fact, as Moisés Silva observes, "We learn much more about the doctrine of sin by John's statement, 'Sin is the transgression of the law,' than by a word-study of ἀμαρτία; similarly, tracing the history of the word ἀγιοῦ is relatively unimportant for the doctrine of sanctification once we have examined Romans 6–8 and related passages."¹⁷

John Sanders, in *A God Who Risks*, interprets παραδίδωμι with one meaning ("hand over") in every use of the word in John's Gospel.¹⁸ He uses this as an argument to claim that Jesus merely said that Judas would "hand him over," not "betray him." God has only present and past knowledge, says Sanders, therefore Jesus could not have known what Judas was really going to do. In other words, God cannot know the future. In addition, by applying the meaning "strengthen" to all three Hebrew words employed to describe God's "hardening" of Pharaoh's heart (**יִצְחָק**, **קָטַף**, and **קָטַף**), Sanders, to purge any deterministic sense from the wording of the text, has glossed over the clear contextual meaning of these words in their individual occurrences.¹⁹ In this way he proposes that "God strengthened Pharaoh's heart in his rebellion in the hopes that it would help him come to his senses and

¹⁶Robert Renehan, *Greek Textual Criticism: A Reader* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1969) 134 (translations in brackets added).

¹⁷Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 28.

¹⁸John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998) 98.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 59.

repent.”²⁰ Sander’s problem is that he depends too heavily upon word studies, which he skewed to his presuppositions rather than listening to Scripture as a whole or to the individual statements in context. To pursue proper word studies, the student must emphasize current usage in a given context (*usus loquendi*). Linguistic aids are virtually useless apart from the author’s context.

The Fallacy of Reading Between the Lines

As this writer grows older and (hopefully) wiser, he has less and less interest in “white spaces” in the Word. We have enough to occupy us in understanding and applying what the Word says explicitly. What the Bible student must do is to focus on what the Scriptures say, not on what he thinks the Scriptures imply. One example of this fallacy is the trinitarian interpretation of the four living creatures’ crying out “Holy, holy, holy” in Rev 4:8.²¹ The multiple adjectival declaration is actually an emphatic Semitic triplet. Other such triplets include “a ruin, a ruin, a ruin” (Ezek 21:27) or “land, land, land” (Jer 22:29). What kind of threefold existence might the creative interpreter dream up for these occurrences?

This fallacy falls into the category of logical fallacies that Carson discusses in *Exegetical Fallacies*.²² The unwarranted associative fallacy “occurs when a word or phrase triggers off an associated idea, concept, or experience that bears no close relation to the text at hand, yet is used to interpret the text.”²³ Seminarians applying Phil 4:13 (“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me”) to taking an exam in New Testament Introduction are stretching the text. In the context Paul speaks of contentment in the midst of poverty, hunger, and suffering. Someone who appeals to Paul’s statement in the expectation of turning water to wine, healing a sick person, or smuggling Bibles into China is doing more than stretching the application—he or she is abusing the text.

The Hebrew Verb Fallacy

One of the most misunderstood and debated areas of biblical (or classical) Hebrew grammar involves the Hebrew verb system. “Perfect” and “imperfect” are unfortunate names for the two major Hebrew verb forms. Therefore, many Hebraists prefer to employ the transliterations *qatal* and *yiqtol* or the names “suffix conjugation” and “prefix conjugation.” Deciding what to call these two categories of verbs,

²⁰Ibid., 121. See also A. B. Caneday, “Putting God at Risk: A Critique of John Sanders’ View of Providence,” *Trinity Journal* 20/2 (Fall 1999):156.

²¹E.g., Edward Hindson, *Approaching Armageddon* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1997) 88.

²²Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 117 (perhaps an “unwarranted associative jump”).

²³Ibid.

however, is but a small matter compared to defining their distinctive usages or meanings. How one defines the distinctions has a great deal to do with how these verbs affect one's translation and interpretation of the Hebrew Bible's text.

Gary A. Long, in *Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew*, comments that the "perfective aspect" (= the suffix conjugation or *qatal*) "views a situation from the outside, as whole and complete."²⁴ Furthermore he describes the perfective by explaining that it

expresses the *totality* of the situation, without dividing up its internal temporal structure. The *whole* situation is presented as an undivided whole. The beginning, middle, and end are rolled up into one.... [I]t makes no attempt to divide the situation into various phases.²⁵

For the "imperfective aspect" (= the prefix conjugation or *yiqtol*) Long observes that the "imperfective aspect... views a situation from the inside. It considers the internal temporal structure of a situation."²⁶ Examples of what imperfectivity might involve in a given context include such things as repeated or habitual actions, actions in progress, and completed actions without a view to result.²⁷ In other words, in contrast to the suffix conjugation, the prefix conjugation does attempt to divide a situation into various phases (beginning, middle, or end) rather than looking at it as a totality.

Long's distinctions are in general agreement with the more technical discussions of Joüon and Muraoka. They indicate that one of the primary characteristics of the suffix conjugation is that its aspect refers to action that is "unique or instantaneous."²⁸ In fact, they remind us that "The *unity* of the action can, and sometimes must, be emphasised in our languages."²⁹ It is instructive to consider some of their examples:

²⁴Gary A. Long, *Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew: Learning Biblical Hebrew Grammatical Concepts through English Grammar* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002) 92 (emphasis in the original).

²⁵*Ibid.*, 93 (emphasis is Long's). Waltke and O'Connor emphasize that "the perfective does not emphasize the completedness of a situation. Earlier researchers commonly erred in characterizing the suffix conjugation as indicating completed action, instead of indicating a *complete* situation" (Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990], §30.1d [emphasis in the original]). It behooves the careful exegete to be equally distinct and accurate when it comes to the terms "completed" and "complete." They are not identical in meaning when discussing the grammar of Hebrew verbs.

²⁶Long, *Grammatical Concepts 101* 94 (emphasis in the original).

²⁷*Ibid.*, 95.

²⁸Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, trans. and rev. by T. Muraoka, *Subsidia Biblica* 14/I-II (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1996) §112d.

²⁹*Ibid.* (emphasis in the original).

Judges 19:30—“Nothing like this has *ever* happened [perfect/*qatal*]” (NAU) = “such a thing has *never* (*not even once*) been done”

Isaiah 66:8—“Who has heard [perfect/*qatal*] such a thing?” = “who has *ever* heard?”

One must be aware, however, that Joüon and Muraoka point out a number of exceptions to this simplified view of the suffix conjugation.³⁰ As with any element of biblical Hebrew grammar, exceptions may occur.

For the *yiqtol* (prefix conjugation) Joüon and Muraoka state that the aspect may be “unique or repeated, instantaneous or durative.”³¹ It is in their discussion of stative verbs, however, that they come closest to the kind of values attributed to *qatal* and *yiqtol* that were observed by Long. The suffix-conjugation stative verb appears to merit a translation employing a form of the verb *be* whereas Joüon and Muraoka present the prefix conjugation overwhelmingly with a translation employing a form of the verb *become*.³² In other words, a stative verb normally represents a state of *being* in the suffix conjugation, but a state of *becoming* in the prefix conjugation. This grammatical observation is significant for the interpretation of Gen 1:2 (the verb is the suffix conjugation: “was”—not “became”). Recognizing this distinction provides a major argument against the so-called Gap Theory (which proposes that the condition of the earth *became* chaotic as the result of God’s judgment of Satan prior to the six days of creation).

Obviously, context is the 500-pound gorilla in interpreting the Hebrew text. Context will consistently be the defining and refining factor when the exegete works for as objective an interpretation as possible. In each situation the exegete must first identify the grammar and then ask, “So what? What is the exegetical significance of this form in this passage?” The task of exegesis can easily fall victim to either the extreme of over-simplification or the extreme of over-complexification, but nevertheless the exercise must be pursued.

How does all this affect exegesis? Take Gen 1:5 as an example: “God called [*wayyiqtol* = consecutive imperfect] the light day, and the darkness He called [perfect/*qatal*] night” (NAU). What is the difference between the *wayyiqtol* (which is still an imperfect, note the *yiqtol* in its name) and the perfect? The *wayyiqtol* views the act of naming as that which is either initiated, progressing, completed (without a view to the result), or some other factor internal to the action—and, even more important, as one event in a sequence of events. “Then God named the light ‘Day’” is an accurate translation. Interpretively, however, the exegete must be aware of the

³⁰Joüon and Muraoka tend to categorize *qatal* as a past tense and *yiqtol* as a future tense (§§112f, h, 113a). This tense definition of the Hebrew verb forms is weak and unconvincing. Tense is a function of context rather than of the form of the Hebrew verb. See Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *From Exegesis to Exposition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) 86.

³¹Joüon, *Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* §113b.

³²*Ibid.*, §113p.

fact that Moses was not making an overall descriptive statement representing the totality of the situation. However, the latter verb, being a perfect, does look at the totality of the situation without regard to any internal progress of action.

What does this mean? How does it affect the exegete? Moses employed the perfect to distinguish the action from the sequential narrative framework of *wayyiqtol* verbs. So that he might interrupt the chain smoothly, Moses placed the object (“the darkness”) first (a non-emphatic use since it is merely interrupting the chain). By looking at the totality of the situation, the second act of naming the darkness is not a separate sequential act following the naming of the light. It is a common Hebrew way of making certain that the reader does not think that two sequential acts occurred. It does not matter which was named first or even if the two were named separately. Therefore, any expositor attempting to make a preaching point of the order of the naming here is in direct conflict with the actual grammar of the text.

One more example (from Ps 1:1-2) should help to make these points more lucid:

How blessed is the man who does not walk [perfect] in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand [perfect] in the path of sinners,
Nor sit [perfect] in the seat of scoffers!
But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates [imperfect] day and night.”

Why did the psalmist employ the perfect for the three negated verbs in v. 1 while employing the imperfect for the verb in v. 2? He intended the perfects of v. 1 to direct the reader to view the situation as a totality without regard to any phases. On the other hand, the imperfect in v. 2 draws the reader’s attention to the internal nature of the action rather than looking at it from the outside as a whole. Confirmation comes in the adverbs that follow and modify “meditates.” This action is viewed as either habitual, repetitive, or continual: the godly individual will “habitually (*or* repeatedly *or* continually) meditate day and night.” Note how the context supports the verb usage. Biblical Hebrew writers and speakers selected their verb forms on the basis of the context in which each verb form was employed. To do otherwise would create a dissonance for the reader or hearer. In some cases, biblical authors utilized such dissonance to indicate emphasis or some other literary effect.

A final illustration might help to clarify the basic differences between the two Hebrew verb forms. In Judg 5:26 the text reads, “She reached out [imperfect] her hand for the tent peg, And her right hand for the workmen’s hammer. Then she struck [perfect] Sisera, she smashed [perfect] his head; And she shattered [perfect] and pierced [perfect] his temple” (NASB). Film makers have two options when it comes to depicting such violence. They might employ close-up shots of the peg and skull as blood splatters and brain tissue is exposed (as in CBS’s “CSI” special effects) or they might show only Jael’s hands and the hammer (allowing the viewer’s imagination to take over when they hear the peg sink into the skull). Hollywood’s

preference for the overly explicit and gory does not match the Scripture's treatment. Filming with a view to the Hebrew verbs opens the scene with a close-up shot showing Jael's left hand reaching for the tent peg. Next, the camera zooms in on her right hand grasping the hammer. The camera stays on the hammer as it arcs and descends, then strikes the head of the peg. The biblical writer uses the imperfect verb to represent these actions in progress. As the sounds of the blow and the cracking skull are heard, the camera moves to Jael's grim face or to the death throws of Sisera's feet—the camera never shows the striking of Sisera directly nor the smashing of his head or piercing of his temple. The Hebrew writer uses the perfect to simply state the fact of actions' occurrence, without focusing on their actual process.

The Fallacy of Ignoring Particles

No word is too small or lacking in significance. Turning attention to the NT, a close look at Acts 13:2 is revealing. In this text the Holy Spirit's command appears as "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (NASB; cf. KJV, NKJV, ESV, NRSV, NIV). All of these translations ignore the little word $\delta\eta$ that in the Greek text follows the imperative "set apart." Translators have often treated that word as though it were nothing more than a marker of "relatively weak emphasis—'then, indeed' or frequently not translated but possibly reflected in the word order."³³ Nida and Louw suggest the translation, "set apart for me, then, Barnabas and Saul to do the work for which I have called them."³⁴ However, A. T. Robertson, the venerable Greek scholar, indicated that, although this Greek particle was difficult to translate, it is strongly emphatic.³⁵ Combined with an imperative (as in Acts 13:2), it has a "note of urgency."³⁶ The nature of the particle is such that it should not be omitted from the translation of the verse.³⁷ Expositors need to represent the Holy Spirit's command so that they convey the concept of urgency ("do it immediately").³⁸

Unfortunately, all available English translations will translate some texts like

³³J. P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2d ed., 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989) 811 (§91.6).

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 1149. Cp. also Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) 673.

³⁶Robertson, *Grammar* 1149.

³⁷"It ought to be preserved in the translation" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 6 vols. [Nashville: Broadman, 1930] 3:178).

³⁸When an imperative indicates that something is "to be carried into effect at once" the particle " $\delta\eta$ strengthens the injunction" (George Benedict Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, 7th ed., rev. by Gottlieb Lünemann [Andover, Mass.: Warren F. Draper, 1870] 313).

Acts 13:2 poorly.³⁹ No Bible interpreter or translator has the right to select certain elements of biblical propositions for preservation and to excise the remainder from the text. An accurate translation must be full and complete, not selective and partial. Omission of any portion of the text hinders full understanding or, at its worse, creates misunderstanding.

The Fallacy of Reduction

A repetitive text like Num 7:12-83 provides an extreme example of reduction of the biblical text. The passage describes each tribe's offerings at the dedication of the Tabernacle. Tribal leaders presented those offerings on each of twelve consecutive days, one tribe per day. The Good News Bible⁴⁰ (also known as Today's English Version) abridges the text instead of providing the full wording of the Hebrew text. Why refuse to abbreviate such a repetitive text? First, there are minor variations in the Hebrew wording—all the verses are not exact repetitions. Second, the wordiness is unusual for this kind of text—it has a purpose. Ellicott observes, "The repetition of the description of the offerings... may serve to denote the special regard which God has to the offerings of His people."⁴¹ Ronald Allen asks, "Is it not possible that in this daily listing we catch a glimpse of the magnificent pomp and ceremony attending these gifts?"⁴² He goes on to state, "This chapter has a stately charm, a leisurely pace, and a studied sense of magnificence as each tribe in its turn was able to make gifts to God that he received with pleasure."⁴³ Dennis Olson in the less-than-evangelical *Harper's Bible Commentary* writes, "The careful repetition underscores the unanimous and strong support for the tabernacle and its priesthood. Every tribe has an equal and strong commitment to the worship of

³⁹The matter of this participle should not be taken as a claim that all particles should be translated. As Carson points out, "precisely because particles are subtle things, one can always find instances where any particular translation has it wrong" (D. A. Carson, "The Limits of Functional Equivalence in Bible Translation—and Other Limits, Too," in *The Challenge of Bible Translation: Communicating God's Word to the World*, ed. Glen G. Scorgie, Mark L. Strauss, and Steven M. Voth (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003) 73).

⁴⁰*Good News Bible: The Bible in Today's English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1976).

⁴¹Charles John Ellicott, *An Old Testament Commentary for English Readers*, 5 vols. (London: Cassell & Co., 1897) 1:503. Cf. also Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 1981) 93.

⁴²Ronald B. Allen, "Numbers," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990) 2:762.

⁴³*Ibid.*

God.”⁴⁴ Reducing the text would be the equivalent of asking a class of graduating seminarians to stand en masse as the dean intones, “Ladies and gentlemen, the graduating class of 2020 is hereby awarded sixty Master of Divinity degrees and five Master of Theology degrees”—without reading each person’s name, without having them walk across the platform, without hooding them, and without placing the diploma into their hands. It makes for a brief and perhaps comfortable ceremony, but is empty of celebration and individual recognition.⁴⁵ We should preserve the entire text of Num 7:12-83 without abridgement—and, the class of 2020 will receive their due individual recognition at graduation.

Conclusion

Every student of the Bible must attempt to interpret the text as objectively as possible. In order to maintain accuracy, the student must avoid taking shortcuts that result in committing the fallacies described in this article. Correct interpretation is the result of careful attention to details, to context, and to what the text says. Above all, the attitude of the interpreter is extremely important. We must not approach the text with academic swagger, a feeling of superiority to the ancient writers, or an unteachable spirit. Hubris can have no home in the heart of the hermeneut. We dare not make the Word “lordless” (ἀκυρόω) by making our human understanding the authoritative factor in interpretation (Matt 15:6).

⁴⁴Dennis T. Olson, “Numbers,” in *Harper’s Bible Commentary*, ed. James L. Mays (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 187-88.

⁴⁵Allen suggested this analogy (“Numbers” 2:762-63).

PROMISES TO ISRAEL IN THE APOCALYPSE

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Recent opinions that Israel's covenants and promises are missing in Rev 20:1-10 have rested on poor hermeneutical foundations. Three major OT covenants with Israel are prominent throughout the Apocalypse and therefore are foundational to what John writes in chapter 20. God promised Abraham a people who are quite visible in Revelation 7, 12, and 14, and in 2:9 and 3:9, where physical descendants of Abraham are in view. The geographical territory promised to Abraham comes into view in 11:1-13 as well as in 16:16 and 20:9. Close attention is given to the Davidic Covenant in 1:5 and 22:16 and many places between, such as 3:7, 5:5, and 11:15. The New Covenant comes into focus whenever the Lamb and His blood are mentioned in the book, and particularly in 21:3 which speaks of a new relationship with God. Obvious references to God's covenants with Israel are often ignored because of deviations from sound principles of interpretation by those who practice what has been called eclectic hermeneutics. According to Revelation, God will in the future be faithful in fulfilling His promises to Israel.

* * * * *

Bruce Waltke finds no textual linkage in Revelation 20 to Israel's OT promises regarding a kingdom. He writes, "In the former essay I argued among other things that if there is any tension in one's interpretation between the Old Testament and the New, priority must be given to the New; that Rev 20:1-10 cannot be linked textually with Israel's covenants and promises; that no New Testament passage clearly teaches a future Jewish millennium; and that the New Testament interprets the imagery of the Old Testament with reference to the present spiritual reign of Christ from his heavenly throne."¹ In supporting this claim, Waltke professes allegiance to

¹Bruce K. Waltke, "A Response," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, eds. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 353. Waltke is referring to his earlier works "Kingdom Promises as Spiritual," in *Continuity and Discontinuity*:

the grammatical-historical approach, but adds certain rules of interpretation that “go beyond” that approach, rules such as the “priority of the Bible over other data,” “the priority of New Testament interpretation over the interpretation of theologians,” “the priority of clear texts over obscure ones,” and “the priority of spiritual illumination over scientific exegesis.”² He fails to notice, however, that in applying his rules beyond the grammatical-historical method, he violates time-honored principles of that method, such as interpreting a passage in its historical context³ and the principle of single meaning.⁴ Like others of a covenant theology persuasion, he interprets OT passages without adequate attention to their historical context, and in so doing, assigns them an additional meaning, one meaning being what the original author intended and the other being a meaning assigned by a NT writer.⁵ He fails to grant NT writers the prerogative of assigning additional meanings through use of their

Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments: Essays in Honor of S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., ed. John S. Feinberg (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1988) 263-88; and “Theonomy in Relation to Dispensational and Covenant Theologies,” in *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Academie Books, 1990) 59-88.

²Waltke, “Kingdom Promises as Spiritual” 263-65.

³M. S. Terry writes, “The interpreter should, therefore, endeavour to take himself from the present and to transport himself into the historical position of an author, look through his eyes, note his surroundings, feel with his heart, and catch his emotion. Herein we note the import of the term *grammatico-historical* interpretation” (*Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments* [1885; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1947] 231, emphasis in the original), and “Subject and predicate and subordinate clauses must be closely analyzed, and the whole document, book, or epistle, should be viewed, as far as possible from the *author's historical standpoint*” (*ibid.*, 205, emphasis added). B. Ramm adds, “Some interaction with the culture and history of a book of Holy Scripture is mandatory” (B. Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics*, 3d. rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970] 150), and “The interpreter must know *Biblical history*. . . . Every event has its historical referent in that all Biblical events occur in a stream of history” (*ibid.*, 154, emphasis in the original).

⁴“A fundamental principle in grammatico-historical exposition is that the words and sentences can have but one significance in one and the same connection. The moment we neglect this principle we drift out upon a sea of uncertainty and conjecture” (Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* 205); “But here we must remember the old adage: ‘Interpretation is one; application is many.’ This means that there is only one meaning to a passage of Scripture which is determined by careful study” (Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* 113). Summit II of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy concurred with this principle: “We affirm that the meaning expressed in each biblical text is single, definite and fixed. We deny that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application” (Article VII, “Articles of Affirmation and Denial,” adopted by the International Council in Biblical Inerrancy, 10–13 November 1982). For further discussion of the principle of single meaning, see Chapter Six in my *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The Old Versus the New* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002) 141-64.

⁵For an explanation of the NT use of the OT that does not violate either of these principles, see my discussion in Chapter Nine of *Evangelical Hermeneutics* 241-69.

revelatory gifts of apostleship and prophesy.⁶

Waltke deserves a response in light of his inability to find any reference to Israel's covenants and promises in Revelation in general and in Rev 20:1-10 in particular. Since Rev 20:1-10 cannot be divorced from the remainder of the Apocalypse, that passage will be viewed through the eyes of the whole book.

The OT describes four covenants that are most relevant to "perspectives on Israel and the church": the Abrahamic, the Palestinian or Land, the Davidic, and the New Covenants. Some consider the Land Covenant to be a part of the Abrahamic, so that covenant will be considered as part of the Abrahamic. The three major covenants of God with Israel are the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the New Covenants.

This study will examine the Book of Revelation to see what kind of fulfillments of these covenants it records. Results yielded by differing hermeneutical approaches to the book will also come under scrutiny. The treatments selected for comparison will be three recent evangelical commentaries on Revelation by Greg Beale, David Aune, and Grant Osborne.

The Abrahamic Covenant

God promised Abraham a people, the land, and an ability to be a source of blessing to all families of the earth (Gen 12:1-3, 7).

A people. Revelation depicts a number of times and a number of ways that God will fulfil His promises to Abraham. The people descended from Abram are in view several times in the book. Perhaps the most conspicuous instances are in chapter 7:1-8 and chapter 14:1-5 in which the 144,000 descended from the twelve sons of Abram's grandson Jacob are mentioned. These are not the total number of Abraham's descendants, but are a select group from among that number who will in later times have a special mission to fulfil.⁷

Of course, covenantalists do not accept the literal meaning of the words about the 144,000. Beale, in line with his eclectic approach to hermeneutics in the Apocalypse, concludes that "the group of 7:4-8 represents a remnant from the visible church, which professes to be true Israel"⁸ or, in other words, "the totality of God's people throughout the ages, viewed as true Israelites."⁹ He describes his eclecticism

⁶Ibid.

⁷Others who interpret the book literally may see a different role for the 144,000 (e.g., John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* [Chicago: Moody, 1966] 140), but they all agree that the 144,000 are descendants of Abraham.

⁸G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary, eds. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 423.

⁹Ibid., 733.

as a combination of the idealist and the futurist approaches to the book.¹⁰ Eclectic hermeneutics allow a person to switch from literal to allegorical and from allegorical to literal in any given passage in order to support a preferred theological persuasion. In Revelation this most often happens under the cover of assuming that the book's apocalyptic genre allows for such vacillation. Eclecticism allows Beale to interpret idealistically in some places, such as in chapters 7 and 14, and futuristically in others such as in chapter 19.

Aune identifies the 144,000 as representing “*that particular group of Christians (including all ages and both genders) who have been specially protected by God from both divine plagues and human persecution just before the final eschatological tribulation begins and who consequently survive that tribulation and the great eschatological battle that is the culmination of that tribulation.*”¹¹ In contrast with Beale, Aune sees the 144,000 as future Christians, not believers of all ages.¹² He also differs from Beale when he differentiates the 144,000 from the innumerable multitude of 7:9-17.¹³ A comparison of these two allegorists in their comments on this passage illustrates how interpretations of Revelation are uncontrolled and varied when exegetes forsake the use of grammatical-historical principles.

Aune reaches his conclusions after laboring hard to find a consensus definition of apocalyptic genre.¹⁴ He eventually has to set down his own definitions of genre and apocalypse,¹⁵ while admitting that some authorities disagree with his definitions.¹⁶

Hermeneutically, Osborne falls into the eclectic camp with Beale, but instead of combining just idealist and futurist, he combines futurist with preterist and idealist.¹⁷ He too can vacillate from one approach to another to suit his own theological leanings. Yet he pleads for “hermeneutical humility” and caution, whatever principles of interpretation one adopts.¹⁸

He understands the 144,000 to be the church because of emphasis on the

¹⁰Ibid., 48-49.

¹¹David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, vol. 52B of *Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. Bruce M. Metzger, David A. Hubbard, Glenn W. Barker (Nashville: Word, 1998) 443 (emphasis in the original).

¹²Ibid., 443-44.

¹³Ibid., 440.

¹⁴David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, vol. 52A of *Word Biblical Commentary*, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Nashville: Word, 1997), lxxi-xc.

¹⁵Ibid., lxxxi-lxxxii, lxxxii-lxxxviii.

¹⁶Ibid., lxxxviii-lxxxix.

¹⁷Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002) 21-22.

¹⁸Ibid., 16.

church throughout Revelation.¹⁹ He goes on to say, “[T]here is no mention of Jewish believers apart from the Gentile church elsewhere in Revelation,”²⁰ a statement that will be shown below to be fallacious. Osborne’s other reasons for his conclusion draw upon other NT passages, but in his cited passages, alleged references to the church as Israel are also debated.²¹

As I have pointed out in another place,²² valid exegetical arguments for taking the designations in 7:4-8 in other than their literal meaning are nonexistent. The only reasons adduced for understanding them otherwise are theologically motivated. Without citing every weakness of Osborne’s conclusion, suffice it to say that “no clear-cut example of the church being called ‘Israel’ exists in the NT or in ancient church writings until A.D. 160.”²³ Walvoord’s point is also quite valid: “It would be rather ridiculous to carry the typology of Israel representing the church to the extent of dividing them up into twelve tribes as was done here, if it was the intent of the writer to describe the church.”²⁴ Add to these the difference in number and ethnicity between the 144,000 and the innumerable multitude of Rev 7:9-17, and identification of the 144,000 as descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob becomes quite evident.

Another reference to the descendants of Abraham comes in Revelation 12 when the text tells of a great sign in heaven that includes a woman with child. The term *σημείον* (12:1) is the contextual signal to understanding a figurative interpretation of the woman. The connection of the woman’s description with Gen 37:9 helps in identifying the woman as national Israel. God will in the future provide a place of refuge for the nation from the animosity of the dragon.

As part of a lengthy acknowledgment that the woman represents Israel, Beale makes the following exegetically unsubstantiated statements: “This then is another example of the church being equated with the twelve tribes of Israel (see on 7:4-8). Ch. 12 presents the woman as incorporating the people of God living both before and after Christ’s coming.”²⁵ As part of his discussion, he sees references to the OT community of faith that brought forth the Messiah.²⁶ Yet he notes, “It is too limiting to view the woman as representing only a remnant of Israelites living in trial

¹⁹Ibid., 311.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 311-12.

²²Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1–7* (Chicago: Moody, 1992) 473-78.

²³Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge U., 1969) 74-84, 206.

²⁴Walvoord, *Revelation of Jesus Christ* 143.

²⁵Beale, *Book of Revelation* 627.

²⁶Ibid., 629.

at the last stage of history,”²⁷ and adds the conclusion that “the woman in 12:1-2 represents the community of faith in both the Old and New Testament ages.”²⁸ Through some unexplained interpretive transition, he moves from a recognition that the woman is a symbol for Israel to making her a symbol for both believing Israel and the believing church.

Aune analyzes the words about the woman as probably derived from the Greek Leto-Apollo-Python myth. With only one passing mention of Gen 37:9-11,²⁹ he allows that the myth about the woman can be read as a reference to Mary and her child from a Christian perspective, or as a reference to Israel, the persecuted people of God, from a Jewish perspective.³⁰ Aune seems to pursue a reader-response type of hermeneutic in this instance. He sees the catching up of the child to God and His throne as referring to the exaltation of the risen Jesus to the right hand of God, but rather than assigning an OT background to the story, he sees its source in Greek mythology.

Osborne correctly identifies the woman as Israel by referring to Gen 37:1-9 with the sun and the moon referring to Joseph’s parents and the stars his brothers, but inexplicably, he says that she represents the church in Rev 12:17.³¹ He fails to explain how the church has the same parents as Joseph—i.e., Jacob and Leah,³² but in Rev 12:6, he opts for a futurist explanation, identifying those persecuted during the “final terrible persecution” as the church.³³ How Israel, the people of God, suddenly becomes the church, the people of God, he does not explain. The transition appears to be quite arbitrary.

Again, the radical disagreement of allegorists in their handling of Revelation 12 illustrates the subjective nature of interpretation once the interpreter has forsaken grammatical-historical principles. A point that Beale and Aune have in common, however, is their failure to recognize the futurity of what chapter 12 reveals. This is the portion of the book that discloses “things that must happen after these things,” according to Rev 4:1. Osborne recognizes the futurity, but changes boats in the middle of the stream, beginning the chapter with the woman being Israel and ending the chapter with her representing the church.

The woman represents the faithful remnant of Israel of the future and the

²⁷Ibid., 631.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Aune, *Revelation 6–16* 680.

³⁰Ibid., 712.

³¹Osborne, *Revelation* 456.

³²Osborne seemingly identifies Joseph’s mother as Leah, but actually Joseph’s mother was Rachel (Gen 30:22-24).

³³Ibid., 464.

attempt of the devil to get rid of her.³⁴ Clearly, the sun and the moon in Gen 37:9-10 refer to Jacob and Rachel, the parents of Joseph. National Israel is the mother who begat the Messiah, a feat that cannot with any justification be attributed to the church. To claim that Revelation makes no distinction between the people of God in the OT and the church in the NT is without merit. Such a distinction has already been noted in comparing 7:1-8 with 7:9-17. Whatever the composition of the innumerable multitude in 7:9-17, they are explicitly distinct from the 144,000 in 7:1-8. This account in Revelation 12 furnishes another instance of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promise to Abraham in raising up from him and preserving a people that become a nation.

Revelation 2:9 and 3:9 also furnish a recognition of the existence of national Israel, descendants of Abraham. Of course, not all of Abraham's physical seed belonged to his spiritual seed. These two passages, coming from the epistolary portion of the Apocalypse, describe cases where Abraham's physical seed were not among the faithful remnant of Israel, but the latter case (3:9) promises the future repentance of national Israel when it records, "Behold, I will cause [those] of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie—behold, I will make them to come and bow down at your feet, and to know that I have loved you." The verse refers either to the exaltation of the Philadelphian church, without implying salvation of those who are forced to come and worship, or to an eschatological salvation of the Jews. The latter alternative has more in its favor because it aligns with biblical predictions of the future repentance of Israel (cf. Rom 9:26a) and is in line with the prediction of Christ's return in 3:10-11 when that national repentance will occur.³⁵ Here is another indication of God's fulfilling His promise of a people to Abraham.

Beale, Aune, and Osborne concur that these are references to national Israel, but reject any teaching of future national repentance, saying that the verse simply refers to vindication of the Philadelphian believers.³⁶ Yet vindication of the Philadelphian church is extremely difficult to separate from a future repentance of national Israel. Submission and homage depicted in the language of 3:9 can hardly be rendered by anyone who has not become Christ's follower.³⁷

The Land. God also promised Abraham possession of the land to which He

³⁴For additional support for this decision, see Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22* (Chicago: Moody, 1995) 117-21.

³⁵Thomas, *Revelation 1–7* 281-83.

³⁶Beale, *Book of Revelation* 240-41, 286-88; Aune, *Revelation 6–16* 162-65, 237-38; Osborne, *Revelation* 190-91.

³⁷Thomas, *Revelation 1–7* 282.

was to lead him. This, of course, is the land that came to be known as Israel, “the promised land.” Revelation 11:1-13 tells of the measuring of the temple and two witnesses active in Jerusalem, a city in the heart of that promised land, and a revival that will take place in that city following a great earthquake.

The following chart that summarizes the differences between hermeneutical approaches to Rev 11:1-13. As noted earlier, Beale follows a double-eclectic philosophy of hermeneutics, varying between idealist and futurist. In his commentary on Revelation, Osborne follows a triple-eclectic approach when he switches between futurism, idealism, and preterism. The following chart reflects the results of their eclecticism compared with a literal or consistent grammatical-historical approach to the book:

Three Views on Rev 11:1ff.

(Note: page numbers in parentheses refer to Beale’s commentary, Osborne’s commentary, and Thomas’ commentary. On the chart, note the shaded blocks where Beale and Osborne essentially agree with each other. In the rest of the blocks they are in substantial disagreement with one another. They disagree with a literal understanding in every one of the fourteen areas.)

<i>Term or Expression</i>	<i>Beale</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Thomas</i>
[1] “measure” (11:1)	“the infallible promise of God’s future presence”; “the protection of God’s eschatological community” (559) “until the parousia” (566)	“preservation of the saints spiritually in the coming great persecution” (410; cf. 411); “a ‘prophetic anticipation’ of the final victory of the church” (412)	“a mark of God’s favor” (80-81)
[2] “the temple (naon)” (11:1)	“the temple of the church” (561); “Christians” (562); “the whole covenant community” (562); “the community of believers undergoing persecution yet protected by God” (566)	heavenly temple depicting “the church, primarily the saints of this final period but secondarily the church of all ages” (410)	“a future temple in Jerusalem during the period just before Christ returns” (81-82)

<i>Term or Expression</i>	<i>Beale</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Thomas</i>
[3] “the altar” (11:1)	“the suffering covenant community” (563)	“the [heavenly] altar of incense” (410)	“the brazen altar of sacrifice in the court outside the sanctuary” (82)
[4] “the worshipers” (11:1)	“believers worshipping together in the temple community” (564)	“individual believers” (411)	“a future godly remnant in Israel” (82)
[5] “in it” (11:1)	“it” referring to the temple or the altar (571)	“in the church” (411)	“in the rebuilt temple” (82)
[6] “the court that is outside the temple (<i>naou</i>)” (11:2)	“God’s true people,” including Gentiles (560)	“the saints who are persecuted” (412)	“the wicked without God” (83)
[7] “cast outside” (11:2)	“not protected from various forms of earthly harm (physical, economic, social, etc.)” (569)	not protected from the Gentiles/nations (412); God delivers his followers into the hands of sinners (413)	“exclusion from God’s favor” (83)
[8] “the Gentiles” (11:2)	“unbelieving Gentiles and Jews” (569)	“the church handed over to the Gentiles/nations for a time” (412)	“a group [of non-Jews] in rebellion against God who will oppress the Jewish remnant” (83-84)
[9] “the holy city” (11:2)	“the initial form of the heavenly city, part of which is identified with believers living on earth” (568)	“the people of God” (413)	“the literal city of Jerusalem on earth” (84)

<i>Term or Expression</i>	<i>Beale</i>	<i>Osborne</i>	<i>Thomas</i>
[10] “forty-two months” (11:2)	“figurative for the eschatological period of tribulation” (565); “attack on the community of faith throughout the church age” (566)	“a limited period that is strictly under God’s control”; “a time of martyrdom but also a time of preservation and witness” (415)	“the last half of Daniel’s seventieth week” (85)
[11] “they will trample on” (11:2)	persecution of the church from Christ’s resurrection until His final coming (567)	“the saints will suffer incredibly” in a physical sense (413)	“future defilement and domination of Jerusalem” (86)
[12] “the two witnesses” (11:3)	the church; “the whole community of faith” (573)	“two major eschatological figures . . . [and a symbol for] the witnessing church” (418)	two future prophets, probably Moses and Elijah (87-89)
[13] “the great city” (11:8)	“Babylon” = “Rome” = “the ungodly world” (591-92)	Jerusalem and Rome; secondarily, all cities that oppose God (426-27)	Jerusalem (93-94)
[14] the resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses (11:11-12)	“divine legitimation of a prophetic call” (599)	“A proleptic anticipation of the ‘rapture’ of the church” (432)	the resurrection of the two witnesses (97)

Of special interest for this study are rows 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, and 13. All pertain to a geographical location within the land that God promised to Abraham. Following a futurist, literal approach to the book, one learns that these are part of the future fulfillment of His promise to Abraham.

