

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS¹

John F. MacArthur, Jr.
President and Professor of Pastoral Ministries

Peter's life exemplifies what the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints means in the life of a faltering believer. Christ's present intercessory prayers assure that genuine believers will be saved to the uttermost. This is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Those with true faith will not lead perfect lives, though some have attributed such a claim to proponents of working-faith salvation. The teaching of "once saved, always saved" may carry the false implication that after "accepting Christ" a person may live any kind of life and still be saved. That leaves out the doctrine of perseverance, which carries with it the need for a holy life. Peter in his first epistle furnishes six means through which God causes every Christian to persevere: by regenerating them to a living hope, by keeping them through His power, by strengthening them through tests of faith, by preserving them for ultimate glory, by motivating them with love for the Savior, and by saving them through a working faith. Quantification of how much failure the doctrine of perseverance allows is impossible, but Jesus did prescribe a way for the church to deal with a professing believer whose life sin had seemingly come to dominate.

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In order to place the doctrine of perseverance in proper light we need to know what it is not. It does not mean that every one who professes faith in Christ and who is accepted as a believer in the fellowship of the saints is secure for eternity and may entertain the assurance of eternal salvation. Our Lord himself warned his followers in the days of his flesh when he said to those Jews who

¹This essay is adapted from chapter 11 of John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles* (Dallas: Word, 1993).

believed on him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye truly my disciples, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32). He set up a criterion by which true disciples might be distinguished, and that criterion is continuance in Jesus' Word.²

²John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955) 151-52.

The above explanation by Murray of the doctrine of perseverance is an elaboration of what Peter meant by his words "protected by the power of God" when he wrote his first epistle (1 Pet 1:5).³ If any biblical character was ever prone to failure, it was Simon Peter. Judging from the biblical record, none of the Lord's disciples`excluding Judas the betrayer`stumbled more often or more miserably than he. Peter was the disciple with the foot-shaped mouth. He seemed to have a knack for saying the worst possible thing at the most inappropriate time. He was impetuous, erratic, vacillating`sometimes cowardly, sometimes weak, sometimes hotheaded. On several occasions he merited strong rebukes from the Lord, none more severe than that recorded in Matt 16:23: "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's." That occurred almost immediately after the high point in Peter's experience with Christ, when Peter confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16).

Peter's life is proof that a true believer's spiritual experience is often filled with ups and downs, but Peter illustrates another biblical truth, a more significant one: the keeping power of God. On the night Jesus was betrayed, He gave Peter an insight into the behind-the-scenes spiritual battle over Peter's soul: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but *I have prayed for you*, that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22:31-32, emphasis added).

Peter was confident of his willingness to stand with Jesus, whatever the cost. He told the Lord, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death" (Luke 22:33). Yet Jesus knew the truth and sadly told Peter, "The cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me" (Luke 22:34).

Did Peter fail? Yes, miserably. Was his faith overthrown? Never. Jesus Himself was interceding on Peter's behalf, and His prayers did not go unanswered.

The Lord intercedes for all genuine believers that way. John 17:11 gives a glimpse of how He prays for them: "I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, *keep them in Thy name*, the name which Thou has given Me, that they may be one, even as We are" (emphasis added).

He continues:

I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to *keep them from the evil one*. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

³All Scripture quotations in this article are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in the truth. I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou has given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me (John 17:15-23, emphasis added).

Notice what the Lord was praying for: that believers would be kept from the power of evil; that they would be sanctified by the Word; that they would share His sanctification and glory; and that they would be perfected in their union with Christ and one another. He was praying that they would persevere in the faith.

Was the Lord praying for the eleven faithful disciples only? No. He explicitly includes every believer in all succeeding generations: "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word" (v. 20). That includes all true Christians, even in the present day!

Moreover, the Lord Himself is continuing His intercessory ministry for believers right now. "He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb 7:25). The King James Version translates Heb 7:25 thus: "He is able also to *save them to the uttermost* that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (emphasis added).

SAVED TO THE UTTERMOST

All true believers will be saved to the uttermost. Christ's High Priestly ministry guarantees it. They have been justified, they are being sanctified, and they will be glorified. Not one of them will miss out on any stage of the process, though in this life they all find themselves at different points along the way. The truth has been known historically as *the perseverance of the saints*.

No doctrine has been more savaged by the system of theology that advocates merely intellectual faith as the condition of salvation,⁴ because the doctrine of perseverance is antithetical to the entire system that is so oriented. In fact, what proponents of this system have pejoratively labeled "lordship salvation" is nothing other than the doctrine of perseverance!

Perseverance means that "those who have true faith can lose that faith neither totally nor finally."⁵ It echoes God's promise through Jeremiah: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; *and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me*" (32:40, emphasis added).

That flatly contradicts the notion entertained by some who teach that faith can evaporate, leaving "believers" who no longer believe.⁶ It opposes the radical easy-believism teaching that genuine Christians can choose to "drop out" of the spiritual growth process⁷

⁴Those who follow the system of merely intellectual faith for salvation have pejoratively assigned the label "lordship salvation" to the system that insists on a faith that works as the condition for salvation. They invented the title "lordship salvation" to convey the impression that the system so labeled contradicts the doctrine of justification by faith alone, because it adds another condition for salvation. That does not accurately represent the working faith position which clings to the justification-by-faith doctrine while noting that a submissive heart is not extraneous to saving faith. Though elsewhere I have employed the expression "lordship salvation" for the sake of argument, here I am using the more accurate expression "working-faith salvation" (cf. Jas 2:17). A faith that is void of submission is a merely intellectual faith, sometimes appropriately called "easy believism." "Easy believism" is the view that saving faith is a solely human act. Those who adopt such a view must then scale back the definition of faith so that believing is something that even depraved sinners are capable of.

⁵Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) 234.

⁶Cf. Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1989) 141.

⁷Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free!* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989) 79-89.

and "cease to confess Christianity."⁸ It is the polar opposite of the brand of theology that makes faith a "historic moment," a one-time "act" that secures heaven, but offers no guarantee the "believer's" earthly life will be changed.⁹

The Westminster Confession of Faith has defined perseverance as follows:

They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved (chap. 17, sec. 1).

This definition does not deny the possibility of miserable failings in one's Christian experience, because the Confession also said,

Nevertheless [believers] may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins; and for a time continue therein; whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his Holy Spirit: come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts; have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded; hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves (sec. 3).

Sin is a reality in the believer's experience, so it is clear that insistence on the salvific necessity of a working faith does not include the idea of perfectionism. Nevertheless, people steeped in the merely-intellectual-faith teaching often misunderstand the issue with regard to perseverance.

A Christian layman who has embraced easy-believism teaching wrote me a very graciously worded seventeen-page letter explaining why he rejects the working-faith doctrine. His complaint is that the latter theology "does not seem to allow for anything but highly successful Christian living."

Hodges makes a similar charge:

The belief that every Christian will live a basically successful life until the end is an illusion. It is not supported by the instruction and warnings of the New Testament. . . . It is not surprising that those who do not perceive this aspect of New Testament revelation have impoverished their ability to motivate both themselves and other

⁸Ibid., 111.

⁹Ibid., 63-64.

believers. Tragically, they often fall back on the technique of questioning the salvation of those whose lives seem not to meet Biblical standards. But in the process they undermine the grounds for a believer's assurance and take part however unwittingly in the siege of the Gospel.¹⁰

No advocate of working-faith salvation I am aware of teaches that "every Christian will live a basically successful life until the end." Hodges is quite right in saying the NT does not support such a view.

Murray, defending the doctrine of perseverance, acknowledged the difficulties it poses:

Experience, observation, biblical history, and certain Scripture passages would appear to provide very strong arguments against the doctrine. . . .

Is not the biblical record as well as the history of the church strewn with examples of those who have made shipwreck of the faith?¹¹

Certainly Scripture is filled with warnings to people in the church lest they should fall away (cf. Heb 6:4-8; 1 Tim 1:18-19; 2 Tim 2:16-19). Hodges suggests such warnings prove Christians can fall away: "If anyone supposes that no true Christian could quit, or would quit, they have not been paying attention to the Bible. They need to reread their New Testament, this time, with their eyes open."¹²

But God does not contradict Himself. The warning passages do not negate the many promises that believers will persevere:

Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him *shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life* (John 4:14).¹³

I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst (John 6:35).

You are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who shall also confirm you in the end, blameless in the day*

¹⁰Zane Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege* (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1981) 113.

¹¹Murray, *Redemption* 151.

¹²Hodges, *Absolutely Free!* 83.

¹³Ironically, Hodges continually cites Jesus' words to the woman at the well in John 4 as support for his system, but he neglects the truth of perseverance that is included in this promise.

of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor 1:7-9).

May the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely: and *may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame* at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and *He also will bring it to pass* (1 Thess 5:23-24).

They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for *if they had been of us, they would have remained with us*; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us (1 John 2:19).

Now unto *him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy*, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen (Jude 24-25, KJV, emphasis added in all citations).

Horne observed,

It is noteworthy that when Jude exhorts us to keep ourselves in the love of God (v. 21) he concludes with a doxology for Him who is able to keep us from falling and who will present us without blemish before the presence of His glory (v. 24). The warning passages are *means* which God uses in our life to accomplish His purpose in grace.¹⁴

And, it could be added, the warning passages like Jude 21 reveal that the writers of Scripture were very keen to alert those whose hope of salvation might be grounded in a spurious faith. Obviously the apostolic authors were not laboring under the illusion that every person in the churches to whom they were writing was genuinely converted.¹⁵

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?

It is crucial to understand what the biblical doctrine of perseverance does *not* mean. It does not mean that people who "accept Christ" can then live any way they please without fear of hell. The expression "eternal security" is often used in this sense, as is "once saved, always saved." Kendall, arguing for the latter phrase, defines its meaning thus:

¹⁴Charles Horne, *Salvation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971) 95.

¹⁵Cf. Hodges, *Absolutely Free!* 98.

*"Whoever once truly believes that Jesus was raised from the dead, and confesses that Jesus is Lord, will go to heaven when he dies. But I will not stop there. Such a person will go to heaven when he dies no matter what work (or lack of work) may accompany such faith."*¹⁶

Kendall also writes, "I hope no one will take this as an attack on the Westminster Confession. It is not that."¹⁷ But is *precisely* that! Kendall expressly argues against Westminster's assertion that faith cannot fail. He believes faith is best characterized as a single look: "one need only see the Sin Bearer once to be saved."¹⁸ This is a full-scale assault against the doctrine of perseverance affirmed in the Westminster Confession. Worse, it subverts Scripture itself. Unfortunately, it is a view that has come to be widely believed by Christians today.

Murray, noting this trend nearly forty years ago, defended the expression "perseverance of the saints":

It is not in the best interests of the doctrine involved to substitute the designation, "The Security of the Believer," not because the latter is wrong in itself but because the other formula is much more carefully and inclusively framed. . . . It is not true that the believer is secure however much he may fall into sin and unfaithfulness. Why is this not true? It is not true because it sets up an impossible combination. It is true that a believer sins; he may fall into grievous sin and backslide for lengthy periods. But it is also true that a believer cannot abandon himself to sin; he cannot come under the dominion of sin; he cannot be guilty of certain kinds of unfaithfulness. The truth is that the faith of Jesus Christ is *always* *respective* of the life of holiness and fidelity. And so it is never proper to think of a believer irrespective of the fruits in faith and holiness. To say that a believer is secure whatever may be the extent of his addiction to sin in his subsequent life is to abstract faith in Christ from its very definition and it ministers to that abuse which turns the

¹⁶R. T. Kendall, *Once Saved, Always Saved* (Chicago: Moody, 1983) 19 (emphasis in original). Kendall later expands on this: "I therefore state categorically that the person who is saved`who confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes in his heart that God raised Him from the dead`will go to heaven when he dies no matter what work (or lack of work) may accompany such faith. In other words, no matter what sin (or absence of Christian obedience) may accompany such faith" (ibid., 52-53).

¹⁷Ibid., 22.

¹⁸Ibid., 23. Hodges' similar rhetoric on this same issue is patently offensive: "People are not saved by staring at Christ. They are saved by looking at Him in faith" (*Absolutely Free!* 107).

grace of God into lasciviousness. The doctrine of perseverance is the doctrine that believers *persevere*. . . . It is not at all that they will be saved irrespective of their perseverance or their continuance, but that they will assuredly persevere. Consequently the security that is theirs is inseparable from their perseverance. Is this not what Jesus said? "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

Let us not then take refuge in our sloth or encouragement in our lust from the abused doctrine of the security of the believer. But let us appreciate the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints and recognize that we may entertain the faith of our security in Christ only as we persevere in faith and holiness to the end.¹⁹

Any doctrine of eternal security that leaves out perseverance distorts the doctrine of salvation itself. Heaven without holiness ignores the whole purpose for which God chose and redeemed His people:

God elected us for this very purpose. "He chose us in him [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight" (Eph. 1:4). We were predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ in all His spotless purity (*Rom. 8:29*). This divine choice makes it certain that we shall be like Him when He appears (*I John 3:2*). From this fact, John deduces that everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself just as Christ is pure (*I John 3:3*). His use of the word "everyone" makes it quite certain that those who do not purify themselves will not see Christ, nor be like Him. By their lack of holiness they prove that they were not so predestinated. The apostle thus deals a crushing blow to Antinomianism.²⁰

God's own holiness thus *requires* perseverance. "God's grace insures our persevering`but this does not make it any less *our* persevering."²¹ Believers cannot acquire "the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" unless they "press on toward the goal" (Phil 3:14). But as they "work out [their] salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12), they find that "it is God who is at work in [them], both to will and work for His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

"THE OUTCOME OF YOUR FAITH"

¹⁹Murray, *Redemption* 154-55.

²⁰Richard Alderson, *No Holiness, No Heaven!* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1986) 88.

²¹Horne, *Salvation* 95.

Perhaps no apostle understood better than Peter the keeping power of God in the life of an inconsistent believer. God had preserved him and matured him through every kind of faux pas and failure, including severe sin and compromise—even repeated denials of the Lord accompanied by cursing and swearing! (Matt 26:69-75). Yet the power of God kept Peter in faith despite his own failures. It is therefore appropriate that he become the instrument of the Holy Spirit used to pen the following glorious promise:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls (1 Pet 1:3-9).

Peter was writing to scattered believers living in Asia Minor. They were facing a horrible persecution that had begun at Rome and was spreading through the Roman Empire. After the city of Rome burned, Nero had blamed Christians for the disaster. Gradually believers everywhere were becoming targets of tremendous persecution. These people feared for their lives, and they feared they would fail if put to the test for their faith.

Peter wrote this epistle to encourage them. He reminded them that they were aliens in this world, citizens of heaven, a royal aristocracy, children of God, residents of an unearthly kingdom, living stones, a holy priesthood, and a people for God's own possession. Peter told them they were not to fear the threats, they were not to be intimidated, they were not to be troubled by the world's animosity, and they were not to be afraid when they suffered.

Why? Because Christians are "protected by the power of God through faith." Instead of giving them doses of sympathy and commiseration, Peter pointed them to their absolute security as believers: He knew they might be losing all their earthly possessions and even their lives, but he wanted them to know they would never lose what they had in Christ. (1) Their heavenly inheritance was

guaranteed. (2) They were being kept by divine power. (3) Their faith would endure through anything. (4) They would persevere through their trials and be found worthy at the end. (5) Their love for Christ would remain intact. (6) Even now, in the midst of their difficulties, God would provide the spiritual deliverance they needed, according to His eternal plan. An explanation of those six means of perseverance will sum up how God sustains every Christian.

Christians are born again to a living hope. "God . . . has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (vv. 3-4). Every Christian is born again to a *living hope* that is, a hope that is perpetually alive, a hope that cannot die. Peter seems to be making a contrast to mere human hope, which is always a dying or a dead hope. Human hopes and dreams inevitably fade and ultimately disappoint. That is why Paul told the Corinthians, "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied" (1 Cor 15:19). This living hope in Christ cannot die. God guarantees that it will finally come to a complete and total, glorious eternal fulfillment. "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast" (Heb 6:19).

That has clear implications beyond the normal concept of eternal security. Again, the point is not only that Christians are saved forever and safe from hell, no matter what. It means more than that: Christian *hope* does not die. Christian *faith* will not fail. That is the heart of the doctrine of perseverance.

But this passage *does* teach eternal security as well. Christians are guaranteed "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven" (v. 4). Unlike everything in this life, which may be corrupted, decay, grow old, rust, corrode, be stolen, or lose its value, an inheritance is reserved for Christians in heaven where it remains incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. A full inheritance will one day be the culmination of the living hope of Christians. It is "reserved in heaven"—"not like a hotel reservation which may be unexpectedly cancelled, but permanently and unchangeably."²²

Christians still alive have already received part of that inheritance. Ephesians 1:13-14 says, "[Having] believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory" (cf. 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5). "Pledge" in

²²Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* 244.

v. 14 comes from the Greek word *ἀρραβών* (*arrabōn*), which means "down payment." When a person first believes, the Holy Spirit Himself moves into that person's heart. He is the security deposit on eternal salvation for Christians. He is an advance on the Christian's inheritance. He is the guarantee that God will finish the work He has started. "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were *sealed for the day of redemption*" (Eph 4:30, emphasis added).

Christians are kept by God's own power. "[We are] protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (v. 5). That is a rich statement, guaranteeing the consummation of every believer's eternal salvation. The phrase, "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," speaks of full and final salvation from the curse of the law, the power and presence of sin, all decay, every stain of iniquity, all temptation, all grief, all pain, all death, all punishment, all judgment, and all wrath. God has begun this work in Christians already, and He will thoroughly complete it (cf. Phil 1:6).

Earlier in the sentence is this phrase: "you . . . are protected by the power of God through faith." Christians are *protected* by the power of a supreme, omnipotent, sovereign, omniscient, almighty God. The verb tense speaks of continuous action. Even now believers are *being protected*. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39). "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom 8:31, KJV). "[He] is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy" (Jude 24).

Furthermore, Christians are protected *through faith*. Continued faith in Christ is the instrument of God's sustaining work. God did not save Christians apart from faith, and He does not keep them apart from faith. Our faith is God's gift, and through His protecting power He preserves it and nurtures it. The maintenance of a Christian's faith is as much His work as every other aspect of salvation. Faith is kindled and driven and maintained and fortified by God's grace.

But to say that faith is God's gracious gift, which He maintains, is not to say that faith operates apart from the human will. It is the faith *of Christians*. They believe. They remain steadfast. They are not passive in the process. The means by which God maintains their faith involves their full participation. They cannot persevere apart from faith, only *through* faith.

Christians are strengthened by the testing of their faith. "In this you

greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet 1:5-6). This statement tells the chief means by which God maintains the faith of Christians: He subjects it to trials.

The little phrase "you greatly rejoice" may catch the unsuspecting reader off guard. Remember the recipients of this epistle were facing life-threatening persecutions. They were fearful of the future. Yet Peter says, "You greatly rejoice." How could they be rejoicing?

Trials produce joy because the testing establishes the faith of Christians. James said exactly the same thing: "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance" (Jas 1:2-3). Temptations (same word as for "trials" in the Greek) and tests do not weaken or shatter real faith—just the opposite. They strengthen it. People who lose their faith in a trial only show that they never had real faith to begin with. Real faith emerges from trials stronger than ever.

Trials themselves are anything but joyful, and Peter recognizes this: "though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials" (v. 6). They come like fire to burn the dross off metal. But that is the point. The faith that emerges is that much more glorious. When the fire has done its burning, what is left is purer, brighter, stronger faith.

For whom does God test the faith of Christians? For His own sake? Is He wanting to find out whether their faith is real? Of course not. He knows. He tests them for their own benefit, so that they will know if their faith is genuine. He tests their faith in order to refine it, strengthen it, bring it to maturity. What emerges from the crucible is "more precious than gold" (v. 7). Unlike gold, proven faith has eternal value. Gold may survive the refiner's fire, but it does not pass the test of eternity.

Peter was not giving these Christians empty platitudes. He had tasted the joy that accrues from a trial of persecution. Acts 5:41 says the apostles "went on their way from the presence of the Council [i.e., the Sanhedrin], *rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name*" (emphasis added). They probably went on their way with a stronger faith too. They had suffered, but their faith had passed the test. The great confidence of the believer is to know that his faith is real. Thus trials produce that mature faith by which God preserves Christians.

Christians are preserved by God for ultimate glory. "The proof of your faith . . . may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (v. 7). Here is an astonishing promise. The ultimate result of proven faith will be praise, glory, and honor at Christ's appearing. The direction of this praise is from God to the believer, not vice versa! Peter is not talking about Christians' praising, glorifying, and honoring God, but His approval directed to them.

First Peter 2:20 says, "If when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God." Like the master of the faithful servant, God will say, "Well done, good and faithful slave, . . . enter into the joy of your master" (Matt 25:21). Romans 2:29 says, "He is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; *and his praise is not from men, but from God*" (emphasis added). True faith, tested and proved, receives praise from God.

Notice 1 Pet 1:13 where Peter writes, "Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." What is that grace? "Praise and glory and honor." In 4:13 he says, "To the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation." Paul says, "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom 8:18).

Some people misunderstand 1 Pet 1:7 and think it is saying that faith has to wait for the Second Coming to be found genuine. "That the proof of your faith . . . may be found [worthy] *at the revelation of Jesus Christ*" as if the outcome were uncertain until that day. But the verse actually says that faith, already tested and proved genuine, is awaiting its eternal reward. There is no insecurity in this. In fact, the opposite is true. Christians can be certain of the final outcome, because God Himself is preserving them through faith until that day.

Christians are motivated by love for the Savior. "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory" (v. 8). That is a profound statement about the character of genuine faith. Without doubt, two key factors that guarantee perseverance from the human side are love for and trust in the Savior. Peter knew this better than anyone.

After he denied Christ, Peter had to face Jesus Christ and have his love questioned. Jesus asked him three times, "Do you love Me?" and Peter was deeply grieved (John 21:17). Of course, he *did* love Christ, and that is why he returned to Him and was restored. Peter's

own faith was purified by that trial. Peter portrays a beautiful humility here. Peter commends these suffering believers and says to them, "You've never seen Him and you love Him, and you don't see Him now but you believe in Him." He must have been remembering that when he denied Christ, he was standing close enough for their eyes to meet (Luke 22:60-61). Surely the pain of his own failure was still very real in his heart, after these many years.

A normal relationship involves love and trust for someone you can know face-to-face. But Christians love Someone they cannot see, hear, or touch. It is a supernatural, God-given love. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19, KJV).

There is no such thing as a Christian who lacks this love. Peter is saying categorically that the essence of what it means to be a Christian is to love Jesus Christ. In fact, perhaps no better way exists to describe the essential expression of the new nature than to say it is *continual love for Christ*. The King James Version translates 1 Pet 2:7 thus: "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." Note what Paul said in the last verse of Ephesians: "Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible" (6:24). Paul makes his strongest statement on this matter in 1 Cor 16:22: "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed."

Easy-believism theology ignores this vital truth. Consequently, many people who utterly lack any love for the Lord Jesus Christ are being given a false hope of heaven. True Christians love Christ. His love for them, producing their love for Him (1 John 4:19), is one of the guarantees that they will persevere to the end (Rom 8:33-39). Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:23). "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me" (John 14:21). Conversely, "He who does not love Me does not keep My words" (John 14:24).

Those who are devoted to Christ long to promote His glory. They long to serve Him with heart and soul and mind and strength. They delight in His beauty. They love to talk about Him, read about Him, fellowship with Him. They desire to know Him better and to know Him deeper. They are compelled in their hearts to want to be like Him. Like Peter, they may stumble frequently and fail in pathetic ways as sinful flesh assaults holy longings. But like Peter, all true believers *will* persevere until the goal is ultimately reached.²³ "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be

²³This is not to suggest that all believers will experience the same degree of spiritual success, only that none of them will turn away from Christ by giving in to settled unbelief.

like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2).

Leighton, writing in 1853 in a wonderful commentary on 1 Peter, said this:

Believe, and you shall love; believe much, and you shall love much; labor for strong and deep persuasion of the glorious things which are spoken of Christ, and this will command love. Certainly, did men indeed believe his worth, they would accordingly love him; for the reasonable creature cannot but affect that most which it firmly believes to be the worthiest of affection. Oh! this mischievous unbelief is that which makes the heart cold and dead towards God. Seek then to believe Christ's excellency in himself and his love to us, and our interest in him, and this will kindle such a fire in the heart, as will make it ascend in a sacrifice of love to him.²⁴

So love for Christ is another of the means God uses to assure our perseverance. That love and the faith that accompanies it are a source of inexpressible joy, full of glory (1 Pet 1:8).

Christians are saved by a working faith. "[You are] obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls" (1:9). In this phrase Peter speaks of a present deliverance. "Obtaining" is a present-tense verb, middle voice. The word could be literally translated, "Presently receiving for yourselves. . . ." This present salvation is "the outcome" of a Christian's faith—a working faith. In practical terms, it means a present-tense deliverance from sin, guilt, condemnation, wrath, ignorance, distress, confusion, hopelessness, everything that defiles. This does not speak of the future perfect consummation of salvation mentioned in v. 5.

The salvation in view in v. 9 is a constant, present-tense salvation. Sin no longer has dominion over Christians (Rom 6:14). They can in no way fail to persevere. They will certainly fail at times and will not always be successful. In fact, some people may seem to experience more failure than success. But no true believer can fall into settled unbelief or permanent reprobation. To allow for such a possibility is a disastrous misunderstanding of God's keeping power in the lives of His chosen ones.

Thus Peter opens his first epistle. At the end of this same epistle he returns to the theme of perseverance: "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His

²⁴Robert Leighton, *Commentary on First Peter* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1972 reprint of 1953 ed.) 55.

eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you" (5:10).

The magnitude of that promise is overwhelming! *God Himself* perfects, confirms, strengthens, and establishes His children. Though His purposes for the future involve some pain in the present, He will nevertheless give Christians grace to endure and persevere. Even while they are being personally attacked by the enemy, they are being personally perfected by God. He Himself is doing it. He will accomplish His purposes in them, bringing them to wholeness, setting them on solid ground, making them strong, and establishing them on a firm foundation. All those terms speak of strength and resoluteness.

THE PROBLEM OF QUANTIFICATION

Inevitably, the question is raised, "How faithfully must one persevere?" Ryrie has written,

So we read a statement like this: "A moment of failure does not invalidate a disciple's credentials." My immediate reaction to such a statement is to want to ask if two moments would? Or a week of defection, or a month, or a year? Or two? How serious a failure and for how long before we must conclude that such a person was in fact not saved? Lordship teaching recognizes that "no one will obey perfectly," but the crucial question is simply how imperfectly can one obey and yet be sure that he "believed"? . . .

. . . A moment of defection, we have been told, is not an invalidation. Or "the true disciple will never turn away completely." Could he turn away almost completely? Or ninety percent? Or fifty percent and still be sure he was saved? . . .

Frankly, all this relativity would leave me in confusion and uncertainty. Every defection, especially if it continued, would make me unsure of my salvation. Any serious sin or unwillingness would do the same. If I come to a fork in the road of my Christian experience and choose the wrong branch and continue on it, does that mean I was never on the Christian road to begin with? For how long can I be fruitless without having a lordship advocate conclude that I was never really saved?²⁵

Ryrie suggests that if we cannot state precisely *how much* failure is possible for a Christian, true assurance becomes impossible. He wants the terms to be quantified: "Could he turn away almost completely? Or ninety percent? Or fifty percent?" To put it another way, Ryrie is suggesting that the doctrines of perseverance and assurance are incompatible. Astonishingly, he wants a doctrine of assurance that

²⁵Ryrie, *So Great Salvation* 48-49, emphasis added.

allows those who have defected from Christ to be confident of their salvation.

No quantifiable answers to the questions Ryrie raises are available. Indeed, some Christians persist in sin for extended periods of time. But those who do, forfeit their right to genuine assurance. "Serious sin or unwillingness" certainly *should* cause someone to contemplate carefully the question of whether he or she really loves the Lord. Those who turn away completely (not *almost* completely, or ninety percent, or fifty percent) demonstrate that they never had true faith.

Quantification poses a dilemma for merely-intellectual-faith teaching too. Hodges speaks of faith as a "historical moment." How brief may that moment be? Someone listening to a debate between a Christian and an atheist might believe for an instant while the Christian is speaking, but immediately be led back into doubt or agnosticism by the atheist's arguments. Would such a person be classified as a believer? One suspects some easy-believism advocates would answer yes, although that view goes against everything God's word teaches about faith.

Jesus never quantified the terms of salvation; He always made them *absolute*. "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions" (Luke 14:33); "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt 10:37); "He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal" (John 12:25). Those conditions are *impossible* in human terms (Matt 19:26).²⁶ That does not alter or mitigate the truth of the gospel. It certainly is no excuse for going to the other extreme and doing away with any necessity for commitment to Christ.

Ryrie's comments raise another issue that is worth considering. It is the question of whether working-faith teaching is inherently judgmental: "How long can I be fruitless without having a lordship advocate conclude that I was never really saved?" Hodges has made a similar comment: "Lordship teaching reserves to itself the right to strip professing Christians of their claims to faith and to consign such people to the ranks of the lost."²⁷

Certainly no individual can judge another's heart. It is one thing to challenge people to examine themselves (2 Cor 13:5); it is entirely another matter to set oneself up as another Christian's judge

²⁶Even those who want to apply these statements of Christ to a post-conversion step of discipleship do not solve the dilemma of their absoluteness.