Turning attention to Aune, one sees that he agrees with Osborne that the temple refers to the heavenly temple, not the earthly one, but he does so under the assumption that the earthly temple will not be rebuilt.³⁸ Yet he later acknowledges that the temple described in 11:1-2 is most definitely the earthly temple in

³⁸Aune, *Revelation 6–16* 596-97.

Jerusalem.³⁹ He also believes that “the holy city” is a clear reference to the earthly city Jerusalem that is referred to again in 11:8.⁴⁰ On the other hand, he agrees with Osborne that the worshipers are a divinely protected remnant of Christians who will survive until the arrival of the eschaton.⁴¹ Through a combination of source and form critical explanations of the passage, Aune is able to combine literal-futuristic interpretations of the passage with allegorical-idealistic explanations.

For those whose hermeneutical principles accord with literal interpretation, however, the land promises to Abraham keep resounding through the Apocalypse. Other references in Revelation to the land promised to Abraham include Rev 16:16 and 20:9. The former refers to a place called Harmagedon or Armageddon, where a future battle will be fought. The “Har” prefix probably refers to the hill country around a town called Megiddo. Megiddo was a city on the Great Road linking Gaza and Damascus, connecting the coastal plain and the Plain of Esdraelon or Megiddo. That the kings from the east must cross the Euphrates River to get to the land of Israel and Megiddo is another indication of the geographical connotation of Armageddon and of the fulfillment of the land promise to Abraham (Rev 16:12).⁴² The reference in 20:9 speaks of “the camp of the saints and the beloved city,” most clearly a reference to the city of Jerusalem.

In Beale’s system “Armageddon” is a figurative way of referring to the place where the final battle against the saints and Christ will be fought. He sees that place as being the whole world.⁴³ Similarly, he opts for another allegorical interpretation when he sees “the camp of the saints and the beloved city” as the church.⁴⁴

Aune calls Armageddon “the mythical apocalyptic-world mountain where the forces hostile to God, assembled by demonic spirits, will gather for a final battle against God and his people.”⁴⁵ Regarding “the beloved city” he comments, “Since the heavenly Jerusalem does not make its appearance until 21:10 (aside from 3:12), ‘the beloved city’ cannot be the New Jerusalem but must be the earthly Jerusalem.”⁴⁶ Yet one should not conclude that Aune handles Revelation’s prophecies as a futurist. Because of his source and redaction critical assumptions, he simply assumes that the final editor of the Apocalypse incorporated earlier traditions and/or myths into the

³⁹Ibid., 605.

⁴⁰Ibid., 608, 619.

⁴¹Ibid., 630.

⁴²Thomas, *Revelation 8–22* 261–62.

⁴³Beale, *Book of Revelation* 838–39.

⁴⁴Ibid., 1027.

⁴⁵Aune, *Revelation 6–16* 898.

⁴⁶David E. Aune, *Revelation 17–22*, vol. 52C of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas, 1998) 1098–99.

passage.

After briefly examining eight possible meanings, Osborne understands Armageddon to speak of a broadening of apostate Israel to depict all nations in their final war against God.⁴⁷ This too is an obvious allegorical interpretation of the term. After acknowledging the geographical connotation of the term,⁴⁸ he opts for a symbolic rather than geographical meaning. From OT times, the plain and the hill country around Megiddo were a well-known battleground, and is a suitable location for Christ's final victory over His enemies. The plains of Megiddo are not large enough to contain armies from all over the world, but furnish an assembly area for a larger deployment that covers two hundred miles from north to south and the width of Palestine from east to west (cf. Rev 14:20).⁴⁹

In agreement with literal interpretation, Osborne reverts to his literal-futurist mode in identifying "the beloved city" of Rev 20:9 with Jerusalem which will have been reinstated as the capital of Christ's kingdom during the millennium.⁵⁰ That refreshing conclusion adds fuel to the case for the fulfillment of the land promise to Abraham by locating activities of the millennium geographically within the boundaries of territory promised to Abraham. This will be the location of Israel's Messiah in ruling the world kingdom on earth.⁵¹

Among Abraham's descendants will be the "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16). His conquest will free the righteous of the earth from the deceptions, tyranny, and injustice of the beast and the false prophet (19:20). This great battle will eventuate in the imprisonment of the deceiver of the nations (20:3), a great blessing to all the families of the earth.

The Davidic Covenant

God's promises to David included the following: "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, "I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and **I will establish his kingdom. . . . I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever . . . and your house and your kingdom shall endure before me forever; your throne shall be established forever**" (1 Sam. 7:12, 13, 16; emphasis added).

Fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant is a major theme of Revelation, from beginning to end. In Rev 1:5 the titles chosen for Christ come from Psalm 89, an inspired commentary on the Davidic Covenant. Those titles are "the faithful witness,

⁴⁷Osborne, *Revelation* 596.

⁴⁸Ibid., 594.

⁴⁹Thomas, *Revelation 8–22* 270-71.

⁵⁰Osborne, *Revelation* 714.

⁵¹Cf. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22* 425.

the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.” The source of all three is Psalm 89. “The firstborn of the dead” comes from “My firstborn” in verse 27 of the psalm. “The highest of the kings of the earth” refers again to verse 27 where the psalmist wrote “the highest of the kings of the earth.” “The faithful witness” derives from “the witness in the sky is faithful” in verse 37 of the psalm.

David is prominent at the book’s end too. Rev 22:16 reads, “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star.” Jesus is both the ancestor (the root) and the descendant (the offspring) of David. He is the beginning and end of the economy associated with David’s family. In the words of 2 Sam 7:12, He is the descendant whom God promised to raise up after David. He will inaugurate the kingdom promised to David. Just as David founded the first Jerusalem, Jesus will found the new Jerusalem. Paul refers to Jesus in a similar way in Rom 15:12, calling Him “the root of Jesse.”

In Rev 5:5 one of the twenty-four elders assures John that “the lion who is of the tribe of Judah, the root of David” has conquered and will open the seven-sealed book. “Root” has the sense of “offspring” here and points to Christ’s headship in the final Davidic kingdom. The title alludes to the Messianic prophecy of Isa 11:1, 10.

Beale agrees in connecting these titles of 1:5 with Psalm 89, but concludes that John views David as “the ideal Davidic king on an escalated eschatological level.”⁵² In other words, he sees an allegorical fulfillment of the promise to David, not a literal understanding as the promise would have been understood by David. He takes Christ’s death and resurrection to be the time when He assumed His sovereign position over the cosmos, a reign being fulfilled during the present age, not in the future in a literal sense.

As for 22:16, Beale does the same. Here he sees David’s kingdom as both already inaugurated and future.⁵³ A literal understanding of the Davidic Covenant, however, would limit that kingdom to the future only. Note Beale’s combination of idealist and futurist hermeneutics in this instance, allegorical in seeing a present fulfillment and literal in seeing a future fulfillment. He violates the principle of single meaning once again.

At 5:5, Beale has little to say about Jesus’ connection to David. Regarding the two titles, he notes that “both concern the prophecy of a messianic figure who will overcome his enemy through judgment.”⁵⁴ Those words fall into an idealist mold, which theoretically can be fulfilled at any time.

⁵²Beale, *Book of Revelation* 190-91.

⁵³Ibid., 1146-47.

⁵⁴Ibid., 349.

Aune notes the connection of Rev 1:5 with Ps 89:27, 37,⁵⁵ but fails to connect the psalm with the Davidic Covenant on which the psalm furnishes a commentary. In 22:16 he notes the Messianic connotation of the title, but again does not mention the Davidic Covenant and its fulfillment in Revelation.

Regarding Rev 5:5 Aune writes,

The emphases on the tribe of Judah and on Davidic descent together underline one of the crucial qualifications of the Jewish royal Messiah; he must be a descendant of the royal house of David (Pss. Sol. 17:21; Mark 12:35-37; John 7:42), sometimes conceived as David *redividus* (Jer 23:5; 30:9). Descent from the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14) and more specifically the Davidic descent of Jesus, is frequently mentioned in the NT and early Christian literature (Matt 1:1, 6; Luke 1:32, 69; 2:4; 3:31; Acts 2:30-32; 13:22-23; Rom 1:3; 2 Tim 2:8; Ignatius *Eph.* 18:2; 20:2; *Rom.* 17:3; *Smyrn.* 1:1), and he is frequently called “son of David (Matt 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; Mark 10:47-48; 12:35; Luke 18:38-39; *Barn.* 12:10).⁵⁶

Aune correctly ties the titles of 5:5 with OT prophecies of the Messiah who was coming to reign, but he does not take the next step and tie them specifically to fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant of 2 Samuel 7. He does refer to the reign of David’s house in the 2 Samuel passage in connection with Rev 11:15, “He shall reign forever and ever,” but that is the only place in his three volumes that he does so.

Osborne prefers not to connect “the faithful witness” of 1:5 with Ps 89:27, but he does connect the other two titles of 1:5 with Psalm 89.⁵⁷ Yet he makes no direct connection with Israel’s fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.⁵⁸ At 22:16, he relates “the Root and Offspring of David” to “the fulfillment of the Davidic messianic hope,” and calls Jesus “the Davidic Messiah.”⁵⁹ Still he refrains from noting how such a fulfillment contributes to the hope of national Israel.

In 5:5, Osborne notes the connection of “the root of David” with Isa 11:1, a military passage, and admits that the military side of the Davidic imagery predominates in Revelation.⁶⁰ Yet he backs off from seeing Him as the returning Christ to accomplish His victory. Rather he identifies the cross as Jesus’ major weapon in warfare with God’s enemies.⁶¹ That hardly does justice to a literal

⁵⁵David E. Aune, *Revelation 1–5*, vol. 52A of *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, 1997) 37-40.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 351.

⁵⁷Osborne, *Revelation* 62-63.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 63.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 792-93 (emphasis in the original).

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 254.

⁶¹*Ibid.*

interpretation of Revelation and to fulfillment of Israel's Davidic Covenant in the future.

In Rev 3:7, in addressing the church at Philadelphia, Jesus refers to Himself as the one who holds "the key of David." Possession of that key means that He has the right to admit to or exclude from the city of David, Jerusalem both old and new. That key pertains to the prerogative of determining who will have a part in the kingdom of David over which He as the Messiah will rule. Again, this remark would be impossible without His fulfillment of the promise made to David.

Regarding "the key of David" (3:7), Aune concludes, "The phrase refers to the key to the Davidic or messianic kingdom, i.e., to the true Israel,"⁶² but Aune erroneously equates "the true Israel with the church," not with a future kingdom promised to David and Israel in 2 Samuel 7.

For Beale, "the key of David" is an amplification of a similar phrase in 1:18 and equates to Jesus' power over salvation and judgment.⁶³ He correctly notes the stress of the Lord's sovereignty over those entering the kingdom, but he defines the kingdom as the church in the present era. He justifies this conclusion in part by noting allusions to prophetic "servant" passages (Isa 43:4; 45:14; 49:23) in Rev 3:9. Then he writes, "But there the allusions are applied to the church, though the rationale for the application lies in an understanding of the church's corporate identification with Jesus as God's servant and true Israel (e.g., Isa. 49:3-6 and the use of 49:6 in Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23; note how Christ and the church fulfill what is prophesied of Israel in the OT)."⁶⁴ Beale has consistently spiritualized references to Israel in the OT, and he does the same in Revelation, a book which so clearly points to a kingdom in the future, not in the present.⁶⁵

Osborne equates "the key of David" in 3:7 with "the keys of the kingdom" in Matt 16:18-19, keys which Christ holds and passes on to His followers.⁶⁶ In the Revelation context, he sees a reference to Jesus as the Davidic Messiah "who controls entrance to God's kingdom, the 'New Jerusalem' (3:12)."⁶⁷ Christ "alone can 'open' and 'shut' the gates to heaven," says Osborne.⁶⁸ Why Osborne speaks of access to the eternal kingdom rather than the millennial kingdom remains a mystery. The millennial kingdom pertains most specifically to the present earth where Israel's

⁶²Aune, *Revelation 1-5* 235 (emphasis in the original).

⁶³Beale, *Book of Revelation* 284.

⁶⁴Ibid., 284-85.

⁶⁵See my article, "The Kingdom of Christ in the Apocalypse," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 3.2 (Fall 1992): 117-40.

⁶⁶Osborne, *Revelation* 187.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid., 187-88.

hopes will be fulfilled. The “keys” promise to the Philadelphian church shows that the resurrected church will share in the blessings of the future kingdom in which mortal Israelites will be most prominent.

In addition to specific references to David in the Apocalypse are a number of references to David’s kingdom. In fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, Revelation speaks often of a future kingdom on earth, prophecies that correspond to OT prophecies of that kingdom. Revelation 11:15 records, “And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become [the kingdom] of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’” What other kingdom could that be than the Messiah’s future kingdom? The language of this proleptic song by the heavenly voices echoes Ps 2:2, a psalm that speaks of the transference of power from heathen nations to God and His Messiah. Incidentally, Revelation alludes to Psalm 2 at least seven other times in addition to this reference in 11:15. That psalm will receive its final fulfillment when the Davidic King reigns over all the earth.

Elsewhere in instances too numerous to discuss here, I have pointed out the dominant focus of Revelation on the futurity of the kingdom.⁶⁹ Discussion about the kingdom in the book should not be limited to Rev 19:11–20:10. The teaching of the book as a whole needs to be considered. Anticipation of the future kingdom is an integral part of motivation for present Christian experience.⁷⁰ Whatever meaning “kingdom” may have for the corporate Christian church of today, that meaning does not eradicate the fact that a future kingdom on earth is still ahead, and Revelation connects that future kingdom with God’s covenants with David and Abraham.⁷¹ Proleptic songs about the initiation of the kingdom also occur in Rev 12:10 and 19:6.

Beale in commenting on 11:15 says, “God now takes to himself the rule that formerly he permitted Satan to have over the world.”⁷² Yet two paragraphs later he comments,

Vv. 16-17 show that it is the Lord whose eternal reign is focused on here. . . . The consummated fulfillment of the long-awaited messianic kingdom prophesied in the OT finally has come to pass. . . . It is difficult to say how Christ’s delivering up the kingdom to the Father and subjecting himself to the Father at the consummation in 1 Cor. 15:24-28 relates to the present text. Perhaps Christ gives up the redemptive historical phase of his rule and then assumes an eternal rule alongside but in subjection to his Father.⁷³

⁶⁹Thomas, *Revelation* 8-22 546-50.

⁷⁰Ibid., 546.

⁷¹Ibid., 550-58.

⁷²Beale, *Book of Revelation* 611.

⁷³Ibid.

Beale has at least two difficulties with 11:15. (1) At one point he says the verse looks forward to a change of rulership over *the world*, but a little later he contradicts himself by referring to a change of rule from that over *this world* to a rule over the new heavens and the new earth in the eternal state. (2) His second difficulty, which he admits, is in understanding how Christ could at the time of the consummation deliver up the kingdom to the Father as 1 Corinthians 15 requires, since Christ will only be starting His rule over the kingdoms of this world at that time.

The response to both of Beale's dilemmas is an acknowledgment that the future kingdom will have a temporal phase relating to the present earth, followed by an eternal kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. From its own statement, 11:15 speaks of a future temporal kingdom on this earth, a transference of power from heathen nations to God and His Messiah. At the end of that future temporal kingdom the Messiah will deliver up that kingdom to the Father as 1 Corinthians 15 requires.

Aune creates for himself the same dilemma as Beale in first defining "the kingdom of the world" of 11:15b as either the totality of creation or the human world in opposition to God and in conflict with His purposes, and then identifying the eternal reign of 11:15c as the eternal reign of God.⁷⁴ In so doing, he anticipates a future kingdom *on this earth* that will be eternal in duration, leaving no room for a new heaven and a new earth that he allows for elsewhere.

Osborne locates the replacement of the kingdom of the world with the kingdom of our Lord and His Messiah at the second coming of Christ, and sees it as the fulfillment of Jewish and NT expectations.⁷⁵ He has the same dilemma as Beale and Aune, however, because he sees this as the beginning of Christ's eternal kingdom,⁷⁶ even though 11:15 specifically locates this kingdom in *this world*, not in the new creation. He makes no allowance for the millennial kingdom, whose location will be the present earth.⁷⁷

Of course, at this point neither Beale, Aune, nor Osborne says anything about a fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. That is because Rev 11:15 creates an impossible situation for those who interpret the book nonliterally, but for those who interpret it literally, it marks the fulfillment by God of the promises He made to David, and ultimately to Abraham too.

The Apocalypse has much more to say about the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant and the prominent role of Israel in the kingdom, but it has much to say

⁷⁴Aune, *Revelation 6–16* 638-39.

⁷⁵Osborne, *Revelation* 440-41.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 441.

⁷⁷For further verification on the location of the millennial kingdom, cf. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22* 550-52.

about the New Covenant also.

The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31-34 records God's New Covenant with Israel. Among its other provisions are two that relate to the present discussion. When God says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more," that was partly how Abraham would be a source of blessing to all people, and when He said, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people," He provided for Israel and all other peoples a new relationship with Himself, another source of universal blessing.

Forgiveness of sins. Much in Revelation deals with the forgiveness of sins. A heavenly voice sings about the following in Rev 12:11: "They [referring to the martyrs among the Israelites] overcame him [referring to the devil] through the blood of the Lamb." Anywhere the book refers to the blood of the Lamb or simply to the Lamb, it alludes to His death at Calvary to provide forgiveness of sins (cf. 5:6; 7:14; 13:8). Revelation refers to the Lamb twenty-five times. The Lamb did not die sacrificially for Israel alone, of course—redemption is among benefits extended to the body of Christ⁷⁸—but His death happened for Israel's sins especially as the Servant Song of Isa 52:13–53:12 emphasizes. The 144,000 special servants from among Israel were "redeemed from the earth" according to Rev 14:3. They are seen on Mount Zion standing with the Lamb in 14:1. Their redemption must be the redemption provided by the suffering Messiah. According to 5:9 the redemption came through the blood of the Lamb.

Since Beale, Aune, and Osborne do not connect the woman of chapter 12 with Israel specifically, that they do not connect the blood of the Lamb in 12:11 with God's New Covenant promise to Israel is no surprise. Beale identifies the woman as "all believers, past, present and future."⁷⁹ Aune says, "The passage deals with the proleptic victory of Christian martyrs."⁸⁰ Osborne identifies the overcomers in 12:11 with overcomers in the seven churches in Revelation 2–3.⁸¹

Part of God's promise to Abraham was that he would be a source of worldwide blessing. Obviously, forgiveness of sins was part of a fulfillment of that promise, but the New Covenant spoke of more than that. Jeremiah 31:33b-34a promises, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will

⁷⁸Because of Israel's rejection of her Messiah at His first advent, Jesus extended the benefit of forgiveness of sins beyond the boundaries of Israel (Matt 26:28; cf. Mark 14:24). That is why Revelation also speaks of forgiveness when the objects are not limited to Israel (cf. Rev 1:5; 7:9, 14, 17).

⁷⁹Beale, *Book of Revelation* 663.

⁸⁰Aune, *Revelation 6–16* 702-3.

⁸¹Osborne, *Revelation* 475-76.

be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them." Such a condition as this can only exist after the binding of Satan spoken of in Rev 20:1-3. Satan will no longer have freedom to deceive the nations (20:3). Until that time, he will continue his leadership as "the prince of the power of the air, or the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:2b) and as "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31). He has been judged already in a potential sense through the crucifixion of Christ, but the implementation of that judgment awaits the future kingdom on earth and the complete fulfillment of the covenant that God made with Abraham.

Control of the world in that future day will be in the hands of the descendant of David, the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16), and those who rule with Him (Rev 20:4). He will raise the dead, including those who have been martyred during Daniel's seventieth week immediately before the millennial kingdom, and they will rule with Him. It will be a rule of righteousness and equity, and thus Abraham and his descendants will be a source of blessing to all people.

A New Relationship with God. Clearly, in the New Jerusalem phase of David's future kingdom, Israel and all others who have received the forgiveness benefit of the New Covenant will enjoy a relationship with God that will be unparalleled. John writes in Rev 21:3, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them." This promise comes in conjunction with the descent of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, from heaven (21:2). It recalls God's New Covenant promise to Israel, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer 31:33d; cf. 32:38; Ezek 37:27).

Aune recognizes the covenant formula, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer 31:33[LXX 38:33]), in 21:3c, but sees it here as referring to all people. He recognizes that it is limited to the righteous in Israel throughout the OT.⁸² He, of course, would not recognize God's dealings with Israel in particular in Revelation 7, 12, and 14 in order to bring them to this point.

Beale sees fulfillment of Jer 31:33 by all people who trust in Jesus, "the true seed of Abraham and the only authentic Israelite, who died and rose for both Jew and Gentile."⁸³ He writes, "Everyone represented by Jesus, the ideal king and Israelite, is considered part of true Israel and therefore shares in the blessings that he receives. . . ."⁸⁴ Thereby, he shuns the literal fulfillment of the New Covenant with

⁸²Aune, *Revelation 17–22* 1123.

⁸³Beale, *Book of Revelation* 1047. Cf. *ibid.*, 1048 where Jer 31:33 appears.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

Israel in the future kingdom.

Osborne connects 21:3 with the promise of Ezek 37:27 as well as Jer 31:33b, but interprets the verses as pointing to a fulfillment spiritually by Christians today, but by all people in the new heaven and new earth.⁸⁵ He omits any reference to the original recipients of the promises in Ezekiel and Jeremiah and their unique role. Ethnic Israel is the reason for this previously non-existent, close relationship between God and not only Israel but all peoples. All the families of the earth will be blessed through God's promise to Abraham.

The promise of Rev 21:3 does extend beyond the boundaries of Israel, but to deny its special relevance to Israel and her New Covenant is to ignore the clearly distinctive role of national Israel through earlier portions of the Book of Revelation and even in producing this new closeness to God. Revelation 21:12, 14 shows that Israel will have a role distinct from the church even in the new Jerusalem, the eternal state. As the special object of God's choice, she will ever be distinctive.

Summary of Promises to Israel in the Apocalypse

The Book of Revelation is full of references to God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises to national Israel, specifically the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the New Covenants. For Him to turn away from Israel to fulfil them with other peoples, as those who interpret the book in an eclectic, nonliteral, or allegorical manner suggest, would violate His faithfulness to His promises.

The means used by Beale, Aune, and Osborne to avoid finding references to Israel in the Apocalypse vary. Beale and Osborne generally resort to an eclectic hermeneutic, choosing an idealist or allegorical meaning whenever the text refers to Israel. Any reference to Israel for them becomes a reference to the church, which they call the "New Israel." Aune does not describe his hermeneutics as "eclectic," but his method of interpreting the Apocalypse easily falls into that category. He labors to find definitions for "apocalyptic" and for "genre," ending with his own definition that he admits will not be acceptable to some others. He then uses apocalyptic genre as justification for combining a literal-futuristic-mystical method in some passages with an allegorical-idealist-historical method in others. He and Osborne nibble at literal fulfillment here and there, but explain it away by a species of genre principles used to override normal grammatical-historical principles, by reader-response hermeneutics, or by historical criticism.

All three men take negative references to Jewish people literally in 2:9 and 3:9, but revert to figurative meanings for Israel and the sons of Israel in chapters 7 and 14. The frequent disagreements between the three graphically portray how uncontrolled interpretation can be when one forsakes a literal method of understanding Revelation. With a literal approach to the book, references to Israel are plentiful.

⁸⁵Osborne, *Revelation* 734-35.

With this characteristic of the book as a whole in mind, for someone to say “that Revelation 20:1-10 cannot be linked textually with Israel’s covenants and promises; that no New Testament passage clearly teaches a future Jewish millennium; and that the New Testament interprets the imagery of the Old Testament with reference to the present spiritual reign of Christ from his heavenly throne” is a denial of what is obvious because of adopting meanings other than what words have in their normal usage. It is to view those verses as completely divorced from their context, an exegetically unacceptable decision. God will fulfil in a literal manner all the promises He has made to national Israel and will retain His eternal attribute of faithfulness. The Apocalypse interpreted literally verifies His compliance with His promises to the nation.

REJECTION THEN HOPE: THE CHURCH'S DOCTRINE OF ISRAEL IN THE PATRISTIC ERA

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The early church's hope for the future of Israel has often been overlooked. In writings of the Patristic Era, the fathers often connected the salvation of Israel with the comings of Antichrist and Elijah and the personal coming of Jesus Christ at some time in the future. To note their emphasis on the future of the nation is not to deny several other emphases of the early writers. Their view of Israel is best defined primarily as punitive supersessionism, because they viewed Israel as being judged by God for their rejection of Christ at His first coming. For them the two destructions of Jerusalem proved this. They felt that the church had replaced Israel as the people of God, at least for the present, and had taken over Israel's Scriptures, Israel's Covenants, and Israel's promises. Yet the message is loud and clear that the ancient church believed in the future salvation of Israel, some voices even predicting that the nation would return and possess the land that God had promised to Abraham. The early church as a whole, then, adhered to a moderate form of supersessionism, meaning that they concurred with the Bible's teaching that Israel had been rejected, but went beyond that to dwell on the great hope lying ahead for that people.

* * * * *

The Christian church of the Patristic Era (A.D. 100–500) is known for wrestling with several important theological issues. It defended the faith from unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. It responded to Marcion's heretical canon. Through the valiant efforts of Athanasius, the church fought off the errors of Arius in regard to the person of Christ. Augustine confronted the heresies of Pelagius on issues of anthropology and soteriology. The early church's doctrine of Israel was not as central or controversial as those other topics, yet at times the church did address the issue of Israel and her relationship to that nation. As a result, enough evidence is available to draw some general conclusions regarding the early church's doctrine of Israel.

Most studies concerning the early church's view of Israel focus on the church's supersessionist approach to Israel, in which the nation Israel was viewed as rejected by God and replaced by the new Israel—the church.¹ Though the early church did view herself as the true Israel, the early church's hope for national Israel has been a neglected subject. Many theologians of the Patristic Era believed in a future salvation for the nation.² That belief was so widespread that theologians such as Augustine and Cassiodorus claimed that such an understanding was the common view of their day.

The expected salvation of Israel was often linked with the comings of Antichrist and Elijah and the personal return of Jesus Christ in the end times. In other words, the early church did not ignore OT prophecy regarding Israel or Paul's words concerning the hope of Israel in Romans 11.³ Early theologians may not have gone far enough in discussing the full implications of what a restoration of Israel in Scripture means,⁴ but they did hold to a future hope for the nation—a hope that at the very least included an *en masse* salvation of the Jewish people. Apparently for some, a restoration of Israel to its land was also the expectation.

This article purposes to offer a balanced view of the early church's doctrine of Israel. When the writings of the church theologians of the Patristic Period are compiled, a consensus on five issues emerges:

1. Because of Israel's disobedience and rejection of Christ, the Jews have been judged by God.
2. Evidence for this judgment is found in the two destructions of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and 135.
3. The church is the new Israel.
4. As the new Israel, the church assumes the Jewish Scriptures and covenant blessings that were given first to the nation Israel.
5. Yet, a future conversion of the Jews in line with OT prophecies and Paul's statements about Israel in Romans 11 will occur.

¹One such example is Clark M. Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1993). Williamson rightly describes the replacement theology of men like Origen and Augustine, but does not discuss the hope for national Israel that these early fathers espoused.

²This is not to claim that the early fathers agreed on all aspects of Romans 11 or the OT texts that speak of a restoration of Israel. Various disagreements exist on some details of these texts, yet a general belief prevails that a salvation of the Jews would come in the latter days.

³Soulen overstates matters somewhat when he says discussions of Romans 9–11 in the early church were “soon foreclosed” (Richard Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996] ix). As will be shown, many of the theologians of the Patristic Era used Romans 11 as evidence for a future salvation of Israel.

⁴In this writer's view, the early fathers did not adequately address the implications of the restoration texts in regard to Israel such as Matt 19:28, Luke 22:30, and Acts 1:6.

In sum, the position to be argued is that the church of the Patristic Era adopted a moderate supersessionist view on Israel and the church in which (1) the church is the new Israel; but (2) the nation Israel will be converted in line with the predictions of the OT prophets and Paul's words in Romans 11.

Supersessionism Defined

Since this article will note the early church's adoption of a moderate supersessionist approach concerning Israel, a definition of supersessionism is necessary at this point.⁵ Supersessionism is the position that the NT church supersedes, replaces, and/or fulfills Israel's identity and role in the plan of God.⁶ Along with supersessionism is the belief that the church is now the new and/or true Israel that assumes or fulfills the covenant promises given to the nation Israel in the OT.

Supersessionism takes various forms. The first is "punitive" or "retributive" supersessionism which believes Israel to be rejected by God and replaced by the church because of its disobedience and rejection of Christ.⁷ Punitive supersessionism emphasizes Israel's *disobedience* as the primary reason for Israel's rejection by God. A strong form of punitive supersessionism emphasizes the *permanent* rejection of Israel while a milder or moderate form of punitive supersessionism is open in some sense to the idea of a future for national Israel.

Another variation of supersessionism is "economic supersessionism." According to R. Kendall Soulen, economic supersessionism is the view that "carnal Israel's history is providentially ordered from the outset to be taken up into the spiritual church."⁸ With this form of supersessionism, national Israel corresponds to Christ's church in a prefigurative way. Christ, with His advent, "brings about the

⁵The primary purpose of this article is to show what the early church believed about Israel and is not primarily an evaluation of their views. For more information concerning a refutation of the doctrine of supersessionism, see Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel in the Development of Christian Thought* (Rome: Istituto Biblico Evangelico Italiano, 2000). See also this author's work, Michael J. Vlach, "The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism" (Ph.D. diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004).

⁶Often, the title "replacement theology" is used as a synonym for "supersessionism." Some reject the title replacement theology since they view the church more as a *fulfillment* of Israel and not a *replacement* of Israel. The term "supersessionism" is preferable since it is a broader term that can encompass the ideas of replacement and fulfillment.

⁷As Gabriel J. Fackre explains, this form of supersessionism "holds that the rejection of Christ both eliminates Israel from God's covenant love and provokes divine retribution" (Gabriel J. Fackre, *Ecumenical Faith in Evangelical Perspective* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993] 148). With punitive supersessionism, according to Soulen, "God abrogates God's covenant with Israel . . . on account of Israel's rejection of Christ and the gospel" (Soulen, *God of Israel and Christian Theology* 30).

⁸Soulen, *God of Israel and Christian Theology* 181 n. 6.

obsolescence of carnal Israel and inaugurates the age of the spiritual church.”⁹ With economic supersessionism, Israel is not replaced primarily because of its disobedience but because its role in the history of redemption expired with the coming of Jesus. It is now superseded by the arrival of a new spiritual Israel—the Christian church. Thus, with economic supersessionism, the church *fulfills* Israel more than *replacing* Israel.

Which form of supersessionism did the early church affirm? As will be shown, primarily the early church affirmed punitive supersessionism—Israel was viewed as rejected by God and replaced by the church because of the nation’s rejection of Christ. Yet this punitive supersessionism is modified in that many believed that the nation Israel would experience salvation in the latter days.

Israel’s Rejection

One theme espoused by the early church was that Israel was rejected by God because of her disobedience and rejection of Christ. For instance, Irenaeus (130-200) wrote, “For inasmuch as the former [the Jews] have rejected the Son of God, and cast Him out of the vineyard when they slew Him, God has justly rejected them, and given to the Gentiles outside the vineyard the fruits of its cultivation.”¹⁰ Clement of Alexandria (c. 195) claimed that Israel “denied the Lord” and thus “forfeited the place of the true Israel.”¹¹ Tertullian (c. 155-230) declared, “Israel has been divorced.”¹² For Origen (185-254), the people of Israel were “abandoned because of their sins.”¹³ He also said, “And we say with confidence that they [Jews] will never be restored to their former condition. For they committed a crime of the most unhallowed kind, in conspiring against the Saviour of the human race in that city where they offered up to God a worship containing the symbols of mighty mysteries.”¹⁴ According to Origen, “The Jews were altogether abandoned, and possess now none of what were considered their ancient glories, so that there is no indication of any Divinity abiding amongst them.”¹⁵ Cyprian (d. 258) too promoted a supersessionist approach when he wrote,

⁹Ibid., 29.

¹⁰Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 36.2, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (hereafter *ANF*), eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, 10 vols. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994) 1:515. Though Irenaeus made a strong statement of punitive supersessionism here, Soulen asserts that Irenaeus also held to a form of economic supersessionism: “In sum, Irenaeus sees God’s history with Israel as an episode within the larger story whereby God prepares a fallen humanity for the incarnation” (Soulen, *God of Israel and Christian Theology* 46).

¹¹Clement, *The Instructor* 2.8, *ANF* 2:256.

¹²Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews* 1, *ANF* 3:152.

¹³Origen, *Against Celsus* 4.22, *ANF* 4:506.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., *ANF* 4:433.

I have endeavoured to show that the Jews, according to what had before been foretold, had departed from God, and had lost God's favour, which had been given them in past time, and had been promised them for the future; while the Christians had succeeded to their place, deserving well of the Lord by faith, and coming out of all nations and from the whole world.¹⁶

The belief concerning Israel's rejection sometimes drifted toward anti-Semitism as some began to stereotype the Jews as Christ-killers. Melito of Sardis (c. A.D. 150) stated, "The King of Israel slain with Israel's right hand! Alas for the new wickedness of the new murder."¹⁷ Ignatius (c. 36-108) wrote that Jesus Christ suffered, "at the hands of the Christ-killing Jews."¹⁸ As these quotations show, some Christian fathers blamed the crucifixion of Christ on the Jews as a people. Stephen Wylen summarizes this trend:

As Christians abandoned the mission to their fellow Jews and proselytized among the Gentiles they shifted blame for the crucifixion of Jesus from the Romans to the Jews—not just some Jews, but the Jewish people as a whole. The Jews were branded as deicides—killers of God. This accusation became a deep source of hatred against the Jews.¹⁹

The Two Destructions of Jerusalem

According to the early church, the primary evidence that Israel had been rejected by God was the two destructions of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70²⁰ and 135.²¹ The fathers took the destructions as tangible evidence that God had punished the Jews as a people.

Justin Martyr, for example, in his *Dialogue With Trypho*, argued that the destructions of Jerusalem were God's judgment on Christ-rejecting Jews. He stated that the Jews "justly suffer," and that the Jewish cities were rightly "burned with fire."²² He also described the Jews as "desolate" and forbidden to go to Jerusalem.²³

¹⁶Cyprian, *Three Books of Testimonies Against the Jews*, ANF 5:507.

¹⁷Melito, "On Faith," ANF 8:757. Melito also stated, "God has suffered from the right hand of Israel" (ibid., 8:760).

¹⁸Ignatius, *Epistle to the Magnesians* 11, ANF 1:64.

¹⁹Stephen M. Wylen, *The Jews in the Time of Jesus* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1996) 191.

²⁰In 63 B.C., Pompey conquered Jerusalem and brought the city under Roman control. In A.D. 66, Jewish Zealots, who chafed under the authority of Rome, took military action to remove the yoke of Rome from Israel. In A.D. 70, however, the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its temple.

²¹This second uprising against Rome was led by Bar-Kokhba, whom many Jews believed to be the Messiah. Under his leadership, hundreds of Jewish villages fought for freedom from the Romans. The revolt, however, was a disaster as more than half a million Jews died.

²²Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho* 16, ANF 1:202.

²³Ibid.

In speaking to the Jews about the destructions of Jerusalem, he said, "Accordingly, these things have happened to you in fairness and justice, for you have slain the Just One . . . and now you reject those who hope in Him."²⁴

The belief that the two failed Jewish revolts were evidence of God's rejection of Israel is evident also in the writings of Origen:

For what nation is an exile from their own metropolis, and from the place sacred to the worship of their fathers, save the Jews alone? And these calamities they have suffered, because they were a most wicked nation, which, although guilty of many other sins, yet has been punished so severely for none, as for those that were committed against our Jesus.²⁵

For Origen, the destruction of Jerusalem functioned as a divorce decree from God to Israel: "And a sign that she [Israel] has received the bill of divorce is this, that Jerusalem was destroyed along with what they called the sanctuary of the things in it which were believed to be holy."²⁶

As Philip S. Alexander has pointed out, the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem handed Christians "a propaganda coup" in that it gave them the opportunity to argue that the catastrophe was "a divine judgment on Israel for the rejection of Jesus."²⁷ The same was also true concerning the failed second Jewish revolt in A.D. 135. Marcel Simon observes that the destruction of Jerusalem in 135 "appeared to Christians as the confirmation of the divine verdict on Israel."²⁸ Richardson states, "The war of A.D. 132-5 did what the Synagogue Ban did not: to all intents and purposes it severed the two groups, freeing later Christians from the need to assert close contact with Judaism and providing for them evidence of the full 'judgment' of God upon Israel."²⁹

The two destructions, especially the one in A.D. 135, caused many in the church to believe that God had permanently rejected Israel and that the church was the new Israel. In elaborating on this view, Lee Martin McDonald notes, "The church fathers concluded from God's evident rejection of the Jews, demonstrated by the destruction of their Temple, and their displacement from Jerusalem, that the

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.8, ANF 4:433.

²⁶Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* 19, ANF 10:507.

²⁷Philip S. Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways,'" in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 20.

²⁸Marcel Simon, *Versus Israel: A Study of the Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (135-425)*, trans. H. McKeating (Oxford: Oxford University, 1986) 65.

²⁹Peter Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1969) 203.

Christians themselves constituted the ‘new Israel.’”³⁰ That led to an observation regarding the identity of Israel.

The Church as the New Israel

As the second century developed, the church of the Patristic Era did what the apostles of the first-century church did not do—namely view itself as the new or true Israel that assumed the title of Israel for itself.³¹ As Alister McGrath has observed, a “wide consensus” was formed that “the church is a spiritual society which replaces Israel as the people of God in the world.”³²

Justin Martyr is significant in this regard. Around A.D. 150, he became the first Christian writer to explicitly identify the church as “Israel.”³³ He declared, “For the true spiritual Israel, and descendants of Judah, Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham . . . are we who have been led to God through this crucified Christ.”³⁴ He also said, “Since then God blesses this people [i.e., Christians], and calls them Israel, and declares them to be His inheritance, how is it that you [Jews] repent not of the deception you practise on yourselves, as if you alone were the Israel?”³⁵ Justin also announced, “We, who have been quarried out from the bowels of Christ, are the true Israelite

³⁰Lee Martin McDonald, “Anti-Judaism in the Early Church Fathers,” in *Anti-Semitism and Early Christianity: Issues of Polemic and Faith*, eds. Craig A. Evans and Donald A. Hagner (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 230.

³¹Galatians 6:16 and Rom 9:6 are sometimes used as evidence that the church was called Israel. The contexts of these two passages, however, makes it unlikely that this is the case. In Gal 6:16 Paul offered a blistering critique of the Jewish Judaizers who were trying to add circumcision to faith in regard to salvation. His reference to the “Israel of God” in Gal 6:16 was Paul’s way of acknowledging the Jewish Christians who had not followed the dangerous errors of the Judaizers. According to Hans Dieter Betz, the Israel of God refers “to those Jewish-Christians who approve of his *κανών* (‘rule’) in v 15” (Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979] 323). In Rom 9:6 the spiritual Israel Paul refers to involves believing Jews, not Gentiles. See William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1923) 240. See also Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 574.

³²Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 2d ed. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998) 461-62. See also E. Glenn Hinson, *Understanding the Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 6; N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 447; Richard B. Hays and Joel B. Green, “The Use of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers,” in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 222.

³³Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 11, *ANF* 1:200. See also *ibid.*, 1:261, 267. Peter Richardson has observed that the first explicit identification of the church as “Israel” was made by Justin Martyr in A.D. 160. See Richardson, *Israel in the Apostolic Church* 1.

³⁴*Ibid.*, *ANF* 1:200.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 123, *ANF* 1:261. He also says, “Those who were selected out of every nation have obeyed His will through Christ . . . must be Jacob and Israel.” (1:265).

race.”³⁶

Origen also taught that the church was the new Israel. In his debate with Celsus, for example, Origen stated, “Our Lord, seeing the conduct of the Jews not to be at all in keeping with the teaching of the prophets, inculcated by a parable that the kingdom of God would be taken from them, and given to the converts from heathenism.”³⁷ N. R. M. De Lange summarizes Origen’s supersessionist perspective: “Crucial to the whole argument [of Origen] is the paradox that Jews and Gentiles suffer a reversal of roles. The historical Israelites cease to be Israelites, while the believers from the Gentiles become the New Israel. This involves a redefinition of Israel.”³⁸

Origen also saw a distinction between *carnal* Israel and *spiritual* Israel. Physical Israel functioned as a type for the spiritual Israel—the church, in whom the promises would find their complete fulfillment.³⁹

As the Patristic Era’s most influential theologian, Augustine (354-430) contributed to the view that the church was now Israel. As James Carroll points out, Augustine’s attitude toward the Jews was rooted in “assumptions of supersessionism.”⁴⁰ According to Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, Augustine introduced a “negative element into judgment on the Jews.”⁴¹ He did so by advancing the “‘theory of substitution’ whereby the New Israel of the church became a substitute of ancient Israel.”⁴²

In line with supersessionist theology, Augustine explicitly stated that the title “Israel” belonged to the Christian church: “For if we hold with a firm heart the grace of God which hath been given us, we are Israel, the seed of Abraham. . . . Let therefore no Christian consider himself alien to the name of Israel.”⁴³ He also said, “The Christian people then is rather Israel.”⁴⁴ He impacted later Christian theology heavily in taking this position. According to Augustine, when Gentiles believe and

³⁶Ibid., 135, ANF 1:267.

³⁷Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.5, ANF 4:431.

³⁸N. R. M. De Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1976) 80.

³⁹Origen said “corporeal Israelites” [Jews] were “the type” for “spiritual Israelites” [the church]. *On First Principles* 4.21, ANF 4:370; See also Diprose, *Israel in the Development of Christian Thought* 89.

⁴⁰James Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword: The Church and the Jews* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001) 219.

⁴¹Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, “Christianity and Judaism, a Historical and Theological Overview,” in *Jews and Christians: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Crossroad, 1990) 20.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Augustine, *On the Psalms* 114.3, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (hereafter *NPNF*), Series 1, ed. Philip Schaff, 14 vols. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994) 8:550.

⁴⁴Ibid.

become part of the new covenant, their hearts are circumcised and they become part of Israel:

Now what the apostle attributed to Gentiles of this character, how that “they have the work of the law written in their hearts;” must be some such thing as what he says to the Corinthians: “Not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.” For thus do they become of the house of Israel, when their uncircumcision is accounted circumcision. . . . And therefore in the house of the true Israel, in which is no guile, they are partakers of the new testament.⁴⁵

Concerning Israel’s role in the plan of God, Augustine argued that *national* Israel prefigured *spiritual* Israel—the Christian people:

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob three fathers, and one people. The fathers three, as it were in the beginning of the people; three fathers in whom the people was figured: and the former people itself the present people. For in the Jewish people was figured the Christian people. There a figure, here the truth; there a shadow, here the body: as the apostle says, “Now these things happened to them in a figure.”⁴⁶

Augustine’s supessionist views were largely consistent with the Patristic tradition that preceded him. But one original contribution appears in his reasons for Israel’s continued existence. During Augustine’s time, the existence of the Jews and Judaism posed an apologetic problem for the church. If the church was the new Israel, for what purpose did the nation Israel exist?

Augustine offered an answer for this perceived dilemma. For him, the Jews functioned primarily as witnesses. They were witnesses to the faith preached by the prophets, witnesses of divine judgment, and witnesses of the validity of Christianity. He wrote, “But the Jews who slew Him . . . are thus by their own Scriptures a testimony to us that we have not forged the prophecies about Christ.”⁴⁷ The Jews, according to Augustine, shielded Christians from accusations that Christians invented OT prophecies that pointed to Jesus. Thus, the existence of non-Christian Jews was not a problem but an essential testimony to the truth of Christianity.

Hood views Augustine’s contribution as “ingenious” because it “provided a foundation for tolerating Jews within a Christian society.”⁴⁸ Augustine’s contention

⁴⁵Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter* 46, *NPNF'* 5:102-3.

⁴⁶Augustine, *On the Gospel of St. John* 11.8, *NPNF'* 7:77. Augustine also stated, “In that people [the Jews], plainly, the future Church was much more evidently prefigured” (Augustine, *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed* 19.33, *NPNF'* 3:304). Augustine expressed a supessionist perspective when he wrote, “But when they [the Jews] killed Him, then though they knew it not, they prepared a Supper for us” (Augustine, *Sermons on New Testament Lessons*, Sermon on 62, *NPNF'* 6:447).

⁴⁷Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 18.46, *NPNF'* 2:389.

⁴⁸John Y. B. Hood, *Aquinas and the Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1995) 12. Carroll states, “It is not too much to say that, at this juncture, Christianity ‘permitted’ Judaism to endure because of Augustine” (Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword*, 218). See also Jeremy Cohen, “Introduction,” in

that the Jews were witnesses to Christianity became especially important when the crusades began and the church began to persecute heretics. Augustine's views "shielded the Jews of western Europe from the full force of Christendom's coercive powers."⁴⁹

The Takeover of Jewish Blessings

Israel's Scriptures

As a result of viewing herself as the new Israel, the church believed that it had become the primary owners of Israel's blessings. In regard to the Scriptures, House declares, "The church not only appropriated the special status of the Jewish people, it took over their Bible, the Septuagint (LXX)."⁵⁰ For example, in addressing Trypho about truths concerning Jesus, Justin declared, "Are you acquainted with them, Trypho? They are contained in your Scriptures, or rather not yours, but ours."⁵¹

Israel's Covenants

The church also believed she had inherited the covenants of Israel. This was the view of the *Epistle of Barnabas*: "I further beg of you . . . take heed now to yourselves, and not to be like some, adding largely to your sins, and saying, 'The covenant is both theirs [Jews] and ours [Christians].' But they finally lost it."⁵² The *Epistle of Barnabas* also stated the new covenant was never intended for Israel. Instead, it was intended for the church, the true inheritor of the promise through Christ: "But He [Jesus] was manifested, in order that they [Israelites] might be perfected in their iniquities, and that we, being the constituted heirs through Him, might receive the testament of the Lord Jesus."⁵³ Summarizing the supersessionist approach of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Ronald E. Diprose writes, "The writing, as a whole, manifests the latent presupposition that the Church, the true heir of the

Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict: From Late Antiquity to the Reformation, ed. Jeremy Cohen (New York: New York University, 1991) 13-14.

⁴⁹Hood, *Aquinas and the Jews* 13.

⁵⁰H. Wayne House, "The Church's Appropriation of Israel's Blessings," in *Israel, the Land and the People: An Evangelical Affirmation of God's Promises*, ed. H. Wayne House (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998) 97. See also, Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, vol. 1, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971) 19; Simon, *Versus Israel* 69.

⁵¹Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho* 29, ANF 1:209.

⁵²*The Epistle of Barnabas* 4, ANF 1:138.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 14, ANF 1:146. Horbury argues that the anti-Judaistic tone and supersessionist approach to Israel's covenants in this work can be linked to the author's fear of Christian assimilation to the Jews during this time. See William Horbury, "Jewish-Christian Relations in Barnabas and Justin Martyr," in *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 323-27.

promises, occupies the place that Israel had always been unworthy of occupying.”⁵⁴

Israel’s Promises

Some also viewed the church as assuming Israel’s promises. Justin Martyr reapplied OT promises so that the church, not Israel, was viewed as the beneficiary of its promised blessings. Justin declared to Trypho:

And along with Abraham we [Christians] shall inherit the holy land, when we shall receive the inheritance for an endless eternity, being children of Abraham through the like faith. . . . Accordingly, He promises to him a nation of similar faith, God fearing, righteous . . . but it is not you, “in whom is no faith.”⁵⁵

As Siker points out, “According to Justin, the patriarchal promises do not apply to the Jews; rather, God has transferred these promises to the Christians and . . . to Gentile Christians in particular.”⁵⁶

The Salvation of Israel

The early church went beyond the biblical witness and viewed itself as the true Israel that inherited national Israel’s blessings. Yet, on the other hand, also a consensus existed among the theologians of the Patristic Era that a future salvation of the Jews would come in accord with OT prophecies and Paul’s words regarding Israel in Romans 11.⁵⁷

Denis Fahey, in reference to a list from Father Augustine Lemamn, gives the names of theologians through the twelfth century who believed “that the Jews will be converted.” The list includes Tertullian, Origen, St. Hillary, St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Prosper of Aquitaine, Cassiodorus, Prentissius, St. Gregory the Great, St. Isidore, Venerable Bede, St. Anselm, St. Peter Damian, and St. Bernard.⁵⁸ In fact, Fahey points out that the view that “the Jews

⁵⁴Diprose, *Israel in the Development of Christian Thought* 78.

⁵⁵Justin, *Dialogue With Trypho* 119, ANF 1:259.

⁵⁶Jeffrey S. Siker, *Disinheriting The Jews: Abraham In Early Christian Controversy* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1991) 14. Diprose asserts that Justin “adopts a typically Greek attitude” toward the characters in the OT, referring to Abraham, Elijah, and Daniel’s three friends as “barbarians” (*Israel in the Development of Christian Thought* 79).

⁵⁷In response to the debate going on among some Roman Catholics regarding the future salvation of Israel, Mark Cameron researched the issue of the future of Israel in church history. He states, “I come away more persuaded than ever that there was a broad Patristic, Medieval, and Counter-Reformation consensus about a final conversion of the Jews.” He also writes, “The more I search the Fathers, the broader the consensus seems to be” (online at www.catholic-legate.com/dialogues/jewsreturn2.html, accessed 6/21/07).

⁵⁸Dennis Fahey, *The Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation* (Kimmage, Dublin: Holy Ghost Missionary College, 1953) 107.

will be converted . . . towards the end of the world can be proved from the texts of the Fathers, century by century.”⁵⁹

Salvation of the Jews, as expected by the early church theologians, was not merely a trickle of believing Jews throughout history but an eschatological *event* that took place with the prophesied comings of Elijah, Antichrist, and Jesus. For early theologians, the salvation of Israel would be a spectacular “last days” occurrence.

For example, Justin Martyr held that the tribes of Israel would be gathered and restored in accord with what the prophet Zechariah predicted:

And what the people of the Jews shall say and do, when they see Him coming in glory, has been thus predicted by Zechariah the prophet: “I will command the four winds to gather the scattered children; I will command the north wind to bring them, and the south wind, that it keep not back. And then in Jerusalem there shall be great lamentation, not the lamentation of mouths or of lips, but the lamentation of the heart; and they shall rend not their garments, but their hearts. Tribe by tribe they shall mourn, and then they shall look on Him whom they have pierced; and they shall say, Why, O Lord, hast Thou made us to err from Thy way? The glory which our fathers blessed, has for us been turned into shame.”⁶⁰

In regard to this comment by Justin, Charles Hauser states, “Justin also links the Jews with the second advent of Christ. It will be at this time that Christ will gather the nation Israel and the Jews shall look on him and repent tribe by tribe.”⁶¹ Significantly, Justin not only held to a future hope for the literal tribes of Israel, he did so on the basis of OT promises to the nation—in this case Zechariah. For Justin, the hope for Israel presented in the OT was alive.

Tertullian discussed the future blessings and salvation of Israel when he said, “He [God] will favour with His acceptance and blessing the circumcision also, even the race of Abraham, which by and by is to acknowledge Him.”⁶² He also urged Christians to anticipate eagerly and rejoice over the coming restoration of Israel: “[F]or it will be fitting for the Christian to rejoice, and not to grieve, at the restoration of Israel, if it be true, (as it is), that the whole of our hope is intimately united with the remaining expectation of Israel.”⁶³

Origen too affirmed a future salvation of the nation Israel. As Jeremy Cohen has observed, “He [Origen] affirms Paul’s commitment to—and confidence in—the ultimate salvation of the Jews.”⁶⁴ This belief was linked to “the glorious forecast of

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Justin, *First Apology* 52, *ANF* 1:180.

⁶¹Charles August Hauser, Jr., “The Eschatology of the Church Fathers” (Ph.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1961) 112.

⁶²Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 5.9, *ANF* 3:448.

⁶³Tertullian, *On Modesty* 8, *ANF* 4:82.

⁶⁴Jeremy Cohen, “The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation: Romans 11:25-26 in Patristic and Medieval Exegesis,” *Harvard Theological Review* 98/3 (2005):256.

[Romans] 11:25-26.”⁶⁵ For example, in his comments on the *Song of Songs*, Origen mentions “two callings of Israel.” In between these two callings is God’s call of the church. But after the call of the church Israel will experience salvation:

For the Church was called between the two callings of Israel; that is to say, first Israel was called, and afterwards when Israel had stumbled and fallen, the Church of the Gentiles was called. “But when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, then will all Israel, having been called again, be saved.”⁶⁶

According to Cohen, “Origen does appear to assume that the Jewish people as a whole will regain their status as a community of God’s faithful, that all Jews will ultimately be saved.”⁶⁷ This is true even though Israel, for a time, has rejected Christ. As Cohen points out, “Despite the Jews’ rejection of Jesus and his apostles, the potential for restoration and renewal remains inherent within them.”⁶⁸

Origen’s belief in a salvation of Israel can also be seen in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*:

Now indeed, until all the Gentiles come to salvation the riches of God are concentrated in the multitude of believers, but as long as Israel remains in its unbelief it will not be possible to say that the fullness of the Lord’s portion has been attained. The people of Israel are still missing from the complete picture. But when the fullness of the Gentiles has come in and Israel comes to salvation at the end of time, then it will be the people which, although it existed long ago, will come at the last and complete the fullness of the Lord’s portion and inheritance.⁶⁹

Belief in a future salvation of the Jews was also held by several others. Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 315-386), when discussing events regarding “the end of the world drawing near,” discussed the coming of the Antichrist and his *temporary* deception of the Jews. For him, the Antichrist will deceive “the Jews by the lying signs and wonders of his magical deceit, until they believe he is the expected Christ. . . .”⁷⁰ Thus, for Cyril, the coming Antichrist would deceive the Jews for a time until they believed in Jesus.

John Chrysostom (349-407), who often made harsh statements against the Jews, still believed in a future salvation of the Jews. He linked the coming salvation

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Origen, *The Song of Songs*, in *Ancient Christian Writers* (hereafter *ACW*), eds. Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1957) 26:252.

⁶⁷Cohen, “Mystery of Israel’s Salvation” 263.

⁶⁸Ibid., 260.

⁶⁹Origen, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* [hereafter *ACC*]: *New Testament*, ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998) 6.291.

⁷⁰Cyril, *Catechetical Lectures*, in William A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, 3 vols. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press) 1:356-57.

of the Jews with the coming of Elijah:

To show therefore that [Elijah] the Tishbite comes before that other [second] advent . . . He said this. . . . And what is this reason? That when He is come, He may persuade the Jews to believe in Christ, and that they may not all utterly perish at His coming. Wherefore He too, guiding them on to that remembrance, saith, "And he shall restore all things;" that is, shall correct the unbelief of the Jews that are then in being.⁷¹

According to Chrysostom, the coming of Elijah means "the conversion of the Jews."⁷²

Chrysostom also taught that Romans 11 holds future significance for the nation Israel. In reference to Rom 11:27 and the statement, "For this is my covenant with them, when I will take away their sins," Chrysostom declared, "If then this hath been promised, but has never yet happened in their case, nor have they ever enjoyed the remission of sins by baptism, certainly it will come to pass."⁷³

Some of the strongest statements affirming the salvation of Israel come from Augustine. As Cohen points out, "Augustine speaks of the ultimate salvation of the Jewish people, ostensibly as a whole."⁷⁴ Like Chrysostom, Augustine, in his *City of God*, linked the salvation of the Jews with the coming of Elijah:

It is a familiar theme in the conversation and heart of the faithful, that in the last days before the judgment the Jews shall believe in the true Christ, that is, our Christ, by means of this great and admirable prophet Elias who shall expound the law to them. . . . When, therefore, he is come, he shall give a spiritual explanation of the law which the Jews at present understand carnally, and shall thus "turn the heart of the father to the son," that is, the heart of the fathers to the children.⁷⁵

Significantly, Augustine mentions that his view concerning the salvation of the Jews was "familiar" to believers of his day. In other words, his belief in the salvation of the Jews went beyond just his own personal view. This perspective was common for those of his generation.

Augustine also adopted a literal approach to Zech 12:10 in regard to the salvation of Israel. In doing so, he shows that at least some OT prophecies still had continuing relevance for the salvation of Israel:

"And they shall look upon me because they have insulted me, and they shall mourn for Him as if for one very dear (or beloved)", and shall be in bitterness for Him as for an only-begotten." For in that day the Jews—those of them, at least, who shall receive the spirit of grace and mercy—when they see Him coming in His majesty, and recognize that it is

⁷¹St. John Chrysostom, *The Gospel of Matthew* 57, *NPNF*¹ 10:352.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 353.

⁷³St. John Chrysostom, *The Epistle to the Romans* 19, *NPNF*¹, 11:493.

⁷⁴Cohen, "The Mystery of Israel's Salvation" 275.

⁷⁵Augustine, *City of God* 29, *NPNF*¹ 2:448.

He whom they, in the person of their parents, insulted when He came before in His humiliation, shall repent of insulting Him in His passion.⁷⁶

Augustine also offered a chronology of end-times events. In connection with the coming of Elijah and other events, the nation of the Jews will be saved:

And at or in connection with that judgment the following events shall come to pass, as we have learned: Elias the Tishbite shall come; the Jews shall believe; Antichrist shall persecute; Christ shall judge; the dead shall rise; the good and the wicked shall be separated; the world shall be burned and renewed.⁷⁷

Augustine also took a literal view of the prophecy of Hos 3:5: “But let us hear what he adds: ‘And afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall be amazed at the Lord and at His goodness in the latter days.’ Nothing is clearer than this prophecy. . . .”⁷⁸

Augustine also believed that the people of Israel would be saved in accord with what Paul taught in Romans 11: “That, forasmuch as in that humble coming [first advent] ‘blindness hath happened in part unto Israel, that the fullness of the Gentiles might enter in’ [Rom. 11:25], in that other should happen what follows, ‘and so all Israel should be saved’ [Rom. 11:26].”⁷⁹

This salvation of Israel is linked with the removal of Israel’s captivity: “[F]or the Jews, as it is here, ‘Who shall give salvation to Israel out of Sion?’ ‘When the Lord shall turn away the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.’”⁸⁰

Augustine also argued that the church had not permanently supplanted the Jews:

What! have we supplanted the Jews? No, but we are said to be their supplanters, for that for our sakes they were supplanted. If they had not been blinded, Christ would not have been crucified; His precious Blood would not be shed; if that Blood had not been shed, the world would not have been redeemed. Because then their blindness hath profited us, therefore hath the elder brother been supplanted by the younger, and the younger is called the Supplanter. But how long shall this be?⁸¹

Augustine then answers this question of “But how long shall this be?” Israel has been

⁷⁶Ibid., *NPNF* 2:450.

⁷⁷Augustine, *The City of God* 20.30, *NPNF* 2:451. Augustine states that we cannot know with certainty the exact order of the events although “My opinion, however, is, that they will happen in the order in which I have related them.”

⁷⁸Ibid., 18.28, *NPNF* 2:375-76.

⁷⁹Augustine, *On the Psalms*, Psalm 15, *NPNF* 8:47.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Augustine, *Sermons on New-Testament Lessons*, Sermon 72, *NPNF* 6:472.

supplanted to bring blessings to the church, but this time of being supplanted will come to an end: "The time will come, the end of the world will come, and all Israel shall believe; not they who now are, but their children who shall then be."⁸²

Like Augustine, Jerome (347-420) believed in a future salvation of the Jews. He said, "[W]hen the Jews receive the faith at the end of the world, they will find themselves in dazzling light, as if our Lord were returning to them from Egypt."⁸³

St. Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390-455) argued that Israel's current state of blindness is being used by God for the salvation of the Gentiles. But after this Israel will be saved:

As we have already said above, it is not given to any human study or genius to explore the decree and design according to which God . . . *hath concluded all in unbelief, that He may have mercy on all*. . . . He delayed for centuries, while He was educating Israel, to enlighten the countless peoples of infidels; and now He allows that same Israel to go blind till the universality of the Gentiles enter the fold. He allows so many thousands of this people to be born and die to be lost, when only those whom the end of the world will find alive will attain salvation.⁸⁴

The idea of Israel's salvation after the time of Gentile blessing is also found in the following statement of St. Prosper of Aquitaine:

But He has shown His mercy for all men in a far more extraordinary manner when the Son of God became the Son of man. . . . Since then the glory of the race of Israel shines not in one people only. . . . The promised heritage falls no longer to the sons of the flesh, but to the sons of the promise. The great parsimony in bestowing grace which in the past ages befell all other nations, is now the lot of the Jewish people. Yet, when the fulness of the Gentiles will have come in, then a flood of the same waters of grace is promised for their dry hearts. . . . When the Apostle Paul stopped in his knowledge and discussion of this problem and gave way to utter astonishment, who would be so presumptuous as to believe that he could try and explain it rather than admire it in silence?⁸⁵

Ambrose (c. 340-397) connects Miriam's conflict with Moses and Paul's declaration in Romans 11 that Israel would be saved:

[T]his murmuring refers to the type of the Synagogue, which is ignorant of the mystery of . . . the Church gathered out of the nations, and murmurs with daily reproaches, and envies that people through whose faith itself also shall be delivered from the leprosy of its unbelief, according to what we read that: "blindness in part has happened unto Israel,

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³St. Jerome, *Commentary on St. Matthew*, 2, cited in Fahey, *The Kingship of Christ and the Conversion of the Jewish Nation* 108.

⁸⁴St. Prosper of Aquitaine, *The Call of All Nations*, 1.21, *ACW* 14.69 (emphasis in the original).

⁸⁵Ibid., *ACW* 14.103.

until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.”⁸⁶

In his commentary on Rom 11:26, Theodoret of Cyrus (393-457), like Augustine, stated that the Jews would believe in connection with the coming of Elijah in the end times:

And he [Paul] urges them not to despair of the salvation of the other Jews; for when the Gentiles have received the message, even they, the Jews, will believe, when the excellent Elijah comes, bringing to them the doctrine of faith. For even the Lord said this in the sacred gospels: ‘Elijah is coming, and he will restore all things.’⁸⁷

According to Joel A. Weaver, hope for a salvation of Israel in relation to the coming of Elijah “is not an isolated reading but rather part of a larger, widespread . . . expectation in Christianity.”⁸⁸

Others affirmed a future for Israel. In regard to Rom 11:26, St. Cyril of Alexandria (378-444) stated with confidence that Israel would be saved after the calling of the Gentiles: “Although it was rejected, Israel will also be saved eventually, a hope which Paul confirms. . . . For indeed, Israel will be saved in its own time and will be called at the end, after the calling of the Gentiles.”⁸⁹

Cyril offers one of the more extended discussions on the future salvation of Israel in his *Commentary on Genesis*. For him, the salvation of Israel is something that cannot be doubted by the readers of Scripture:

At the end of time our Lord Jesus Christ will be reconciled with Israel, his ancient persecutor, just as Jacob kissed Esau after his return from Haran. No one who listens to the words of holy Scripture can actually doubt that with the passing of time Israel also will have to be received again into the love of Christ through faith.⁹⁰

Cyril then quotes Hos 3:4-5 for proof of this belief and then says,

While Christ, the Savior of us all, gathers believers from the nations, Israel is deserted, since it has no law to elect its leaders, and it cannot offer to the divine altar the sacrifices prescribed by the laws. It therefore awaits Christ’s return from his action of converting the nations, so that he may receive it as well and unite it with the law of his love to the

⁸⁶St. Ambrose, *Letters*, Letter 63, 57; in *NPNF*,. Series 2, ed. Philip Schaff, 14 vols. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994) 10:464-65.

⁸⁷Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Saint Paul, Patrologia Graeca* (hereafter *PG*), ed. J. P. Mince, trans. Joel A. Weaver, 82:180, *Theodoret of Cyrus on Romans 11:26: Recovering an Early Christian Redivivus Tradition* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007) 15.

⁸⁸Weaver, *Theodoret of Cyrus on Romans 11:26* 150.

⁸⁹St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Explanation of the Letter to the Romans*, PG 74:849. See *ACCS:NT* 6.298-99.

⁹⁰Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Genesis*, PG 69:261, translation from *ACCS:OT* 1.225.

others. See how Jacob, who rejoiced in the generation of his children and in his numerous herds of sheep, came back from Haran and received again Esau into his friendship. In time Israel itself will be converted after the calling of the nations and will admire these riches in Christ.⁹¹

Cyril also held that Matt 23:38-39 had relevance to the coming salvation of Israel. In reference to Jesus' statement to unbelieving Israel that "You shall not see Me until you say 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,'" Cyril said, "That which has been spoken possesses an interpretation that comes through the vision of faith. For when 'the fullness of the nations comes in' and they believe in Christ, then the Jews who believe after these things see the beauty of the divine nature of Christ."⁹²

Writing in the last third of the fourth century, Ambrosiaster stated, "However seriously the Jews may have sinned by rejecting the gift of God . . . nevertheless, because they are the children of good people, whose privileges and many benefits from God they have received, they will be received with joy when they return to the faith, because God's love for them is stirred up by the memory of their ancestors."⁹³

Slightly outside the Patristic Era, Cassiodorus (c. 485-585) linked the salvation of Israel with Psalm 102. Commenting on verse 9—"He will not always be angry, nor will he be wroth for ever"—he declared, "This verse can be applied also to the Jewish people, who we know are to be converted at the world's end. On this Paul says: *Blindness in part has happened in Israel, that the fullness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved.*"⁹⁴ When Cassiodorus states "we know" it appears that this belief in a future salvation of Israel was quite common in his day. He does not appear to be presenting a novel idea.

In sum, the testimony of the theologians of the Patristic Era is that the nation of Israel will be saved in accord with OT prophecies and the teachings of Paul in Romans 11. This future event will take place in conjunction with other last days events such as the comings of Elijah, Antichrist, and Jesus Christ.

That most of the early theologians believed in a future salvation of Israel is beyond doubt. But did the Patristic theologians go beyond the idea of a salvation of Israel to a *restoration* of Israel? Though the heavy emphasis is on the salvation of Israel, it does appear that some did expect a restoration of Israel to its land. For example, in reference to Joel 3:1-2 Jerome said, "For those who believe, salvation is in Mount Zion and Jerusalem. In the latter days, the Lord will gather the called remnant from the people of Judah, who with the apostles and through the apostles

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Cyril of Alexandria, *Fragment 264*, *ACCS:NT* 1b.185.

⁹³Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Paul's Epistles*, *ACCS:NT* 6.299.

⁹⁴Cassiodorus, *Explanation of the Psalms*, *Ancient Christian Writers*, eds. Walter J. Burghardt and Thomas Comerford Lawler (New York: Paulist, 1991) 53.22-23.

believed. He will return the captives of Judah to Jerusalem.”⁹⁵

Cyril of Alexandria gives a spiritual interpretation of Mount Zion as the church in Obadiah 16,⁹⁶ but he may indicate that the Jews will possess their land according to Obadiah 19:

“Those in the south” signifies the area where the Babylonians invaded Jerusalem led by Nebuchadnezzar. The entire province of Judea was laid waste, sinking back into misery so that it was reduced to absolute silence and appeared entirely deserted. However, when God will enter into the misery of the captives, he will return them to the land of their ancestors after his wrath has subsided. In their return from Babylon the entire multitude of Israel will possess the region of the nations that is equal to Edom. This is a sign of blessing from God.⁹⁷

Cyril also said,

At this place in the text, the migration of Israel back to the land is mentioned, more specifically from those Jews taken away into Babylon. . . . Perhaps here he is saying that everything that is to the south and to the north and to the east and to the west will be fully occupied by Israel as they will easily possess the whole region around them. And people will ascend, gathered on top of Zion, which sums up the goal of the prophecy. For the inhabitants of Zion, he says, are saved by God, who will burst through their chains of servitude.⁹⁸

The main emphasis of the early theologians was on the salvation of Israel, but some appear to have affirmed a restoration of Israel to its land as well.

Conclusion

The early church adopted a moderate form of supersessionism in regard to Israel and the church. The church believed that the nation Israel had been rejected by God because of its disobedience and rejection of Christ. This rejection appeared to be confirmed by the destructions of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and 135. Going beyond the biblical witness, the early church held that the church was now the new Israel and that the scriptures, covenants, and promises given to Israel were now primarily the possession of the Christian church.

Yet a consensus among the theologians of this era held that the nation Israel would be converted in the last days in connection with the promises of the OT

⁹⁵“*Saluatis credentibus in monte Sion, et Hierusalem, et uocatis residuis de populo Iudaeorum, qui cum apostolis et per apostolos crediderunt, in tempore illo postquam conuerterit Dominus captiuitatem Iuda et Hierusalem*” (Jerome, *The Prophet Joel*, in *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* [Turnhout, 1953-] 76, 198).

⁹⁶Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Obadiah*, PG 71:591.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, PG 71:593. See *ACCS:OT* 14.125.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, PG 71:595-96. See *ACCS:OT* 14.126.

prophets and Paul's words in Romans 11. According to some, this salvation was to be accompanied by a repossession of Israel's land by the tribes of Israel. Thus, the early church's doctrine of Israel included the elements of rejection and hope.

PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE: PROVIDENTIAL OR MIRACULOUS? THE BIBLICAL VIEW

Jon Rehurek*

Many evangelicals and KJV-only advocates assert that the Bible provides explicit evidence for a doctrine of miraculous preservation. In their assertions, they apply the doctrine to a particular version of the Bible, most often the King James Version (KJV) of 1611. Yet an examination of exegetical evidence from commonly cited biblical texts supports only a general promise of preserving the truth of God's message to mankind, not a particular version of the Bible. Many verses—including some related to immutability, infallibility, and preservation—have been incorrectly interpreted and applied to preservation. The preservation of God's revelation is the lesson in many of the passages, but no explicit indication applies them directly to written Scripture or to how and when a promise of general preservation would be fulfilled. Since historical evidence demonstrates that scribal errors exist in every extant manuscript, the conclusion to be drawn is that the Bible has been providentially preserved by means of secondary causation through the plethora of available manuscripts and not through miraculous preservation of particular manuscripts and versions. God Himself is faithful and true and His Word reflects His character; His decrees are absolutely immutable and infallible. Although the Scriptures themselves strongly assert that truths contained in it are firmly established and will endure forever, the case for providential preservation must rest upon theological grounds through the historical (i.e., canonicity) and manuscript evidence (i.e., textual criticism) rather than upon exegetical grounds.

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Introduction

History provides evidence that God's Word has been preserved in numerous copies and translations throughout the world. *Webster's Dictionary* defines "preserve" as "to keep or save from decomposition."¹ Thus, to preserve something is to save it from corruption, damage, or erosion so that the original state or condition is maintained to the greatest degree possible for an indefinite period of time.