²⁷Hodges, *Absolutely Free!* 19.

(Rom 14:4, 13; Jas 4:11).

But though individual Christians must never be judgmental, the church body as a whole very definitely has a responsibility to maintain purity by exposing and excommunicating those who live in continual sin or defection from the faith. The Lord gave very explicit instructions on how to handle a fellow believer who falls into such sin.

Christians are to go to the brother (or sister) privately first (Matt 18:15). If he or she refuses to hear, they are to go again with one or two more people (Matt 18:16). Then if he or she refuses to hear, they are to "tell it to the church" (Matt 18:17). If the one sinning still fails to repent, "let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer" (Matt 18:17).

In other words, pursue that person for Christ evangelistically as if he or she were utterly unsaved.

This process of discipline is how Christ mediates His rule in the church. He added, "Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven" (Matt 18:18-19). The context shows this is not talking about "binding Satan" or about praying in general. The Lord was dealing with the matter of sin and forgiveness among Christians (cf. Matt 18:21 ff.) The verb tenses in v. 18 literally mean, "Whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." The Lord said that He Himself works personally in the discipline process: "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst" (Matt 18:20).

Thus the process of church discipline, properly followed, answers all of Ryrie's questions. How long can a person continue in sin before fellow Christians "conclude that [he or she] was never really saved?" All the way through the discipline process. Once the matter has been told to the church, if the person still refuses to repent, Christians have instructions from the Lord Himself to regard the sinning one "as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer."

The church discipline process outlined in Matthew 18 is predicated on the doctrine of perseverance. Those who remain hardened in sin only demonstrate their lack of true faith. Those who respond to the rebuke and return to the Lord give the best possible evidence of genuine salvation. They can be sure that if their faith is real, it will endure to the end because God Himself guarantees it.

"I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6). "I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2 Tim 1:12).

PREMILLENNIALISM IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Kenneth L. Barker¹

Among six passages in Daniel that pertain to a promised future kingdom, three are most relevant to premillennialism: 2:31-45; 7:1-27; 9:24-27. By means of Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream-vision of a statue, 2:31-45 prophesies about five kingdoms that will appear in sequence, the last of which comes in the form of a Messianic stone that will crush the ones before it and fill the whole earth. Daniel 7:1-27 covers the same ground from a different perspective. Here Daniel receives a two-part vision, the former part including four beasts that represent kingdoms and the latter, the Ancient of Days and the Messianic Son of Man. Subsequent interpretation details the Son of Man's subjugation of these kingdoms to Himself after a period of tribulation. The prophecy of the seventy "weeks" in 9:24-27 supplies additional data regarding a premillennial return of the Messianic ruler to set up an earthly kingdom. These data include such things

¹Kenneth Barker is Executive Director of the NIV Translation Center and was Visiting Professor for the Winterim Session at The Master's Seminary in January, 1993. In submitting the following article, he has dedicated it to the memory of his brother-in-law, Dr. Charles R. Smith, who was the first dean of The Master's Seminary. To receive the greatest benefit, the reader should read this essay in conjunction with three other recent contributions of Dr. Barker: "False Dichotomies Between the Testaments," *JETS* 25 (March 1982):3-16; "Evidence from Daniel," in *A Case for Premillennialism, A New Consensus* (Donald K. Campbell and Jeffrey L. Townsend, gen. eds.; Chicago: Moody, 1992) 135-46; and "The Scope and Center of Old and New Testament Theology and Hope," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* (Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, eds.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 293-328.

as the time-frame of the Messianic ruler's first and second advents and the purposes of the two advents. All three passages correlate most easily with what is taught throughout Scripture about a premillennial return of Christ.

* * * * *

THEME, SCOPE, AND HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH

This article is an overview of evidence for premillennialism in the Book of Daniel, a key verse of which is Dan 2:44: "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."² The article could just as appropriately have been entitled "The Most High God Is Sovereign," for the Lord rules "over the kingdom of men" (Dan 5:21; cf. 4:17, 25, 32). Indeed, "the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev 11:15; cf. Ps 2:2) is the central focus of biblical theology.³

Relating this theological theme to the presentation of a case for premillennialism in the Book of Daniel would require a thorough exegesis of at least Dan 2:31-45; 7:1-27; 8:15-26; 9:24-27; 11:36-45; 12:1-13. Realistically, that is impossible in this essay, so the following discussion will present a summary synthesis of the data from the three passages most relevant to the article's purpose: 2:31-45; 7:1-27; 9:24-27.

Any approach, including the present one, falls under the influence of a particular system of hermeneutics. Interpreters will continue to reach different conclusions regarding such passages until they can fully agree on a presupposed hermeneutic. For example, because of this writer's (hopefully) consistent adherence to the grammatical-literary-historical-theological method of exegesis,⁴ he reads the text more literally while allowing for figurative language than his amillennial friends who follow a more allegorical, symbolical, or "spiritual" understanding of Scripture.

DANIEL 2:31-45`THE MESSIANIC STONE

Walvoord introduces his comments on Daniel 2 with these words: "Nowhere else in Scripture, except in Daniel 7, is a more comprehensive picture given of world history as it stretched from the time of Daniel, 600 years before Christ, to the consummation at the second advent of Christ."⁵

In 2:31-45, in order to show His sovereign control of history,⁶ God provides through Daniel (see vv. 26-28) an interpretation of the large stone that Nebuchadnezzar dreamed about in the earlier part of the chapter. The stone represents four temporal human kingdoms and the divine kingdom, making a total of five kingdoms alluded to in Daniel 2. The divinely inspired interpretation shows indirectly that history is the story of God's rule and that He will have the last word.

Most evangelical scholars—as well as numerous early church fathers—representing all eschatological schools of thought, agree that the four human kingdoms were Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece (and its divisions after

²All Scripture quotations in this article, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the *Holy Bible, International Version* (North American Edition), copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society, used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

³See Barker, "Scope and Center" 305-18.

⁴For this terminology, see Kenneth L. Barker, "Zechariah," in *EBC* (Frank E. Gaebelin, gen. ed.; Rapids: Zondervan, 1985) 7:600.

⁵John F. Walvoord, *Daniel, the Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971) 44.

⁶John E. Goldingay, "Daniel," in *WBC* (David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, gen. eds.; Dallas: Word, 1989) 30:56. Unfortunately, Goldingay adopts the late—i.e., Maccabean—date for Daniel. Another study from this perspective is J. J. Collins, "The Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic," *JBL* (1975):218-34.

death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., with special emphasis on Egypt under the Ptolemies and on Syria under the Seleucids (see 8:22), and Rome.⁷ These identifications become virtually certain in light of a correlation of the data in chapter 2 with those of chapters 7 and 8, notwithstanding Goldingay and others to the contrary.⁸

It is impossible to question the identity of the head of gold (corresponding to the lion of 7:4), because the text explicitly equates it with Nebuchadnezzar's 'head of the Neo-Babylonian empire' (vv. 37-38). The chest and arms of silver (corresponding to the bear of 7:5) correlate with the two-horned ram of chapter 8, where the ram represents the kings of Media and Persia (v. 20).⁹ The belly and thighs of bronze (corresponding to the leopard of 7:6) correspond to the she-goat of chapter 8, where the goat is specifically the king of Greece (v. 21) and the large horn is the first king—i.e., Alexander the Great. Finally, subsequent history reveals that the legs of iron (corresponding to the nondescript, composite beast of 7:7, 19) represent the Roman Empire.¹⁰

Scholars agree less on the identification of the feet and their ten toes of mixed iron and clay, as well as on the fulfillment of this phase of the prophecy of the kingdoms. Fortunately, in Dan 7:19-27 Daniel inquired about the ten horns of the fourth beast, most likely the same as the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's statue. Daniel 7:24 plainly states that the ten horns (= the ten toes of Daniel 2) represent ten kings who will come from the fourth, or Roman, kingdom. According to the generally accepted hermeneutical principle of the analogy of faith—including the guideline that Scripture often interprets itself¹¹ and leading to a harmonious interpretation of the Bible as a whole¹² it is logical and natural to correlate the ten toes of Daniel 2 and the ten horns of Daniel 7 with the ten horns of the beast in Revelation 17:12-18. Many interpreters agree that the beast, described in various passages scattered throughout Revelation 13-20, is the still-future (and thus, still-coming) Antichrist.¹³ Since Rev 19:19-20 indicates that the beast will meet his doom at Christ's return to earth, a reasonable conclusion is that the ten toes (= ten horns = ten kings = ten states over which the beast will rule) belong to that same general period of time—the time of the end.

Nonetheless, since the ten kings come from the fourth kingdom (i.e., Roman Empire, Dan 7:24), some interpreters have sought the fulfillment of the ten toes (and horns) in the historic Roman Empire. This is an exercise in futility, because the details of Daniel's prophecy do not match what actually occurred in history.

⁷C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, in *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, ed. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.) 245-83; Charles Boutflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977 reprint of 1923 edition) 13-34.

⁸See below, pp. 30-31. Goldingay, "Daniel" 50-51; James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1979 reprint) 59-63, 185-92.

⁹Persia under Cyrus the Great quickly became superior to Media, see 7:5; 8:3.

¹⁰See Appendix V, in Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 27.

¹¹See this writer's discussion in "A Response to Historical Grammatical Problems," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus, eds.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) 40.

¹²Cf. Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Wilde, 1956) 125-28.

¹³See, e.g., the discussions by George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 13-14, 155-57, 176-87, 220-34, 256-48; Alan F. Johnson, "Revelation," in *The Revelation of John* (Frank E. Gaebelien, gen. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) 12:505-6, 520-36, 563-64, though Johnson appears to vacillate between the personal Antichrist view and the theological heresy view.

¹⁴Walvoord, *Daniel* 71-76; Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974); Robert D. Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days* (Chicago: Moody, 1954) 105-24. Culver's entire book

Consequently others have related the fulfillment to a reconstituted confederacy of states in the future within the territory occupied by the Roman Empire—a position supported by Dan 7:23-27;¹⁵ Rev 16:14; 17:12-28; 19:11-21. This position has further support in that it is the feet and the ten-toes stage of the statue at which the Messianic stone or rock smashes it, thereby putting an end to human government. The stone then grows into a huge mountain (= the Messianic kingdom), filling the whole earth, interpreted in Dan 2:44 as the "kingdom that will never be destroyed." All this happens "in the time/days of those/these kings." In context the natural antecedent of "those/these kings" is the ten toes just mentioned (Dan 2:43).

Significantly, when Christ returns to the earth, He will "strike down the kingdoms" (Rev 19:15). The Lord's own eternal and universal kingdom then follows (Revelation 20:22). Thus the same general sequence of events delineated in Dan 2:2; 7:2; 11:2; and 12:2 is found also in Revelation.¹⁶ For an expanded discussion of this position that the millennial reign of the Messiah is the initial stage of the kingdom that endures forever, see Culver's discussion.¹⁷

Since Christ will first return to the earth, then put down all human government as the crushing stone, then fully establish on earth His own "kingdom that will never be destroyed," Dan 2:31-45 argues for premillennialism.

well worth reading.

¹⁵See below, 30-33.

¹⁶The same sequence occurs also in Jeremiah 30:31; Zechariah 12:14; Matthew 24.

¹⁷Culver, *Daniel* 35-44, 177-90.

DANIEL 7:1-27 THE MESSIANIC SON OF MAN

Daniel 7 details the first of four dream-visions or revelations God gave Daniel.¹⁸ It is a dream-vision of four beasts, the Ancient of Days, and the Son of Man and His kingdom. The vision's description is in vv. 1-14, followed by its interpretation in vv. 15-27. The following overview of the chapter's subdivisions will *help understand* its important contribution.

Vision of four beasts (7:1-8). In the vision Daniel saw what looked like four great beasts: a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a nondescript composite beast (cf. 13:1-2). The above discussion has already noted the correspondence of these animals, as well as those in Daniel 8, with the various parts of the magnificent human statue of chapter 2.¹⁹ Nevertheless, this is no mere repetition. The perspective is different in that what was perceived as beautiful in Daniel 2 appears as bestial in nature.²⁰ Furthermore, some new features are added here: the little horn, the Ancient of Days and one like a son of man, and the special involvement of the saints in the titanic struggle between divine and Satanic forces and in the triumph of the kingdom of God and light over the kingdom of Satan and darkness.

The fact that the bear was raised up on one of its sides (v. 5; cf. 8:3, 20) serves to indicate that one part (Persia) would become dominant over the other (Media). The three ribs in its mouth apparently anticipate Persia's conquests of Lydia (547 B.C.), Babylonia (539), and Egypt (525). In v. 6 the leopard's four heads evidently represent the four major divisions of Alexander's empire after his death in 323 B.C. (cf. the goat's four horns in 8:8, 22). Verse 8 probably depicts the final (yet future) reconstituted form of the fourth world empire. The little horn that becomes dominant over the ten is probably the Antichrist, though Antiochus IV Epiphanes, king of Syria (175-164 B.C.), may be in the background in a typological fashion as he apparently is in 8:23-25.²¹ His speaking boastfully (cf. 7:11, 20, 25) may be compared with the description of the Antichrist in 11:36-37; Matt 24:15; 2 Thes 2:1-4; Rev 13:5-6.²²

Vision of the Ancient of Days and the Messianic Son of Man (7:9-14). Since the Messianic Son of Man approaches the Ancient of Days (v. 13), the identification of the latter is God the Father. The epithet "Ancient of Days" (v. 9) is appropriate for Him, because He is eternal (cf. also His white hair). His white clothing speaks of His purity or holiness, while the fire represents His glory and judgment (cf. Ezek 1:13-28; Rev 1:14-15). The judgment referred to in v. 10 is apparently that of the nations or Gentiles (Matt 25:31-46), because Matthew re-

¹⁸Recent studies of Daniel 7 from a variety of theological perspectives include C. H. W. Brekelmans, "The Saints of the Most High and Their Kingdom," *OTS* 14 (1965):305-29; G. R. Beasley-Murray, "The Interpretation of Daniel 7," *CBQ* 45 (1983):44-58; Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Identification of 'The Saints of the Most High' in Daniel 7," *Bib* 56 (1975):173-92; V. S. Poythress, "The Holy Ones of the Most High in Daniel 7," *VT* 26 (1976):208-13; William H. Shea, "The Neo-Babylonian Historical Setting for Daniel 7," *JBL* 105 (1986):31-36.

¹⁹See above, 27-29, and also the chart in *The NIV Study Bible* (Kenneth Barker, gen. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985) 1311.