How has this preservation been accomplished? Has God miraculously preserved His Word to the degree that no errors or variations occurred in the transmission process? Or have humans been responsible to preserve His Word apart from the Lord promising to do so? The first possibility can be dismissed because of obvious errors in transmission.² However, the second possibility is not so easily answered. To say that man has indeed been given the responsibility to preserve the Word of God for future generations would account for errors that have occurred. Yet is this all that preservation involves, or does a providential³ safekeeping guard the essential quality of the Bible for future generations?

But the question may arise as to whether or not the Bible is better preserved than any other piece of literature. If it is, is it due to a doctrine of preservation explicitly taught in the Scriptures? Many theologians answer "yes," and use numerous passages to defend their position. However, do those passages refer to preservation of the Bible itself? The foundational question to answer is whether or not the Lord has promised to preserve His Word. If He promises to preserve the Scripture, a proper doctrine of preservation can be formulated. If commonly quoted passages used to defend preservation of the Word of God do not refer to the Bible itself, preservation cannot be defined as a doctrine. Rather, it must be defended on historical and theological grounds.⁴ Concerning the position of the seminary at which

¹Philip Babcock Gove, ed., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1971) 1794.

²For further evidence, see Jon A. Rehurek, "Derived Autographic Authority: Recognizing Distinctions in the Transmission of the Scriptures" (Th.M. thesis, The Master's Seminary, April 2004) 1-24.

³Erickson defines the providence of God as "the continuing action of God in preserving his creation and guiding it toward his intended purposes" (Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998] 412).

⁴Combs writes: "Right at the outset, we must distinguish between belief in a *doctrine* of preservation and, simply, belief in preservation. This is crucial in understanding exactly what those in group 1 [i.e., those who deny the Scriptures teach any doctrine of preservation] are denying. To my knowledge, no one in that group denies *the preservation of Scripture*, that is, that the books of the Old and New Testaments have been substantially preserved to our day. But they do deny that Scripture anywhere promises, either

he taught, Glenny writes,

We gladly affirm God's providential control over the events of history so that His Word has been preserved by natural processes in the many extant manuscripts, versions, and other copies of Scripture. Furthermore, we want to clarify our position by stating what we do not believe. We do not believe that God has perfectly preserved His Word by miraculous, supernatural means in any one manuscript, version, or text-type.⁵

Can Glenny's position be biblically defended? Is preservation theologically derived? Sawyer writes, "The problem of an appeal to *providence* for support of an argument is that there is no objective criterion by which one is to judge what is and is not providential."⁶ The Bible clearly teaches that all events of human history are providential (Isa 46:5, 8-11). Nothing is out of God's control or veers from His ultimate design and intention. Combs brings clarity to the earlier question of whether or not the Bible is better preserved than other ancient literature: "Any ancient document that is extant today owes its present existence to God's preservation. So we can say that all the works of ancient authors in existence today have been 'providentially preserved.'"⁷ Even so, what is the nature of that preservation? If it is providential, what does that mean? How is the Word of God preserved?

In light of these questions, specific passages of Scripture must shed light on

directly or indirectly, its own preservation—a doctrine of preservation. That is, they can speak of the preservation of Scripture because it is a historical reality, but it is not a theological necessity. . . . A *doctrine* of preservation of the Scriptures would mean, however, that the preservation of Scripture was always assured even though God carried out his will to preserve the Scriptures primarily through the actions of human wills" (William W. Combs, "The Preservation of Scripture," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 5 (Fall 2000):6-7, 10). Two representatives of Group I are W. Edward Glenny, "The Preservation of Scripture," in *The Bible Version Debate: The Perspective of Central Baptist Theological Seminary*, ed. Michael A. Grisanti (Minneapolis: Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1997) 71-106; and Daniel B. Wallace, "Inspiration, Preservation, and New Testament Textual Criticism," *GTJ* 12/1 (Spring 1991):21-50.

⁵Glenny, "The Preservation of Scripture" 71.

⁶M. James Sawyer, "Evangelicals and the Canon of the New Testament," *GTJ* 11/1 (Spring 1990):45. Yet, Combs makes a valid point when discussing what providence actually means and how it is often misunderstood or taken to an extreme. He writes, "God brings about his will in the universe either directly (e.g., miracles) or indirectly, that is, through secondary causation. . . . When most writers speak of the preservation of the Scripture as being providential, they mean Scripture has been preserved by secondary causation, through ordinary human means, rather than by God's direct, miraculous intervention. God has not chosen to preserve the Scriptures miraculously. Thus the preservation of Scripture is not different *in method* from any other ancient book God has determined to preserve, as, for example, Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic War*—both Scripture and Caesar's work have been preserved providentially, by secondary causation, by essentially ordinary human means" (Combs, "The Preservation of Scripture" 9-10).

⁷Combs, "The Preservation of Scripture" 8.

this issue, because “the only objective criterion we have by which we can determine God’s providence and will is His interpretation of the events of this world in His Word.”⁸ The question is not, Has the Bible has been preserved? History confirms that it has. The question is whether it was miraculously preserved or providentially preserved through secondary causation. The goal must be to find out what—if anything—the Bible teaches about preservation. Therefore, the meanings of a number of the commonly used proof texts need to be examined to determine whether or not providential preservation of the Scripture is explicitly taught.

Assessing the Biblical Case for Preservation

The only proper place to start an investigation into the preservation of the Scripture is in the biblical record itself. A number of passages have been offered as evidence for the preservation of the Bible, some of them making specific reference to “the Word of God.” Yet, how many of them—properly interpreted—actually support a doctrine of preservation? Combs writes, “It is customarily assumed, usually with no supporting argumentation, that this expression always refers to Scripture, God’s written revelation. However, a study of this phrase suggests that, more often than not, God’s written revelation is not in view.”⁹ What does each of the following passages have to contribute to a proper understanding of preservation?

Immutability Texts

Two passages from the Gospel of Matthew are commonly quoted as proof that God has promised to preserve His Word, i.e., the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The first passage is Matt 5:17-18¹⁰ and the second Matt 24:35. What

⁸Glenny, “The Preservation of Scripture” 79-80.

⁹Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” 13. A number of lexicons demonstrate that the OT expression “the word of God” (or Lord) is almost always used of oral communication. See Francis Brown, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., “דְּבָרִים” and “אִמְרָתוֹ,” in *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1979) 182-84, 57. See also H. Douglas Buckwalter, “Word,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2d ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 828-31. See also Wayne P. Grudem, “Scripture’s Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture,” in *Scripture and Truth*, eds. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 19-59. To this Combs adds: “Because what came orally to God’s spokesmen was sometimes eventually written down, the phrase came to designate Scripture as well. . . . While the attributes of God’s oral communication can often easily be transferred to God’s written word, a one-to-one correspondence is not always possible; so texts that seem to promise preservation of ‘the word of God’ need to be examined carefully to determine if such application is valid” (Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” 13-14).

¹⁰Combs writes, “This is one of the most commonly referenced passages used to support the preservation of Scripture” (“The Preservation of Scripture” 20-21).

do these statements of Jesus teach?

Matthew 5:17-18. In this passage, Jesus says, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter [ἰῶτα, *iōta*] or stroke [κεραία, *keraiā*] shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.”¹¹ Glenn writes, “Matthew 5:18 is clearly speaking of fulfillment in Christ of OT ethical (3:15) and prophetic (1:13; 2:15; 4:14; etc.) texts.”¹² He states that these verses, “in context, speak of the eschatological fulfillment of promises, prophecies, and types from the Old Testament.”¹³ But Jesus’ reference to the OT should not be limited to the texts specified by Glenn; the verses broadly refer to Jesus’ fulfillment of *all* OT prophecies concerning the Messiah. This interpretation indicates that they do not refer to the preservation of one or even several manuscripts of the OT; they refer to fulfillment of the prophetic truth contained in them. Yet the words of Jesus also address the immutability and authority of the OT. Grudem concurs:

Consistent with the view that the Old Testament writings are God’s own speech is a willingness on the part of New Testament authors to rely on individual words or even letters of the Old Testament. Jesus’ affirmation of the abiding validity of every “iota” and “dot” of the Old Testament law (Matt. 5:18) indicates such confidence.¹⁴

In addition, the context shows that Jesus limits His reference to the OT and does not include future writings and later events that make up the content of the NT. In v. 17, He clearly refers to “the Law” and “the Prophets” of the OT. He refers to the authoritative nature of the OT Scriptures and their fulfillment in Himself as the promised Messiah, not to the preservation of the manuscripts.¹⁵ He did not come to “abolish” (καταλῦσαι, *katalusai*) the Law and the Prophets, but to “fulfill”

¹¹English translations of Scripture are from the New American Standard Bible.

¹²Glenn, “The Preservation of Scripture” 87.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Grudem, “Scripture’s Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture” 40.

¹⁵Although it is beyond the scope of this discussion, there are numerous views as to what Jesus meant by “fulfill.” Carson writes, “The best interpretation of these difficult verses says that Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets in that they point to him, and he is their fulfillment. The antithesis is not between ‘abolish’ and ‘keep’ but between ‘abolish’ and ‘fulfill.’ . . . Therefore we give *plēroō* (‘fulfill’) exactly the same meaning as in the formula quotations, which in the prologue (Matt 1–2) have already laid great stress on the prophetic nature of the OT and the way it points to Jesus” (D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” vol. 8, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984] 143-44).

(πληρώσαι, *plērōsai*) them. Glenny writes, “The point of this verse is that Jesus did not come to destroy (or to perpetuate for that matter) the OT Law. He is the one to whom all the OT points (Luke 24:25-27, 44-46) and He came to fulfill all that was prophesied about Him in it.”¹⁶ Therefore, the restriction of this passage to the messianic prophecies of the OT should be maintained.¹⁷

Immediately following this reference to OT prophecies, Jesus once again mentions “the Law” and the smallest marks found in the Hebrew OT. Carson describes them:

The “jot” (KJV) has become “the smallest letter” (NIV): this is almost certainly correct, for it refers to the letter י (*yōḏ*), the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The tittle (*keraiā*) has been variously interpreted: it is the Hebrew letter ו (*wāw*) . . . or the small stroke that distinguishes several pairs for Hebrew letters (צ/ץ; ג/ג; ח/ח) . . . or a purely ornamental stroke, a “crown”; . . . or it forms a hendiadys with “jot,” referring to the smallest part of the smallest letter. . . . In any event Jesus here upholds the authority of the OT Scriptures right down to the “least stroke of a pen.” His is the highest possible view of the OT.¹⁸

His description provides further proof of reference to the Hebrew OT prophetic Scriptures alone and not to the future yet-to-be written Greek NT Scriptures. Yet Cloud, a KJV-only advocate, disagrees: “In summary, the Bible promises that God will preserve His Word in pure form, including the most minute details (the jots and titles [*sic*], the words), and that this would include the whole Scriptures, Old and New Testaments.”¹⁹ Likewise, Waite writes, “Not ‘one jot’ nor ‘one tittle’—that is Bible preservation, isn’t it? Now He’s talking about the Old Testament, and I’m sure by extension we can carry that on to the New Testament as well.”²⁰ Yet, is this the literal rendering of what Jesus said? The above evidence refutes the KJV-only position on this passage. Combs rebuts, “If not one ‘jot’ or ‘tittle’ is to be changed,

¹⁶Glenny, “The Preservation of Scripture” 87.

¹⁷Glenny asserts, “Matthew 5:18 does not even refer to the NT text, let alone speak of its perfect supernatural preservation” (*ibid.*).

¹⁸Carson, “Matthew” 145.

¹⁹David W. Cloud, “Preservation Is Missing in Standard Works on Textual Criticism,” March 30, 1999, updated December 16, 2002, <http://www.wayoflife.org/~dcloud/fbns/preservationis.htm>, accessed 16 May 2003). He also writes in the same article: “I praise God that we are not left to drift upon the unsteady seas of modern critical scholarship. Because of faith in God’s promises to preserve His Word, I can reject the new texts and Bibles and cleave confidently to the faithful Received Text-based King James Version in English and to Received Text versions in other languages.”

²⁰D. A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible—A Four-fold Superiority: Texts, Translators, Technique, Theology. God’s Word Kept Intact in English* (Collingswood, N.J.: The Bible for Today Press, 1992) 10.

then they should insist on using only the 1611 edition of the KJV since ‘jot’ and ‘tittle’ certainly involve spelling, and there have been thousands of spelling changes since 1611.”²¹ Such statements demonstrate that the focus for many in this passage is on miraculous preservation—most notably those advocating a particular text or version, i.e., the Textus Receptus/Majority Text and/or King James Version—rather than on the primary issue which is the immutable²² authority of the OT in the fulfillment of its messianic prophecies in Jesus Christ.

The point is that if these verses claim miraculous preservation of the Scriptures themselves, the manuscript evidence contradicts Jesus’ words. No available manuscripts contain the inerrant autographic text (i.e., unchanged ‘jot’ or ‘tittle’) in totality. Combs writes, “Jesus is not teaching in this verse ‘inerrant preservation of the Words of the Bible.’”²³ Instead, Jesus is defending²⁴ the “nature, extent, and duration of its [OT authority] validity and continuity.”²⁵ Combs concludes,

If the Scripture cannot be changed, then it obviously remains valid with full authority. Thus, the emphasis in Matthew 5:18 is more on the *authority* and *validity* of the OT, not primarily its preservation. . . . Thus, this verse makes no *direct* affirmation concerning preservation; however, the emphasis on the continuing authority of the Scriptures can *by implication* be used to argue for the preservation of those same Scriptures.²⁶

Matthew 24:35. In Matt 24:34-35 Jesus says, “Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” In this passage He refers specifically

²¹Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” 22.

²²W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988, 1991, 1997) 1:492; cf. Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 177-78.

²³Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” 22.

²⁴Keener (*A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* 178) calls “jot and tittle” a hyperbole, but Feinberg responds to those who take the words as hyperbolic, “I see no such proof” (Paul D. Feinberg, “The Meaning of Inerrancy,” in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980] 284.). Extreme caution should be used when labeling any portion of Scripture as hyperbolic. “Hyperbole” should be reserved for instances where the literal meaning brings an unjustifiable meaning to the text.

²⁵Carson, “Matthew” 145.

²⁶Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture,” 23. Cf. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992) 110; Carson, “Matthew” 145.

to the immutable character of *His own words*.²⁷ Here some see a reference to the whole NT or at least to the words of Jesus found in the Gospels and Acts. Waite writes,

The Lord is talking of His *Words*, the New Testament. Not the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament only, but His Words will not pass away. That means the promise extends to the New Testament. I believe personally that the Lord Jesus was the Source and Authority of every word of the Hebrew Old Testament text. He was the Revelator. He is the Word of God. In a very real sense, therefore, His *Words* include the entire Old Testament. He is also the Source and Author of all the New Testament books. Though we had human writers, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Divine Author and SOURCE of it all.²⁸

Waite's understanding goes beyond what the text means. Glenny comments, "Verse 35 itself cannot mean that all of Jesus' words will be perfectly preserved in the text of Scripture since all of His words were not recorded in the text of Scripture, or anywhere else for that matter (cf. John 20:30; 21:25)."²⁹ Combs adds, "Though it is true that God (or Jesus) is the ultimate author of Scripture, this verse is not directly referring to any written revelation."³⁰

Combs writes, "Both the words of the Law and the words of Jesus are immutable; they cannot be set aside; they are unalterable."³¹ Speaking of both Matthew 5:18 and 24:35, Glenny concludes, "Therefore, when read in their context, these passages do not guarantee that every word of the autographs of Scripture will be preserved intact in some text or text-type. Instead, they teach that the Word of God is true, and that the OT prophesies will all come to pass."³² Combs adds, "But unlike Matthew 5:18, which clearly refers to Scripture, 24:35 has reference to the authority of Jesus' oral words. And though it is true that some of Jesus' words were recorded in Scripture, written revelation is not the primary emphasis here. Any application to preservation would be indirect, much like Isaiah 40:8."³³

²⁷"But here that something [of greater endurance] is Jesus' speech, which therefore sets him above the Torah and makes his words like God's words (cf. Ps 119:89; Isa 40:8): they possess eternal authority" (Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* 3:368). Cf. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* 590. Morris notes, "What he [Jesus] says will in the end have its fulfillment" (Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* 613).

²⁸Waite, *Defending the King James Bible* 11.

²⁹Glenn, "The Preservation of Scripture" 88. Cf. Combs, "The Preservation of Scripture" 24.

³⁰Combs, "The Preservation of Scripture" 24.

³¹Ibid.

³²Glenn, "The Preservation of the Scripture" 89.

³³Combs, "The Preservation of Scripture" 25.

Psalm 119:89. Another passage that could be included in this section is Psalm 119:89. In it the psalmist writes, “Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled [נִשְׁבָּב, *niššāb*] in heaven.” Psalm 119 is an acrostic Psalm³⁴ that extols the virtues and magnificence of the Law of the Lord (v. 1) and the blessedness of whole-heartedly obeying it (v. 2). Kidner entitles the ל (*lamēd*) section (vv. 89-96) “The Great Certainties” and writes, “A striking feature of these verses is the coupling of God’s creative, world-sustaining word with His law for man.”³⁵

But in a desire to uphold a doctrine of miraculous preservation, Waite has written,

God’s Word is not in doubt. It is permanent. It is unconfused and plain. God has settled this. If it has been settled, that means it has been preserved, kept pure. Nothing has been lost. Something which is settled is determined and even more solid than steel or concrete. Some people say, “Well, it is settled in Heaven but not on earth.” But God doesn’t need it in Heaven; He knows His Word. We are the ones who need it. He is using this verse, Psalm 119:89, to show us that God has given us Words that are settled.³⁶

Is this the proper way to understand the verse? As Combs asks, is there “a perfect copy of the Bible in heaven?”³⁷ This is the contention of many, but evidence contradicts their argumentation. For the sake of argument, even if the reference is to the Bible, it would be restricted to the five books of Moses according to Allen, who thus sets the parameters of this Psalm: “The number of lines seems to have been determined by the use of eight synonyms for the focus of the psalmist’s interest, the ‘Torah.’”³⁸ Allen limits the specific referent of the psalmist to the Pentateuch, which would limit the direct application of verse 89 to Moses’ five books. Yet the reference is not necessarily to a particular portion or form of Scripture; rather, it is to the truth and immutability of the message contained in the Scripture, whether or not it refers to the whole OT or just to the Pentateuch. Furthermore, the origin of the stability of His “word” lies “in heaven,” not here on earth.³⁹

³⁴Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, vol. 21, WBC, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glen W. Barker (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983) 139.

³⁵Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73-150*, vol. 14b, TOTC, ed. D. J. Wiseman (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1975) 426.

³⁶Waite, *Defending the King James Bible* 7-8.

³⁷Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” 16.

³⁸Allen, *Psalms 101-150* 139.

³⁹Combs writes, “Granting for the moment that this verse is referring to God’s written revelation in heaven, it still says nothing about the preservation of that revelation here on earth, not withstanding Waite’s protestations to the contrary. In fact, it says nothing about its initial inspiration here on earth. In short, no direct promise of preservation here on earth can be gleaned from this verse” (“The

Another assumption of Waite and other KJV-only advocates is that all occurrences of “the Word of God” refer to divine *written* revelation. Yet, as previously demonstrated, the reference is primarily to the *truth* of God’s message,⁴⁰ which then applies to the written record of that truth as found in the Scripture. In this Psalm the meaning definitely applies to the truths of the OT Law (vv. 92, 93, 94, 95, 96), but cannot be extended beyond that since Psalm 119 refers to no other portions of the OT Scripture.

What, then, does God’s Word being “forever . . . settled in heaven” mean? נִשְׁשָׁב (niššāb, “settled”; NASB marginal note reads “stands firm”) is a niphil participle⁴¹ and means that the truth of God’s Word is “that which stands firm.”⁴² It is established and, therefore, cannot be changed by anyone or anything. Barrick writes, “God’s revelatory Word is fixed firmly in heaven. Regardless of what might happen to His Word on earth, it is securely preserved in His mind.”⁴³ Yet this does not mean a written copy of the OT Law sits in a heavenly library guarded by angelic beings. The verse does not allude to any such idea, but it does state that the truth of God’s Word stands, will never fail, cannot be changed, and remains forever so in heaven where God dwells. It is dependable and immutable. Combs concludes, “What God says, his word, is determined and fixed; it can be counted on; thus, God is faithful. His word holds the universe in place. Thus, it would appear that this verse has no direct application to the doctrine of preservation.”⁴⁴

Infallibility Texts

The previous passages in Matthew focus on the immutability of both the Law and the Prophets (OT) and of Jesus’ words, while the one found in Psalm 119:89 focuses on the immutability of the truth of God’s Word. All are equally authoritative

Preservation of Scripture” 17).

⁴⁰Combs writes, “It seems more likely that ‘Your word’ in verse 89 has no *direct* reference to God’s written revelation” (ibid.)

⁴¹Barrick and Busenitz state “that the Niphil stem (or conjugation) of the Hebrew verb was employed to express the simple passive (i.e., the subject is the recipient of the action)” (William D. Barrick and Irvin A. Busenitz, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew: OT 503 and 504 Syllabus* [Sun Valley, Calif.: The Master’s Seminary, 1999-2000] 120, cf. 84).

⁴²Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “נִשְׁשָׁב” in *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon* 662.

⁴³William D. Barrick, “Ancient Manuscripts and Exposition,” *TMSJ* 9/1 (Spring 1998):28.

⁴⁴Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” 17. Glenny writes, “Psalm 119:89 declares that God’s Word is settled forever in heaven. The verses following this one indicate that the point of this verse is that God’s Word is infallible and it hold the universe in place (vv. 90-91). The stability of the universe is an evident token of God’s faithfulness to His Word (v. 90)” (“The Preservation of Scripture,” 88).

and eternally enduring. This applies to preservation but not in a direct sense to the written words of the Old and New Testaments. In addition to the texts examined in the Matthew passages and Ps 119:89, the following passages also need attention to see whether or not they are applicable to preservation, and if so, in what sense.

Psalm 12:6-7. In Ps 12:6-7 David has written, “The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. Thou, O LORD, wilt keep them; Thou wilt preserve *him* from this generation forever” (emphasis added). Yet, in the KJV it reads, “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve *them* from this generation for ever” (emphasis added). The translators of the KJV differed from the NASB translators in determining the antecedent of the pronoun in v. 7. Is it the “godly man” of v. 1, the “afflicted” and “needy” of v. 5, or the “words of the LORD” in verse 6?

The focus of David in the Psalm is to clarify a distinction between the words of wicked and evil men who deceive and the words of the LORD who keeps His promises. Perowne writes, “Falseness is everywhere; truth nowhere. The heart of men is double; their lips are flattering lips (ver. 3).” In light of this fact, the number of men with integrity is minimal (v. 1) and they have difficulty dealing with the falsehood and flattery (v. 2, 5a) that surrounds them and desire to be delivered. Therefore, the Lord Himself will arise and come to their defense (v. 5b).⁴⁵ Perowne continues,

This deliverance is promised them in the form of a Divine interposition. The singer, filled with the Spirit of prophecy, consoles himself, and those afflicted like himself, not in his own words, but in the words of God (ver. 6). And then remembering how pure those words are, how unalterably true—not like the words of men which *seem* so fair, but *are* so false—he feels that there he can rest, calm in the conviction that, though the wicked walk on every side, Jehovah will save them that love Him from all their machinations (ver. 8).⁴⁶

The Lord’s deliverance is certain because everything He says is absolutely true. When He says that He “will arise” and “set him in the safety for which he longs” (v. 5b), He can be trusted because His words are “pure words” (v. 6a),

⁴⁵J. J. Stewart Perowne, *Commentary on the Psalms: 2 Volumes in 1* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1878-1879; reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1989) 175. Craigie concurs, “There are two basic sections: (1) the vain speech of wicked persons (12:2-5); (2) the sure speech of God (12:6-9)” (Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, vol. 19, WBC, eds. David A. Hubbard and Glen W. Barker [Waco, Tex.: Word, 1983] 137).

⁴⁶Perowne, *Commentary on the Psalms* 175-76.

“intended, and to be fulfilled, absolutely as they run without any admixture whatever of untruthfulness.”⁴⁷ That is because the purity of those words has been tested and refined in the fires of a furnace, proving that no mixture of impurity is present (v. 6b).⁴⁸ Thus, the contrast is between the reliability of “the spoken words of God”⁴⁹ and the unreliable words of men.

But who or what will be “kept” and “preserved” in v. 7? The context shows that the proper antecedent of “them” in v. 7a is the “afflicted” and “needy” man of v. 5a, who is the same “godly man” of v. 1. Keil and Delitzsch write,

The suffix *ēm* in v. 8a [v. 7a English] refers to the miserable and poor; the suffix *ennu* in v. 8b [v. 7b English] (him, not: us, which would be pointed תצַרְנוּ [tšrēnū, “preserve us”], and more especially since it is not preceded by תִּשְׁמְרֵנוּ [tšmērēn, “keep us”]) refers back to the man who yearns for deliverance mentioned in the divine utterance, v. 6 [v. 5 English]. The “preserving for ever” is so constant, that neither now nor at any future time will they succumb to this generation.⁵⁰

Therefore, the preserving applies to the righteous,

who are being afflicted, by the wicked of “this generation.” The pronoun “them” in verse 7 (“thou shalt keep them”) does not refer to the “words” of verse 6. It refers back to the “poor” and the “needy” of verse 5, and the “godly” and “faithful” men of verse 1, whom the Lord will “preserve” (v. 7b). . . . The point of the psalm is that the godly man will never cease; the faithful will never “fail from among the children of men” (v. 1).⁵¹

⁴⁷C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Psalms*, vol. 5, Commentary on the Old Testament (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866-91; reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1996) 121. They go on to state: “The poetical אִמְרָה [*imrāh*, “words” or “sayings”] . . . serves pre-eminently as the designation of the divine power-words of promise. The figure, which is indicated in other instances, when God’s word is said to be צֻרְפָּה (*sērūpāh*, “refined” or “tried”) (18:31; 119:40, Prov. 30:5), is here worked out: silver melted and thus purified בְּצִלְיֵי לְאֵרֶץ [ba *ālil* ā *āres*, “in a furnace on the earth”]” (ibid.) .

⁴⁸“God’s word is solid silver smelted and leaving all impurity behind, and as it were, having passed seven times through the smelting furnace, i.e., the purest silver, entirely purged from dross” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Psalms* 121-22).

⁴⁹Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* 138.

⁵⁰Keil and Delitzsch, *Psalms* 122.

⁵¹Glenny, “The Preservation of the Scripture” 90-91. He also writes, “Hebrew grammar requires that it be the righteous whom God is keeping and preserving in verse 7. The word ‘them’ (v. 7a) is a masculine pronominal suffix and ‘the words’ of verse 6a is feminine in gender. . . . The textual evidence also supports the contextual and grammatical evidence that Psalm 12:7 does not refer to the doctrine of the preservation of God’s Word. There are a variety of readings for the Hebrew pronominal suffixes on the verbs ‘shalt keep’ and ‘shalt preserve.’ In the Masoretic Text, these verbs have third person plural and third person singular suffixes respectively, (‘wilt keep them’ and ‘wilt preserve him’ as the NASB translates the verse). There is also good support for the first person plural suffixes on both verbs in

In light of this interpretation, only v. 6 refers to the words of the Lord while v. 7 refers to the afflicted and needy man of v. 5, etc. And v. 6 has more to do with the *perfection* (i.e., ‘purity’) and lack of error found in the words of the Lord—i.e., their truthfulness and reliability—than with the *preservation* of those words. Combs writes, “Truly, these ‘pure words’ are inerrant words, but the passage does *not* say how *purely* they will be preserved, only that they will be preserved. Therefore, at most this verse might be a general promise of the preservation of God’s Word.”⁵² Though the first part of Comb’s statement is true, the second part confuses the matter since it does not agree with the previous exegetical evidence that the preservation refers to the godly man of vv. 1 and 5 (Combs himself clarifies this later in his next paragraph).

Therefore, this passage does not speak of the preservation of God’s written Word; it only addresses the purity and trustworthiness of His words and the preservation that is being spoken of concerns the righteous man. In light of this, v. 6 is more applicable to the doctrines of inerrancy and infallibility than it is to a doctrine of preservation. God’s words are absolutely dependable because they do not contain any untruth or error (i.e., they are pure and, therefore, infallible) and will never fail (i.e., they are reliable). Combs concludes, “God will preserve the righteous forever. Taken in this sense, this passage has no bearing on the doctrine of preservation.”⁵³

Isaiah 40:8. Isaiah wrote in his prophecy, “The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever [קִיָּם לְעוֹלָם], *yāqûm kē ’ôlām*” (Isa 40:7-8). To set the context, Oswalt writes,

Chapters 40–48 particularly address the questions concerning God’s ability and desire to deliver that the exile would pose. This focus is evident immediately in ch. 40. . . . Thus, ch. 40, the introductory chapter, makes two points: God is the sole ruler of the universe (vv. 12-26), and he can be trusted to deliver (vv. 1-11, 27-31). . . . Verses 1-11 provide a stirring opening for the new section of the prophecy. In four evenly balanced strophes the prophet lays the groundwork for the rest of the book. He establishes that the theme

Hebrew manuscripts, the Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate (‘will watch us’ and ‘will guard us’). These latter two interpretations of the textual evidence have better support than the KJV reading (which has no support for its translation ‘preserve *them*’ for the second verb). Furthermore, neither of these two preferred readings teaches the doctrine of preservation of Scripture; both indicated that David is speaking of the preservation of the righteous from the wicked people around them” (ibid., 91-92). Cf. Perowne, *Commentary on the Psalms* 178.

⁵²Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” 15.

⁵³Ibid.

from this point on will no longer be judgment but restoration (vv. 1-2), that this restoration will be through the personal intervention of God (vv. 3-5), *that no human force or condition can prevail against God's promise* (vv. 6-8), and that there is good news of divine might coupled with divine compassion. *Through the entire segment, speech is the prominent element.* Eleven words relating to speech appear. Three times the speech of God is mentioned.⁵⁴

This portion of Isaiah is about the ability of God to deliver His people from their captivity in Babylon so that they might return to their homeland in Judah. In the opening verses of chapter 40, the frailty of humankind (“the people are grass,” v. 7b) contrasts with the absolute imperishability of the words that God speaks (“the word of the Lord stands forever,” v. 8b) because of who He is. Keil and Delitzsch have written,

Men living in the flesh are universally impotent, perishing, limited; God, on the contrary (ch. 31:3), is the omnipotent, eternal, all-determining; and like Himself, so is His word, which, regarded as the vehicle and utterance of His willing and thinking, is not something separate from Himself, and therefore is the same as He.⁵⁵

The promises of God are sure and reliable. Once again, the focus is on the abiding truthfulness of the words of the Lord; whereas men fail, the words will never fail. And, even more specifically, the text emphasizes that important truth. Oswalt says, “Whatever may lie ahead for the Israelites, they may know that God’s word of promise will not fail them.”⁵⁶ This may apply indirectly to the preservation of the written word of God, but it is not the direct meaning of the statements of Isaiah. In comparison to the frailty of flowers and grass, the promises of God “stand forever,” firmly established, unshakeable, immovable, and unfailing. “Stands” (יָקֻם, *yāqûm*, *qal* imperfect) has the idea of being “fixed,” “confirmed,” “established,” “enduring,” and in this verse means “be fulfilled.”⁵⁷

Young writes,

⁵⁴John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, NICOT, eds. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 45, 46, 48 [emphases added].

⁵⁵C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Isaiah*, vol. 7, Commentary on the Old Testament (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1866-91; reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996) 394. They continue: “Surely grass is the human race; such grass withereth and such flower fadeth, but the word of our God (Jehovah, the God of His people and of sacred history) *yāqûm* & *’ôlām* [“stands forever”], i.e., it rises up without withering or fading, and endures forever, fulfilling and verifying itself through all times” (ibid.).

⁵⁶Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66* 54.

⁵⁷Brown, Driver, and Briggs, “יָקֻם” in *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon* 878. This verb appears a number of times in the following chapters to characterize that which stands up or rises up: 43:17; 49:7; 51:17; 52:5; 54:17.

To God's word there is a permanence of character. Unlike the flesh of man, which withers and fades, it stands forever. It rises up, stands, and endures. In contrast to all flesh with its perishable nature, the word of God is imperishable and endures forever. . . . When God speaks, His word expresses the truth; and that truth cannot be annulled or changed.⁵⁸

Keil and Delitzsch conclude, "Thus the seal . . . is inviolable; and the comfort which the prophets of God are to bring to His people, who have now been suffering so long, is infallibly sure."⁵⁹ Because the focus is on the permanence of God's promises (v. 8), this certainly has application to the written words of God, albeit indirectly and by implication. Combs concludes, "Overall, then, it does not appear that verse 8 should be pressed to affirm a specific and direct promise of the preservation of God's written revelation. Instead, it may have a more indirect application to the doctrine."⁶⁰

First Peter 1:23-25. In his first epistle, Peter writes in 1:23-25,

[F]or you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable [φθαρτῆς ἀλλὰ ἀφθάρτου, *phthartēs alla aphthartou*], that is, through the living and abiding word of God [διὰ λόγου ζώντος θεοῦ καὶ μένοντος, *dia logou zōntos theou kai menontos*]. For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.

Verses 24-25a are a quotation from Isa 40:6b-8. Can the same conclusion be drawn from Peter's words and quotation as from Isa 40:8?

Waite seems to think not. He cites these verses as proof of a direct promise from God to preserve His written words in the Bible. He comments on the 1 Peter passage as follows:

That is a reference to Bible preservation, isn't it? The Word of God is *incorruptible*. . . . God's Words cannot be corrupted, corroded, or decayed like our bodies. When we die and are put into the earth, our bodies see corruption. They are decayed and vanish away into dust, but the Words of God are incorruptible. They live and abide forever. That is a promise of God's preservation. . . . The Words of God do not go away. They do not perish. They endure *for ever*. . . . He has kept His promise to preserve His exact Bible Words, right down to the present.⁶¹

⁵⁸Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 35.

⁵⁹Keil and Delitzsch, *Isaiah* 394.

⁶⁰Combs, "The Preservation of Scripture" 20.

⁶¹Waite, *Defending the King James Bible* 14-15.

But it has already been established that Isa 40:8 does not refer to the actual written words, but to the truth and permanence of what God says. Waite is quoting from the KJV when he writes “incorruptible” instead of “imperishable,” as found in the NASB and NIV. So, which is correct? The context and word’s use throughout 1 Peter 1 shows the meaning to be “imperishable.”⁶² “Not . . . perishable but imperishable” in v. 23 repeats the thought and word (“perishable things,” φθαρτοῖς, *phthartois*) of 1:18-19. In those verses the emphasis is on the lacking value of silver and gold, which perish as opposed to the “precious blood” (τιμίῳ ἅματι, *timiō haimati*) of Christ, which is infinitely valuable and will never perish. As in 1:4, the emphasis is on permanence (“to obtain an inheritance which is *imperishable* and *undefiled* and *will not fade away, reserved in heaven* for you,” emphasis added), not incorruptibility.

What is of permanence here? Peter focuses on the gospel message, not necessarily on the written Word of God.⁶³ Glenny interprets,

Here Peter’s point has nothing to do with the words of Scripture being preserved perfectly, but instead it has everything to do with the lasting and life-changing effect of God’s Word in the lives of believers (vv. 21-23). This Word will continue to work in the lives of those who have received it (2:2, 3). It is a seed in believers which is living and abiding.⁶⁴

The gospel message will never fail because it is “living” and it is reliable because it is “enduring.” It cannot become obsolete.

The exegesis of this passage reveals something further about “the word of the Lord” as quoted from Isa 40:8 in v. 25. Hiebert explains,

“But” (*de*) adds the contrasting fact of the abiding nature of God’s word, “but the word

⁶²Cf. William Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature: A Translation and Adaptation of the Fourth Revised and Augmented Edition of Walter Bauer’s Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch Zu Den Schrift En Des Neuen Testaments Und Der Ubrigen Urchristlichen Literatur* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 125.

⁶³Combs writes, “This would seem to indicate that Peter’s emphasis throughout has been on the gospel message as proclaimed to his readers, not on God’s written revelation” (“The Preservation of Scripture” 26).

⁶⁴Glenny, “The Preservation of Scripture” 89. Hiebert adds, “In what follows, Peter identifies that Word with ‘the word of glad tidings’ (v. 25, ASV), the gospel message that was preached to the readers. . . . The two participles [ζῶντος . . . καὶ μένοντος, *zōntos . . . kai menontos*, ‘living and abiding’] portray the continuously living and enduring nature of the gospel message. It has the very character of God whose message it is (Phil. 2:16; Heb. 4:12). It is also ‘enduring,’ never obsolete or irrelevant” (D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter* [Winona Lake, Ind.: BMH Books, 1984] 115-16).

of the Lord stands forever” (v. 25a). The term rendered “the word” (*to rhēma*) is not the same term rendered “the word” (*logou*) in v. 23. *To rhēma* is the term used in the Septuagint. The same transition occurs in Peter’s sermon in Acts 10:36-37. *To rhēma* is more concrete and denotes that which is spoken—the utterance itself. *Logos* is more comprehensive and includes the thought as well as its expression. The term *rhēma*, “utterance” or “message,” pointedly designates the message spoken by the mouth of God; it is the divine revelation made known in the Christian gospel (cf. Heb. 1:1-2). The repetition of the term in the next phrase identifies that divine utterance with the gospel proclaimed to the readers. It is indeed “the word of the Lord.”⁶⁵

Glenny adds, “The point of Peter’s use of Isaiah 40 is that the Word of God which has been planted in the hearts of his recipients by the Spirit when they were born again is alive and incorruptible and by means of that implanted Word they can and should grow to maturity.”⁶⁶ It would appear then that “the Word of God” refers primarily to the gospel message spoken by the apostles, not to the written Word. But even if this subtle distinction is not intended, the emphasis in the text remains on the enduring reliability of God’s promises, not on the preservation of the Scripture. Combs concludes, “Therefore, any reference to the preservation of Scripture in this passage is probably indirect at best.”⁶⁷

Preservation Texts

Although the passages considered up to this point do not directly support a specific doctrine of the preservation of Scripture, they may be applied indirectly to preservation due to the implications of the statements made about the enduring reliability of the promises of God. Yet, two passages remain to be considered as to whether or not they explicitly teach the preservation of the written Word of God. The two passages are Pss 119:152 and 119:160.

Psalm 119:152. The Psalmist writes in 119:150-52, “Those who follow after wickedness draw near; they are far from Thy law. Thou art near, O LORD, and all Thy commandments are truth. Of old I have known from Thy testimonies, That Thou hast founded them forever.” Does this passage support a doctrine of preservation when speaking of the “testimonies” of the LORD being “founded forever”? Kidner writes this regarding תִּדְבָר (‘*ēdūt*, “testimonies”):

Israel was told to place the book of the law beside the ark of the covenant, ‘that it may be there for a witness (‘*ēd*) against you’ (Dt. 31:26). The outspokenness of Scripture, with

⁶⁵Hiebert, *1 Peter* 117.

⁶⁶Glenny, “The Preservation of Scripture” 90.

⁶⁷Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” 26.

its high standards and frank warnings (e.g. Dt. 8:19, using this root), is implied in this expression, but so too is its dependability, as the word of the 'faithful and true witness'. Therefore, 'thy testimonies are my delight' (24).⁶⁸

Glenny explains concerning the Psalmist's words, "His confidence is that God's law is not fickle; it is trustworthy and based on God's unchanging moral character. That must be the meaning of verse 152 in its context."⁶⁹ Although this is true, does it allow "testimonies" its fullest meaning? Based on Kidner's assessment of testimonies, the passage seems to indicate that the reference is to more than just the spoken Word of God. The "testimonies" of God are His words upon which the Psalmist was able to meditate (v. 148). If he is able to "observe" the Lord's "statutes" (v. 145) and to keep his "testimonies" (v. 146) and to "meditate" on them, they would have to be written down. But, not only are they written down, they are also "founded forever" (עָמְדוּ לְעֹלָם וְעַד, *lē 'ôlām yēsadlām*).

עָמְדוּ (*yāsād*) means "establish, found, fix" and in this context means that the Lord's commandments are "established" forever.⁷⁰ Combs clarifies:

Since the Psalmist would have come to know these "testimonies" from the written Torah, probably through his own reading, it is difficult to imagine that he could divorce their being "founded," established, or caused to "last forever" apart from a *preserved* written form, the written form from which he was reading. The Torah could not likely be "established . . . to last forever" apart from a written form.⁷¹

Thus it appears that this text does directly support the preservation of the truth contained in the Torah, although it does not tell how that preservation had taken place or would take place or how details of certain words are preserved. The simple assertion is that the Lord has established His Law to last forever, and that certainly pertains to the written Law. But, again, it does not cite a particular scroll or copy of the Law, let alone any reference to the New Testament. Zemek writes,

What he [the Psalmist] had specifically come to know was that the LORD had established, founded, or firmly fixed His testimonies *forever* (v. 152b). . . . Deeply internalized recognitions of the presence of God (v. 151a) and the purity (v. 151b) and perpetuity (v.

⁶⁸Kidner, *Psalms 73-150* 2:418.

⁶⁹Glenny, "The Preservation of Scripture" 88.

⁷⁰Brown, Driver, and Briggs, "עָמְדוּ" in *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon* 413.

⁷¹Combs, "The Preservation of Scripture" 18.

152) of His Word are very practical sufficiencies in the face of all kinds of suffering.⁷²

The passage refers not only to the trustworthiness of God’s Law but also to the eternal nature of its preservation. Yet, no form or method of preservation is given. The text simply says it is preserved. As a result of the assertions made in this verse and in the surrounding context, Combs concludes, “Verse 152 appears to be a fairly direct promise of preservation.”⁷³ Yet, that preservation applies to the truthfulness of God’s promises that cannot be toppled because they are established forever and not to a specific text or manuscript.

Psalms 119:160. This verse appears in the same context as v. 152.⁷⁴ The Psalmist writes, “The sum of Thy word is truth, And every one of Thy righteous ordinances [קִרְבַּי צַדִּיקוֹתֶיךָ, *kol-mišpat šidqeḵā*] is everlasting [לְעוֹלָם, *lə ’ôlām*].” This verse combines the integrity of the Word of God and the eternity of His righteous ordinances. Zemek writes about v. 160,

[T]he psalmist looks at that Divine revelation first wholistically then atomistically. By juxtaposing the word שֵׁרֵשׁ (*rôš*), literally “head,” with דְּבַרְךָ (*deḇārēḵā*), “Your word,” he draws attention to the “sum” of God’s written communications to mankind, that is, the “totality” of the word. He associates with the “sum-total” of his LORD’s inscripturated directives for life a primary attribute of אֱמֶת (*’emet*), “truth” (v. 160a; cf. v. 142 and John 17:17 again). Then as he shifts his perspective slightly, moving to the various parts of the whole with the phrase קִרְבַּי צַדִּיקוֹתֶיךָ (*kol-mišpat šidqeḵā*), “(each and) every one of Your righteous judgments,” the grateful child of God spotlights the Word’s attribute of permanence (v. 160b; cf. Isa 40:6-8). Consequently, whether surveyed as one piece or as parts of a unit, God’s Book has proven itself to be both dependable and imperishable.⁷⁵

This assessment certainly agrees with the previously examined verses in this chapter

⁷²George J. Zemek, *The Word of God in the Child of God: Exegetical, Theological, and Homiletical Reflections from the 119th Psalm* (Mango, FL: self-published, 1998) 332. Allen agrees, “Fervent prayers for assistance are accompanied by the assurance of Yahweh’s closeness and the permanence of his revelation to which the psalmist has allied himself. Yahweh’s Torah gives the promise of his living presence with the believer. It is doubtless for this reason that earnest early prayer is matched by an even earlier study of the written Torah” (*Psalms 101–150* 144).

⁷³Combs, “The Preservation of Scripture” 18.

⁷⁴Combs writes, “This verse is similar to Psalm 118:152 in that it is part of a section (vv. 153-60) in which the Psalmist makes numerous references to the Torah: ‘law’ (v. 153), ‘word’ (v. 154), ‘statutes’ (v. 155), ‘ordinances’ (v. 156), ‘testimonies’ (v. 157), ‘word’ (158), and ‘precepts’ (159)” (*ibid.*).

⁷⁵Zemek, *The Word of God in the Child of God* 347-48. He goes on to write, “For needy pilgrims it exudes its never-failing reliability which enables them through a transcendent perspective to endure and persevere amidst the tempestuous tribulations of life in a hostile world” (*ibid.*, 348).

that discuss the immutable and infallible nature of God's promises. Glenny comments, "His [the Psalmist] confidence is in the fact that God's Word is true and infallible."⁷⁶ Yet, once again, this verse makes specific reference to the Word of God in part, and then in totality;⁷⁷ i.e., to the trustworthiness and permanence of it all, in part or in whole. God's truth is "everlasting." Combs writes, "As in verse 152, the Psalmist is reflecting on God's Word in the written Torah, which he sees as both dependable and imperishable. This verse, then, like 152, would also seem to strongly imply a doctrine of preservation."⁷⁸ Yet, that preservation does not have any particular form of tablet, manuscript, text, or writing, i.e., the Scriptures. God's words are preserved in that what He says is true and everlasting, both in part and in whole.

Summary and Conclusion

The exegesis of relevant Scriptures demonstrates that the doctrine of preservation is not directly taught as some evangelicals and KJV-only advocates believe. In fact, the evidence presented indicates that many of the verses that have been used "to directly prove the doctrine of preservation have been misinterpreted and misapplied."⁷⁹ The verses do teach the preservation of God's revelation, but nothing specifically applies them directly to the written Word.⁸⁰ God's promises are truthful and, therefore, will endure forever because they cannot be thwarted or changed. Conclusions from scriptural data strongly assert that the truth of the written Word of God stands forever and cannot be shaken or moved. His decrees are absolutely immutable and infallible. Yet history proves that His written revelation is also preserved, but not miraculously, in a specific tablet, scroll, or document. So, the case for providential preservation rests on theological grounds through historical and manuscript evidence rather than on purely exegetical grounds.

⁷⁶Glenny, "The Preservation of Scripture" 89. He also writes, "Therefore, when he says, 'every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever,' he must be expressing his confidence in the infallibility and absolute trustworthiness of God's Word. Every statement in God's Word is dependable" (ibid.).

⁷⁷Keil and Delitzsch write, "שָׁרָא [šō'ā] in v. 160 signifies the head-number of sum. If he reckons up the word of God in its separate parts and as a whole, truth is the denominator of the whole, truth is the sum-total" (Keil and Delitzsch, *Psalms* 747). Cf. Brown, Driver, and Briggs, "שָׁרָא," in *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon* 911.

⁷⁸Combs, "The Preservation of Scripture" 19.

⁷⁹Ibid., 26.

⁸⁰Combs is correct when he writes that these passages "only suggest a general promise of preservation without specifying how (what method) or to what extent (how pure) God has chosen to preserve his Word" (ibid.).

LIFE AND WORK OF ROBERT DICK WILSON

Brian Nicks*

At a time when his denomination and seminary were turning away from conservative, orthodox views of the Bible, Robert Dick Wilson felt called to challenge respected scholars in their Higher Criticism of Scripture. As a child and young man, he showed remarkable academic abilities, particularly in learning new languages. He attended Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, and while a student there, he learned and taught a number of languages. He demonstrated effectiveness as a preacher and evangelist, but chose to become a teacher because of his linguistic abilities. After studying Semitic languages in Europe for a time, he returned to join the faculty at Western Theological Seminary. In 1900, he left Western to become a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, a role that he held until 1929 when he left to help in founding Westminster Theological Seminary. He authored a number of articles and books related to the twenty-six languages and dialects he had learned. His writings were particularly noted for their effectiveness in answering higher critical attacks on the authenticity of the OT, particularly the Book of Daniel. He died on October 11, 1930.

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

The historicity, authenticity, and authority of the Bible are under attack on every front these days. Fiction works distort the truth of Christianity, denying the historicity of the Bible. Christian fiction is replacing theology on the bookshelves of churchgoers. Books that rip Scriptures from their historical and biblical contexts are being elevated to pseudo-scripture status. Self-help books with an amazing number of biblical references are being sold to help people find their purpose in life. So-

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called scholars rely on other so-called scholars to chop up the Hebrew Scriptures into their “component parts” to make sense of it, but are rather convoluting God’s Word.

Reverend Harold J. Ockenga, Assistant in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when that church took an offering for Westminster Theological Seminary, summarized conditions accurately.

That the majority of our denomination and of other churches have turned away from historical and Biblical Christianity is no longer debatable. It is an acknowledged fact. The reason for this lies in the fact that our schools, especially seminaries, have been taken over by these religious pacifists and dwellers-on-the-fence. The negative mind has pervaded our Church; many of our young preachers know not what to believe; the note of authority has been lost from their message, each constructs his own theology, and everyone can believe what he will. The nerve of evangelism has been cut and the Church is going backward.¹

Those words are as relevant today as the day they were spoken, about 75 years ago.

Robert Dick Wilson challenged the “experts” at their own game: “I defy any man to make an attack upon the Old Testament on the ground of evidence that I cannot investigate. I can get at the facts if they are linguistic. If you know any language that I do not know, I will learn it.” When he said that in his address on “What is an Expert?” he had the ability to back it up!²

LIFE OF ROBERT DICK WILSON³

Robert Dick Wilson was born in Indiana, Pennsylvania, on February 4, 1856, as one of ten children (he had five brothers and four sisters). He was able to read by age four and began attending school by age five. By the time he was eight years old, he had read, among other books, *Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World* by George Rawlinson. When he was nine, he and his ten-year-old brother accompanied their father on a trip from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia. The most

¹Harold J. Ockenga, “Robert Dick Wilson: Torchbearer,” *Christianity Today* (January 1931):8, online at <http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/wilson/torchbearer.html>, accessed 1/25/08.

²Robert Dick Wilson, “What is an Expert?” online at <http://www.gracebiblefellowship-tx.org/Providential%20Preservation%20Appendix.htm>, accessed 1/23/08.

³Much of the information in this section is compiled from primary source material, including the inaugural address delivered on September 21, 1900, at Princeton Theological Seminary, which was later published as “The Lower Criticism of the Old Testament as a Preparation for the Higher Criticism,” and from lecture notes for “Old Testament Introduction” transcribed from stenography taken by Winifred Thomas, daughter of W. Griffith-Thomas, under the direction of Allan A. MacRae at Westminster Theological Seminary. The lectures are from the spring of 1930 and would have been among the last classes taught by Wilson. These sources may be accessed online at <http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/wilson/lecture1.pdf>, accessed 1/25/08.

exciting part of the trip was an excursion to Heffelfinger's bookstore on Chesnut Street. Their father told them to pick out a few books. By the time the father returned, they had selected about fifty volumes on history and English poetry, including Prescott, Robertson, J. S. C. Abbott, and others. Of course, their father purchased all the books for the boys.

By the time he was 13, Robert was ready for college, but had to defer entrance for two years due to illness. During that time, he amused himself in learning French, Greek, German, Spanish, and Italian. In college, he studied language, psychology, and mathematics. He was embarrassed to admit "in such Bible courses as he then studied he says that he got 'a very low grade of 90, which pulled down my average.'"⁴

By the time he entered seminary, he was able to read the NT in nine languages. Prior to entering seminary, an old gentleman gave him a Hebrew-Latin dictionary, a Hebrew grammar, and an old Hebrew Bible. He learned Hebrew on his own and, going into seminary, took all the prizes in Hebrew. When asked how he did it, he replied, "I used my spare time."⁵ He would take a Hebrew grammar with him when he went for walks and would read for about 15 minutes, or until he completely understood everything taught on that page. He described the process as being "unconscious of the labor, as a man is interested in his roses, and doesn't think of the thorns."⁶ He utilized this method to master Latin, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, biblical Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, and others, twenty-six languages and dialects in all.

Wilson graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1876 with an A.B.; in 1879, he received his A.M. Prior to entering seminary, he and his brother went to the town of Indiana, Pennsylvania, to do the work of evangelism. The response there was very encouraging, but he felt that God had given him a gift for languages and he had a desire to use that gift in the study of the Scripture. He finally entered seminary at Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he studied comparative religion under Charles A. Briggs and A. A. Hodge. While he was there, he taught about eight or ten languages and studied about a dozen. He had an article

⁴Philip E. Howard, "Foreword," in *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?* by Robert Dick Wilson (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times Company, 1922) 6. In the first lecture to his students in his "OTI" class, he gives his age as 13, contra to Walter C. Kaiser's biographical sketch in *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999) 73. Kaiser gives his age as 14. Kaiser then says that he entered seminary at 17, but Wilson in his lecture seems to imply that he entered at age 15.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., 7.

published while in his fourth year.⁷ He desired to preach the gospel, but knew that he had a unique ability to learn and teach language. As shown by his previous success as an evangelist, he did not go into teaching just because he could not preach!

He traveled to Europe to study Semitic languages that were not taught in the States. He was advised to go to Leipzig to study under the younger Delitzsch.⁸ Once in Germany, he entered the University of Berlin and studied Assyriology under Eberhard Schrader, August Dillmann, and Eduard Sachau. In Germany he made his ultimate plan for the rest of his days.

When I went to Heidelberg, I found I hadn't the strength to be a preacher and a teacher both, so I decided to be a teacher. I thought the world needed a man who was fitted as I was, so I decided that I would give my life just to that one thing, the defence of the Old Testament. I made my plan as to my life, that I would give—you know, like life insurance. I was good on that line, my family was noted for its longevity, and I felt I might reasonably live till I was 70, so I divided my life into periods of fifteen years. I gave myself the first 15 years to study languages, these languages divided this way. I would learn all the Semitic languages, every language which threw light on the vocabulary or the syntax of the Old Testament. Of course, I did already know Syriac, and Aramaic, and Hebrew, but there was Ethiopic and Phoenician and Babylonian, and Assyrian, and a number of others—about twelve different Aramaic dialects. Secondly, I would learn all languages that threw light on the history of the Old Testament, taking in Egyptian, Coptic, and others. Then, thirdly, I would learn all languages that threw light on the text of the Old Testament, down to the year 600 after Christ. The texts after that would be too late. So that took me into Armenian and several other languages, Gothic, and Anglo-Saxon, etc. . . . The second part of my life I would devote to lower Criticism, studying the text of the Old Testament, the comparison of the Hebrew text with the Versions, Greek, Latin, Syriac, especially, and all the versions down to 600. . . . The last 15 years, after which I had acquainted myself with all the machinery, I would tackle the subject which is called the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament, including all that the critics have said, and so be able by that time to defend the history, the veracity of the Old Testament. . . . Well, I admit, and you will admit too, that that was a pretty big proposition that I laid out for myself, and I think you will admit that the Lord must have been in it.⁹

Upon returning to the States in 1883, he returned to Western Theological Seminary, where he served as an instructor until 1885 and then as Professor of Old Testament from 1885 to 1900. He was ordained in 1885 and received his Ph.D. from the College of New Jersey in 1886. He ultimately became chair of the Department of Old Testament History and Hebrew at Western, a position he held until 1900 when he left to take a similar position at Princeton Theological Seminary. In his inaugural

⁷Wilson, "OTI Lecture 1."

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

address on September 21, 1900, he gave the reason why he would teach at Princeton: "It shall be my aim and ambition, with the hoped for hearty aid of the faculty and directors of this institution, and of our *Alma Mater* across the way, to present to every student the opportunity of acquiring any language which, as cognate to the Hebrew, throws light upon its grammar and lexicon, or any language in which a version of the Bible was made before the Sixth Century, A.D."¹⁰ He served faithfully at Princeton until 1929 when the reorganization took place. He left Princeton in 1929, in spite of persuasive efforts for him to stay, to assist in the founding of Westminster Theological Seminary. He could have stayed at Princeton and had a very comfortable retirement awaiting him. He could have stayed and taught what he knew beyond the shadow of a doubt to be true in his classes without trouble no matter what the rest of the institution did or taught. He could have left the fight to the younger men, but he would not do that. The essence of his decision to leave Princeton was his training for a lifetime of devotion to the Word of God. Like the keenness of a Damascus blade, his conscience cut through any argument leveled against leaving. You see, "he saw that for him to remain at Princeton would be to commend as trustworthy what he knew to be untrustworthy, that it would be to lead Christ's little ones astray."¹¹ He could not bear to affirm by association what he knew to be false. He never regretted that decision even though there was no endowment, retirement, or honors awaiting him at this new institution.¹²

"On Saturday, October 11, 1930, the Reverend Robert Dick Wilson, Ph.D., D.D., LL.D., Professor of Semitic Philology and Old Testament Criticism in Westminster Theological Seminary, entered into his heavenly reward."¹³ A colleague, Allan A. MacRae, recounts Wilson's last days in an October 14, 1930 letter. Wilson had been ill for several days and it did not seem serious, but it quickly became quite serious. He taught one class at Westminster before he was taken ill. He was in bed for four days when Mrs. Wilson called Mr. MacRae to come to the house to assist her in calming her husband so that he could breathe freely. The next day the physician sent Wilson to the hospital and after three days of little trouble, he took a severe turn for the worse. Wilson became unconscious at 3:00 P.M. on Friday and never woke up. He died quietly with his wife and Allan MacRae at his bedside.¹⁴

¹⁰Robert Dick Wilson, "Inaugural Address," delivered on September 21, 1900, at Princeton Theological Seminary, online at <http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/wilson/index.html>, accessed 1/25/08.

¹¹Faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary, "The Power of a Noble Example," December 1930, online at <http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/wilson/index.html>, accessed 1/25/08.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Allan A. MacRae, "Personal Letter," October 14, 1930, online at <http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/wilson/index.html>, accessed 1/25/08.

WRITINGS

By the time Robert Dick Wilson died, he had almost achieved everything he set out to achieve. He had learned over 26 different languages and dialects¹⁵ that were related to the Old Testament in some way. Before going to Princeton in 1900, he wrote for *Harper's Magazine* and for the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*.¹⁶ His *Elements of Syriac Grammar by an Inductive Method* was published in 1891, and his booklet *Notes on Hebrew Syntax* in 1892. After he left Western to teach at Princeton, he continued writing. His inaugural address on September 21, 1900, was published the next year under the title *The Lower Criticism of the Old Testament as a Preparation for the Higher Criticism* (1901). He then wrote *Illustrations of Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar with Vocabularies* (1906) and *A Hebrew Grammar for Beginners* (1908). He wrote and published thirty-six major articles and fifteen book reviews in the *Princeton Theological Review* as well as four monographs on key critical issues of the day.¹⁷

In 1902, Friedrich Delizsch, the son of the highly respected Hebrew scholar Franz Delizsch, lectured before the Kaiser of Germany declaring that the Hebrew Scriptures were highly influenced by the Babylonian religion. Wilson could not allow such an opportunity to pass, so at the opening exercises of the 91st session of Princeton Seminary on September 18 in that same year, he delivered a devastating reply to Delizsch, under whom he been advised to study.¹⁸ This marked the beginning

¹⁵A discrepancy occurs between Walter Kaiser's number in his biographical sketch in *Bible Interpreter's of the 20th Century* and the one found in the "Foreward" by Philip E. Howard, former publisher of the Sunday School Times, of *Is The Higher Criticism Scholarly?* Howard states the number of languages and dialects is forty-five (5) while Kaiser states the number as twenty-six (75). Either way, the sheer number of languages and dialects is daunting and impressive. Wilson had a command of any language related in any way to the study of the OT.

¹⁶Wilson, "OTI Notes." For a complete bibliography of the writings of Robert Dick Wilson, 1856-1930, please access the PCA Historical Center's website <http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/wilson/bibliog.html>, accessed 1/25/08. The website can be accessed also at www.pcahistory.org, accessed 1/25/08.

¹⁷Kaiser, *Bible Interpreters 75*. As a recognized scholar of his time, Wilson also wrote numerous articles for the original edition of ISBE edited by James Orr. They include: "Abed-Nego," "Ahasbai," "Arsaces," "Artaxerxes," "Ashpenaz," "Baladan," "Belshazzar," "Cambyses," "Daniel," "Daniel, Book of," "Darius," "Evi-Merodach," "Ezra," "Ezra-Nehemiah," "Melzar," "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," "Merodach-Baladan," "Nebuchadnezzar," "Nehemiah," "Shadrach," "Sanballat," "Sheshbazzar," "Tirshatha," "Tobiah," and "Zerubbabel." Many of these entries were retained in whole or in edited form in the 1979 Wm. B. Eerdmans edition of ISBE. All these articles are accessible online at www.StudyLight.Org and can be accessed at <http://home.earthlink.net/~ironmen/wilson/robert.htm>, accessed 1/25/08.

¹⁸This address was published as "Babylon and Israel: A Comparison of Their Leading Ideas Based upon Their Vocabularies," *The Princeton Theological Review* 1/2 (April 1903):239-55.

of his intense defense of the veracity of the Hebrew Scriptures, focusing most of his energy on the book of Daniel.¹⁹

Wilson was able to mount one of the most successful attacks on Higher Criticism, astutely defending the conservative, orthodox position on many of the most critical issues in the forefront of OT scholarship during the first third of the twentieth century. Some of those battles centered on the book of Daniel, namely its miracles (e.g., fiery furnace, lion's den), history (e.g., Nebuchadnezzar, Darius), and prophecies (e.g., 70 weeks). "It was his conviction that if one maintained a clear conservative view on this book of the Bible, one would remain conservative on the other matters as well."²⁰ In the Introduction of the first volume of *Studies in the Book of Daniel*, he gave his concluding argument. He was convinced that "the methods pursued by many so-called higher critics are illogical, irrational, and *unscientific*. They are illogical because they beg the question at issue. They are irrational because they assume that historic facts are self-evident, and that they can set limits to the possible. They are unscientific because they base their conclusions on incomplete inductions and on a practical claim of omniscience."²¹ Unfortunately, the second planned volume was never completed. It was to have dealt specifically with all the linguistic problems in the Book of Daniel. The third planned volume originally appeared as a series of articles in the *Princeton Theological Review* and then later as volume 2 of *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (1938).²²

Wilson's early date for Daniel clearly contradicted Driver's Maccabean date set forth in his commentary published in 1900.²³ He took a firm linguistic approach to Daniel and attacked Driver's thesis that "The verdict of the language of Daniel is thus clear. The *Persian* words presuppose a period after the Persian Empire had been well established: the Greek words *demand*, the Hebrew *supports*, and the Aramaic *permits*, a date *after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great* (B.C. 332)."²⁴ This set up a feud between the two men: Driver felt that Wilson did not represent his position accurately, while Wilson clearly articulated his own views of the above-mentioned conflict in *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?*²⁵ Even before that booklet

¹⁹See note 19 regarding this volume.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 76. See n. 5 on the same page.

²¹Robert Dick Wilson, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Knickerbocker, 1917) xiii (emphasis in the original).

²²Kaiser, *Bible Interpreters* 76.

²³S. R. Driver, *The Book of Daniel*, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1900; reprinted 1901, 1905, 1912) xlvi-lvi.

²⁴*Ibid.*, lxiii (emphases in the original).

²⁵Robert Dick Wilson, *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?* (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times Company, 1922) 27-57.

was written, Wilson addressed the issue very thoroughly in an article entitled, "The Aramaic of Daniel" in *Biblical and Theological Studies* written by the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary and published in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the founding of the seminary.²⁶ The opening statement of the article expresses the need for Wilson's response to Driver.

Every student of the Old Testament who has read the chapter on Daniel in Dr. Driver's *Literature of the Old Testament* (LOT latest edition 1910) must have been forcibly struck by the arguments presented in favor of a late date for the book which are based upon the alleged agreement between the Aramaic contained in it and that found in the dialects of the Nabateans, of the Palmyrenes, and of the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan. So impressed was the writer of this article by the significance of these statements, backed up as they are by an imposing array of evidence, that he determined to undertake a new investigation of the whole problem of the relations existing between the various dialects of Aramaic. Such an undertaking necessarily involved as complete an investigation as was possible of the documents which constitute the extant literature of these dialects, in so far as they bear upon grammar and lexicography. Fortunately, a large part of the work involved in the investigation had already been completed by him. But, needless to remark, the accomplishment of such a task—and the writer does not regard it as yet accomplished, although he is firmly convinced that further investigation will only serve to strengthen and confirm the conclusions which he has put forward in this article—would have been utterly impossible, had there not been already to hand so many grammars, lexicons, and texts, of scientific value.²⁷

Though an in depth analysis of the specific arguments set forth by Wilson is beyond the scope of this article, a summary of the four propositions he used is not. Wilson very thoroughly addressed the issues of (1) Daniel belonging to the Western Aramaic, (2) the Aramaic of Daniel being all but identical with that of Ezra, (3) the Aramaic of Daniel being nearly allied to that of the Targum of Onkelos and Jonathan and to that of the Nabateans and the Palmyrenes, and (4) the Aramaic of Daniel being that which was spoken in or near Palestine at a date after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great.²⁸ His conclusion concisely summarizes his argumentation:

In conclusion, we would express the hope that we have been able to convince our readers that in so far as philology is concerned there is no such evidence existing as Dr. Driver alleges, in support of the late date and western provenience of the book of Daniel. The early date derived from the orthography is not as convincing in the case of every individual letter as could be desired; but taken as a whole, it is in favor of an early rather

²⁶R. D. Wilson, "The Aramaic of Daniel," in *Biblical and Theological Studies*, by the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary (New York: Scribner's, 1912) 261-306.

²⁷Ibid., 263.

²⁸Ibid., 262.

than of a late date. The evidence derived from forms and inflections and syntax is decidedly, and that from the vocabulary is overwhelmingly, in favor of an early date and of an eastern provenience. . . . For there never has been a time and place known to history save Babylon in the latter half of the 6th century B.C., in which an Aramaic dialect with just such an admixture of foreign ingredients and in just such proportions could have been brought into existence. . . . Therefore, it being thus apparent that on the basis of foreign elements imbedded in Aramaic dialects, it is possible for the scholar to fix approximately the time and the locality in which the different dialects were spoken; all the more when as has been shown in the case of Daniel such a date and locality are required by the vocabulary of the pure Aramaic substratum and favored or at least permitted by its grammatical forms and structure, we are abundantly justified in concluding that the dialect of Daniel containing, as it does, so many Persian, Hebrew, and Babylonian elements, and so few Greek words, with not one Egyptian, Latin, or Arabic word, and so nearly allied in grammatical form and structure to the older Aramaic dialects and in its conglomerate vocabulary to the dialects of Ezra and Egypto-Aramaic, must have been used at or near Babylon at a time not long after the founding of the Persian Empire.²⁹

Driver was shocked at the challenge put forth by Wilson, so much so “that he included a rejoinder to Wilson in the ninth edition of his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. Driver was most incensed that Wilson had not represented his position fairly: Driver had not claimed that the Aramaic of Daniel ‘proved’ the book to be a product of the second century B.C.; he had said only that the Aramaic “permitted” it to be from that date.”³⁰ H. H. Rowley entered the fray with his book *The Aramaic of the Old Testament*.³¹ He does not hold back in his argumentation, viciously attacking Wilson at times, accusing him of ineptitude, inaccuracy, blindness, and prejudice in handling the data.³² Unfortunately, even though Wilson spent the summer before his death studying Rowley’s book, not enough materials remained after his death to publish a response in his name.³³

The booklet mentioned above, *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?*, published in 1922, was the forerunner to Wilson’s seminal work, *A Scientific Investigation of*

²⁹Ibid., 303-5.

³⁰Kaiser, *Bible Interpreters* 76-77. Samuel Rolles Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 9th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913) xxxiv-xxxviii.

³¹H. H. Rowley, *The Aramaic of the Old Testament*, (London: Oxford University, 1929).

³²For some of the many examples of Rowley’s attack, see vii, 1-2, 11, esp. 19, 21, 23, 33, 44, 46-47, 54-55, 62-67, 74-75, to cite a few. The entire volume seems to be an attack on Wilson’s view of the Aramaic of Daniel.

³³Kaiser, *Bible Interpreters* 77.

the Old Testament, published originally in 1926.³⁴ In this booklet intended for use by laymen without a language background, he astutely defends the historical reliability and truth of the Hebrew Scriptures.

We may take the purely defensive line and endeavor to show that the general and particular attacks upon the truthfulness of the Old Testament narratives are unsupported by facts. Or, we may take the offensive and show that the Old Testament narratives are in harmony with all that is really known of the history of the world in the times described in the Old Testament records, and that these records themselves contain the inefaceable evidence that the time and place of their origin agree with the facts recorded. The best method, perhaps, will be to make an offensive-defensive, showing not merely that the attacks are futile, but that the events recorded and the persons and things described are true to history,—that is, that they harmonize in general with what we learn from the contemporaneous documents of other nations.

This is true of the very earliest narratives of the Old Testament. . . . From this time downward there is no good reason for doubting that the Biblical narrative is derived from *written* sources based on *contemporaneous* documents.³⁵

He clearly argues that writing was known early in the history of humanity as attested in the Amarna correspondence between the pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt (fourteenth century B.C.) and various princes in Palestine and Syria.³⁶

He then points out “the general scheme of *chronology* and *geography* presented to us in the Hebrew records corresponds with what we can learn from other documents of the same period.”³⁷ He points out one of the unique biblical phenomenon unequaled in the history of literature is the “extraordinary confirmation of the careful transmission of the Hebrew documents from original sources lies in the exact manner in which the names of the kings are spelled.”³⁸ He then shows how the 24 names of the kings of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, et. al. contain 120 consonantal letters, “of which all are found in the same order in the inscriptions of the kings themselves or in those of their contemporaries. That the Hebrew writers should have transliterated these names with such accurateness and conformity to philological principles is a wonderful proof of their thorough care and scholarship and of their access to the

³⁴Robert Dick Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Sunday School Times Company, 1926). Moody Press republished this volume in 1959 with revisions by Edward J. Young.

³⁵Wilson, *Is the Higher Criticism Scholarly?* 14-15 (emphasis in the original).

³⁶Ibid., 15.

³⁷Ibid., 16 (emphasis in the original).

³⁸Ibid., 19.

original sources.”³⁹ He then contrasts that fact with the reality that not one name is preserved when compared to the transliteration of foreign words in other documents from other comparable periods. “In the list of names of the companions of Alexander given by the Pseudo-Callisthenes, nearly every name is changed so as to be unrecognizable; and the same is true of most of the names of the kings of Egypt as we have them preserved in the lists of Manetho, Herodotus, and Diodorus Siculus, and of the kings of Assyria and Babylonia as given in Africanus, Castor, and the Canon of Ptolemy.”⁴⁰

Wilson then turns to confront the intrusion of foreign words into the Hebrew Scriptures and utterly disproves the higher critics claims regarding date and authenticity. “In each stage of the literature the foreign words in the documents are found to belong to the language of the peoples that the Scriptures and the records of the nations surrounding Israel unite in declaring to have influenced and affected the Israelites at that time.”⁴¹ In the remainder of the booklet he asks the critics some very difficult questions that they are either unwilling or unable to address. He concludes the booklet by stating, “I have not attempted to fix the exact dates of composition, or final redaction of the books composed before that time, preferring rather to show that there is nothing in the history of the world from 2000 to 164 B.C. that militates against the possibility, nor even against the probability, of the trustworthiness of the history of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament.”⁴² This little pamphlet was ultimately translated into Swedish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese.⁴³

In 1919, Wilson authored a series of essays published in the *Princeton Theological Review* in which he set forth the method that he followed during his years at Western and Princeton. The essays were then revised and enlarged for his seminal work, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament* (1926). “It is the purpose of the present volume to show that intelligent Christians have a reasonable ground for concluding that the text of the Old Testament which we have is substantially correct, and that, in its true and obvious meaning, it has a right to be considered a part of the ‘infallible rule of faith and practice’ that we have in the Holy Scriptures.”⁴⁴

Again, I have ventured to use the term scientific, not merely because these conclusions are based on knowledge, but because, after the introductory pages, I have presented the

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 20.