²⁰It is instructive that the insignia or symbols of most Gentile nations, including that of the United States, are beasts or birds of prey.

²¹Cf. also the type-antitype relationship between Antiochus in 11:21-35 and the Antichrist in 11:36-44.

²²The little horns of Daniel 7 and Daniel 8 are not the same. See Gleason L. Archer, Jr., "Daniel," in *The New Testament* (Frank E. Gaebelin, gen. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985) 7:99 (Excursus); Archer, *A Survey of Bible Prophecy* (Chicago: Moody, 1974) 398. Archer argues persuasively against such an equa-

the judgment of the nations to the appearance or return of the Messianic Son of Man (Matt 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31-32), just as Daniel does here (vv. 13, 26-27).

For the destruction of the fourth beast (kingdom), as represented by its king (the little horn of v. 8) mentioned in v. 11, see 9:27; 11:45; Rev 13:3, 12; 17:12; 18:20:10.

In view of passages like Pss 2:2, 6-12; 110:1; Matthew 24:25 (see above); 23:2-5-11; 10:12-13; Rev 1:13; 5:1-14; 14:14, the $v \ r \ eq \ O(a, b) \ eq \ O(\Gamma, \kappa) \ O(+, e) \bar{a} \ @ \ eq \ O(+, e) \ n \ eq \ O(\sim, a) \ eq \ O(+, s)$, "one like a son of man," v. 13) be Israel's Mes-siah.²³ As the Son`actually not only Son of Man, but also Son of God and Great Son of David`He is an heir. As His inheritance, He is given universal and "everlasting dominion," a kingdom "that will never be destroyed" (v. 14). He, not the Antichrist, will be the last world ruler.

Daniel's reaction to the vision (7:15-16). Daniel, troubled by what he had seen and heard, inquired about the meaning of it all.

Summary of the meaning of the vision (7:17-18). A summary of the interpretation comes first, and then in the following section, the particulars of the interpretation. A previous part of this article has a discussion of the four beasts (v. 17).²⁴ In this context, the "saints" who "receive the kingdom" (v. 18) certainly include believing Jews (the faithful remnant), in anticipation of Israel's restoration and the final and complete fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The designation must incorporate church saints of the New Testament too, though the fact of their inclusion did not become clear until a time much later than Daniel's. By God's sovereign grace He grafted this later group into Israel's olive tree (Rom 11:17-29) not to replace Israel, but to share in Israel's covenant blessings (Eph 2:11-12). Thus they too are heirs (cf. Rom 8:14-17) and will reign with the Son (Rev 20:6).

Details of the vision's meaning (7:19-27). In v. 21 the little horn of the fourth beast, previously identified as the Antichrist,²⁵ wages war against the saints and destroys them, most likely anticipating passages like Rev 11:7; 13:7. This state of affairs continues until divine intervention (v. 22).

Earlier discussion has identified the ten horns of the fourth beast with ten kings from the fourth kingdom, that is, from the area of the old Roman Empire (v. 20; cf. Rev 13:1; 17:12).²⁶ After they are in place, another king`the little horn of v. 21`arises and subdues three kings and the states they govern (presumably the ones that do not acquiesce). Then he pursues three tasks: (1) he speaks against the Most High (v. 20; vv. 8, 11, 20; 11:36-37; Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4; Rev 13:5-6); (2) he oppresses the saints (again cf. Rev 11:7; 13:7 as well as Zech 13:8-9; 14:1-2; Matt 24:21-22); and (3) he tries to change the set times and the laws (possibly a very general and comprehensive way of referring to an attempt to disrupt the divinely established order, a valid example of which would be the Antichrist's breaking of the sabbath).

²³For a synopsis of the multiplicity of views concerning this humanlike person, see C. Colpe, "Yahweh's Son," *TDNT* (Gerhard Friedrich, ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 8:400-77; Goldingay, "Daniel," *TDNT* 169-72, 192-93; O. Michel, "Son of man," in *NIDNTT* (Colin Brown, ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973) 3:613-34; Montgomery, *Daniel* 317-24. For a view closer to the one in this essay, see Joyce G. Baker, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1978) 148-54; R. G. Brant, "Son of Man," in *EDT* (Walter A. Elwell, ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 1034-36.

²⁴See above, 30-31.

²⁵See above, 30-31.

²⁶See above, 28-29.

year covenant of 9:27²⁷). Furthermore, he is allowed to overpower the saints "for a time, times and half a time" (= three and a half years). For the time reference see also 12:7; Rev 11:2-3 (42 months or 1,260 days); 12:6 (1,260 days), 14; and 13:10 (12 months). The passages in Revelation point toward the likelihood that these are 360-day months and 360-day ("prophetic") years. The persecution here is the same as described in Rev 12:6, 12-17. The whole period corresponds to what Jesus called the "great distress" or "great tribulation" (KJV), "unequaled from the beginning of the world until now and never to be equaled again" (Matt 24:21; cf. Jer 30:7; Dan 12:1; Rev 3:10; 7:14).

Fortunately, this period of unparalleled tribulation does not last long (3½ years, the worst part of it being the last three and a half years). At its end the power of Antichrist is permanently broken (v. 26). Then follows the fulfillment of the expression of the covenanted, Davidic, theocratic kingdom on the earth within time-space history (v. 27; cf. Revelation 19-22; 1 Cor 15:20-28). Even though the kingdom is "handed over to the saints" in the sense that they reign with the Son of Man (cf. Luke 22:28-30; Rev 20:6) and it is for their benefit,²⁸ it is still "the kingdom," and "all rulers will worship and obey *him*." This will finally completely fulfill Gen 49:10; Pss 2:8-9; 110:1-2; Isa 2:1-5; 9:1-7; 11:1-11; 35:1-10; 65:17-25; Zech 14:1-21; Matt 24:1`25:46, as well as the remaining unfulfilled promises in Israel's important unconditional covenants (i.e., the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New).²⁹

So this passage contains an eschatological depiction of "one like a son of man" who will come in glory with the clouds of heaven to judge all nations and to rule the world (cf. Rev 1:7). The gospels present precisely the same portrait, though they perhaps influenced by the suffering servant passages of Isaiah (42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13`53:12) fill out the picture by speaking also of the sufferings and death of the Son of Man as well as of His resurrection, ascension, exaltation, present glory, and future return to the earth in great glory. This is not surprising in light of such passages as Psalm 22; Dan 9:26; Luke 24:25-27; 1 Pet 1:11.

Since the tribulation period is here followed by the return of the Messiah, the Son of Man (Christ) and then the full establishment of His universal and enduring kingdom on earth, Daniel 7 makes an important contribution to the cumulative evidence for premillennialism. Finally, it is noteworthy that Ladd, who also argues the case for premillennialism, draws some convincing parallels between Daniel 7 and Revelation 20.³⁰

DANIEL 9:24-27`THE MESSIANIC RULER

The outline of Israel's history after the Babylonian exile is traced in the prophecy of the 70 "weeks."³¹ This prophecy demonstrates the distinct plan

²⁷See below, 35, 41.

²⁸"To the saints" represents a construction similar to the Greek dative of advantage. Brekelmans has convincingly demonstrated that "holy ones" (lit. Heb.) must be rendered "saints," not "angels" ("Saints of the Most High" 325-26); similarly Poythress ("Holy Ones of the Most High" 213) and Hasel ("Identification of the 'Holy Ones'" 192).

²⁹See chart in *The NIV Study Bible*, 19.

³⁰Ladd, *Revelation* 267.

³¹Recent studies relating to Dan 9:24-27 include William H. Shea, "Poetic Relations of the Time Period of Daniel 9:25," *AUSS* 18 (1980):59-63; J. Doukhan, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9: An Exegetical Study," *AUSS* 17 (1979):1-22; Thomas Edward McComiskey, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel against the Background of Ancient Near Eastern Literature," *WTJ* 47 (1985):18-45; Robert C. Newman, "Daniel's Seventy Weeks and the Old Testament Sabbath-Year Cycle," *JETS* 16 (1973):229-34; Roger T. Beckwith, "Daniel 9 and the

Israel in God's purposes, delineating her relationship to Gentile powers and cutting off of her Messiah. God's present purpose in calling out a people every nation to form the church is not specifically in view. Instead, the church must fit between the sixty-ninth and seventieth "weeks." It may well be that "history of the exegesis of the 70 Weeks is the Dismal Swamp of O. T. criticism" but the most natural exegesis of Dan 9:24-27 provides an indispensable key to a correct understanding of much of NT prophecy (e.g., Matt 24:15-22; Mark 13:14; Rev 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5).

It is helpful to use topical headings to expand on the seventy-week prophecy.³³

Principal ingredients of the prophecy. Major emphases in Dan 9:24-27 are in number: (1) The entire prophecy relates to Daniel's people and Daniel's city, the covenant nation Israel and the city of Jerusalem (v. 24). (2) Two rulers mentioned are not to be confused: the Anointed One or the Messiah (v. 25) and a ruler who will come (v. 26). (3) The period involved is 70 "weeks" (v. 24), which is divided into three parts: 7 "weeks," 62 "weeks," and 1 "week" (vv. 25, 27). (4) The reckoning of time begins with "the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (v. 25). (5) The appearance of the Anointed One as ruler of Israel marks the end of the first 69 "weeks" (v. 25).

(6) After the 69 "weeks," the Messianic ruler will be cut off, Jerusalem will again be destroyed by the people of another ruler who is yet to come, and wars and desolations will continue until the decreed end (v. 26). (7) The establishment of a firm covenant or treaty between the coming ruler and Israel for one "week" signifies the beginning of the seventieth "week" (v. 27).

(8) In the middle of this seventieth "week," the coming ruler will break the covenant with Israel, will forcibly put an end to Jewish sacrifice, and will inflict against the Jews a time of unprecedented persecution and desolation that will last to the end of the "week" (v. 27). (9) This coming ruler will be summarily disposed of (v. 27).

(10) After the completion of the entire period of the 70 "weeks," a time of unparalleled blessing will begin for the people of Israel (v. 24). The first three of the list of six purpose-blessings in v. 24 pertain primarily to Christ's first advent: His sacrificial death and the redemption provided thereby and the three to His second advent: His crown, His sovereignty, and His reign.³⁴ The absolute certainty about the meaning of the six phrases is not possible. The following general interpretations are reasonable and probable: (a) To finish the transgression: generally to finish Israel's rebellion against the Lord's rule

of Messiah's Coming in Essene, Hellenistic, Pharisaic, Zealot and Early Christian Computation," *Revelation* (1981):521-42.

³²Montgomery, *Daniel* 400.

³³The following synopsis, in large part, derives from Alva J. McClain, *Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1940); J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Findlay, OH: D. W. Pentecost, 1958) 240-50. For a survey of various interpretations of the passage, see Paul D. Feinberg, "An Exegetical Study of Daniel 9:24-27," in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg* (John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg, eds.; Chicago: Moody, 1982) 189-220; Montgomery, *Daniel* 39-40; Baldwin, *Daniel* 172-78; Young, *Daniel* 191-95; O. Zckler, "Daniel," in *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.) 205-13.

³⁴Pentecost is perhaps more precise in affirming that the "first three have to do with sin, and the second three with the kingdom. The basis for the first three was provided in the work of Christ on the cross, but all three will be realized by Israel at the Second Advent of Christ" (J. Dwight Pentecost, "Daniel," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* [John F. Walvoord and Roy Zuck, eds.; Wheaton: Victor, 1985] 1:1361).

perhaps also specifically her climactic rejection of her Messiah at Calvary.³⁵ (b) To put an end to sin: probably the same general idea as the first purpose, but perhaps with the added notion of dealing with Israel's sin problem once and for all, resulting in her salvation (cf. Ezek 37:23 for the idea; Heb 9:26). (c) To atone for wickedness: a reference to the atoning work of Israel's Messiah through sacrifice on the cross, though Israel *as a whole* will not experience the benefit of Christ's atonement until His second coming (see Zech 12:10-13:1; Rom 11:25-27).

(d) To bring in everlasting righteousness: an anticipation of the establishment of the millennial kingdom. This was not accomplished for Israel or Jerusalem at Christ's first coming, nor has it yet been accomplished (see below). (e) To seal up vision and prophecy (i.e., until the time of their fulfillment): a warning to look forward to the close of the Old Covenant era and to the future completion of the fulfillment of the great promises in Israel's unconditional covenants (particularly the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants). (f) To anoint the Most Holy Place: most likely an anticipation of the anointing of the millennial temple (cf. Ezek 40:48; Zech 14:16-21³⁶), since in all other occurrences the Hebrew phrase $\langle y \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(I,v) \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(A,d) \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(A,q) \rangle \text{ v } \text{ eq } \langle O(e,d) \rangle \text{ Oq } (q \text{ eq } \langle O(\sim,o) \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(+,s) \rangle \text{ god eq } \langle O(\sim,a) \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(+,s) \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(=,i)m \rangle$, "most holy") refers to the tabernacle or temple or to the sacred articles, offerings, and furniture used in them (see Exod 26:33-34; 29:37; 30:10, 29; 40:10; Lev 2:3, 10; 7:1, 6; 10:12, 17; 14:13; 24:9; 4:4, 19; 18:9-10; 1 Kgs 7:50; Ezra 2:63; Ezek 42:13; 43:12; 44:13).

Hence it may be said of Christ that He came to earth to *redeem* and to return to earth to *reign*. This is not to deny the present reign of Christ in heaven; rather, it is to anticipate the answer to the prayer in Matt 6:10 when that heavenly kingdom becomes an earthly one.

In particular, the "everlasting righteousness" ($\langle y \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(I,m) \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(A,l) \rangle \text{ O; } q \text{ eq } \langle O(e,d) \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(e,x) \rangle \text{ eq } \langle O(>,s) \rangle \text{ edeq } \# \text{ eq } \langle O(\sim, a) \rangle \text{ m eq } \langle O(=,i)m \rangle$ for Daniel's people (Israel) and Daniel's holy city (Jerusalem) can only refer, in any full sense, to the millennial kingdom. The establishment of such a righteous kingdom on earth, conforming to the moral, ethical, and spiritual standard revealed by God in His Word (the fuller meaning of $\langle O(>,s) \rangle$ "righteousness"), was the goal and expectation of all the covenantal promises given to Israel (cf. Isa 9:7; 11:4-5; 60:17, 21; Jer 23:5-6; 33:15-16). All that will be possible because the Jews en masse (and in faith) will look to their Messiah at His second coming to earth (see Zech 12:10-13:1; Rom 11:25-29). This prophecy therefore predicts the entire work of the Messiah for Israel past, present, and future. Baldwin explains:

If we may tentatively interpret the verse, it is speaking of the accomplishment of God's purpose for all history. If we look at this from our vantage-point, it was accomplished partly in the coming of Christ, but it still has to be consummated (Eph. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:28). If the historical work of Christ and His second coming are telescoped this is not unusual, even in the New Testament (*e.g.* in the discourse of Mt. 24).³⁸

The meaning of "weeks." Before determining the chronology of the prophecies

³⁵Baldwin relates this expression to "the final triumph of God's kingdom and the end of human history" (*Daniel* 168).