⁴¹Ibid., 26.

⁴²Ibid., 57-58.

⁴³Young, “Introduction: The Life and Ministry,” in *A Scientific Investigation* 20.

⁴⁴Wilson, *Scientific Investigation* 5.

evidence in an orderly manner, treating of text, grammar, vocabulary, and history in what I consider to be a logical sequence. The results of some of my investigations, such as those of the foreign words in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, and of the religion of Israel, have not yet been fully published. If it please the Lord to spare my life and grant me health I hope in the future to publish the results of my labors on these and other subjects.⁴⁵

He applied the evidence in the same way it would be used in a court of law in order to demonstrate its veracity. “He was consumed with a deep desire to remove the subjective intrusions into Old Testament studies in order that the objective facts could be given their proper prominence.”⁴⁶ He championed the conservative stance on the historicity and truth of the OT.

[T]he conservative position is, in general, that the Canon of the books of the Old Testament was completed in the fifth century B.C., before the succession of the prophets ceased. As to the particular portions of the Old Testament, their view is:

1. That the Pentateuch as it stands is historical and from the time of Moses; and that Moses was its real author, though it may have been revised and edited by later redactors, the additions being just as much inspired and as true as the rest.
2. That Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, and Kings were composed from original and trustworthy sources; though, in the case at least of Kings, they were not completed till about 575 B.C.
3. That the prophets Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Micah, and Isaiah were all written about or before 700 B.C.; Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah before 600 B.C.; Jeremiah, Lamentations, and Ezekiel, between 650 and 550 B.C.; Daniel, Haggai and Zechariah between 550 and 500 B.C.; and Malachi in the fifth century B.C.
4. That there is good and sufficient reason for concluding that the headings of the Psalms are as a whole correct; that it is probable that all of the Psalms were written before 400 B.C.; that Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs and most of the book of Proverbs may, for all we know, have been written by Solomon; that Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles were written before 400 B.C.; and Job at 550 B.C. or earlier.

In conclusion, let me reiterate my conviction that no one knows enough to show that the true text of the Old Testament in its true interpretation is not true. The evidence in our possession has convinced me that at “sundry times and in divers manners God spake unto our fathers through the prophets,” that the OT in Hebrew “being immediately inspired by God” has “by his singular care and providence been kept pure in all ages”; and that, when the wisdom of men and the law of God had alike failed to save humanity, in the fullness of time, when all the preparation was complete, God sent forth His Son to confound the wisdom of man and to redeem those who come under the Law. Thank God for the Holy Oracles. Thank Him yet more for “the unspeakable gift” of His love, who brought life and immortality to light in His gospel.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Ibid., 7-8.

⁴⁶Kaiser, *Bible Interpreters* 77.

⁴⁷Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation* 11-13.

Marion Ann Taylor, writing about the OT and the Princeton Old School, concludes the following about Robert Dick Wilson:

Wilson's scholarship therefore was often highly technical, theologically barren and had little appeal to a general audience. Moreover, his work in exegesis was negligible. Wilson was neither able to develop Green's insights regarding the importance of being sensitive to the theological shaping of the texts (although he did assign Green's *Unity of the Book of Genesis* to his students) nor was he able to mount a much-needed comprehensive defence of the conservative position based upon a completely reformulated Princeton approach. He had neither the aptitude nor the philosophical training to do this kind of work. Finally, as the interchanges between Driver, Rowley and Wilson demonstrate, Wilson was regarded as a very learned but highly idiosyncratic scholar whose alignment with conservatism seriously tainted his scholarship. At the time of his death, the Princeton OT school which he had tried so valiantly to update and defend had lost its primary institutional authority and the credibility that it had once enjoyed. The Princeton OT school was hardly taken seriously by the wider academic community. Its demise had come.⁴⁸

Ms. Taylor seems to embrace the expectations of others regarding what they felt Wilson should have done rather than commend him for his choice of the path that he pursued the rest of his life.

Robert Dick Wilson spent his life defending the OT from the attacks of the liberal "scholars"; therefore he had to be "highly technical" for them to accept his scholarship. His works were not necessarily ever intended for the "general audience." She seems to fail to recognize the sheer volume of unpublished study and exegesis that he did in Hebrew and other cognate languages which enabled him to publish the other titles.⁴⁹ He devoted his life to cognate language study, not to theological study, but had he decided to apply his intellect to theology, he would have been more than able to "develop Green's insights." The fact that he assigned the reading of Green's book is testimony that he regarded the "theological shaping of the texts" as important for his students to understand.⁵⁰ Could it be that he was hopeful that one of his students would take on that challenge? Wilson began his study of the OT with the

⁴⁸Marion Ann Taylor, *The Old Testament in the Old Princeton School (1812-1929)* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University, 1992) 272.

⁴⁹See PCA Historical Center's bibliography of Robert Dick Wilson at their website <http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/wilson/bibliog.html>, accessed 1/25/08 or at www.pcahistory.org, accessed 1/25/08.

⁵⁰Taylor is referring to William Henry Green, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1895). During this time Wilson was the William Henry Green Professor of Semitic Philology and Old Testament Criticism (1900-1929). He took the tasks associated with that title very seriously and literally.

presupposition that it was the inspired Word of God and nothing else. That is the position that his “conservatism” defended. Wilson recognized what was happening at Princeton and before his death aligned himself with Oswald T. Allis and J. Gresham Machen, two other conservative defenders of the truth, to begin a new seminary in Philadelphia, whose goal was to defend biblical truth from liberal reinterpretation. Ms. Taylor’s sketch mentions that Wilson’s monographs missed what he accomplished in his book reviews, encyclopedia articles, and classroom lecture notes that inspired his students to take God’s Word seriously, learn Hebrew, and know it well in order to defend it from liberal “scholarship.” Oswald T. Allis, who was one of Wilson’s students, carried the flame lit by Wilson and devoted his life to defend the approach begun by Wilson in OT studies. He defended the OT against liberal attacks very successfully for many years.⁵¹

THE LAST YEARS

Robert Dick Wilson traveled extensively from 1922 to 1927. His itinerary included Japan, Korea, China, England, Wales, Scotland, Canada, and many larger cities within the United States. In 1927, he addressed the two opening sessions of the Ninth International Congress of the World’s Christian Fundamentals Association. It was also in that same year, on April 11, that the Kittanning Presbytery passed its four resolutions on the occasion of Wilson’s fiftieth anniversary in the ministry.⁵² On May 23, 1929, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. met in St. Paul to elect a new moderator, which turned out to be the most controversial item on the agenda. The two men with the most support were Cleland McAfee, a professor of systematic theology at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, and Robert Dick Wilson. Wilson’s candidacy was sponsored by a group of “fundamentalists” who yearned for the Old School Presbyterianism that had prevailed prior to its reunion with the new school in 1870. This led to the reorganization of Princeton Theological Seminary and the departure of J. Gresham Machen, Oswald T. Allis, and Robert Dick Wilson to start Westminster Theological Seminary. Wilson was only able to teach at this fledgling seminary for one year. Before he died, he had the opportunity to speak to his students one last time. Wilson declared,

I have made it an invariable habit never to accept an objection to a statement of the Old Testament without subjecting it to a most thorough investigation, linguistically and factually. If I find that the objector bases his objection upon a general theoretical consideration such as the denial of miracles or of predictive prophecy, I just smile at the objector and turn him over to the department of

⁵¹Taylor, *Old Testament in the Old Princeton School* 273 n. 93, found on p. 360.

⁵²Kaiser, *Bible Interpreters* 79-80.

theism, to learn who and what the God of the Bible is. 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh' at them, and I for one laugh with Him. But if a man believes in the probability or certainty of miraculous events wherein God is working but is precluded from faith in the claims of the bible to be a divine revelation by doubts based upon alleged historical, scientific, or philological evidence, then I consider it to be my duty to do my best to show that this alleged evidence is irrelevant, inconclusive, and false.⁵³

His last public appearance was on October 1, 1930, at the opening exercises of the second year of the new seminary. Two weeks later, his body was laid to rest in Indiana, Pennsylvania.⁵⁴ On the day of his funeral, the Board of Trustees of Princeton Seminary was meeting. In the minutes was recorded the following: "The hour of four o'clock having arrived, and having been informed that at this hour the funeral services of the Rev. Robert Dick Wilson, D.D., were being held in Philadelphia, Pa., the Board of Trustees suspended its regular order of business to stand in solemn tribute to him who had served the Seminary so long and faithfully as a teacher. The President, Dr. McEwan, led the Board of Trustees in prayer." Included in the minutes was a unanimous motion "to express to [Robert Dick's] family the sincere sympathy of its members, and to express its appreciation of the long and faithful service he rendered the Seminary and the whole Church in a most distinguished way."⁵⁵

CONCLUSION

Robert Dick Wilson was gifted in an amazing way in his ability to absorb and learn languages. His seminal works, *Studies in the Book of Daniel* and *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, are unparalleled to this day in their ability to defend the truthfulness of the Hebrew Scriptures. These two works should be on the shelf of every pastor and seminary student who has a desire to grasp the truth contained in the Hebrew Scriptures. The liberal higher critics do not have an answer to these books and so rather than attempt to address the issues raised within their pages, they would rather just ignore them and hope they "go away." Thankfully, these volumes are still available in either reprinted form (*Daniel* by WIPF and Stock) or on the Internet (*Daniel* e-text at <http://home.earthlink.net/~ironmen/wilson/robert.htm>, accessed 1/25/08, and *Scientific Investigation* at <http://www.pcahistory>

⁵³Young, "Introduction: The Life and Ministry," in *A Scientific Investigation* 20-21, citing *Christianity Today* 1/2 (June 1930):5.

⁵⁴Ibid., 80.

⁵⁵Kaiser, *Bible Interpreters* 80, quoting from *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 24/3 (November 1930):26-27.

.org/findingaids/wilson/siot.html, accessed 1/25/08). They can also be found in their original forms through careful searching on the Internet.

Very few men have had the scholarly impact on the veracity of the OT that Robert Dick Wilson had. The impact of many others has been questionable because of their insistence on a new and creative way of interpreting the OT to discount the historicity of the Hebrew text. Robert Dick Wilson clung to the belief that God's Word is inspired, inerrant, and authoritative—that is what makes him unique among the great Hebrew scholars from the turn of the century into the early twentieth century. Many, if not all, twenty-first-century Hebrew scholars owe him a debt of gratitude as they stand on his shoulders and continue his legacy of defending the truth of the Hebrew Scriptures.

REVIEWS

Bill T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005. xxiii + 1060 pp. \$50.00 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books (DOTHB) continues IVP's excellent *Dictionary of the Old Testament* series, which started with *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, edited by David W. Baker (2003). New Testament companion volumes include *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (1992), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (1993), *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (1997), and *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (2000). For *DOTHB*, 122 contributors present 161 entries covering almost everything someone might want to know about the historical books (Joshua–Nehemiah, minus Ruth) from "Agriculture and Animal Husbandry" (1-20) by Gerald A. Klingbeil to "Zion Traditions" (1019-25) by J. Alan Groves. Apparently a different volume will include the Book of Ruth (989), but the editors in their preface give no warning or explanation for Ruth's omission (ix-xi). In the front and back materials the editors provide all the aids that will enable readers to get the most out of the volume: "How to Use This Dictionary" (xii-xiii), "Abbreviations" (xiv-xix), "Transliteration of Hebrew" (xx), "Contributors" (xxi-xxiii), "Archaeological Periods" (1026), maps of Palestine and the Ancient Near East (1027-28; some maps also occur with entries, 37, 319-27), "Scripture Index" (1029-46), "Subject Index" (1047-59), and "Articles Index" (1060). Five levels of cross-references enable serial reading of connected topics: (1) alphabetical insertion of topics often leading to subdivisions of articles, (2) asterisks marking key topics included in the entries, (3) parenthetical cross-references to articles, (4) cross-references at the end of an article (just ahead of the bibliography for that entry), and (5) cross-references to companion volumes in the IVP *Dictionary* series (both OT and NT).

Each article concludes with a select bibliography pertinent to that entry's topic. These vary in length and detail. Amelie Kuhrt's ("Persia, Persians," 768-82) is perhaps the lengthiest and most helpful (778-82). On the other end of the spectrum, one of the most disappointingly thin bibliographies concludes J. Andrew Dearman's "Moab, Moabites" (705-7). Bibliographies for the biblical books themselves (e.g., "Samuel, Books of," [866-77] by Bill T. Arnold) are divided into

two sections: "Commentaries" and "Studies" (876-77). In addition to the valuable bibliographies, several charts display details on a variety of studies. The following is a partial listing: "Ratio of Caprines/Bovines in Religious Contexts in the Historical Books" (10), "Implicit Comparisons: 'Signs' of Blessing and Cursing" (174-75), "Lists of David's Sons" (214), and "Distribution of Elements Throughout Major-Judges Accounts" (583). More charts could have enhanced the volume further.

Reading *DOTHB*, this reviewer was struck by the number of significant contributions. He has inserted bibliographic references to most of these entries into his own course bibliographies and recommends the articles to his students. Such readings include the following: "Aramaic Language" (50-60) by Jerome A. Lund, "Assyria, Assyrians" (97-105) by A. Kirk Grayson, "Chronology" (181-88) by Kenneth A. Kitchen, "Faith" (296-300) by Peter Enns, "Forgiveness" (301-4) by John N. Oswalt, "Genealogies" (309-16) by John H. Walton, "Geographical Extent of Israel" (316-28) by Frederick J. Mabie (TMS M.Div. graduate, 1999), "God" (336-55) by Daniel I. Block, "Hebrew Inscriptions" (366-80) by Judith M. Hadley, "Innerbiblical Exegesis" (502-9) by William M. Schniedewind, "Linguistics" (657-69) by Cynthia L. Miller, "Omri Dynasty" (755-64) by Joel E. Drinkard, Jr., "Scribes and Schools" (884-88) by David W. Baker, "Sources, References to" (935-41) by Kevin L. Spawn, "Text and Textual Criticism" (954-60) by Al Wolters, "Women" (989-99) by Mary J. Evans, and "Writing, Writing Materials and Literacy in the Ancient Near East" (1003-11) by Alan R. Millard.

The editors purposely avoided the inclusion of entries on every named character in the historical books, opting instead to group them into entries treating a dynasty or family (e.g., "David's Family" [211-15] by Steven L. McKenzie, and "Omri Dynasty"). The results of this policy have been "fresh insights which would not have emerged had each family member or each king in a dynasty been treated separately" (x).

Two grouped topics deserve special attention: "History of Israel" and "Non-Israelite Written Sources." In the former the editors have provided a multi-authored and ordered history of Israel handily collected into one section of the volume. Eight separate articles divide the history according to its major periods: "Settlement Period" (425-34) by Sam A. Meier, "Premonarchic Israel" (434-42) by Mark W. Chavalas, "United Monarchy" (442-52) by Andrew E. Hill, "Division of the Monarchy" (452-58) by McKenzie, "Assyrian Period" (458-78) by Brad E. Kelle and Brent A. Strawn, "Babylonian Period" (478-85) by Paul-Alain Beaulieu, "Persian Period" (485-93) by Tremper Longman III, and "Postexilic Community" (493-97) by Peter R. Bedford. The second grouped topic provides a reading in non-Israelite written sources without having to look under the separate language headings. Five entries cover the major corpuses: "Assyrian" (724-30) by Grayson, "Babylonian" (730-35) by David B. Weisberg, "Egyptian Aramaic Papyri" (735-39) and "Old Persian and Elamite" (739-43) by H. G. M. Williamson, and "Syro-Palestinian" (743-50) by Simon B. Parker.

Due to the significance of the interpretation of history in the historical

books of the OT, one would expect an entry for maximalists and minimalists (or, maximalism and minimalism). However, the reader is left to track down definitions, adherents, and discussion by appealing to the subject index, where “minimalists” has twelve references but “maximilists” is totally absent. Craig G. Bartholomew (“Hermeneutics,” 404-5) and Carl S. Ehrlich (“Philistines,” 786) include brief discussions of these two contrasting positions. Hill (“History of Israel 3: United Monarchy,” 445) provides a bit more detail, including the addition of the medialist position (similarly, Kelle and Strawn in “History of Israel 5: Assyrian Period,” 460). However, the fullest discussion occurs in “Quest of the Historical Israel” by Robert D. Miller II (832-33), which still leaves much to be desired. The topic deserves more specific and extensive attention, since it represents one of the key ongoing debates in historical studies. As it is, the absence of a separate entry might prove the old saying that a reference book is one in which the reader can quickly find what it does not contain.

Some of the entries were disappointing due to the writers’ weak support for biblical accuracy and integrity. For example, in “Oral Tradition and Written Tradition” (764-67) Richard S. Hess ignores the option that God Himself most likely re-revealed Jeremiah’s prophecies after King Jehoiakim had destroyed the original document (see Jeremiah 36). He concludes that the reproduction of the prophecies merely “demonstrates the memory capacity of an oral culture to recreate the written text after it has been destroyed” (766). An example of the inclusion of differing viewpoints in the volume appears in the handling of large numbers by David M. Fouts’ “Numbers, Large Numbers” (750-54) through a hyperbolic approach and Baker’s contrasting insistence that, “when figures are recorded in this context of a military muster (e.g., Num 1–2; 1 Sam 14:14; 2 Sam 8:1-14), we should assume their accuracy” (“Scribes and Schools,” 887).

DOTHB should be in the library of every Bible student and teacher, as well as every institution engaged in biblical education. IVP’s series of dictionaries stands as a landmark accomplishment for biblical scholarship. The reviewer looks forward to the future completion of the OT series.

Graham A. Cole. *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2007. 310 pp. \$30.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Andrew V. Snider, Assistant Professor of Theology.

Professor Cole’s book is the fourth volume in the Foundations of Evangelical Theology series and, all things considered, it is that series’ fourth quality contribution to evangelical theological literature.

The book is laid out in four parts. After introductory comments, the study begins with “Part I: The Mystery of the Spirit.” Parts II and III contain the OT and NT perspectives on the Holy Spirit, respectively. Part IV is simply Cole’s four-page

conclusion. A basic but helpful glossary follows, along with a Scripture index and general index.

In his introductory comments the author begins with a typically evangelical commitment to Scripture as the ultimate authority for judging the truth of doctrinal formulations, while listening humbly also to the work of the Spirit in the Christian tradition. For the reader expecting an immediate plunge into the biblical material on the Spirit, Part I seems like a continuation of the introduction, albeit with a focus that narrows from theological method in general to a standard survey of certain issues in theology proper. These include a discussion of the elusiveness of the Spirit (i.e., the incomprehensibility of God) and the Trinity.

The extensive introductory material is one of the few but important weaknesses of the book—this reviewer feels that Cole is traversing territory covered thoroughly in Feinberg's (*No One Like Him*) or Clark's (*To Know and Love God*) contributions to this same series. While much of Part I is good—even excellent—it does not contribute much to Cole's study of pneumatology.

Part II of the book focuses on the Spirit's ministry in the OT, beginning with the Spirit's relationship to creation. The author engages in an exegetically and theologically sensitive discussion of Gen 1:2 that avoids facile conclusions but not difficult questions. This reviewer also appreciated the distinctly evangelical tone to the discussion, as Cole consulted with such stalwarts as Feinberg, Ferguson, Gromacki, and Packer on this topic.

The Spirit's ministry to Israel and OT saints in general comprises the remaining chapters of Part II. Cole considers the Spirit's ministries of care, governance, communication, and presence with the nation Israel under the OT economy. Of special emphasis, of course, is the OT theme of the hope of Israel in which the Spirit plays an important part. This is explored in some detail. The author, who is not of a dispensationalist bent, nevertheless expresses his admiration for the dispensationalist's commitment to taking Israel's role in the redemptive plan of God seriously (138 n.34). Finally, in an excursus on regeneration in the OT, the author takes a traditional position that the Spirit regenerated but did not indwell OT believers.

The largest division of the book, unsurprisingly, is Part III, in which the Spirit's NT ministries are addressed. The author first explores the relationship of Christ and the Spirit. His unique approach is to consider the pneumatological relationship of each of the major "Christological moments": incarnation, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, mighty works, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. In all but two of these (the transfiguration and ascension), Cole finds some compelling pneumatological significance.

Though the Spirit was the empowering force in Christ's incarnate ministry, Cole goes on to emphasize that the Spirit continues the ministry of Jesus after the ascension. At this point in the book, the author's exposition of the NT ministries of the Spirit begins in earnest. Choosing to leave Jesus' name for the Spirit untranslated, Cole focuses on the ministerial functions of the Paraclete, which include

comfort, advocacy, and teaching, among others to be examined later in the book. Above all in this chapter, Cole seeks to preserve the vital connection between Christology and pneumatology against the recent ecumenical and interfaith trends which seek to separate these two in order to find a way of salvation through other religions by means of the Holy Spirit.

The last two chapters deal with the Spirit's relation to the church and the NT believer. Beginning with Pentecost, Cole works his way through the NT literature to explain the benefits of the Spirit which come to those who are "in Christ." A particularly compelling strength of this book is seen in these two chapters, as the author emphasizes rightly the corporate ministries of the Holy Spirit. All those who are "in Christ" and members of his body are united by partaking of the one Spirit—so the baptism, indwelling, sealing, filling, and gifts of the Spirit are intended to benefit the body as a whole, not just the individual members. This is an emphasis that is sometimes lacking in conservative evangelical thought and practice.

The author's discussion of spiritual gifts and the issue of cessationism/continuationism is somewhat disappointing. His position, which he calls "Open but Discerning," is not adequately defended against the cessationist views—he simply does not go into the arguments for either side in adequate detail. It is true that many books have been written on this issue alone, but it seems appropriate to expect a book of this scope on pneumatology to present a more thorough treatment of various views on this issue.

Finally, and unfortunately, the book ends with a rather perplexing discussion of the illumination and internal testimony of the Spirit. In the end, the reader is left wondering just what Cole understands these ministries to entail. The various positions on illumination and internal testimony are presented, but the argument Cole constructs seems to be left without a conclusion.

These closing criticisms aside, this book is indeed a welcome contribution to the discussion of the doctrines of the Holy Spirit. On the whole, Cole has provided an exegetically minded, theologically nuanced, historically sensitive exposition of the key areas of biblical pneumatology. Although drawing on a broad base of research that ranges from Ryrie to Barth to Pinnock to John Paul II, Cole manages to produce a distinctly evangelical and biblical pneumatology. Extensive footnoting provides a clear path into a wide array of sources, which makes the book of great value to theological students, pastors, and educated laity.

C. John Collins. *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary*. Philippsburg, N.J.: P & R, 2006. xiv + 318 pp. \$17.99 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

C. John Collins is Professor of Old Testament and department chairman at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. He also authored *The God*

of *Miracles: An Exegetical Examination of God's Action in the World* (Crossway, 2000) and *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?* (Crossway, 2003). As a Bible translator he served as chairman of the Old Testament Committee for the English Standard Version and contributed "What the Reader Wants and What the Translator Can Give: First John as a Test Case," in *Translating Truth: The Case for Essentially Literal Bible Translation* (Crossway, 2005).

Genesis 1-4 is an exegetical commentary that "includes a literary-theological method informed by contemporary discourse analysis" (1). Collins describes this method as seeking "to read the text the way a competent reader in the original audience would have done, to the best that we can reconstruct that competence" (5). Collins penned a portion of his second chapter (5-32) as a response (9 n. 6) to Robert L. Thomas, "Modern Linguistics versus Traditional Hermeneutics," *TMSJ* 14/1 (2003):23-45. Using 1 Samuel 3 and Matt 4:1-11, Collins illustrates his methodology based upon a series of nine questions (18-30).

In Chapter 3 the author places Genesis 1-4 in its literary context (33-37) before embarking on four chapters exegeting the text's four pericopes: 1:1-2:3 (39-100), 2:4-25 (101-47), 3:1-24 (149-88), and 4:1-26 (189-220). In each chapter Collins identifies the boundary of each pericope, its structure, and its genre. Then he provides an essentially literal translation richly footnoted for syntactical and exegetical details before commencing the main treatment of the text. The remainder of each chapter deals with "Extra Notes," which are expanded discussions of key interpretative elements of the text. For example, these "extra" notes for 1:1-2:3 display the following headings: "Genesis 1:1 and creation from nothing" (50-55), "The proper rendering of the refrain" (55-56), "The fourth day" (56-58), "The meaning of kind" (58-59), "Genesis 1 and the Trinity" (59-61), "The image of God" (61-67), "The use of the words *create* and *make*" (67-68), "Genesis 1:28 and environmental ethics" (68-69), "The goodness of creation" (69-70), and "The unusual seventh day" (70-71). Next comes a literary-theological exposition (71-83, for 1:1-2:3), followed by what the author terms "Other Reverberations" (83-100, for 1:1-2:3) dealing with references to the text in other OT and NT texts.

After presenting the characteristics of 1:1-2:3, Collins concludes that the genre is "exalted prose narrative" (44). He understands "created" in 1:1 to refer to an event preceding the storyline that follows (43, 54). Interestingly, he seems to impose the Western concept of "day and night" on "And there was evening and there was morning, the *n*th day" by making the "evening" refer to the end of the day and the "morning" refer to the end of the night—resulting in day followed by night rather than the traditional night followed by day (56). In what may have been an oversight, no reference to 1 Cor 11:7 occurs anywhere in Collins' discussion of the image of God (61-67), and his treatment of 1 Cor 11:7-12 with regard to Gen 2:4-25 (141-42) does not provide an explanation. Making certain to distinguish his view from that of Meredith Kline, Collins opts for a literary framework interpretation of the days of Genesis 1 (73-74). In his opinion the framework theme does not require the reader to do away with the sequential nature of the days (74, 111). However, he takes a

“broadly sequential” view that allows for the creation week to be “some years long” (129). For the seventh day, he opts for an ongoing creation Sabbath that did not end like the previous six days (74-75, 92-93, 125).

In Gen 2:15-17 Collins identifies an Adamic covenant, but not a covenant of works (112-14). As for the location of the Garden of Eden, he believes that “the flood could not have obliterated” (120-21 n. 65) the clues for identifying its location. On the issue of the length of the days of Genesis 1, he associates himself with the analogical days view that holds that the days’ “length is neither specified nor important, and not everything in the account needs to be taken as historically sequential” (124). In a disarmingly transparent statement regarding harmonization of the Bible and science, he declares, “my sympathies are with the harmonizers. But I hope that I am honest enough to change my mind if the evidence leads elsewhere” (124).

In Collins’ opinion, God has not revoked the creation mandate for man to fill the earth and subdue it (130). In fact, he bases his system of biblical ethics upon this mandate. Thus, the Ten Commandments cannot be done away with, since they are rooted in the creation ordinances (131-32) and keeping those commandments is restorative and evangelistic (132). According to Collins, Gen 3:15 is messianic in the sense that it envisions a champion who engages the dark power that uses the serpent. Therefore, “we may say that Genesis fosters a messianic expectation, of which this verse is the headwaters” (157, 176). Due to the syntactical specificity of the text for an individual as the offspring of the woman, he sees no need to resort to some sort of *sensus plenior* (158).

In his eighth chapter Collins takes up the matter of the sources, unity, and authorship of the Pentateuch and Genesis 1–4 in particular (221-35). He warns that writing an obituary for the Documentary Hypothesis probably might prove premature (224). He concludes that “Moses is the primary author of the Pentateuch as we have it” (235). Chapter 9 discusses the communicative purpose of Genesis 1–4, taking into consideration the ANE background, the Pentateuch as a whole, and life in Israel (237-47). Reluctant to describe Genesis 1–4 as a polemic, Collins takes it as an alternative to the ANE stories—an alternative that corrects the pagan versions of events and provides the true interpretation (242-43). Chapter 10 tackles questions of history and science (249-67). It is in this chapter that the author most clearly identifies himself as an adversary of a literalistic reading of Genesis 1–4, of young earth creationism, and of creation science. The final chapter (269-78) considers “how Genesis 1–4 can shape our view of the world today” (269).

This book concludes with a fairly extensive bibliography (279-98) that lacks adequate reference to key creation science and young earth creationist sources (e.g., those written by Henry M. Morris and John C. Whitcomb). Two indexes round out the volume (biblical and extrabiblical references, 299-308; subjects and names, 309-18).

Collins’ volume ought to be read by anyone seeking an exegetical treatment of Genesis 1–4. The detail with which he pursues its text and its implications

theologically is unmatched in the usual commentaries. As the title claims, this is a linguistic, literary, and theological commentary. This reviewer teaches a seminary course on Genesis 1–11 in which he takes issue with a number of Collins' interpretations. However, this volume will be required reading for all future course offerings.

Hubertus R. Drobner. *The Fathers of the Church: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007. 632 pp. \$49.95 (cloth). Reviewed by William Varner, Professor of Biblical Studies at The Master's College.

This volume is the eagerly anticipated English translation of the author's well-known German volume, *Lehrbuch der Patrologie*, published in 1994. Perhaps the title of the English should have been a straightforward translation of its German title: "A Textbook of Patrology." The English subtitle creates difficulty for this reviewer. "A Comprehensive Introduction" is something of an oxymoron and does not represent what the book intends to communicate. After a review of what the volume delivers, a decision of whether or not the subtitle is an adequate description of the book will be possible.

Hubertus Drobner, Professor of Church History at the University of Paderborn, Germany, surveys post-canonical literature from the late first century through the seventh century. Though his treatment progresses in a generally chronological manner, he organizes the men and their messages by grouping them according to the themes which they share. Thus, under "Theological Controversies of the Fourth Century," he discusses Nestorius, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret, and Leo the Great. He also tends to group Greek Fathers with Latin Fathers.

One of the great strengths of the English translation is the addition of a twenty-four page "Supplementary Bibliography" prepared by William Harmless, S.J., a professor at Creighton University. The bibliography consists of mostly English works on Patristics published since 1994, including a few from before that date that were not included in Drobner's German edition. In this reviewer's opinion, the extensive bibliographies found throughout the volume provide the greatest value. They direct to the published original language texts of the Fathers' works, published biographies of them, and monographs and articles about their role and significance. In this regard it is a veritable goldmine for the researcher who wants to go beyond what Drobner himself tells about each of the Fathers whom he treats. It is in just that area—the actual description of the Fathers and their writings—that the English subtitle is misleading and the volume a bit disappointing. How can a work that includes only one or two pages (apart from the bibliography) about the lives and works of the majority of individuals included be in any sense "comprehensive"? It could be called an "introduction," but it is in no way a "comprehensive introduction." For

Augustine, Drobner assigns sixty pages, while Jerome merits twelve pages, and Origen has eight pages of treatment. But is one page for *First Clement* and two pages for the seven letters of Ignatius sufficient? For this reviewer and other writers who have invested so much interest in the *Didache*, how can one be satisfied with two short paragraphs about this important little work that has spawned huge discussion since its discovery in 1873?

Furthermore, Drobner's treatment has some omissions that are hard to comprehend. Two glaring examples will suffice. Where is any discussion of the life and works of the great Didymus of Alexandria, more commonly known as "Didymus the Blind"? Now that the Greek commentaries of Didymus on various OT books, discovered at Thoura, Egypt in 1943, are fully published, this relegation by Drobner to four scattered references is quite perplexing. Though Drobner's two pages on the *Shepherd of Hermas* are compact and helpful, it is disappointing that he makes no mention of the new chapter numbering system for *Hermas* suggested by Molly Whittaker. This is especially problematic because her system is being adopted by many scholars as an improvement over the complex system used for many years.

The impression should not be that this reviewer questions Drobner's scholarship or his familiarity with his subject. His enormously detailed bibliographies, supplemented by Harmless, indicate that he is fully informed about this vast and complex area of study. His volume will become THE source to be consulted for "further reading" about the Fathers. But if the reader is looking for an introduction to the thought of the Fathers that may justify that word "comprehensive," he can be better served by the classic five-volume set by Johannes Quasten, titled simply *Patrology*. And if he wants an up-to-date treatment, he should consider the recent two-volume work by Moreschini and Norelli, *Early Christian Greek and Latin Literature*. The recent publication by evangelical Bryan Litfin, *Getting to Know the Church Fathers*, is helpful although he includes only ten of these great worthies, even omitting the giant Jerome in the process.

Perhaps the problem with this book can simply be traced to the publisher's assigning of such a misleading sub-title that raises expectations too high.

R. T. France. *The Gospel of Matthew*. In the New International Commentary on the New Testament. Ed. Gordon Fee. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007. 1167 pp. \$60.00 (cloth). Reviewed by William Varner, Professor of Biblical Studies, The Master's College.

The long awaited volume on Matthew in the New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT) has finally arrived. This venerable commentary series was launched over a half century ago under the editorship of Ned Stonehouse (1947-1962), followed by that of F. F. Bruce (1962-1990), and is (hopefully) being brought to completion under Gordon Fee (1990 -). The series was launched with a

team of international scholars sympathetic to the Reformed faith from the U.K., the U.S., South Africa, and the Netherlands. The commentary has been around long enough for replacements of some of the original volumes to appear (e.g., Luke, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, James, and the Epistles of John) and revisions by the author of some of the originals to be issued (e.g., John, Acts, Thessalonians, Hebrews, and Revelation).

In light of the long history of the NICNT, one may wonder why it took so long for the Matthew volume to see the light of day. From an examination of old dust covers, one can see that the Gospel of Matthew was originally assigned to Stonehouse, but his untimely death caused a switch to Robert Guelich. For some reason, it was then assigned to Herman Ridderbos who for whatever reason did not complete it. In his preface to this volume, editor Gordon Fee reveals that during his tenure since 1990 he had contracts for the Matthew volume returned to him by two “very capable” younger scholars. Fee says that one day he asked a fellow member of the Committee on Bible Translation (NIV/TNIV), Dick France, if he would take the commentary project, and what we have is the result.

For those familiar with Gospel studies, France is no stranger, having written a smaller commentary on Matthew for the Tyndale NT series, a separate book on Matthew’s teaching, and a commentary on Mark in the NICGT series. France has also contributed scholarly articles on Matthew, Jesus, and the Synoptics. No one seems more qualified to step into the gap, and France does not disappoint with this volume.

Sadly, most commentaries from scholars of this caliber are a series of technical word studies somehow strung together, or they become a commentary on other commentaries, or they suffer from the unholy union of both those characteristics. France avoids both the pedantry of the first method (the one totally word based) and the endless lists of different interpretations characteristic of the second method (those who comment on other commentaries). He does this with constant attention in every individual pericope to how this section fits into the larger section in which it appears and how everything fits into Matthew’s larger strategy. He avoids the danger of simply providing a digest of others’ interpretations by referencing other authors in the footnotes and majoring on telling what he believes Matthew is saying. No one can accuse him of ignoring scholarly opinion on Matthew. For example, his bibliography of books, commentaries, and journal articles covers thirty-five pages! He interacts with other views, but majors on a fresh interpretation of the text.

Another refreshing aspect of France’s treatment is that he places his emphasis on discovering what the canonical text of Matthew is teaching. He does not follow the endless bypaths of source and redaction critics which mar many modern commentaries on Matthew. One thinks of the magisterial work of Davies and Allison, filled with insights both exegetical and theological, only to be marred by statements that this or that word/phrase is the work of a redactor. How can one know that when no text of Matthew indicates such redaction? France tells what the text means and does not get bogged down on questions of whether this verse was in Q or

M, or if it is the result of a final redaction of those two or more sources. This also makes his commentary much more valuable for the preacher and teacher.