³⁶See Barker, "Zechariah" 7:695-97.

³⁷The present reign of Christ in heaven is distinct from His future reign on David's throne, a throne naturally understood as an earthly one in Jerusalem (Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7, An Exegetical Commentary* [vol. 1 of 2 vols.; Chicago: Moody, 1992] 325-26).

³⁸Baldwin, *Daniel* 169.

one must understand Daniel's use of the Hebrew word שָׁבַע ($\text{shab}^\prime\text{a}^\prime$), trans-
 "weeks" (KJV). The Hebrew is literally "sevens" (cf. NIV), and that is a prefe-
 rendering. So then, Dan 9:24 simply asserts that "seventy `sevens' are decreed
 what the "sevens" are must be determined from the context and from u-
 elsewhere, as well as from the passage's historical fulfillment. Theoretically
 sevens could have referred to days, weeks, months, or years.

Several reasons lead to the conclusion that the 70 sevens of this prop-
 involve the well-known seven of years. First, Daniel knew that God had se-
 length of the Babylonian exile on the basis of the Israelites' violation of God's
 of the sabbath year of rest for the land (Lev 25:1-7). Since according to 2 Chr 36
 the Jews had been removed from the land so that it might rest for 70 years
 evident that the regulation governing the sabbath year had been violated for
 years altogether. This calculates to a total of 70 years owed the land.
 appropriate it is, then, that at the end of the exile, which was the judgment
 those violations,³⁹ the angel Gabriel was sent to reveal the initiation of a new c-
 God's dealings with Israel to cover the same number of years, namely, a cyc-
 490 years or 70 sevens of years (cf. v. 24).

Moreover, the context demands that the 70 sevens be calculated a-
 sevens of years, or a total of 490 years. To construe them as sevens of days w-
 limit the period to a mere 490 days. This short period did not witness
 rebuilding and destruction of the city to say nothing of the tremendous events
 24 making it clear that this interpretation is altogether unthinkable, untenable
 impossible. If, on the other hand, the sevens represent years, the prop-
 dovetails perfectly. The first 69 sevens or 483 years have been liter-
 remarkably, historically fulfilled. So a final period of seven years must st-
 future.

The beginning of the 70 sevens. "The issuing of the decree to restore
 rebuild Jerusalem" (v. 25) signals the beginning of the calculation. In this w-
 judgment, it is most natural to identify this decree as that of Artaxerxes, ki-
 Persia, in 445/444 B.C. (see Neh 2:1-17). Other conservative scholars prefe-
 decree of King Artaxerxes in 458/457 B.C. (see Ezra 7:6-28);⁴⁰ a few prefer Cyr-
 538/537 (see Ezra 1:2-4; 6:3-5), but they must take the numbers sym-bolically r-
 than literally.⁴¹

The fulfillment of the first 69 sevens. The first division of the 69 sevens v-
 sevens (= 49 years) to the rebuilding and full restoration of Jerusalem with
 streets and a trench (v. 25).⁴² Then, 62 more sevens (= 434 years, bringing the

³⁹Sabbath year violations were not the only reason for the exile (see, e.g., Lev 25:1-7; 26:27-35;
 36:14-21), but they were a prominent one.

⁴⁰Archer, "Daniel" 113-16; Wood, *Daniel* 252-54, who also interacts well with opposing v-
 Incidentally, either system will work in the calculations: those who start in 458/457 use solar years and
 at Christ's baptism in A.D. 27, marking the beginning of His public ministry; those who start in 445/444
 lunar (prophetic) years and arrive at Palm Sunday in either A.D. 33 (with greater precision) or 30 (w-
 precision), marking Christ's so-called triumphal entry into Jerusalem (cf. Luke 19:42). See also
 Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977) 115-39.
 significant point is that all these calculations lead to the time of the Messiah. Although some have attempt-
 construe the 70 sevens as indicative of something other than 490 years, no truly convincing or com-
 reason to abandon the general approach of Hoehner (ibid.) and others has surfaced.

⁴¹See, e.g., Young, *Daniel* 202-6.

⁴²Apparently it took that long "to clear out all the debris in Jerusalem and restore it as a thriving
 (Walvoord, *Daniel* 227).

to 483 years) comprised the second division. This division extended to the coming of the Messianic ruler (v. 25) precisely what happened. The accuracy of Daniel's prophecy finds further confirmation in the statement, "after the 62 [more] sevens the Anointed One will be cut off" (v. 26; cf. Isa 53:8). Here Young's assessment is correct: "The old evangelical interpretation is that which alone satisfies the requirements of the case. The 'anointed one' is Jesus Christ, who is cut off by death upon the Cross of Calvary."⁴³

The gap between the sixty-ninth and seventieth sevens. Five good reasons support the position that a gap exists before the fulfillment of the seventieth seven. (1) The seventieth seven could not have been fulfilled because the results of the Messiah's work outlined in v. 24 have not yet been realized. There must therefore be an interlude between the sixty-ninth and seventieth sevens. The church age, which is a mystery—that is, something not specifically foreseen in the OT, but fully revealed in the NT (see Matthew 13; Eph 3:2-9)—fills that gap. Theologically significant part of this mystery is "that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph 3:6; cf. the doctrine of the ingathering of the church in Romans 11).

(2) All the remaining unfulfilled prophecies become unintelligible unless the present church age is regarded as a distinct period of time of unknown duration in God's prophetic program (e.g., Israel's great unconditional covenants; Matthew 24:25; 2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 6:20; etc.).

(3) The events of v. 26 require a gap. At least three events occur after the sixty-ninth seven and before the seventieth: (a) the cutting off of the Messiah (v. 26; cf. Matt 24:30 or 33); (b) the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem (A.D. 70); (c) the tribulation and desolation until the decreed end (cf. Matt 24:6-30; Revelation 6:20).⁴⁴

(4) In dealing with the prophecy the Lord Jesus anticipated a gap (see Matt 24:15, 21, 29-30). He placed the seventieth seven, with its reference to "the abomination that causes desolation," at the end of the age just before His second advent to earth and identified it as the final tribulation period.

(5) The most natural and probable interpretation of v. 27 is that the seventieth seven is yet unfulfilled and so future, as will be shown in the section that follows.

The beginning of the seventieth seven (v. 27). The nearest grammatical antecedent of "He," the first word of v. 27, is not the Messianic ruler of v. 25 or the coming ruler of v. 26. This personage is also to be identified with the little horn of Daniel 7, the willful king of Dan 11:36, the man of lawlessness or sin in 2 Thessalonians 2, and the beast of Rev 13:1-10. The seven-year period described in Dan 9:27 begins, then, with the making of a covenant or treaty between Israel and the future Antichrist, who will be the leader of a confederation of states within the territory of the Roman Empire. With that general interpretation Leupold, who is not a premillennialist, agrees.⁴⁵

The program and fulfillment of the seventieth seven. Six lines of thought amplify the program and fulfillment:

(1) The seventieth seven is a period of seven years that, according to

⁴³Young, *Daniel* 207.

⁴⁴The three events were to take place between the last two sevens, because they are named before the account of the seventieth seven in the next verse. The third event is actually a series that continues intensifies during the last seven-year period.

⁴⁵Herbert Carl Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1949) 431.

writer's opinion, lies between Christ's future return for the church (i.e., the rapture) and His glorious revelation at His second coming to earth. Premillennialists hold to either a midtribulation or a posttribulation rapture will disagree on that point, but a defense of the pretribulation rapture of the church is beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice it to observe that the seventieth seven pertains to Israel and Jerusalem (v. 24), that the church is not mentioned in Revelation 6¹⁸, and several other passages point to a pretribulation rapture (e.g., 1 Thess 4:13⁵; 1 Thess 2:1-12; Rev 3:10⁴⁶).

(2) The seventieth seven also provides the chronological framework for the great events of Revelation 6¹⁸, a section describing the tribulation period.⁴⁷

(3) As previously indicated,⁴⁸ the seventieth seven commences with the effecting of a firm covenant or treaty between the coming ruler of v. 26 (i.e., the Antichrist) and the Jewish people (the "many" of v. 27).

(4) In the middle of the seventieth seven, the Antichrist will reverse his friendly policy toward Israel, will break the treaty, and will "put an end to sacrifice and offering," presumably in a rebuilt Jewish temple. For the typological background in history, see 8:13 and 11:31; for the still future aspect, see 12:11; 12:15-16, 21; 2 Thess 2:3-12; Rev 13:4-7. Young's historical Messianic interpretation of this event has been adequately refuted by both premillennial and nonpremillennial scholars.⁴⁹

(5) The breaking of the firm covenant between Israel and the Antichrist will unleash a period of unprecedented desolations, persecutions, and great distress for the Jewish people (cf. 12:1; Jer 30:7; Matt 24:15-24; Rev 3:10; 7:14; and much of Revelation 6¹⁸). For time references to the second half of the seventieth seven, see Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5. It is instructive that Christ ministered on earth about three and a half years and that the Antichrist will spend the worst part of his Satanic ministry for the same period of time. Thus there will be a holy Trinity at work (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) and an evil trinity at work (Satan, the Antichrist or beast, and the false prophet).

(6) The end of the final seven-year period will bring to completion the entire series of the 70 sevens, will mark the termination of the period of human government, will see the destruction of the desolator, and will usher in the resurrection of the great blessings promised to Israel in 9:24. For the destruction of the desolator (the Antichrist or beast), see also 11:45; Rev 19:20.

Once again, it is clear that the most natural understanding of Dan 9:24-27 leads to the conclusion that the seventieth seven (= the tribulation period) is in the future; that it will be terminated by Christ's return to the earth; and that it will be followed by the millennial aspect of the Messiah's reign, which will include the kingdom of "everlasting righteousness," thus strengthening the case for premillennialism. That kingdom then merges into the eternal kingdom. Thus, how it can last forever and thus be "the kingdom that will never be destroyed" (Dan 2:44).

⁴⁶For a careful and thorough study of the last passage, see John A. Sproule, *In Defense of Pretribulationism* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH, 1980) 24-30, 54. Gordon R. Lewis argues that the preferred view is the one that explains the greatest amount of relevant evidence with the fewest difficulties and that this criterion applies to pretribulationism better than to any other position ("Biblical Evidence for Pretribulationism," *BSac* 125 [September 1968]:226). For a more recent discussion, see also Robert L. Thomas's fine treatment of Revelation in his commentary, *Revelation 1-7* 283-90.

⁴⁷The period ends with Christ's return in Revelation 19, which in turn is followed by His thousand-year reign in Revelation 20.

⁴⁸See above, 40.

⁴⁹E.g., Leupold, *Daniel* 431-40; Walvoord, *Daniel* 233-37; Wood, *Daniel* 257-63.

CONFIRMATION FROM THE REST OF SCRIPTURE

The interpretation of Daniel 2, 7, and 9, as outlined above, leads to a premillennial view of eschatology. Such a position is consistent with the teaching of Scripture elsewhere, in *both* Testaments.⁵⁰ Peters is persuasive in his concurrence with this conclusion:

The Bible emphatically teaches, in its Millennial descriptions, a Kingdom here on earth over man in the flesh, which shall exhibit in a striking administration the principles, laws, results, etc., of a government *beyond all others, and adapted in every respect* to meet all the requisites to secure stability, happiness, etc. (comp. e.g. Isa. 60, 54, 61, etc.). Simply admit that the oath-confirmed covenant will be verified just as it grammatically reads, and then notice that the Son of Man, as constituted, with this King, that associated with Him are His chosen brethren as associated rulers. The Millennial portrayals describe this reign as still future, and it will be seen how *perfect government can, and will be, realized*. On the other hand, reject these things and confine the Kingdom to the Church, limit the reign of the Son of Man to Heaven, and you have not, and cannot receive, such a visible, outward universal Kingdom of dominion, in all respects perfectly adapted to the civil as well as the religious welfare of humanity, as the Word of God tells us if we take its plain grammatical sense and anticipate.⁵¹

Herein lies the true discontinuity between the Testaments. New Testament historical fulfillment falls dramatically short of OT eschatological expectations. Therefore, only a future earthly kingdom could fulfil that of which the prophets wrote.

With regard to the millennial reign of Christ, "the teaching of Scripture is decisive of such a time and rule coming, and it is equally decisive in giving no time and rule between the First and Sec. Advents. It follows, therefore, that in accord with primitive teaching and the scriptural statements, it must follow the Sec. Advent."⁵²

"Your kingdom come."
(Matt 6:10)

⁵⁰See Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Chicago: Moody, 1968); John F. Walvoord, *Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959); George E. Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952); Erich Sauer, *From Eternity to Eternity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954) 137-94; George N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1988) (1884 edition). The last of these is a classic work.

⁵¹Peters, *Theocratic Kingdom* 3:548.

⁵²*Ibid.* For additional evidence, see the argumentation in Barker, "Evidence from Daniel" 135-46, with a more technical treatment that emphasizes word studies of the Hebrew and Aramaic terms for "kingdom." Barker also elaborates further on certain aspects of Dan 9:24.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE APOCALYPSE: RECAPITULATION OR PROGRESSION?

Robert L. Thomas
Professor of New Testament

The number of divisions of the Apocalypse, a longstanding problematic issue, finds its best resolution in allowing for the structural dominance of the numbered series in the book. Though a theory of recapitulation in dealing with those series has its merits, stronger evidence militates against such a system. A telescopic form of progression is not without its difficulties, but stronger evidence in its favor leads to the conclusion that it is the best solution. Attempts to combine recapitulation and progression fail because of the procedure's hermeneutical shortsightedness. A number of chronological considerations bolster the conclusion that the telescopic explanation is correct. Recapitulation does play a supporting role in some of the book's sections of intercalation, but the overall scheme of the book is that of progression, not repetition.

* * * * *

Theories about the structure of the Apocalypse abound. Some propose that the organization of the book revolves around seven sections,¹ but another recommends a structure composed of six series of six.² Other proposals advance theories of eight basic visions in the book³ or of five septenary patterns.⁴ Still another method of division

¹R. J. Loenertz, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (H. J. Carpenter, tr.; London: Sheed & Ward, 1947) xiii-xiv; John Wick Bowman, "The Revelation to John: Its Dramatic Structure and Message," *Int* 9/4 (October 1955):436-53; Leroy C. Spinks, "A Critical Examination of J. W. Bowman's Proposed Structure of the Revelation," *EvQ* 50/3 (July-September 1978):215-22; William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967) 22-25.

²J. Massyngberde Ford, *The Book of Revelation* (vol. 38 of *AB*; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975) 48-50.

³Kenneth A. Strand, "The Eight Basic Visions in the Book of Revelation," *AUSS* 25/1 (Spring 1987):107-21; John G. Gager, "The Attainment of Millennial Bliss through Myth: The Book of Revelation," in *Visionaries and Their Apocalypses* (Paul D. Hanson, ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 149-50.

⁴Jean-Pierre Charlier, "The Apocalypse of John: Last Times Scripture or Last Scripture?"

sees two divisions in the prophetic section, part one covering the first eleven chapters and part two the rest of the book.⁵ A further plan is to divide the book into four septets, one consisting of the seven messages of chaps. 2`3 and three consisting of one each of the seal, trumpet, and bowl series.⁶ A further suggestion also sees another division into four parts but not four divisions of seven.⁷ The division of the apocalyptic portion into three parts⁸ varies from the four-septet scheme by omitting the seven messages of chaps. 2`3.

LV40 (1985):184-90.

⁵W. J. Harrington, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (n.p.: Chapman, 1969) 31-40; Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* 29-31; Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976) 20; J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Findlay, Ohio: Dunham, 1959) 187-88.

⁶J. P. M. Sweet, *Revelation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, Pelican, 1979) 44, 47; Eugenio Corsini, *The Apocalypse: The Perennial Revelation of Jesus Christ* (vol. 5 of *Good News Studies*; Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1983) 61-63.

⁷Elisabeth Schssler Fiorenza, "Composition and Structure of the Revelation of John," *CBQ* 39/3 (July 1977):363.

⁸Jan Lambrecht, "A Structuration of Revelation 4,1`22,5," in *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament* (BETL 53; Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1980) 84-86.

Another issue of structural interest is the question of whether the author intended the sections of the book, however one may choose to divide it, to be parallel or consecutive. Some venture the opinion that they are parallel, each describing the same period from several different perspectives.⁹ Most often, this scheme has been named "recapitulation."¹⁰ The other option is to see chronological progression as entailed in the movement of chaps. 4-22. Though not always the case,¹¹ this latter theory usually accompanies the telescopic or "dove-tailing"¹² perspective regarding the expanded contents of seventh seal and the seventh trumpet. A combining of these two options has proposed the possibility that both progression and recapitulation characterize the structure of the book.

The goal of the present study is to accumulate and evaluate whatever evidence the text will yield in deciding between those possibilities. Two phases of discussion are necessary: the former investigating the relationships between the seals and trumpets and between the trumpets and bowls and the latter isolating indications of chronological repetition or succession. The scope of this essay will not permit an evaluation of the many proposals according to which the intercalations interspersed among the three numbered series are given

⁹William Lee, "The Revelation of St. John," in *The Holy Bible* (F. C. Cook, ed; London: John Murray, 1881) 595; Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* 25, 28; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 30-31.

¹⁰J. Ramsey Michaels prefers the term "reiteration" to "recapitulation," because Irenaeus uses "recapitulation" differently, to refer to going over the same grounds with different results`e.g., with reference to Christ's reparation of Adam's wrong (*Interpreting the Book of Revelation* [Guides to New Testament Exegesis 7, Scot McKnight, gen. ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992] 53-54). "Recapitulation" has become so thoroughly established in speaking of the structure of Revelation, however, that a change in nomenclature at this point is inadvisable.

¹¹Lambrecht, "Structuration" 88-90, in his theory of "encompassing technique" exemplifies a combining of recapitulation with linear sequence. He reconciles the contradictoriness of the two schemes by theorizing that John incorporated the contradiction as a signal to his readers not to expect a future historical realization of the events prophesied in the book (104). This theory approximates the unusual hermeneutical assumptions characteristic of other theories that combine telescoping and recapitulation as discussed in a later section of this study (see pp. 56-58). See also J. B. Smith, *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1961) 136, for an apparent example of combining telescoping with recapitulation.

¹²"Dovetailing" is a term used by R. J. Loenertz, *Apocalypse* xiv-xvi.

consideration equal to the numbered series in the book's structure.¹³ Yet relationships of some of these to the seals, trumpets, and bowls will be considered.¹⁴ The assumption is that a *prima facie* understanding of the book dictates the structural dominance of the numbered series over visionary portions that are unnumbered.¹⁵

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE NUMBERED SERIES

The Theory of Recapitulation

Strengths of recapitulation. A discussion of the relationships between the seals, trumpets, and bowls revolves mostly around the significance, content, or makeup of the seventh seal and also that of the seventh trumpet. (1) A recapitulatory interpretation rests on the assignment of the last seal and the last trumpet to the same time as the seventh bowl i.e., the time of the end.¹⁶ The most frequently cited

¹³Revelation 1:19 divides the book into three major parts: 1:9-20, 2:1-3:22, and 4:1-22:5 (Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7, An Exegetical Commentary* [vol. 1 of 2 vols.; Chicago: Moody, 1992] 113-16). Revelation 4:1-22:5 is the focus of this investigation, the assumption being that the structures of 1:1-3:22 and 22:6-21 are distinct from the central apocalyptic section. G. K. Beale ("The Interpretive Problem of Rev. 1:19," *NovT* 34/4 [1992] 367-375) reaches essentially the same conclusion regarding the book's broad structure by interpreting Rev 1:19 as an allusion to Dan 2:28-29, 45.

¹⁴See John A. McLean, "The Structure of the Book of Revelation and Its Implication for the Pre-wrath Rapture (Part One)," *Michigan Theological Journal* 2/2 (Fall 1991) 138-67, for a helpful survey and evaluation of nine recent proposals analyzing the structure of Revelation.

¹⁵G. V. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (HNTC; New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 106; Donald Guthrie, *The Relevance of John's Apocalypse* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 25; Leland Ryken, *Words of Life: A Literary Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987) 147-49. David L. Barr's comment is relevant here: "Many commentators cannot resist numbering one or two other sequences of seven which John apparently overlooked. Before one proceeds to help John in this way, the critic ought to ask why John chose not to number them. Then the critic ought to try to come to terms with John's own organization. We must read *his* work . . ." ("The Apocalypse as a Symbolic Transformation of the World: A Literary Analysis," *Int* 38/1 [January 1984]:43).

¹⁶Beasley-Murray, *Revelation* 30-31; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation* (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935) 267-68, 271; Alan F. Johnson, "Revelation," in *EBC* (Frank E. Gaebelin, gen. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) 12:490; Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (4 vols.; London: Longmans, Green, 1903) 4:631-32; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 105.

proof of recapitulation notes the parallelism between the seventh trumpet and the seventh bowl, that both bring the reader to the time of Christ's second coming (cp. 11:16-18 with 16:17).¹⁷ The key consideration in regard to the finality of the seventh seal is the impact of the sixth seal that allegedly ". . . permits one interpretation alone: the last day has come."¹⁸

(2) Another line of reasoning to support recapitulation is the occurrence of the storm theophany in conjunction with each seventh member (8:5; 11:19; 16:18).¹⁹ The conclusion drawn from this phenomenon is that it is necessary to assign each seventh member to the climaxing of God's wrath. In 4:5 the writer previews that theophany as originating with the throne of God. The coincidence of the end of the first and second series shown by the theophany requires the first member of the next series to return to the beginning.

(3) A further proof of recapitulation compares the fourth trumpet (8:12) with the sixth seal (6:12-17) and states that the fourth trumpet cannot be subsequent to the sixth seal as the telescopic arrangement necessitates, because the darkening of the heavenly bodies under the former is impossible after the whole sun has become black as sackcloth under the latter.²⁰ The sequence demanded by this comparison requires placing the fourth trumpet *before* the sixth seal and permits only a recapitulatory relationship.

(4) A recent study has added a further argument to the recapitulation theory. It meticulously points out the tripartite unity of the sixth seal, sixth trumpet, and sixth bowl.²¹ This observable unity requires that these parallel members of the three series cover the same ground rather than follow some sort of sequence.

Weaknesses of recapitulation. The theory that the seals, trumpets, and bowls are parallel does not lack for support, but it also faces difficulties. (1) If the three series are independent of each other as this hypothesis usually holds, the organic unity of the whole apocalyptic

¹⁷Lenski, *Revelation* 271; Beasley-Murray, *Revelation* 30.

¹⁸Beasley-Murray, *Revelation* 30-31; cf. Lenski, *Revelation* 267-68.

¹⁹Alford, *Greek Testament* 4:664-65.

²⁰Lee, "Revelation" 603.

²¹Andrew E. Steinmann, "The Tripartite Structure of the Sixth Seal, the Sixth Trumpet, and the Sixth Bowl of John's Apocalypse" (Rev 6:12-7:17; 9:13-11:14; 16:12-16)," *JETS* 35/1 (March 1992):76.

section of the book is impaired.²² Ostensibly the vision of the seven-sealed scroll in chap. 5 introduces the remainder of the Apocalypse. A detachment of the trumpets and bowls from the seals leaves the last two cycles of judgment unrelated to the throne of God from which the seal judgments have proceeded. These unattached sequences of wrathful visitations leave unanswered basic questions about their source and how they fit with the rest of the book. This disconnection brings the book to the brink of absurdity i.e., to a state that is unworthy of a literary work. On the other hand, if the seventh seal consists of the trumpets and bowls, the whole is bound together into a cohesive literary unit.

(2) Another weakness of recapitulation is its inconsistent analysis of the nature and purpose of the seven seals. All seven are manifestations of wrath against "those who dwell on the earth," i.e., "the earth-dwellers" (3:10; cf. 6:10; 8:13; 11:10 [twice]; 13:8; 12, 14 [twice]; 17:2, 8). The theory is hard-pressed to explain the seventh seal as being of this sort and usually resorts to seeing it as a reference to the beginning of sabbatical rest²³ or a temporary suspension in the sequence of revelations given to John.²⁴ Either of these explanations relates the seventh seal to the faithful rather than the earth-dwellers. A further suggestion that the seventh seal is both introductory to the trumpets and simultaneous with the parousia²⁵ is not just weak hermeneutically. It also fails to specify any particular temporal onslaught against the earth-dwellers. None of these proposals explains the seventh seal as a temporal judgment against rebellious mankind.

(3) A third deficiency in recapitulation is its lack of an adequate explanation for the widely acknowledged increase in intensity from the seals to the trumpets and from the trumpets to the bowls.²⁶ For

²²Friedrich Dsterdieck (*Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Revelation of John* [Meyer's Commentary, tr. and ed. by Henry E. Jacobs; New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887] 261-62) sees recapitulation as causing "the organic connection of the visions as a whole [to be] rent."

²³Alford, *The Greek Testament* 4:630.

²⁴Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (London: Macmillan, 1906) 107.

²⁵Dale Ralph Davis, "The Relationship between the Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls in the Book of Revelation," *JETS* 16 (1973):154-55.

²⁶E.g., Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, n.d.) 176; J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse* (3 vols.; New York: Charles C. Cook, 1909) 2:17; Lenski, *Revelation* 267; John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 1966) 231; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (NICNT, F. F.

example, the fourth seal affects one-quarter of the earth's population, and the sixth trumpet afflicts one-third (6:8; 9:18). In contrast to these fractional and non-final punishments, the bowl judgments affect the totality of the earth and are ultimate in their consequences (e.g., cp. 8:8 with 16:3).²⁷ No theory of recapitulation has an adequate explanation for these increases.

(4) Each support for recapitulation cited above has an inherent weakness. (a) The observation that all three series *end* the same way does not necessitate that they *begin* at the same time. A coinciding termination-point is possible even if the three sequences begin at different times. They may still end together even though they are not parallel. (b) The same comment applies to the occurrence of the storm theophany (8:5; 11:19; 16:18; cf. 4:5) in conjunction with each seventh member. The seventh seal, seventh trumpet, and seventh bowl could end simultaneously without necessitating a parallelism of the three series *en toto*. (c) The fourth trumpet *could* follow the sixth seal if the darkening of the heavenly bodies under the sixth seal were only temporary. This optional interpretation that the sixth seal is *not* the immediate precursor of Christ's second coming is quite viable.²⁸ That would leave the heavenly bodies intact for a further manifestation of divine wrath *after* the cosmic upheavals of the sixth seal. (d) The alleged tripartite unity of the sixth seal, sixth trumpet, and sixth bowl rests on a merging of the intercalations following each sixth member with the relevant visitation in each case.²⁹ These mergers are of doubtful validity because the material in the intercalations diverges widely from the judgments of the related seal, trumpet, and bowl. The announcement of the end of the second woe at 11:14, for instance, does not dictate the necessity of including 10:1`11:14 under the sixth trumpet (9:13-21). That announcement occurs at 11:14 so as to join it with the announcement of the third woe and seventh trumpet.³⁰

Bruce, gen. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 179; Davis, "Relationship" 149.

²⁷See John A. McLean, "The Structure of the Book of Revelation and Its Implication for the Pre-Wrath Rapture (Part Two)," *Michigan Theological Journal* 3/1 (Spring 1992) 7-8, for other indications of intensification from one series to the next.

²⁸Thomas, *Revelation I* 7451-52.

²⁹Steinmann, "Tripartite Structure" 70.

³⁰Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (New York: Macmillan, 1919) 607-8. Revelation 9:20-21 clearly marks the end of the sixth trumpet, making impossible the inclusion of 10:1`11:13 as part of that trumpet (Homer Hailey, *Revelation, an Introduction and Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979] 241). Inclusion of the intercalation within the

The accumulation of evidence against the recapitulation theory is considerable and outweighs its favorable points. That leads to a further search for the structural backbone of the Apocalypse.

The Telescopic Theory

Strengths of telescoping. The telescopic or "dove-tailing" view sees the seventh seal as containing the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet as consisting of the seven bowls. (1) It turns for support principally to the absence of any immediate outpouring of wrath against the earth after the opening of the seventh seal (8:1) and after the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15). After the breaking of the seventh seal, no visitation against the earth-dwellers comes until the trumpet series begins.³¹ This lull in judgment along with the preparation of the seven trumpet-angels that results from the seventh seal's opening provides a strong indication from the text that the content of the seventh seal is the seven trumpet-visitations (cf. 8:1-2).³²

(2) The seventh trumpet provides the same general situation. Though some have identified the contents of the seventh trumpet with 11:16-18,³³ and others equate this trumpet with the woe pronounced in 12:12,³⁴ neither possibility can match the criteria required for the last trumpet judgment. The visitation of the seventh trumpet is not in view until 16:1 ff., in the form of the seven bowl judgments.³⁵ The heavenly anthem of 11:16-18 cannot be the seventh trumpet because it is a proleptic celebration of what *will* have happened after the seventh trumpet.³⁶ The "woe" of 12:12 cannot be the last of the trumpet series

trumpet fails to meet the criterion for each of the woes: the objects must be "those who dwell on the earth" (8:13). Nothing in 10:1-11:13 directly impacts all earth-dwellers the way 9:13-21 does.