France explains briefly the two dominant views about the structure of Matthew's gospel (2, 3). The first is the fivefold division based on the repeated statement, "And Jesus finished the sayings," (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). The second is the threefold division based on the repetition of "From that time Jesus began to . . ." (47; 16:21). He opts for seeing the similar way in which Matthew follows a geographical procession of Jesus, as is in Mark. Thus he suggests the following overall outline: I. Introducing the Messiah (1:1–4:11); II. Galilee: The Messiah Revealed in Word and Deed (4:12–16:20); III. From Galilee to Jerusalem: Messiah and His Followers Prepare for the Confrontation (16:21–20:34); IV. Jerusalem: The Messiah in Confrontation with the Religious Authorities (21:1–25:46); V. Jerusalem: Messiah Rejected, Killed, and Vindicated (26:1–28:15); VI. Galilee: The Messianic Mission is Launched (28:16–20). Thus, to France, semantic content trumps literary features in a book's structure. This approach may be more valuable to the preacher, but it neglects the possibility that Matthew may have intended those distinct literary characteristics to communicate his structure. Whether the features favor a fivefold or a threefold division, this reviewer believes that Matthew had a literary design that he intended the reader to understand.

On the other hand, France is best when he is interpreting an individual pericope or even a set of related pericopes. For example, he displays his very capable interpretive skills in his deft handling of the five pericopes in the Matthew nativity account (1:18–2:23). He recognizes the controversial way in which Matthew employs the OT quotations there and arrives at very satisfying conclusions which maintain the hermeneutical sanity of Matthew over against his modern detractors and critics. At this point one might wish to explain specifically how he does that, but space constraints mandate leaving that delight to be discovered by the reader who will not be disappointed by France's insightful method and his conclusions.

Reviewers of a commentary will usually issue the expected caveat that they do not accept every interpretation in the commentary. That is, of course, the same situation with this reviewer's approach to France's commentary. But rest assured that France has considered all views and presents cogent arguments, whether one agrees with them or not. In that regard, I must demur from France's treatment of the Olivet Discourse. He argues for Jesus' answering the first of the disciples' questions ("When shall these things be?") in 24:4–35 before he answers the second question ("What shall be the sign of your coming and the end?") in 24:36–25:46. He views the first section as describing the events leading up to and including the fall of Jerusalem. The rest of the discourse he sees as describing the events related to the "eschaton." Though France studiously avoids millennial terminology, his approach seems to be a form of realized eschatology that views the events of A.D. 70 as fulfilling most of the prophecies traditionally taken as describing Jesus' second advent. Again, the limits of a review do not allow interaction with France in detail. Such a comment is only to alert the reader that in the reviewer's opinion France has

not made a compelling case for his view. Yes, problems exist with whatever view one adopts, but France's approach raises more problems than he solves. For a more traditional and a better handling of the issues, the commentary by Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, (Multnomah, 1980) is recommended.

France's commentary should take its place among the best on Matthew. Will it dislodge the commentaries by Davies and Allison and Luz that are at the top of scholarly commentaries on Matthew? Probably not. But it should be one of the finest ones used to find out not only what is being said about Matthew, but to find out what Matthew is saying.

Mark D. Futato. *Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*. Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007. 234 pp. \$20.99 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Futato's volume is the second in Kregel's new Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis series, edited by David M. Howard, Jr. First to be published was Robert B. Chisholm, Jr.'s *Interpreting the Historical Books* (2006). Forthcoming volumes include *Interpreting the Pentateuch* by Peter T. Vogt, *Interpreting the Wisdom Literature* by Richard L. Schultz, *Interpreting the Prophets* by Michael A. Grisanti (TMS professor), and *Interpreting Apocalyptic Literature* by Richard A. Taylor. Futato is professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. He is best known for his user-friendly *Beginning Biblical Hebrew* (Eisenbrauns, 2003). His studies on the Psalms include *Transformed by Praise: The Purpose and Message of the Psalms* (P&R, 2002) and *Joy Comes in the Morning: Psalms for All Seasons* (P&R, 2004).

Most students for whom this series is intended (13-14) will find Futato's introduction to the basics of Hebrew poetry refreshingly lucid ("Appreciating the Poetry," 23-55). Where necessary, he provides the Hebrew text (25, 30-31, et al.), but many examples are adequately represented by English translation. Definitions of key terms are simple and precise. Dealing with the issue of parallelism, for example, the author focuses on the concept of correspondence in grammar and meaning (33-34). A helpful three-step analysis forms the core treatment of imagery in Hebrew poetry (48-49). However, discussion of mythopoeic imagery fails to provide a methodology for evaluating and interpreting it (53-55). Futato correctly emphasizes that mythopoeic imagery does not mean that myths are present in Scripture (54) and does not indicate that the writers believed the myths (55).

Following his general introduction to Hebrew poetry, Futato presents a survey of the major themes in the Book of Psalms ("Viewing the Whole," 57-116). In order to interpret any individual psalm properly, the reader must grasp the overall purpose of the Psalter (59-72) and the message or theme of the book (72-95). Futato identifies the Psalter's dominant theme as "the kingship of God" (72), developing it

under the headings “Our God Is King” (73-76), “Our Destiny Is Glory” (77-80), and “Our King Is Coming” (80-95). Under the first heading he rightly explains that Psalm 2 cannot refer to an actual historical Davidic king, “since there was never a time when God ruled all nations of the earth through the Davidic monarchy” (75). Thus, Psalm 2 is “profoundly eschatological” (76). Discussion under the second heading is disappointing because of its brevity and lack of substance. The third heading is developed in greater detail. However, the reader finishes the section frustrated at the lack of guidance for determining whether the kingdom as presented in Psalms is consistent with amillennialism, premillennialism, or postmillennialism. The neutrality that the series seeks to maintain actually works against completing the interpretative process. Readers are not even referred to pertinent hermeneutical works that represent those millennial viewpoints. If the kingship of God is the dominant theme, this *Exegetical Handbook* fails to guide through the process of answering the greatest question the theme raises in inquiring, theologically oriented minds. “Other Themes of the Psalms” (95-116) highlights the metaphor of refuge (96-103) and the blessing of the nations (103-16).

In his third chapter (“Preparing for Interpretation,” 117-37) the author sets the stage for his recommended interpretative process. He takes the position that the psalm titles “are canonical although not necessarily original” (119), so he does not allow information from the psalm titles to play a major interpretative role (121). He never mentions James Thirtle’s theory regarding psalm superscriptions and subscriptions. Lack of adequate historical background for the psalms, in Futato’s opinion, “results in increased ease in applying the text to contemporary life” (123). As far as textual criticism of the Psalms is concerned, Futato concludes that the process of textual critical analysis can “at times provide a better understanding of a particular text” (129), but no major doctrine is affected by text-critical decisions in the Psalter. The chapter concludes with lists of resources available for interpreting Psalms (130-37).

The treatment of psalms according to their categories (defined as “a group of writings that have characteristics in common with each other,” 140) occupies the fourth chapter (“Interpreting the Categories,” 139-82). Futato poses the question, “Why do you need to know about the various categories in Psalms?” (141) and then explains how categories guide expectations (142-44) and provide another level of context (144-45) for the interpretative process. Basic categories include hymns (146-50), laments (150-58), songs of thanksgiving (158-60), songs of confidence (160-65), divine kingship songs (165-71), and wisdom songs (171-73). To obtain insights with regard to Christ’s relationships to the psalm categories, Futato recommends reading a psalm “both as being spoken by Christ and as speaking about Christ” (174). Such advice might result in a good deal of *eise-Jesus*, since he is not limiting this practice to psalms that are either Messianic in content or at least cited with reference to Christ’s life, work, or experiences in the NT. Noticeable is an absence of adequate instruction regarding how to identify the difference between Messianic fulfillment, Messianic implications, and Messianic application for interpreting

individual psalms. An excursus on royal psalms concludes the discussion of psalm categories (181-82). Glaringly absent is any reference to imprecatory psalms. Such psalms have proven to be a challenge in the exegesis of the Psalms. Omission of imprecatory psalms in an *Exegetical Handbook* on Psalms diminishes the volume's value and usability.

Exposition is the topic in "Proclaiming the Psalms" (183-207). Futato describes four steps that the expositor should follow in preparing to preach from Psalms: get oriented to the text's contexts and structure before diving into the details of exegesis (185-92), focus on the exegetical details in the text (192-97), shape the expository presentation outlining the logic and the language of the text (197-204), and reflect on the text and its application to life by asking the big question ("So what?") and the "covenant questions" (204-7). Unfortunately, Futato's "covenant questions" do not relate to identifying meaning as related to specific biblical covenants. Instead of asking what the relationship might be to covenants like the Abrahamic or Sinaitic covenants, they consist of merely asking, "(1) What does this text teach me to believe? (2) What does this text teach me to do? (3) What does this text teach me to feel?" (206). As a set of general guidelines, Futato's four steps are beneficial to some preachers, but are not sufficiently detailed to satisfy those who want a more finely tuned set of guidelines. In defense of the chapter, however, one might point out that this is an *Exegetical Handbook*, not an expositional handbook.

The final chapter ("Practicing the Principles," 209-29) applies the content of preceding chapters to an analysis of Psalm 29. Choosing Psalm 29 unfortunately brings to the fore the reviewer's earlier observation concerning the absence of a methodology for evaluation and interpreting mythopoeic imagery (53-55). Perhaps in keeping with Futato's background in climatology, he ties everything to a severe rain storm (e.g., 216, 227). This enables him to make a direct connection to the Canaanite storm god Baal and to conclude that Psalm 29 is "clearly a polemic against the worship of Baal and for the worship of Yahweh" (220). He also shows a preference for David borrowing a hymn to Baal rather than composing the psalm from scratch (219). This reviewer appreciates Futato's pointing readers to Peter Craigie's serious set of arguments against the Canaanite origin of this psalm (220 n. 21). In this reviewer's opinion, much more should have been said about the theophanic core of Psalm 29. The author nearly misses it, finally noting that the repetition of "the voice of the LORD" indicates "a manifestation of the praiseworthy presence of God" (221). He perseveres in making the psalm more a psalm of creation (natural revelation) than of special revelation.

A beneficial, though limited, glossary closes the volume (231-34). Absence of any kind of indexes runs contrary to the intent that this series might be employed "as textbooks for graduate-level exegesis courses" (14). Students and teachers alike expect a good handbook to be utilitarian—to be a tool as a reference work. The reader is left without the means to track down specific biblical references and treatments (e.g., Psalm 18), or to look for every topic (e.g., lament) wherever it is mentioned in the volume. Overall, the volume is a good place to begin a simplified

introduction to exegesis of the Psalms, but omits too much for it to become a standard graduate-level textbook. Pastors who are years removed from Hebrew course work, rather than seminarians, will find the volume beneficial.

Simon J. Gathercole. *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. 357 pp. \$32.00 (paper). Reviewed by Trevor P. Craigen, Professor of Theology. 357 pp.

Displaying a familiarity with a considerable amount of material, in English, French, German, and Latin, Simon Gathercole, Senior Lecturer in New Testament at the University of Aberdeen, has put forth a thought-provoking study on a subject of as much interest to the NT scholar as to the systematic theologian. The preexistence of Jesus Christ takes the study of the Son of God back to before Bethlehem and before conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Final answers to questions of where He was and what He was doing prior to His incarnation, and more so, prior to the creation of the universe would be nice to have in one's grasp, but that is unlikely. Certainly, a careful and in-depth exegetical study is never out of order. Gathercole, however, candidly acknowledges that he is in pursuit of proving a controversial point, namely, "That the preexistence of Christ can be found in the Synoptic Gospels" (1). A controversial point, because critical scholarship had long held that Jesus could not have regarded Himself as preexistent (4). A thumbnail sketch accompanies the names of each of the eleven proponents who concurred in their skepticism of either Matthew, Mark, or Luke presenting evidence of preexistence. The most well-known of these is James D. G. Dunn, and his *Christology in the Making* (5). Two influential names associated with the "New History of Religion School" have paragraph descriptions of their views as well. Noteworthy is the author's acknowledgment that he paid scant attention to questions of tradition, history, sources, and the relationship between the canonical Gospels and *Thomas* or the elusive Q (17).

The introduction sketches out the four stages of argument being made to establish the plausibility of preexistence, to propose that the "I have come . . ." sayings are the clearest indication in the Synoptic Gospels of a preexistent christology, to look at how the proponents of Wisdom christology interpret certain portions of the Gospels, and finally to determine if preexistence inheres in terms such as Messiah, Lord, Son of Man, and Son of God (18-19).

In Chapter 1, "Preexistence in Earliest Christianity," Gathercole briefly conducts his readers on a tour through various passages in Paul's epistles to the Philippians, Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, concluding that the apostle assumed it without finding it necessary to argue for it. Similarly so with Hebrews and Jude. In fact, given the wide spread influence of the apostle Paul, the burden of proof now falls on those whose search for early Christian groups which either did not

accept or did not know about Christ's preexistence (43).

Chapter Two treats extensively Christ transcending both the heaven-earth divide and the God/creation divide. The chapter's conclusion is followed by two pages of comment on two intriguing sayings in which Jesus is described as transcending space, one in Matt 18:18-20 and the other in Matt 28:18-20, one pre- and one post-resurrection. Part II, "The Advent and Mission of Jesus," embracing five chapters and two excurses is a well-documented section which first deals concisely with the ten "'I have come' + Purpose Formula" sayings. Then the next chapter introduces the false perspective on these sayings. Angelic usage of the "I have come..." sayings, is the nearest parallel usage, the author contends, after having looked at material from the OT, the Apocrypha, Targums, Midrashic texts, later Rabbinic tales, the tradition of the coming of Elijah, and some angelophanies. Unlike Christ's sayings which turned out summarizing His whole existence, the angels' sayings are oriented to that particular visit. Preexistence is clear, whether it be the words of Jesus or those of an angel speaking. A study of the "sent" sayings is also carried out and concludes that the "sent" sayings by themselves would not necessarily prove preexistence, but in the light of the "coming" sayings (189) then the coming and seeking imagery and His heavenly identity, show that His being sent is not like the sending of a prophet.

Part 3, "Jesus, the Incarnation of Divine Wisdom," comes online with attention given to Matthew 23 and Christ in the history of Israel. It finds no serious obstacle to the portrayal of Jesus as a figure who transcends the generation into which He was born. The titles of Jesus make up Part 4, in which "Lord," "Son of Man," and "Son of God" all merit separate informative and instructive chapters, as does "'Messiah' *Anatole*." The conclusion is the same as that which has been offered at the end of practically every chapter and certainly at the end of each of the four parts, namely that sufficient evidence and indications have highlighted undeniably the preexistence of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels.

The reader becomes aware of those of differing theological persuasions who probably would leave behind the evidence from these Gospels, pockmarked by their denial and amendment. One thing became clear and urgent for the seminary student of today: "Nail down that NTI course! Know well the book, *The Jesus Crisis!*"

Now, this is not a book to sit down and read in one or two sittings, just tripping along with the words. It is definitely not light reading and will require concentration. It will be referenced by students doing research in the Synoptics or reading more deeply into the whole mystery of Christ's preexistence, which, in turn, ends up challenging the thinking of the theologian and exegete alike, as they seek to compose an extended definition and description of exactly what can be known of Him and His activities and responsibilities before His incarnation. If you have a few moments to spare, pick it up and glance through the Table of Contents.

Victor P. Hamilton. *Handbook on the Pentateuch*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 468 pp. \$34.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Michael A. Grisanti, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

In the new edition of this very helpful book, Hamilton offers an expanded and revised treatment of the Pentateuch, not so much as a verse-by-verse commentary, but as a chapter or section-by-section overview, highlighting key details along the way. Hamilton is a clear writer who makes numerous helpful observations, noticing key structural features and dealing with controversial issues throughout the Pentateuch. He is succinct without being vague. Although Hamilton sometimes takes a view that is only moderately conservative, his work will enhance any reader's understanding of and appreciation for the message of the Pentateuch.

The bibliographies at the end of each section are significantly expanded with references to works published since the first edition. The new edition includes a helpful subject index, but for some reason did not retain the name and Scripture index of the first edition. Even if a person owns the first edition, this volume would be a welcome addition to someone's library.

Michael A. Harbin. *The Promise and the Blessing: A Historical Survey of the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. 681 pp. \$49.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Keith Essex, Assistant Professor of Bible Exposition.

The purpose of *The Promise and the Blessing* is to survey the whole Bible as a unit. The book is designed "to provide a general framework, showing how pieces [of the Bible] fit together. This framework is derived from the Bible itself and developed through a historical perspective" (23). The author, Michael Harbin, is chair of the biblical studies, Christian education, and philosophy departments at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. The volume is based on his more than thirty years of teaching the Bible in two courses, Old Testament survey followed by New Testament survey. The result is this textbook that the author envisions will be used in either a one-semester or two-semester course(s) in Bible survey (24).

His work has a definite textbook approach in its structure and content. An introduction and twenty-eight chapters have the same structure. Each begins with a page that includes an overview and study goals for the material that follows. The material itself is then presented on two different levels. The text is written so that the reader can follow the flow of the general argument. The text is amplified in sidebars in the chapters and endnotes at the back of the book (609-51) that explain points in the text in more detail, evaluate alternate views, and/or direct the reader to other sources for further information. Review questions on the text material conclude the introduction and every chapter. Throughout the book, the author includes numerous visuals, including pictures, twenty-three maps, and fifteen charts.

A helpful six-page glossary of significant terms (595-600), a bibliography detailing works the author has found valuable in writing this book or helpful in proving a different perspective (601-6), and an index of people and topics in the text (653-81) complete the volume. Since the author takes a historical approach in his presentation, in his introduction he defends the traditional view that accepts the biblical documents against the modern view which approaches the biblical documents as suspect at best (27-40). Part One, entitled "The Promise," surveys the OT in sixteen chapters (41-346). Part Two, "The Blessing," surveys the NT in twelve chapters (347-593).

Harbin's historical approach, developing the Bible according to its chronological sequence, puts a spotlight on his interpretation of biblical history. This reviewer was encouraged with the author's conclusions, especially since this textbook is directed to the beginning Bible student. The historical creation, fall, and global flood are affirmed. The early date for the birth of Abraham in 2166 B.C. (90), based upon the date of Exodus around 1446 B.C. (135-38) is argued for by the writer. The Bible's account of the Conquest, Judges, Monarchy, Exile, and Return is also affirmed as historically accurate. The author equally supports the historical veracity of the NT. Theologically, Harbin views the OT as preparatory, declaring the "promise" of the Messiah upon which the NT bases its claim concerning the person of Jesus (347) and the resulting "blessing." Though not overt, a premillennial perspective underlies the biblical presentation.

In a volume that has so many positives, the reader needs to be aware of some weaknesses. First, with an historical approach, a time-line, either developed in parts throughout the text or as a full-scale chart in an appendix, would have been helpful for the beginning reader. Second, the literary structure of most of the biblical books is ignored. For example, the content of the four Gospels is blended together into a description of the life of Christ. The unique literary, theological development of each Gospel is overlooked. Third, because the endnotes many times amplify and clarify what is written in the main body of the text, it would be more helpful to have them on the same page as the material to which they pertain.

Overall, *Promise and Blessing* is a valuable survey of the Bible for the beginning student. It is a good introduction to a basic biblical theology with a good discussion of historical issues. It can be read along with a resource like the introductions to the biblical books in *The MacArthur Study Bible*, which orient the student to the literary structure of the individual books. Along with this help on the literary structure, *Promise and Blessing* provides an adequate foundation for further biblical study.

Allan Harman. *Isaiah: A Covenant to Be Kept for the Sake of the Church*. Focus on the Bible. Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2005. 472 pp. \$17.99 (paper). Reviewed by Michael A. Grisanti, Associate Professor of Old

Testament.

This volume represents Harman's third contribution to the "Focus on the Bible" series (*Psalms*—1998, *Deuteronomy*—2001). In writing this commentary, Harman sought to avoid simply distilling the ideas of other commentaries. In fact, he focused on grammar and syntax volumes, lexicons, and theological dictionaries in the early stages of writings and did not reference secondary literature until a later stage of writing. Harman strongly argues for Isaiah of Jerusalem as the author of the entire book. The volume ends with helpful subject, person, and Scripture indices.

Just a few comments about some key passages will illustrate the author's approach. Harman works through various interpretations of the Immanuel prophecy in chapter 7 and advocates an exclusively messianic understanding of Isaiah 7:14. In commenting on chapters 24–27, Harman refuses to identify the chapters as apocalyptic. He identifies certain apocalyptic tendencies, but also regards these chapters as prophetic as well. He does not believe that apocalyptic replaced prophetic literature, but that it supplements biblical literature. When dealing with passages that look to distant rather than near fulfillments, Harman is not clear on whether he sees these events taking place in a literal millennial period or in the present church age. He refers to a regathering of exiles, but emphasizes that this regathering is spiritual. However, when commenting on the return mentioned in chapter 49, Harman seems to regard this as a literal return to the land of promise.

Except for the ambiguity on the eschatological significance of certain passages, Harman is a clear writer and provides a helpful exposition of the text of this great book of Isaiah.

Jonathan Hill. *Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007. 560 pp. \$39.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Gregory H. Harris, Professor of Bible Exposition.

The *Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity* covers a broad scope, tracing Christianity from Acts up to the modern times. It is very readable and contains much valuable content about historical matters that ultimately affected Christianity in different ways, whether good or bad. For instance chapter eleven, "Reason to Revival," contains subheadings of "The Dawn of Modernity" (312-14), "Enlightenment in North America" (319-20), and "The Great Awakening" (328-34). Very good historical information helps explain what was happening in the world at large as well as trends in how people perceived what was truth. Also a section deals with some Christian developments in Africa (275-83), which often seems to be overlooked in many other books about the history of Christianity.

However, some elements within the book should be read with the understanding that they are at odds with the TMS doctrinal statement. Many things

contrary to sound doctrine are included. For instance, the book definitely has a European flavor to it, with the vast majority of contributors coming from England (538). Not that this in and of itself makes it bad, but they do write from this vantage point. When tracing the development of the church, they are writing about “The New Israel” (32). But even beyond that, they include such people as Mother Teresa, and after noting some controversy about her standard Roman Catholic views forbidding contraception, they make this assessment of her: “The fact that such arguments tended to coalesce around the figure of Mother Teresa is perhaps testament not so much to any especially controversial character of her work or personality as to her remarkable prominence as *the* most visible and famous representative of Christian ‘good work’ in the modern world” (475; emphasis in the original). A lumping together of any and everything calling itself Christian characterizes the book, so the reader has to know this when reading it. In other words, the definition of “Christian” is quite broad.

Sadly, beyond this there is more. Though *Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity* is a history book and not a theology book per se, nonetheless it is a history book shaped by the theology that it brings to the text. Tragically, one single word emerges that should make one read the entire work as a Berean Christian. In proposing that the relevance for Christ’s death was in line with historic Judaism, Hill writes, “Certain key passages of scriptures were now understood as prophecies about Jesus (even passages not previously regarded as prophecies at all). Psalm 22, which Jesus *apparently* quoted at the moment of his death, was seen as a prophecy of his death and the circumstances around it” (32; emphasis added). Both Matt 27:46 and Mark 15:34 state that “Jesus cried out with a loud voice” in reference to Psalm 22. If Hill is correct, readers should, first, write in the word “apparently” into the two verses in their Bibles, and second, strike through the words “cried out” and replace them with the word “quoted.” If one so greatly misses the significance of what was transpiring at Christ’s death or casts “Indeed has God said?” questions about the accuracy of the biblical account, especially an account so vital to true Christianity, how can he hope to present an accurate portrayal of what is truly Christian? Thus, everything in the book has to be read very circumspectly, hoping that the author is “apparently” quoting the truth in other matters related to the church which Jesus Christ Himself founded and purchased with His own blood.

iVocab Biblical Hebrew. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2007. \$32.99. Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament, and Tom Drion, TMS M.Div. student.

Most seminary students would *love* a new video iPod or cell phone to play with—and what better excuse to justify the expense than the thought of an easy way to do Hebrew vocabulary? Prior to making a purchase, however, one needs to take

a few things into consideration. For this review, the authors italicized the iPod Classic 80GB that Apple sells for \$249.

iVocab is software providing audio and visual flashcards for use on iPods, video cell phones, MP3 players, and computers. This software arranged vocabularies by chapters, and covers the following popular elementary Hebrew textbooks: *Basics of Biblical Hebrew*, 2d edition, by Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt (Zondervan, 2007), *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* by C. L. Seow (Abingdon, 1995), *Introducing Biblical Hebrew* by Allen P. Ross (Baker Academic, 2001), and *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew* by Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi (Kregel, 2006). The pronunciation is typical modern (European) Hebrew pronunciation. The printed forms of words that appear in the video display are clear and legible. The use of a *raphe* (horizontal line above the accented syllable) is not nearly as attractive as the normal employment of the *'oleh* in most printed vocabularies.

Selecting a full list of vocabulary for a particular textbook chapter or section is simple. For example, “FC3” represents the 15-word vocabulary provided in Fuller and Choi’s Chapter 3. The program goes through the words displaying each Hebrew word and pronouncing it. Following the pronunciation there is a 5-second delay before the English gloss flashes on the display and it, too, is read. After going through the entire list for that section, one may select the individual word (e.g., “FC3v15” for the final word in “FC3”). For reasons unknown to the reviewers, the final word entry in some vocabulary lists would not come up — after a few seconds of a blank display the iPod would return to the vocabulary menu. This glitch might be due to either hardware or software problems.

There are some attractive advantages. *iVocab* provides the facility to both see and hear the words as one learns them. It is handy to have one neat little iPod rather than bulky stacks of tatty looking cards to flick through. In addition, the iPod has plenty of room for one’s music and sermons, once the 2,100 flashcards have been compressed into a mere 50MB of disk space. Two thousand traditional cards would not fit into a wallet quite as neatly as a new credit-card sized iPod. Before reaching for that real credit card to make the purchase, a few questions are to be asked.

Does *iVocab* actually provide the vocabulary you need to learn biblical Hebrew? This is crucial. If one of the Hebrew grammars listed above is the required textbook, *iVocab* might prove worthwhile. The simple reality is that the lists of vocabulary for next week’s test or quiz are all there—neatly in order and easily accessed. If the required grammar is different, the student may well find himself as frustrated as the co-author of this review, fiddling fruitlessly with the alleged facility to sort the cards into new playlists within iTunes, only to give up in dismay at the inordinate waste of time. Added to this frustration, was the sad reality that the list of English glosses for each Hebrew word did not always match the required textbook’s glosses.

Does *iVocab* meet each student’s need? For the audio learner and the visual learner, this software might be a boon. However, for kinesthetic learners, writing out

vocabulary cards and laboriously forming the words enhances recognition and learning. For this latter group, *iVocab* might prove nothing more than another electronic toy.

Do you already own hardware compatible with the software? The professor participating in this review owns only an original iPod Nano—the software was not accessible even in audio despite following all the installation procedures. Even though the software is apparently compatible with audio-only hardware, the full potential can be realized only with hardware having video capability.

For students with hectic schedules, *iVocab* can prove to be a significant aid simply because of the speed with which the vocabulary can be called up, the ease with which the information can be accessed, and the handy size which eliminates having to carry the textbook to work breaks and family outings during which some study time needs to be redeemed.

Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher, eds. *The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources*. Trans. Daniel P. Bailey. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. xxvii + 520 pp. \$45.00 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher both teach at the University of Tübingen in Germany. Janowski is Professor of Old Testament and Stuhlmacher is Professor Emeritus of New Testament. Seven of this volume's ten essays were presented in Professor Martin Hengel's graduate and faculty seminar in the summer semester of 1991 at Tübingen (vii). The seven presented in the seminar are: "The Fourth Servant Song in the Context of Second Isaiah" by Hans-Jürgen Hermisson (16-47), "He Bore Our Sins: Isaiah 53 and the Drama of Taking Another's Place" by Janowski (48-74), "The Effective History of Isaiah 53 in the Pre-Christian Period" by Martin Hengel with the collaboration of Daniel P. Bailey (75-146), "Isaiah 53 in the Gospels and Acts" by Stuhlmacher (147-62), "The Fourth Servant Song in the New Testament Letters" by Otfried Hofius (163-88), "The Servant of Isaiah 53 as Triumphant and Interceding Messiah: The Reception of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 in the Targum of Isaiah with Special Attention to the Concept of the Messiah" by Jostein Ådna (189-224), and "Jesus Christ as a Man before God: Two Interpretive Models for Isaiah 53 in the Patristic Literature and Their Development" by Christoph Marksches (225-323). The remaining three essays are: "The Conception and Prehistory of the Idea of Vicarious Suffering in the Old Testament" by Hermann Spieckermann (1-15), "'Our Suffering and Crucified Messiah' (*Dial.* 111.2): Justin Martyr's Allusions to Isaiah 53 in His *Dialogue with Trypho* with Special Reference to the New Edition of M. Marcovich" by Bailey (324-417), and "Isaiah 53 in the *Sefer Hizzuk Emunah* ('Faith Strengthened') of Rabbi Isaac ben Abraham of Troki" by Stefan Schreiner (418-61). As the length of some of the

essays testifies, some could be books by themselves.

Two years after the German edition of this volume was published (Mohr Siebeck, 1996) the translator, Daniel P. Bailey, contributed an essay ("The Suffering Servant: *Recent Tübingen Scholarship on Isaiah 53*") to *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, edited by William H. Bellinger, Jr. and William R. Farmer (Trinity Press International, 1998) reviewed in *TMSJ* 13/1 (Spring 2002), 103-5. He plays a major role in the publication of the current volume, since he translated the German essays, composed the summaries introducing each essay, expanded many of the footnotes (sometimes significantly lengthening them), collaborated for Hengel's essay, authored an appendix ("Isaiah 53 in the Codex A Text of 1 Clement 16:3-14," 321-23), and updated "A Classified Bibliography on Isaiah 53" by Wolfgang Hüllstrung and Gerlinde Feine (462-92). Two indexes complete the volume ("Primary Sources," 493-510, and "Modern Authors," 511-20).

These essays were prepared for doctoral candidates or professors. Aimed at specialists, the volume is heavy reading. The theological milieu of the authors is decidedly non-evangelical, since humanistic thinking permeates the contributors' offerings. For example, Spieckermann declares that the Servant Songs, with the exception of only a part of the last one, are neither prophecy nor prophecies of Christ (46). Yet, this collection of essays contains a number of discussions of great interest to evangelical theologians and exegetes. Spieckermann examines the potential origins of the concept of vicariousness or vicarious suffering that is linked to Isaiah 53 and concludes that the prophet attempts to say something new, though not completely new (44). Janowski insists that the real suffering Servant was the prophet Second Isaiah (48) and that Philip in Acts 8:34-35 did not claim that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 53 (74). Hengel concludes that messianic interpretations of Isa 52:13-53:12 existed prior to the Christian era, but that they may have applied to an individual like Onias III (146). Stuhlmacher, however, argues that the Servant simultaneously represents the corporate people of God (161-62). Continuing the line of thinking that separates the NT interpretation of Isaiah 53 from the OT meaning, Hofius declares, "we may safely conclude that there is not a single passage where the fourth Servant Song has been taken up in its original sense" (188).

In actuality the majority of this volume deals more with various interpretations (ancient and modern) of Isaiah 53, rather than with the exegesis of the Hebrew text itself. Its primary focus is on the concept of vicarious suffering. Although evangelical readers will be disappointed by the presuppositions and conclusions of these essays' authors, an occasional concept arises that would merit evangelical attention and study. An example is Hermisson's observation that the sin borne by the suffering Servant was "the sin of not turning to Yahweh, of unbelief" (41).

Walter C. Kaiser and Duane A. Garrett, with Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. *Archaeological Study Bible: An Illustrated Walk Through Biblical*

History and Culture. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. xxvii + 2306 (cloth). \$49.99. Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Director of the Seminary Library.

One of the more anticipated new works to appear recently was the *Archaeological Study Bible* by Zondervan. There was a significant amount of pre-publication publicity (more than any new book in several years by this reviewer's observation) and clearly a significant budget had been allocated for both the production and presentation of this new study Bible.

Much excitement accompanied the release of this work. The layout of the book is excellent. This study Bible is perhaps one of the finest productions to date from a publishing point of view. The publisher has printed high quality color pictures on thin "Bible" type paper. The attention to "eye appeal" in the detail is excellent. The only negative in the layout is the use of the "red letter" format in the Gospels (and elsewhere) for the words of Jesus. This now quaint formatting does not read well on the parchment effect and color of the pages (and it continues to neglect that many, like this reviewer, are color blind to one degree or another which makes the "red" lettering often more difficult to decipher). To keep the size of the Bible from expanding even more than it did, the publisher also opted for a very small font size in the biblical text, which also affects the readability.

The work has a very useful subject index to the call-out articles and (perhaps less useful) an abbreviated concordance, a glossary of archaeological and historical terms. The book comes with an interactive CD which is functional, but perhaps limited by the publisher's use of their in-house software systems rather than an industry standard like Libronix for Windows or Accordance for Macintosh.

The illustrations are well conceived and useful. The photography of artifacts and small scenes is one of the highlights of the work. As noted in the front matter of the book, TMS graduate Todd Bolen, who teaches at The Master's College IBEX extension campus in Israel and operates his own ministry (www.bibleplaces.com) is one of the contributors of photographs.

Notations to the text are the main purpose of the study Bible. In general, the "call outs" (specialized articles on particular themes or subjects) are useful and flow with the overall purposes of the work. The call outs are categorized under a few different headings, such as "Ancient Peoples, Lands, and Rulers"; "The Reliability of the Bible"; "Cultural and Historical Notes," Many of the call outs very helpfully add notes to see other call outs on related subjects. Smaller call outs called "Ancient Voices" in which quotations from other Ancient Near Eastern texts are included in the OT (e.g., 2 Chron 26, 651). The NT has fewer of the "Ancient Voice" call outs (e.g., Aristotle on Logos, for John 1, 1720). Most of the time those texts are useful as either illustration or comparason; occasionally, though, they appear to be simply filler material.

The strong point of the "call outs" is also unfortunately one of significant weaknesses of the book. The placement and verse attachment of some of the call outs is, to put it bluntly, extremely odd. A few examples will suffice. The call out

for the city of “Sepphoris” is, for reasons that are entirely mysterious, placed under Mark 6. The text for the call out then begins by stating, “The city of Sepphoris (modern Zippori) is mentioned nowhere in the Bible” (1638). How this call out will assist the reader in understanding Mark 6 more precisely is not stated. At Psalm 107 a call out on “Ancient Texts and Artifacts” has an excellent picture and description of the Gezer Calendar (discovered in 1908). However, while attached to Psalm 107, the article gives no indication of how this discovery might help in the understanding or interpretation of this Psalm.

At Luke 8 under the rubric of “The Reliability of the Bible,” the call out is entitled “The Synoptic Problem and ‘Q.’” This placement is entirely random and, even more oddly, is illustrated with a picture of an Armenian text of one of the Gospels (ca. 1435), with no explanation as to what the graphic has to do with the article. Though the call out is generally useful information and does not take a definitive stand, even on the existence of “Q,” it seems simply to have been “dropped in” a place where nothing else archaeologically or culturally was worthy of discussion.

This is a general issue with this book. The call out articles begin with a Scripture text where the article has been placed, which often has little or nothing to do with the article itself or is not the most significant text in regards to that subject. Or, the call out is appropriate for the biblical book it is found in but terribly misplaced, such as the call out “Who Wrote Revelation” (2060), which is attached to Revelation 10.

The greatest problem with the “study Bible” approach to this material is long stretches of Scripture where little or nothing, archaeologically-speaking, is said. On many pages rather non-descript notations about one or two verses occur that have nothing to do with archaeology or geography (whether physical or cultural), but are notes one might rather find in any useful study Bible. Sometimes the editors clear desire to stay “prophecy neutral” in their opinions hurts the overall work. For example, in Ezekiel 40–42 the description of the Temple receives no illustrative help, help which could have included at least a diagram or, better, some comparative information on the size and dimensions of Solomon’s Temple or the Second Temple and even Herod’s enlargement of that Temple. What the reader receives is a minimal set of rather self-evident notations.