³¹Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* 71-72; George E. Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 121-23; Davis, "Relationship" 151; McLean, "Structure (Part Two)" 8-9.

³²Dsterdieck, *Revelation* 260-61; Ladd, *Revelation* 123; M. Robert Mulholland, *Revelation, Holy Living in an Unholy World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990) 185.

³³E.g., Beasley-Murray, *Revelation* 30.

³⁴Mounce, *Revelation* 190; Sweet, *Revelation* 202.

³⁵E. W. Bullinger, *The Apocalypse or "The Day of the Lord"* (London: Eyre and Spottiswodde, n.d.) 368-69; McLean, "Structure (Part Two)" 9.

³⁶Davis ("Relationship" 155) finds the content of the third woe in 11:18, but fails to recognize that this verse is part of a heavenly celebration and not an inflicting of misery on the earth-dwellers.

because it alludes to the wrath of Satan, not of God. The third-woe judgment(s) (9:12; 11:14) remains unnoticed unless the content of the seventh trumpet is the seven bowls.³⁷

(3) The three woes pronounced are against the earth-dwellers and are the same as the last three trumpets (8:12; cf. 9:12; 11:14). Since these people are the objects of God's wrath under the seven seals also (6:10; cf. 3:10), the identification of the seventh seal as the seven trumpets has further corroboration. Furthermore, the third woe must be the seven bowl judgments because those are referred to as "the seven *last* plagues" that complete the wrath of God (15:1).³⁸ The finality of the bowl judgments compared with the non-final characteristics of the seal and trumpet judgments brings further substantiation of the telescopic makeup of the seventh trumpet as the container of the seven bowls.

Other considerations coincide with a telescopic or progressive understanding of the seals, trumpets, and bowls. (4) If one accepts an identification of the first six seals with the "Little Apocalypse" of Christ (Matt 24:1 ff.; Mark 13:1 ff.; Luke 21:5 ff.),³⁹ he must acknowledge that the first six seals are the beginning of birth pains that Christ spoke about (cf. Matt 24:8).⁴⁰ Compared with the seven *last* plagues (Rev 15:1), the seals are earlier in "the hour of trial." Under this interpretation of progression, the first six seals come early and the bowls of wrath late in the future period of world tribulation.

(5) Telescopic progression also well accounts for the mounting intensity of wrathful manifestations from seals to trumpets and from trumpets to bowls. God's judgments against the earth become increasingly severe until they climax in temporal-become-eternal punishment at the personal return of the Warrior-King in chaps. 19-21.

(6) The telescopic view also explains the occurrence of the storm theophany in conjunction with each seventh member (8:5; 11:19; 16:18; cf. 4:5). Since the seventh seal and seventh trumpet encompass a following series of judgments, all three series end together and are marked by bolts of lightning, noises, and peals of thunder, and

³⁷Ladd, *Revelation* 121-22; Johnson, "Revelation" 12:490-91.

³⁸Johnson, "Revelation" 490-91; McLean, "Structure (Part Two) 8.

³⁹Thomas, *Revelation* 1 7416.

⁴⁰John Andrew McLean, "The Seventieth Week of Daniel 9:27 as a Literary Key for Understanding the Structure of the Apocalypse of John" (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1990) 191-213.

sometimes an earthquake and large hailstones.⁴¹ The initial scene in the throne room anticipates this climax to the visitations (4:5) when setting the tone for the seven-sealed scroll and the appearance of the Lamb (chap. 5). The other three references to the storm theophany (8:5; 11:19; 16:18) each of which is also associated with the heavenly throne room are reminders issued in conjunction with each of the seventh visitations that the particular visitation, when it has run its course, will mark the conclusion of God's punishments against the earth-dwellers. Only the telescopic arrangement can extend the purview of the initial throne-room scene with its storm theophany to include the trumpet and bowl series.

(7) The telescopic theory also accounts for the differences between the seventh bowl on the one hand and the seventh seal and seventh trumpet on the other. The seventh bowl is the absolute end. It is the final stroke, but this is not true of the other two seventh members.⁴² With the seventh seal, only silence in heaven is the immediate outcome. With the seventh trumpet, heavenly voices celebrating the victory of God's kingdom resound. But with the seventh bowl comes the dramatic announcement, *ggonen* (*gegonen*, "it has happened" or "it is done," 16:17). Recapitulation is at a loss to explain these differences among the seventh members of the three series. For recapitulation to be correct, the three final members should be at least approximately the same, but instead, they differ radically from one another.

Weaknesses of telescoping. Problems with the telescopic type of progression are at least three in number. (1) The end signaled by the seventh seal cannot be a period including the whole content of chaps. 8-19, because events of chaps. 12-14, part of the seventh trumpet, occur earlier than the first seal.⁴³ At least two happenings, the birth of the male child and His snatching away to God and His throne (12:5), have already passed and cannot belong to the future period of the seal judgments. Unless special allowance is made for the exceptional

⁴¹A further indication of a simultaneous ending of the three series is the announcement of the end of delay and the culmination of the mystery of God in conjunction with the seventh trumpet (10:6-7) when compared with the finality of the seven bowls. Not only are the bowl judgments the seven *last* plagues (15:1), but when the final bowl is poured out, a loud voice from the temple and the throne proclaims, "It is done (*ggonen* [*gegonen*])" (16:17).

⁴²Lambrecht, "Structuration" 91-92.

⁴³Caird, *Revelation* 104-5.

nature of Revelation's intercalations, progression in the strict sense is an unacceptable explanation of the book's structure.

(2) Matthew 24:29 clearly indicates that the events of the sixth seal (Rev 6:12-17) occur "after the tribulation of those days" and just before Christ's second advent to earth.⁴⁴ That makes it impossible for the seventh seal with its trumpets and bowls to represent events later than the sixth seal. This formidable objection to telescopic progression rests on the identification of the sixth seal with the cosmic upheavals Christ spoke of in His Olivet Discourse. This identification has been questioned, however.⁴⁵

(3) Telescopic progression necessitates a rearrangement of the text to fit a strictly chronological scheme.⁴⁶ Citation of this weakness has in view scholars like R. H. Charles who felt that a later editor had carelessly rearranged the sequence of the text.⁴⁷ After weeding out and correcting those relocations, Charles proposed a strictly chronological sequence for Revelation's structure.⁴⁸ The questioning of Revelation's accuracy in its present form and the liberties taken by Charles in arbitrarily shuffling verses and sections from one place to another are justifiably rejected. Yet this is hardly a ground for rejecting all structural proposals that may resemble his, but which do not rearrange the text.

The Theory Combining Recapitulation and Telescoping

A third theory combines the other two theories. This one sees Revelation's series as neither systematically recapitulating each other nor consistently following each other in strict chronological sequence. Instead it allows for some of both. The most characteristic feature of this theory is its insistence on the book's *literary* quality, which brings an emphasis to its artistry.⁴⁹ In its artistic arrangement, each new series both recapitulates previous visions and develops themes already

⁴⁴Lenski, *Revelation* 266-68. Davis ("Relationship" 153-54) notes the necessity of putting the sixth seal at the very end of the tribulation as the immediate precursor of Christ's return, but strangely, he advocates progression in conjunction with the first five seals, the first six trumpets, and the first six bowls (ibid., 157-58).

⁴⁵Thomas, *Revelation* 1:7451-52; McLean, "Structure (Part Two)" 19-23.

⁴⁶Mounce, *Revelation* 177.

⁴⁷R. H. Charles, *The Revelation of St. John* (2 vols., ICC; New York: Scribner's Sons, 1920) 1:lv.

⁴⁸Ibid., 1:xxiii.

⁴⁹Martin Kiddle, *The Revelation of St. John* (HNTC; New York: Harper, 1940) xxvii-xxx.

introduced.⁵⁰ That allows for obvious progression and considerable restatement and detailed development of earlier material.⁵¹

The unique strength of this theory is its combining of valid elements in the two earlier theories and its nullifying of their weaknesses. When faced with a difficulty of chronological sequence in the text, it allows for a shift to a recapitulation mode. Conversely, when faced with a situation that recapitulation cannot account for, it explains the problem according to a progressive sequence.

Such vacillation, however, introduces a debilitating weakness for the view, because it presupposes the existence of conflicting criteria. It advocates an allowance for logical contradictions in the text of Revelation and necessitates dispensing with rational congruity in interpreting the book. It concurs with the opinion that the expression "a perfectly logical apocalypse" is an oxymoron.⁵² It concludes that John's material cannot be forced into any system of chronological sequence or cycles⁵³ and that apocalyptic language and vision is generally surrealistic rather than rational and logically consistent.⁵⁴ An attempted justification for these unusual hermeneutical assumptions notes that to insist on a *systematic* presentation in Revelation would amount to implying that "John was more interested" in impressing his readers with "a work of literary subtlety than [in] sharing the awe-inspiring visions he experienced."⁵⁵

As persuasive as that tactic may be, its underlying premise is fallacious. Wherein lies the necessity that literary art be logically contradictory?⁵⁶ Do the terms "artistic" and "rational" mutually

⁵⁰Caird, *Revelation* 106.

⁵¹Mounce, *Revelation* 178.

⁵²Ibid.; E. F. Scott, *The Book of Revelation* (New York: Scribner, 1940) 26. Scott's exact statement is, "A logical apocalypse would be a contradiction in terms."

⁵³Caird, *Revelation* 105.

⁵⁴Ladd, *Revelation* 124.

⁵⁵Mounce, *Revelation* 178.

⁵⁶The hermeneutical mood-swing that tends at times to resort to artistic versus rational explanations in Revelation finds a parallel in the way many interpreters handle the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12`14. An example of that occurs in Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT, F. F. Bruce, gen ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 645 n. 23: "It is perhaps an indictment of Western Christianity that we should consider `mature' our rather totally cerebral and domesticated`but bland`brand of faith, with the concomitant absence of the Spirit in terms of his supernatural gifts! The Spirit, not Western rationalism, marks the turning

exclude each other? Descriptions can be quite graphic and still conform to the strictures of human reason. Besides that, no adequate basis exists for relegating Revelation to an apocalyptic genre where normal hermeneutical principles do not apply.⁵⁷ The fact is that the book is more accurately characterized as prophetic rather than apocalyptic genre, so recourse to purported peculiarities of apocalyptic interpretation is baseless.

Interpretive presumption must lie on the side of rationality if the author's meaning is to emerge. Leaving the text's meaning in the hands of readers whose conclusions derive from non-rational impressions of an art form without controls imposed by logic can only bring multiplied interpretive conclusions, none of which coincides with the text's originally intended meaning. John composed the Apocalypse for reasonable people, and the book must be interpreted accordingly.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR PROGRESSION

A comparison of the three main theories regarding the seals, trumpets, and bowls leads to the conclusion that the form of progression known as telescoping or dove-tailing is superior to recapitulation and to a combination of recapitulation and progression. Chronological considerations add weight to this conclusion. As already noted, telescoping does not absolutely exclude recapitulation

of the ages, after all. . . ." Conversely, Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (*Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1979] 75-76), in commenting on 1 Cor 14:4 and 14-19, observes the contemporary tendency to set in contrast the cognitive and preconceptual sides of man as a reaction against a secularized use of reason. Yet he concludes that as bad as the dehumanizing use of reason is, it does not warrant an overreaction against reason in biblical interpretation. He acknowledges that characteristics of an infinite God are beyond human logic, but an allegedly deeper aspect of personality than the mind (with its language capacities) is not where man copes with them. He observes, "Man is more than his mind; he is not an intellectualistic machine. But this 'more' is not inevitably in tension with the mind, nor does language necessarily distort or obscure the wholeness of experience" (76). Gaffin's answer to the proposal that the gift of tongues consisted of some type of ecstatic utterances rather than foreign languages closely parallels an effective response to the proposal that logical consistency should not be required in the Apocalypse. Man's artistic appreciation is not innately opposed to his reasoning faculties any more than his allegedly "deeper aspect of personality" is in tension with his mind.

⁵⁷Thomas, *Revelation I* 723-29.

in the chronological fulfillment of the events predicted, though it does incline that way. The sequence of the visions revealed could differ from the sequence of the events fulfilling those visions, but that would contravene normal expectation. The Apocalypse has a number of chronological indicators that confirm what is here called "normal," i.e., that the fulfillment of things revealed coincides with the sequence of revelation insofar as the seals, trumpets, and bowls are concerned.

(1) It is important to establish the successive nature of the seal and trumpet visitations. [a] Chronological sequence provides the most natural explanation of the numbering of the visitations from one to seven in each series.⁵⁸ [b] The most conspicuous confirmation of this explanation lies in the last three trumpets, otherwise known as the three woes (cf. 8:13). The text explicitly announces the completion of the first woe's fulfillment before the second begins (cf. 8:12) and of the second before the third begins (cf. 11:14).⁵⁹ [c] It is also obvious that warfare under the outworking of the second seal by its very nature must follow the peaceful conditions that prevail under the first seal. [d] Another indicator of the sequential nature of the trumpets is the five-month duration of the fifth trumpet's impact. This judgment has a definite period in which to run its course, thus implying that the same is true of the rest of the series. So the seals and trumpets occur one after the other in numerical sequence and are non-cumulative, i.e., each one finishes before the next one begins. This succession is the sequence of visions and requires the same sequence of fulfillment.⁶⁰

The sequential nature of the bowl judgments is slightly different, however. The beginning of each visitation follows the same chronological sequence, but the bowl judgments are apparently cumulative rather than consecutive in the misery they create. Such a conclusion is necessary because by the time of the affliction of the fifth bowl, the earth-dwellers are still suffering from the effects of the first one (cf. 16:2, 10-11).⁶¹ That feature makes two points: the bowls in their fulfillment follow one another in numerical sequence, and the

⁵⁸McLean, "Structure (Part Two)" 8.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Davis derives the principle that "the order of the visions does not *necessarily* indicate the order of events" ("Relationship" 153), and cites the nonsequential nature of events in chaps. 12 ff. to prove his point. In doing so, however, he misses the point that chaps. 12 ff. are not a direct part of a numbered series and therefore present a different situation.