Though this work is clearly a publishing achievement (as illustrated by its recent Gold Medallion Award from the Evangelical Publishing Association), one wonders how many people will want to buy a 2,300 page, four plus pound study Bible? It is a study Bible that centers itself on a discipline that witnesses a regular change in both the amount of material and the interpretation of that material. Since the book was released (a little less than three years ago), several significant archaeological discoveries and issues have rendered material in the book either obsolete or entirely erroneous (e.g., The Tomb of Herod at the Herodium was recently discovered and is being excavated; *vis a vis* the call out on Herod, 1627). The James Ossuary and the discovery of the correct location for the Pool of Siloam

(contra, 1739) are other examples of a fluid discipline. One of the sayings in archaeological work is that “in archaeology absolute truth is good for about five years.” Without a plan for reprinting and updating the text, this work is already half way through that time frame and will become less valuable as time progresses.

In short, this work is a spectacular achievement in terms of the mechanics of publishing. The written notes are by and large helpful in terms of information, but not always helpful in assisting to interpret a passage. The volume suffers from an attempt to do too much in terms of content by taking a specialized subject that does not lend itself well to a “study Bible” format. Some might find it useful; but other specialized works on biblical archaeology will serve student and layman with greater satisfaction.

Paul Lawrence. *The IVP Atlas of Bible History*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006. 188 pp. \$40.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Michael A. Grisanti, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

This volume is part of a growing collection of helpful reference works produced by InterVarsity Press. Its purpose is to present the broad sweep of biblical history, based primarily on written sources. After a few introductory pages covering the big picture, 104 pages focus on the OT, 12 on the Intertestamental Period, and 45 deal with the NT. Interspersed throughout the atlas are almost 100 superb maps, over 140 color photographs, 20 site plans and reconstructions, various chronological charts, and drawings of recent historical and archaeological finds. The book concludes with a one-page glossary and bibliography, a subject and Scripture index, and a gazetteer (of locations).

The atlas works through OT and NT history, allotting about 2 pages for each topic, event, or issue in that history. All pages have clear photos, maps, artistic reconstructions, or charts. In addition to the methodological overview of biblical history, a number of special studies (on different colored paper) are interspersed throughout the book: languages of the Bible, the geography of Canaan, the climate of Canaan, agriculture of Canaan, writing, neighbors of Israel and Judah, warfare and fortification, trade of Tyre, the Romans, amulets and scrolls, Jerusalem in NT times, Rome, archives and libraries in the ancient world, and travel in the Roman world.

Although this volume does not offer the same coverage as a dedicated atlas, it serves as a very helpful companion volume for a study of biblical history. It combines an overview of biblical history with numerous maps, photos, and charts.

John MacArthur. *The Truth War*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007. 224 pp. \$22.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Gregory H. Harris, Professor of Bible Exposition.

The Bible reveals some future drastic changes in mentality regarding God's Word that has already begun and will progressively grow worse before the Lord's return. In his death-row epistle, in what would become the final chapter he ever wrote, the apostle Paul both charged, instructed, and explained the necessity of what his beloved Timothy—and any other future beloved Timothy—must do. Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 4:1-4:

I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

Several crucial matters from this final epistle of Paul are significant. First, the "they" (4:3) who will not endure sound doctrine refers to people who call themselves Christians; atheists have never endured sound doctrine. Second, the Bible clearly states that, contrary to what some may claim, "sound doctrine" does exist, otherwise they could not turn away from it. Third, coupled with this, those who turn will know at least the corpus of what the Bible presents as sound doctrine; that is, though they may never have held it personally, they certainly abandon previously held orthodox theology. Fourth, and perhaps most important in understanding this mindset, "they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires (*epithumia*, used regularly in the NT for the word "lust," such as a cognate verb used in Matt 5:28). In other words, the order is important: their lusts will already have been established; they will then go out, literally in the Greek, "to collect" teachers who support and justify their own lusts, which they most likely will not acknowledge. Fifth, in a summary statement of how God views this, such people "will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths." Sadly, this is an accurate description of what many today call evangelical Christianity; this phenomenon is the basis for John MacArthur's *The Truth War*.

The introduction alone (ix-xxvii) should convince the reader that contending for truth is not an option for those who take God, His Word, and their own walk seriously. A foundational question to be addressed at the beginning is "What is truth?" MacArthur repeatedly calls the reader not only to define truth biblically, but also repeatedly emphasizes its all-encompassing significance, since establishing what is and is not truth determines eternal destinies. MacArthur argues, "Here is a simple definition drawn from what the Bible teaches: *truth is that which is consistent with the mind, will, character, glory, and being of God*. Even more to the point: *truth is the self-expression of God*" (2, emphasis in the original). He remains true to this definition throughout the book.

If one is not alarmed by the end of the second chapter ("Can Truth Survive in a Postmodern Society?"), he most likely will neither finish nor like the remainder of the book. New theologies spring up (especially the Emerging Church), and their

proponents think they have stumbled upon some new and vibrant teaching. MacArthur shows that it is simply rather a repackaging of previously held false doctrines and agrees with The Preacher of Ecclesiastes that “nothing new under the sun” (1:9) exists. The author traces the quest of secular human philosophers to define and explain truth (4-9), and how this led to “Modernity” that was characterized by accepting only what can be proven by the scientific method (9-10). He shows reasons why Modernity should be followed by “Post Modernity” (10-16), which in spite of how it defines truth is at its core agnostic. In a section entitled “Uncertainty Is the New Truth,” (16-23) MacArthur traces some previous heresies that afflicted the church in the past (thus the nothing-new-under-the-sun scenario), and then draws the reader into its modern application with “War in the Church” (23-26). The last section is important in that much of what happened *outside* the church (in essence 1-15) gradually creeps *inside* the church (16-26), but comes in subtly and unannounced to all but those who are biblically diligent.

It is a sign of the times that a book such as *The Truth Wars* is needed. The book would be most beneficial for individuals or groups studying the books of Jude or Second Peter. It will also be beneficial in responding to the author’s repetition of Jude’s appeal, “that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

Nicholas Perrin. *Thomas: The Other Gospel*. Louisville: WJK, 2007. 160 pp. \$19.95 (paper). Reviewed by William Varner, Professor of Biblical Studies, The Master’s College.

In the first decade after its 1945 discovery amid the sands of Egypt, the *Gospel of Thomas* was overshadowed by over a dozen other ancient texts discovered near the Dead Sea. Now that the storm over the long-unpublished texts from Qumran has passed, scholarly attention turned afresh to the most famous of the Coptic texts known as the Nag Hammadi Library. The so-called *Gospel of Thomas* (GT) has emerged as the darling of the “lost Christianities” crowd of alternative American scholars, many of whom are associates of the (in)famous Jesus Seminar. Certainly this text, consisting of 114 sayings of Jesus supposedly preserved by the apostle Thomas, has been a source for a large number of best-selling books, especially Elaine Pagels, whose popular works on GT have appeared on the best-seller lists for over a decade. Her current one is entitled *Beyond Belief*. The popularity of the GT among scholars in the Jesus Seminar stems from the fact that a sayings Gospel like GT appears to be similar to the hypothetical “Q” document that was supposedly a sayings Gospel as well.

Many evangelicals have tended to stay away from this discussion, even contemptuously casting the whole matter aside. But it is not evangelical books that are on the best seller lists—it is Pagels, Karen King and Bart Ehrman who command

a large readership today. They often present an apparently cogent argument for a first-century date for this document—a fact that Nick Perrin allows. But he is not willing to let this assault on traditional views of Jesus to go unnoticed any longer. He has taken the battle to them with a hard-hitting and scholarly satisfying work that weighs the most popular forms of Thomas scholarship, and finds them wanting.

Nicholas Perrin teaches at Wheaton Graduate School and once served as N. T. Wright's research assistant after receiving his doctorate from Marquette University. His dissertation was on the GT and was published as *Thomas and Tatian* (Brill, 2002). This new book is a more popular work that examines the most recent writings of three GT authors: Stephen Patterson, Elaine Pagels, and April DeConick, as well as a host of others influenced by the Bultmannian school (e.g., Helmut Koester, James Robinson).

Perrin's work is a model of thorough, painstaking scholarship expressed in a felicitous style. He is eminently fair to those with whom he disagrees, even pointing out the valuable arguments of the three Thomas scholars and acknowledging when their observations are correct. But Perrin mounts a withering attack on the supposed first-century date of the GT, and brings his considerable knowledge of both Coptic and Syriac to bear on the questions of both the dating and the conceptual world in which the author of the GT lived and wrote. One surprising observation is that Perrin does not see the GT as part of the Gnostic movement of the second century. He does place it, however, within an ascetic movement that was prevalent in Edessan Syria at the end of the second century.

In this reviewer's opinion, he has established beyond doubt that the author of GT drew on the first Gospel harmony, the *Diatessaron* by Tatian, which was completed in Syria around A.D. 173. He does this by a painstaking comparison of some Jesus sayings in Tatian's *Diatessaron* with how they are expressed in GT. The sayings are closer to the *Diatessaron* than to the canonical Gospels. He also illustrates that the aberrant theology of Tatian, a mix of Hermeticism and anti-Jewish mysticism, can be clearly discerned in GT.

The conclusion is simple. If the GT was penned after A.D. 173, it does not derive from the first century and its value as another source for understanding the "real" Jesus is sorely diminished! Furthermore, though it may be a valuable source for understanding Syrian Christianity in the late second century, it pales in value before the eyewitness testimony of the canonical Gospels, each of which dates from the first century.

Perrin's painstaking search for the "real" Gospel of Thomas reads like a scholarly detective story. After he has finished his scholarly destruction of the first-century date for GT, Perrin has some perceptive comments about the Jesus that emerge from the document. He is a teacher who does no miracles, who does not die and rise again, who has shed all his Jewish context, and who provides no objective salvation for anyone, but points people to know themselves from within. His personal comments at the end of his own search are quite perceptive.

"Somehow, I suspect, we have heard this message before. Somehow we

have met this Jesus before. The Gospel of Thomas invites us to imagine a Jesus who says, 'I am not your saviour, but the one who can put you in touch with your true self. Free yourself from your gender, from your body, and any concerns you might have for the outside world. Work for it and self-realization, salvation will be yours—in this life.' Imagine such a Jesus? (a veiled reference to a John Lennon song?) One need hardly work very hard. This is precisely the Jesus we know too well, the existential Jesus that so many western evangelical and liberal churches already preach. Perhaps the original Thomas community was pleased to have a Jesus who could be divested of his Jewish story and domesticated to their way of seeing things. Perhaps too the early church fathers rejected this sayings collection because they had little patience for anyone or anything that might confuse their hope of a new creation with something approaching a Christianized self-help philosophy" (139).

We owe Nicholas Perrin a great debt for his meticulous research and for sharing the results with readers in a most understandable manner. I wish this work a widespread readership. It is highly recommend for those who may be unduly impressed with a writing that well-deserved its rejection by the church in the third and fourth centuries.

Klyne Snodgrass. *Stories with Intent. A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 845 pp. \$50.00 (cloth). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Adjunct Professor of Bible Exposition.

The writer supplies a "resource book" to help people, in many settings, be "fully informed" (xi). He orients preachers and teachers (3). A vast steeping in literature fuses help for parables from many ancient sources (37-59). Copious examples enrich comments as he averages about fifteen pages each on thirty-two parables (61-564). He devotes more space to some, such as thirty-three pages on the sower; on others he is brief, as in five and a half pages on the pearl.

Snodgrass is on the faculty of North Park Theological Seminary, and invested several years to think through and craft this prolific project.

Six pages of abbreviations at the outset show immersion in a wide variety of sources—commentaries, journals, church histories, early church writings, the Babylonian Talmud, archaeology, lexicons, translations, Dead Sea discoveries, the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, Josephus, Jewish history, Bible versions, theologies, and theological dictionaries.

Here is much for meticulous interaction. The work ranks with and often has longer discussions than standout evangelical contributions by such as Arland J. Hultgren (still the most direct, useful all-around commentary in this reviewer's opinion, called *The Parables of Jesus, a Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000]), Stanley Ellisen's masterful and articulate premillennial work, *Parables in the Eye of the Storm* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001), and Simon Kistemaker's Reformed

effort, *The Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980). Until now the top general guide to the parables is Craig Blomberg's *An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. These works leap to vital substance while Snodgrass does it by and by, and Hultgren is verse by verse. Yet the Snodgrass book does steep readers in more views on details, and has more critiques to sift opinions.

Snodgrass exalts Jesus as "the master creator of story" (1). The work is against manipulations that foist in esoteric, allegorical whims (2). Snodgrass' zeal is to let users hear what Jesus really meant. This reviewer feels that in many cases he succeeds. Granted, one needs to wade through bogs of discussion, and not have issues pin-pointed as quickly as in other works mentioned earlier.

Snodgrass is usually clear, but some statements need reworking to remove obscurity. He sounds different notes on the time the nobleman's return (Luke 19) represents for Jesus. He denies that in this case the kingdom is to come at the parousia (539; cf. 533), yet does an about-face to have it at the parousia (542). To his credit, he is firm against views that the kingdom came when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, or in A. D. 70. In Matthew 13 he has wheat and tares focus on the presence of the kingdom; these actually appear to teach a present-age mingling of saved and unsaved but look on to a separation at the future coming of the kingdom. He sees the dragnet as dealing with future, end-time exclusion from the kingdom. It is a strain to see consistency amid the ponderous reasoning. Though he has the kingdom present in Jesus' ministry (cf. 246, treasure and pearl), he often expects its fullness at the end of this age (514).

Wording in frequent places leaves one groping to decide the meaning (cf. 529, top two lines). The work at times bogs one in discussions that contribute light only now and then. But he is often helpful on customs and examples from relevant ancient literature that support the reasonableness of Jesus' statements. He defends against claims that details in the parables are not sensible, and rejects views forced upon details. He is often clear that while the NT teaches salvation by grace and never works, it gives a serious and valid place to godly works as leading on to future blessing.

Eleven points on "Characteristics of Jesus' Parables" (17-22) are provocative. So are his eleven guides for sensible interpretations and avoiding the foisting in of foreign notions (24-31).

Endnotes document a vast back-up of detail from incredibly ambitious research (579-770). The bibliography covers 771-815. One can lose much time seeking to turn from interpretive sections to later endnote sections to read a specific note. Hultgren, by contrast, efficiently has notes immediately on the same pages.

Occasionally one feels the writer himself gets things askew. He feels that the sower and soils deals with "sowing the true Israel in her own land" (156). The point really is about sowing the word of the kingdom (cf. Matt 13:19) in the soils of individual hearts that genuinely receive it (e.g., vv. 19, 23), in contrast to hearts that do not seriously receive it (19-22) and God's success in His kingdom program.

Snodgrass is precise in sorting out views of the workers in the vineyard

(Matt 20:1-16). He sees God's goodness and the idea that the reward God gives people, by His judgment, is not based on strict human calculation and human standards of justice. The latter arises from envy as complainers fancy by their own speculations that they are justified to receive more reward. One can find this in Matt 20:10 where the first hired thought they would have more (376-77). On the unjust steward, the writer lists sixteen views. His own idea is that the steward cheats his master to set himself up with clients; he should be seen as unrighteous by his boss, the Gospel writer, and hearers. He does not think that the view that the steward shrewdly yet honestly cut away his own profit or interest to ease the clients' payments will stand up to scrutiny. But some will not condone his dismissing of this view; they will feel that his logic is arbitrary and reasonably answered. Granted, the matter is most difficult to interpret, and variant views persist. Snodgrass, as in many cases, insightfully handles most details of the parable

For in-depth seminary and Bible college teaching, the work offers astute stimulation and perspective. For seriously diligent pastors as well, this is true, but one can debate if having the longer work is utilitarian or feasible for the budget. As stated earlier, such works as those by Hultgren, Ellisen, and Kistemaker press quite capably to main issues and make most things more readily available.

Laurence M. Vance. *Greek Verbs in the New Testament and Their Principal Parts*. Pensacola, Fla.: Vance Publications, 2006. 236 pp. \$14.95 (paper). Reviewed by Paul W. Felix, Assistant Professor of New Testament.

A book on the principal parts of Greek verbs probably does not rank high among the books to be purchased by students of the NT. Yet, proficiency in the exegesis of the NT requires that an individual learns the principal parts of selected Greek verbs. One approach to doing this is to memorize the list mechanically. Another method is to learn the principal parts with the aid of various rules that enhance the memorization process. *Greek Verbs in the New Testament and Their Principal Parts* has been written to help students, and even teachers, of NT Greek, to understand the variations in the principal parts of Greek verbs, so that the task of memorizing them is simplified. The author, Laurence M. Vance, is also a publisher, the editor of the *Classic Reprints* series, and the director of the Francis Wayland Institute.

Vance labels his work as a handbook that is much more than a book on morphology. It classifies every verb of the Greek New Testament into one of the following categories: Regular Verbs; "Second" Verbs (verbs that have alternate forms of the aorist and/or perfect); Contract Verbs; Liquid Verbs; $\mu\iota$ Verbs; Irregular Verbs. The first five categories are the author's subdivisions for regular verbs. Each of the categories forms the six chapters of the book, with each chapter having a brief introduction of a few pages. The principal parts that actually occur

in the NT are given for each verb. At times, a brief explanation that alerts the reader to any peculiarities in the principal parts follows the listing of the verb.

This book also contains an introduction and an index. The introduction is essential reading. It informs the reader how best to use the book. In this chapter, one discovers the “rules” which apply to the various forms of the verb that aid in learning its principal parts. The author discusses principal parts, classification of consonants, augment, reduplication, compound verbs, and verb stem changes, with the purpose of laying a foundation for the rest of the book. The index is quite detailed (137-214). It provides an alphabetical listing of every verb in the Greek NT, along with its category, frequency, and principal parts.

Vance is to be commended for the effort expended in producing this work. Any book that encourages and helps the student of NT Greek to learn principal parts is a welcomed addition to the available resources for study of the Greek language. This work discusses principal parts in greater depth than most grammar books. Yet it is not as comprehensive as the recent morphology books of William D. Mounce, *The Morphology of Biblical Greek* (Zondervan, 1994) and James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, *A Morphology of New Testament Greek* (University Press of America, 1994). Possibly, due to its size and cost in comparison with standard morphological works, this book will find its way into the library of students of the Greek language.

Greek Verbs in the New Testament and Their Principal Parts ignores the current debate about the legitimacy of “deponent” verbs. An awareness of this controversy should be highlighted, since the intended audience of the book includes teachers of NT Greek. A glossary could make Vance’s work even more useful. That would save the user valuable time by not having to read through the introduction to each chapter to determine what is meant by “Doric future” or “Attic reduplication.” The book advertises a link to a webpage (www.vancepublications.com/corrections) that will contain any errors discovered in the principal parts of verbs and also a listing of answers to inquiries about why the principal parts of a particular verb differ from the ones listed in other books. When the reviewer went to the website he received “Page not found.” Even if there is no information to list, the webpage should be valid and indicate this.

Individuals who are on a limited budget and who want to focus strictly on the principal parts of Greek verbs should purchase Vance’s work. The material Vance provides can usually be found in books which focus on the morphology of the Greek NT.

Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed. *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 896 pp. (cloth). \$43.95. Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Director of the Seminary Library.

For the last two decades, one of the helpful trends in theological publishing has been to produce useful reference materials for the scholar, pastor, and student. Prior to this trend, many of the most important and useful reference works were 30 to 50 years out of date. The expansion of theological categories, the increased specialization, and new avenues and methodologies of exegetical investigation have also increased the need for clear and concise definitions and explanations.

The editor of the *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, the Research Professor of Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has led the effort in this work to produce one of the most useful and well-conceived new reference works for biblical studies.

The general layout and formatting of the work are typical of a standard reference work. It has an excellent Scripture index and a list of articles by category and a very helpful "Topical Index" (869–77). The articles are generally longer and more detailed than in most reference works and the bibliography for each article is extensive. The generous uses of "See" and "See Also" notations are a great aid.

The articles reflect some helpful work on more recent topics of controversy, such as the "New Perspective on Paul" located in the article on "Justification by Faith" (417–19). Oddly though, some important articles that might have been included were ignored, such as the New Covenant. Each book of the Bible has an individual article with a discussion of the theological import of the book and the "theological interpretation" of the book as a whole or in significant sections.

This work has many excellent articles, to which a review such as this cannot do justice. However, several are particularly noteworthy. John H. Walton's article on "Etymology" (200-202) is excellent. The discussion of the theological and interpretative import of "Geography" by John A. Beck (253-56) is an important and often neglected or misused aspect in the hermeneutical process. Craig Bartholomew's article on "Postmodernity and Biblical Interpretation" (600-606) is quite helpful in sorting out a mass of information and the directions of this movement.

The direction for the entire work though begins with the editor's Introduction, "What Is Theological Interpretation of the Bible" (19-25). He explains what the process is and, more important, is not. He notes, "Theological interpretation is not an imposition of a theological system or confessional grid onto the text of the biblical text. . . . Theological interpretation is not simply what dogmatic theologians do when they use the Bible to support their respective doctrinal positions" (19). He states the work's main purpose:

The dictionary editors believe that the principal interest of the Bible's authors, of the text itself, and of the original community of readers was theological: reading the Scriptures therefore meant coming to hear God's word and to know God better. *DTIB* therefore aims not to impose yet another agenda or ideology onto the Bible, but rather to recover the Bible's original governing interest (22).

This work is a welcome addition to the world of biblical and theological reference. In a realm where biblical study and theological study are often done in

isolation from each other or in simplistic proof-texting, this work will prove to be a valuable resource. This reviewer recommends it highly.

Brian Vickers. *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2006. \$14.99 (paper). 254 pages. Reviewed by Trevor P. Craigen, Professor of Theology.

“Thoroughly done!” and/or “Worthwhile reading!” are probable exclamations voiced soon after starting to read Vickers’ book. Wholehearted agreement with every point, observation, and statement made, and conclusion drawn is not necessarily being signaled thereby, but the quality and depth of research done is being acknowledged and commended. Vickers may have produced one of the most detailed examinations of Paul’s theology of imputation to the present day.

His confident aim is to investigate those words of Paul which traditionally belong to this subject, namely, Rom 4:3-8 and 5:19 and 2 Cor 5:21. Other verses usually conceptually linked with these three main passages, namely 1 Cor 1:30; Phil 3:9; and Rom 9:30–10:4, also receive due consideration. The bottom-line question is whether or not the three main texts are dealing with exactly the same thing (16-17). Further, Vickers cautions against expecting too much from one text. Wisely said, since when one comes to deal with the last clause in Romans 5:12 that has been *the* problem faced by exegete and theologian alike—saying far more than the text says. Vickers is firmly committed to gaining a complete perspective and a full understanding by a synthesis of Paul’s teaching (17). Though Vickers found it necessary in places to incorporate material from systematic and historical theologies, his book is really a good example of “exegetical theology.”

The forty-six page opening chapter, “Tracing Trajectories: The History of Imputation,” introduces the reader to an historical overview of this doctrine. Mention is made of the writings and interpretations of Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin. Eight Confessions, stretching from 1559-1689 and across Europe from East to West, showed an affirmation of both negative and positive imputation (38). John Owen and Jonathan Edwards are included in the overview, as are the German biblical-theological writers, e.g., Käseman and Stuhlmacher, *inter alia*, and their variations (45-53). Under the heading, “A Covenant of a Different Color,” Vickers surveys N. T. Wright, E. P. Sanders, and James D. G. Dunn. Other recognized scholarly commentators of today are also mentioned, such as Thomas Schreiner, Douglas Moo, Leon Morris, George Ladd, and John Murray *inter alia* (62-64). Many lengthy and informative footnotes adorn the pages of the overview, and the rest of the book as well, providing details which might be of interest to those who would like to step beyond the narrow confines of exegesis only, and devote more time to the history of the doctrine. What the reader learns from this concisely written survey is that the term imputation is neither monolithic in theology, nor is it possible

to speak of it in general terms. “There are ‘views’ of imputation, not a general concept of imputation” is Vickers’ final observation (68).

In forty pages of densely packed detail, the author exegetically analyzes Abraham and his faith, “reckoned righteous,” imputation and non-imputation, the close connection to forgiveness of sin, and then closes off chapter 2, “The Reckoning of Righteousness: Abraham, Faith and Imputation,” with a study of Paul’s use of λογίζομαι. Chapter 3 upholds the reputation of the first two chapters by also being full of information and perhaps sporting some of the longest footnotes in the book—it is almost as though Vickers was writing two books, one in the footnotes and one in the main text! In this chapter, “The Foundation of Righteousness: Romans 5:19,” the author undertakes a meticulous study of the term καθίστημι, “to constitute,” “to make,” which is not synonymous with λογίζομαι, “to reckon,” the term Paul selected for use in Romans 4. The OT, the Septuagint, and the NT are culled for their contribution to understanding the meaning and significance of this key term in Paul’s argument. Vickers is not intimidated by having to force this term to somehow resemble λογίζομαι (122). What one is “made” depends upon one’s identification with either Adam or Christ, a profound point in that each person possesses his status as sinner or as saint, because he was made so by the actions of another. A study of the important little phrase ἐφ’ ᾧ receives much attention in determining whether or not it is to be understood and taken as causal or as relative. Grammar alone, it is determined, cannot determine the meaning of this verse (127). When it comes down to matters of sin and death, then an explanation of how Adam stands in relation to his posterity, particularly in the clause “all sinned,” just cannot be left without explanation. The differing explanations and descriptions are sorted into six interpretations, each one with a brief definition attached. Vickers issues a strong critique of the Realist position, i.e., that all humanity was in Adam (128-33). This interpretation was not his preference. That the crucial clause refers to the actual sins of individuals or to personal sins, is also unacceptable. However, the Representational view, or Federalism or Federal Headship, i.e., Adam’s sin is their sin since he is their representative head is given a favorable rating. Here the relationship of Adam to humanity is a forensic reality in which “all sinned” does not refer to personal sins (133). Federalism, as to be expected, skips a beat in exegesis, introducing a non-existent covenant into the scenario, and using terms such as “covenant-like” (150) to make God in relation to Adam fit into such a setting. This is not exactly a demonstration of exegesis as carried out elsewhere in the book.

Either it is, or it is not, a covenant. Suffice it to say that this is not the only way to deal with the Christ-Adam parallel in Paul’s teaching. In fact, with regard to Adam’s transgression and his posterity, “imputation” may very well not be the right term to use

An interesting exercise would be for Vickers to interact with David Turner’s word studies and his exegetical/theological argumentation for what could be labeled the “personal sins view” or “the unexplained solidarity view” which he so methodically presented in his 1982 doctoral dissertation at Grace Theological

Seminary. “Adam, Christ and Us: Paul’s Teaching on Solidarity in Romans 5:12-21,” was disappointingly missing from Vickers’ bibliography. Frankly, the depth of research evidenced throughout the book makes one wonder why it was overlooked. It was bound to have been found! His treatment of the aorist as gnomic in 5:12d (“because all sinned”) is most helpful, as is his lengthy and thorough word studies on καθίστημι, ἐφ’ ᾧ, and πάντες ἡμαρτον. “All sinned” refers to the personal individual sins of all men, which are committed due to an *unexplained solidarity* with Adam. His original sin introduced into the world as a hostile power, death, which permeated all men on the fulfilled condition that all sinned—all are caught up in the unavoidable nexus of sin and death. Turner finds no support for the doctrine of the imputation of Adam’s first sin, whether conceived representatively or realistically. Turner also observes in his concluding exposition that Adam’s sin made his people sinners, whereas Christ’s redemption made His people righteous (Turner, 280). One thought in the “unexplained solidarity view,” is a recognition that Paul is not presenting a theory in Romans 5, but is appealing to the acknowledged facts (1) that one sinned and so all sinned, and one died so all died, and (2) that the acts of two men had an impact upon their people. Those aware of Turner’s dissertation may feel the urge to check it out and think it through again.

No specifically clear reference that sins are reckoned to Christ or that Christ’s righteousness is reckoned to believers, can be found in the text (159). With that being said, Vickers tackles the chapter, “The Provision of Righteousness: 2 Corinthians 5:21,” and conducts a study of the phrase, “made to be sin.” The OT background provided by Leviticus and Isaiah, and the language of vicarious sacrifice, atonement, and forgiveness, reconciliation, and the role of the Suffering Servant therein, all point to a sacrificial interpretation for “God made him who had no sin *to be sin* in 2 Corinthians 5:21” (170, 190). The end result is clear: a synthesis of Pauline writings finds that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to believers (232). Vickers concludes too, as he opens chapter 5, “The Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness: A Pauline Synthesis,” that Paul is not saying the same thing in different ways in the three main texts examined, yet the same basic subject of what it means to be right with God is in view in all three passages. These texts must be read together, in what he calls “a synoptical reading” (192), because read by themselves they do not present the whole story of how a man can be right with God. However, common elements prevail too. The most noticeable common contextual feature of these verses is the reality of “God doing something in or through Christ that applies to the believer.” Another is, “a distinct absence of any sort of personal contribution toward a righteous standing before God” (194). Note what is observed about each text read by itself: “in each text it is God acting in and through Christ on behalf of sinners undeserving of God’s grace, who by faith in Jesus have their sins forgiven, are reconciled to God, and declared righteous” (195). What is with the synoptical reading then? To get the whole story? Practically, though, the whole story is expressed in each of these texts, but comparison of them will note diversity of vocabulary and context, which might very well provide a fuller perspective (192).

At this point, as the secondary level of verses begins to be surveyed, the reader perhaps gains the impression that the book is already over, for nothing new will be brought forward. The short, concise section on the obedience of the Second Adam does show He is undoubtedly qualified to be the spotless Lamb of God, the perfect sacrifice for sin. Quietly, one might say here, Vickers leaves the matter of active and passive obedience on the side, not as though he had not treated it before (115, 133, 146-48).

The strength of the book is its seemingly unending stream of information at every turn, so that, frankly, at times the reader feels quite overwhelmed, drowning in the details, so to speak. Reading it might be heavy going at first, but a disciplined reading will bear fruit in the thinking of exegete and theologian alike. The reader having done with Vickers book may wish to read again Leon Morris' *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, which received favorable comment although he uses the traditional language with hesitancy, "or in language more nuanced and without the same detail" (65) as traditional Reformed theologians, but whose conclusions are the result of careful exegesis. *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness* is fully deserving of another slower reading and worthy of being an assigned text with which to interact weekly in a postgraduate seminar.

Bruce A. Ware. *Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles, & Relevance*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2005. 173 pp. \$14.99 (paper). Reviewed by Cliff McManis, TMS Alumnus and Associate Professor of Theology, The Cornerstone Seminary.

Professor Bruce Ware teaches systematic theology at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. This work is the by-product of a lecture series given at a pastors' conference in March, 2004 (11). In chapter one he delineates eleven reasons why Christians should study the doctrine of the Trinity (13-22). Eight of those eleven emphasize the *functional* inner-workings of the Trinity, in keeping with the subtitle of the book that accentuates "relevance."

In chapter two, Ware chronicles three foundational axioms of the Trinity with a cursory overview of what the early church believed. The first is *Scriptural Monotheism* (24-28), emphasizing the biblical truth of only one true God. Here he invokes standard passages like Deut 6:4, 1 Kgs 8:59, Isa 45:5-6, John 17:3, 1 Tim 2:5, 1 Cor 8:6, and others. The second axiom he labels *Scriptural Trinitarianism* (29-35). Here he shows from the NT that Jesus is deity and equal to the Father in status, yet distinct from the Father in identity. He summarizes the unique relationship between Jesus and the Father with the adage, "Identity and distinction, equivalency and difference" (31). Distilled exposition of standard texts include John 1:1, 14; 8:58; Mark 2; and Hebrews 1. The third and final axiom is, *Scriptural Trinitarianism: The Church's Formulation* (35-42). Here he surveys the Arian heresy, the

importance of the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 and implications of the Council of Constantinople in 381. From the three above axioms Ware posits his formal version of an orthodox definition of the Trinity which is as follows: “The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that God’s whole and undivided essence belongs equally, eternally, simultaneously, and fully to each of the three distinct Persons of the Godhead” (41).

The next three chapters are dedicated to functional relations among the three Persons of the Trinity (43-130), with a chapter emphasizing each of the three respective Persons. Here Ware ardently argues the case of eternal subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit within the Trinity. Detractors of his view are repeatedly labeled “egalitarian” (72, 80, 88, 138, 143). The three Persons of the Trinity have clearly demarcated roles, with an inherent eternal hierarchy of authority and submission—with the Father as preeminent. This irrevocable order of authority and submission that exists within the Trinity, Ware calls *taxis*, a technical term he wields at least fifteen times (72-73, 77, 85, 96, 122, 151, 153, 156-58). Chapter three addresses the Father, where the author asserts seventeen times that “the Father is...supreme within the Godhead.” The theme of chapter four is “that Jesus’ submission to the Father extends from eternity past to eternity future” (84). Chapter five highlights the Holy Spirit’s inter-trinitarian role, which entails advancing “the work of the Son, to the glory of the Father” who “embraces eternally the backstage position in relation to the Father and the Son” (104); who “assists” the Father (105); who takes “a backseat to the Son and the Father” (125), in eternity past, in time and in eternity future.

The last chapter is dedicated to explaining ten practical applications that Christians are to assimilate in daily living after the model of the eternal inner-workings of the Trinity (131-58). Paramount among these is the principle of “authority and submission” (137). This resonates with Ware’s overarching theme that weaves through every chapter: “The Father is supreme in authority, the Son is under the Father, and the Spirit is under the Father and the Son” (131).

The late Carl F. H. Henry wrote in 1982, “American evangelical theology has not on the whole contributed significant literature to the current revival of trinitarian interest” (*God, Revelation and Authority*, V:212). He may have spoken too soon, for since then many notable works have been generated, including Demarest and Lewis, *Integrative Theology* (1987); Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (1994); White, *The Forgotten Trinity* (1998); Erickson, *Making Sense of the Trinity* (2000); Feinberg, *No One Like Him* (2001); Geisler, *Systematic Theology* (2003); Culver, *Systematic Theology* (2005). And now, most recently, Ware’s work can be added to the list.

One strength of Ware’s book is that it is Scripturally-driven—the book is saturated with biblical texts. This is in stark contrast with many other standard works on the Trinity, like Rahner’s *The Trinity* (1967), which is totally void of Scripture. Ware’s allegiance to biblical terminology might explain his conspicuous avoidance of typical trinitarian words like “economic,” “immanent,” “ontological,” and “*perichoresis*” that abound in other works (although he champions the word *taxis* to

an extreme). Like a growing number of theologians (e.g., Erickson, Feinberg, Geisler), Ware frowns upon the phrases “eternal generation of the Son” and “eternal procession of the Spirit” as historically understood because they are “highly speculative” and not biblical (162). The greatest strength of the book is his emphasis on practical application. He makes a convincing case for the relevance of the doctrine of the Triune God in the daily life of the believer—examples abound. His writing style is also lucid, systematic, logical, and accessible to the average lay person.

As for weaknesses, the reader might frequently be confused by Ware’s strong “subordinationist” perspective. He seems to make no clear distinction between trinitarian subordination within the economic Trinity versus the immanent Trinity. Orthodoxy has always affirmed *functional* subordination within the Godhead, but has rejected *ontological* subordination. Clarity on his position would have proved helpful.

Any serious Bible student who wants to delve into trinitarian studies should add Ware to the list as a must read. But it can’t be read in isolation—his “eternal subordinationist” slant needs to be ameliorated by the contemporary works of Erickson, White, and Feinberg, who argue for temporal subordination. In addition, reference is also warranted to the classic articles on the Trinity by Carl F. H. Henry and B. B. Warfield, both of whom cautioned against overly aggressive eternal subordinationist interpretations.