⁶¹Alford, *Greek Testament* 4:700; Moses Stuart, *A Commentary on the Apocalypse* (Edinburgh: Maclachlan, Stewart, 1847) 668.

effect of each remains even after the beginning of the next. Presumably, the second, third, and fourth bowls are causes of the ongoing pain of the fifth bowl also.⁶² This cumulative relationship is the most natural explanation for the last three bowls too, and presents a contrast to the consecutive sequence of the last three trumpets.⁶³

(2) Several internal time relationships add to this framework of sequence. The intercalation between the sixth and seventh seals (Revelation 7) is unnumbered and represents a pause in chronological advance. As with a similar insert between the sixth and seventh trumpets, it furnishes added perspectives that bear an indirect relationship to the manifestation of wrath in the seal just before and in the one to follow. The sixth seal has just closed with all classes of humanity expressing their futile plight and inability to cope with the great day of the wrath of God and the Lamb (6:16-17). The interlude that follows immediately answers the question of a panic-stricken world, "Who will be able to stand?" (6:17). Revelation 7:1-8 answers in essence, "The 144,000 servants of God will be able to stand." It pulls back for a moment and visualizes a group of saints on earth who are on God's side and consequently have God's seal of protection from the wrath yet to come.⁶⁴

The connection of 7:1-8 with the sixth seal furnishes an important indication of chronological progression from the sixth seal to the first two trumpets. The four angels in 7:1 (cf. 7:3) are restraining the four winds lest they blow against the earth, the sea, and the trees. Those are the same parts of creation affected by the first and second trumpet visitations (8:6-9).⁶⁵ Evidently the restraint of the winds is a picturesque apocalyptic way of referring to the delay of the two plagues that are to come shortly.⁶⁶ The reason for no mention of the winds once the trumpet series begins is the fluidity of apocalyptic language that replaces the destructiveness of the four winds with the

⁶²Lenski, *Revelation* 476.

⁶³William Henry Simcox, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Cambridge: Cambridge U., 1893) 151.

⁶⁴Swete, *Apocalypse* 95. Mounce calls the intercalation a parenthesis (Mounce, *Revelation* 164), terminology to which Lenski objects because the intercalation is an integral part of the book's movement (Lenski, *Revelation* 244). Whatever the break in sequence of the seals is called, however, both agree that the function of chap. 7 is to reflect the status of the faithful as radically different from that of the world's rebels.

⁶⁵Alford, *Greek Testament* 4:637; Swete, *Apocalypse* 111.

⁶⁶Ladd, *Revelation* 111.

first two trumpet-angels and their judgments.⁶⁷

The prescribed delay in releasing the four winds at the time of the sixth seal shows that time must elapse between the action of that seal and the implementation of the first trumpet. That furnishes proof of chronological sequence in the movement of seals to trumpets and conforms to the structural conclusion already reached that the seventh seal consists of the seven trumpets.

(3) Another temporal relationship hinges on factors in the intercalation of 7:1-8. That is the conferral of the seal in 7:3 before the release of the aforementioned winds (cf. 7:1). The sealing of the 144,000 must precede the trumpet plagues, especially the fifth one.⁶⁸ Otherwise, the plagues will hurt the faithful along with the earth-dwellers. Specifically, the fifth-trumpet description explains the protection of God's servants provided in the sealing connected with the sixth seal: "And it was said to them [i.e., the locusts] that they should not hurt the grass of the earth or any green thing or any tree, but [lit., 'except'] [they should hurt] the men who do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads" (9:4). That implicit reference to a sealed group can be none other than the 144,000 sealed earlier with a sealing that exempts them from the locust attack.⁶⁹

That connection shows, once again, a temporal sequence from the seals to the trumpets. In particular, it reflects that the sixth seal precedes the fifth trumpet,⁷⁰ and by extension, the rest of the trumpets too. It coincides with the chronological progression of happenings portrayed in the seals and trumpets. It furnishes the added detail that the time-span entailed is less than one generation i.e., the persons protected at the sixth seal are still alive at the time of the fifth trumpet.⁷¹ The predicted period cannot be expanded to hundreds of years.

(4) A comparison of the fifth seal with the days of the seventh

⁶⁷Johnson, "Revelation" 12:478.

⁶⁸Davis, "Relationship" 150.

⁶⁹Swete, *Apocalypse* 116; Smith, *Revelation* 144; Sweet, *Revelation* 168.

⁷⁰Johnson, "Revelation" 12:490.

⁷¹Lenski, *Revelation* 284. Basing his conclusion on a view that the 144,000 in 14:1-5 have been preserved alive through severe persecution, Seiss notes another indication that the period from the opening of the sixth seal when the group was sealed (Revelation 7) to the sounding of the seventh trumpet when they appear on earth once again (Revelation 14) is no more than the normal length of one human life (*Apocalypse* 3:20-21). That rests, however, on the questionable interpretation that the 144,000 do not die as martyrs.

trumpet's fulfillment also reflects chronological sequence in the progress of the book (cp. 6:11 with 10:6). The judgmental aspect of the fifth seal lies in the prayers of the martyrs under the altar for vengeance against the earth-dwellers. God's response to their prayer (6:11) includes His instruction that they rest a little longer. This response, *ti xrnōw mikrōn* (*eti chronon mikron*, "still a small delay" or "a little time yet"), points forward to a period whose conclusion is marked in 10:6 by *xrnōw okti stai* (*chronos ouketi estai*, "there will be delay no longer"). The latter expression marks the end of the delay spoken of under the fifth seal.⁷² The use of *xrnōw* (*chronos*) in the sense of "delay" or "interval of time" in both places confirms the connection of those two announcements.

The very next statement after the announcement of the end of delay connects that end with the days ushered in by the seventh trumpet blast (10:7).⁷³ The whole series of trumpets is the answer to the martyrs' prayer for vengeance and that series is about to wind up.⁷⁴ That development adds a further point to the case for chronological progression: a measurable period of time elapses between the fifth seal and the seventh trumpet.⁷⁵

⁷²Lee, "Revelation" 4:625. For other suggested identifications of the delay, see Thomas, *Revelation I* 7447-48.

⁷³Other proposed meanings of the angelic announcement of 10:6 include the suggestions that it proclaims the beginning of the reign of Antichrist (Charles, *Revelation* 1:263-64) and that it indicates the absolute cessation of time (Lanski, *Revelation* 317-18). The former suggestion falters in its failure to take into account 10:7: completion of "the mystery of God" cannot be limited to the revelation of Antichrist. Furthermore, the seventh trumpet has not yet sounded (cf. 11:15), so there yet remains a progression of time beyond this announcement (Mounce, *Revelation* 213). In regard to the latter suggestion, the **||1** (*all*) that begins 10:7, along with the contents of 10:7, requires that the meaning "delay" be assigned to *xrnōw* (*chronos*) in 10:6 (Smith, *Revelation* 159). Also, it is pointless for the angel to make such a solemn announcement about the timeless nature of eternity (Mounce, *Revelation* 212).

⁷⁴Alford, *Greek Testament* 4:652; Beckwith, *Apocalypse* 582; Bullinger, *Apocalypse* 339; Swete, *Apocalypse* 126-27; M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (McLean, VA: McDonald, n.d.) 2:516; Hailey, *Revelation* 244.

⁷⁵Davis ("Relationship" 150) adds another indicator of chronological progress when he notes that men have already received the mark of the beast by the time of the first bowl (16:2). Since the marking occurs in 13:16-18 in an interlude between the conclusion of the trumpets and the beginning of the bowls, he takes that as another sign of progression. Yet he correctly notes that the interlude does not belong to a particular series of judgments and is, therefore, not

Leading chronological factors, including the sequential nature of the seals and trumpets, the priority of the sixth seal to the first two trumpets, the priority of the sixth seal to the fifth trumpet, and the priority of the fifth seal to the seventh trumpet, therefore, tend to bolster the case favoring structural and chronological progression rather than recapitulation in Revelation.

THE ROLE OF RECAPITULATION

The progressive sequence of the seals, trumpets, and bowls does not rule out some measure of recapitulation in sections of intercalation, however.⁷⁶ In particular, the interlude in 11:1-13 regarding the two witnesses, that in Revelation 12¹⁴ between the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15) and the description of the seven bowls (chaps. 15¹⁶), and that in Revelation 17¹⁸ between the announcement of the seventh bowl (16:17) and the personal intervention of the Warrior-King (19:11-16) are partially recapitulatory.⁷⁷

The passage about the two witnesses (11:1-13) presumably gives another perspective on the same period covered by the first six trumpets that precede it in the sequence of visions. That observation presupposes that the six trumpets carry to the time of the end described in the seven *last* plagues that compose the seventh trumpet.

In order to provide background leading up to the seven bowls, the interlude in Revelation 12¹⁴ returns chronologically at least to the birth of the male child and perhaps even to a point before that. That clearly breaks the chronological sequence of the trumpet series, into which it is woven, by recourse to events long before the trumpet series begins. It also returns to give a third perspective on the period of the trumpets, assuming that the three-and-a-half year period referred to

a decisive factor. If the interlude composed of chaps. 12¹⁴ furnishes a second perspective on the period of the trumpets, as will be suggested below, the imposition of the mark of the beast very possibly comes near the beginning of the trumpet series, not too long after the sealing of the 144,000 (Rev 7:1-8) that is described in conjunction with the sixth seal. That would give every person one mark or the other to indicate his loyalty during the period of the trumpets.

⁷⁶McLean, "Structure (Part Two)" 9-10.

⁷⁷Some would include the interlude of 7:1-17 among the intercalations that are recapitulatory (Bullinger, *Apocalypse* 279; Caird, *Revelation* 94; Johnson, "Revelation" 12:477). Their reason for doing so, however, rests largely on a misunderstanding of Zech 6:5 (Thomas, *Revelation I* 7463).

three times in chaps. 12`13 (12:6, 14; 13:5) is the same one spoken of in 11:2-3.

Revelation 17`18 turns aside to furnish background data regarding Babylon whose final wrathful visitation has just been forecast with the pouring out of the seventh bowl (16:19).⁷⁸ To do so, the section returns to review, among other things, more characteristics of the beast from the sea who has enjoyed greatest prominence during the period of the trumpets (cf. 17:7-12), though in sequence, the trumpet series comes earlier in the book.

That Revelation contains recapitulation in that sense is undeniable. But recapitulation is limited to the intercalatory portions of the book, with the main structure of the book revolving about the progressive sequence of the seals, trumpets, and bowls. Ladd's qualification of the book's progressive mode differs from that. He reasons that because the seals, trumpets, and bowls all carry through to the end and because the seventh seal contains the seven trumpets and the seventh trumpet the seven bowls, some measure of recapitulation is necessary.⁷⁹ That is a misleading use of the term "recapitulation." The encompassing natures of the seventh seal and seventh trumpet do not dictate a return to review periods already covered. Rather they are another way of portraying progression. It may be granted that the three series are not strictly consecutive i.e., the seventh member of one concluding before the first member of the next begins. But progress is portrayed when the trumpets begin later than the sixth seal, and the bowls later than the sixth trumpet.

THE RESULTANT STRUCTURAL SCHEME

The results of this study lead to the conclusion that the overriding structural plan of the Apocalypse is that of progression. It is the form of progression that entails "telescoping," i.e., the seventh seal consists of a number of parts as does a telescope when it is compressed, making the inner parts of the unit invisible. The same is

⁷⁸Charles H. Giblin is helpful in comparing 17:1 and 21:9 as beginnings and 19:9-10 and 22:6-9 as endings of two parallel subordinated interpretation-scenes that elaborate on what immediately precedes each section. The former interpretive-scene (Revelation 17`18) explicates God's wrath against Babylon under the seventh bowl (16:17-21), and the latter the bride of the Lamb who appears first in 21:2 (cf. 19:7, 9) ("Structural and Thematic Correlations in the Theology of Revelation 16-22," *Bib* 55/4 [1974]:488-504).

⁷⁹Ladd, *Revelation* 121-22.

true of the seventh trumpet. The chronological movement in the seals, trumpets, and bowls is always forward, never backward or static. The predictions forecast future events that will follow one right after the other in the same order as the book unfolds them.

Within this progressive structure, pauses occur when elements of recapitulation intervene. These pauses cannot be given equal weight in analyzing the book's structure, however. They function in supporting roles to add understanding to the happenings of the numbered series that compose the main skeleton of the Apocalypse.

Aside from the intercalations, however, there is forward movement in the book from chap. 6 toward a climax in the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom in 19:11`22:5.⁸⁰ When allowance is made for the intercalations of chaps. 17`18 and 21:10`22:5, it is clear that the seventh bowl in its finality has three parts: (1) the fall of Babylon (16:17-19), (2) the final battles and judgments (19:11`20:15), and (3) the vision of the new creation and the new Jerusalem (21:1-8).⁸¹ Within the scope of the last in the series of last plagues, progressive development is also clear.⁸²

Figure 1 on the next page is a graphic representation of the relationships of the seals, trumpets, and bowls built on the conclusions reached above.

⁸⁰Cf. McLean, "The Structure of Revelation (Part One)" 158.

⁸¹One feature that shows the inclusion of all three parts in the seventh bowl is the use in 21:6 of *ggonan* (*gegonan*), a form almost identical with the *ggonen* (*gegonen*) of 16:17. Both words echo the theme of "lastness" that characterizes the bowl plagues as portrayed in 15:1 through the use of *sxtaw* (*eschatas*) and *telsuh* (*etelesth*).

⁸²Lambrecht, "Structuration" 92.

OT COMMENTARIES FOR BIBLE EXPOSITORS, 1987-92¹

James E. Rosscup
Professor of Bible Exposition

Recent years have witnessed the publishing of an abundance of commentaries on OT books of the Bible. A survey of such volumes published from 1987 through 1992 can be quite beneficial to one's study of the Bible for either public presentation or personal use. An annotated bibliography noting the books' purposes and evaluating how well the authors have provided comments to help expositors is a good way to look quickly at a large number of sources. After a survey of the individual works, a classification and ranking of books on Genesis illustrates a good way to compare the volumes with each other by dividing them into categories according to their types of treatment and rating them according to the quality of their explanations.

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¹Editor's note: The volumes and annotations in this article have been selected from a larger annotated bibliography compiled by Professor Rosscup. Recently revised, updated, and enlarged (1993 revision of a 1983 ed.), this larger work includes approximately 1,300 individual commentaries or sets of commentaries with annotations on all sixty-six books of the Bible, the volumes deemed to be the most helpful for expositors and teachers of the Word based on the compiler's thirty-five years of seminary involvement and teaching. The unabridged bibliography is available through Grace Book Shack at the same address as *The Master's Seminary Journal*. This article has selected works from the last five years, 1987-92, and pertaining to the OT only. An article in the Fall 1993 issue of *TMSJ* will deal similarly with NT works.

In an era of mushrooming information, publishing of tools for biblical study has not lagged behind literature in other fields. In a seemingly never-ending stream, books dealing with the Bible continue to appear. That has evoked what is perhaps the most frequently asked kind of question by those who thirst for a deeper understanding of the Word: "What is the best commentary on Genesis?" or "What is the best book for studying Old Testament backgrounds?" or "What is the best commentary set on the Old Testament?"

Such a question deserves a knowledgeable answer because the accuracy and consequent effectiveness of someone's sermon or Bible-study lesson may hinge on the advice given. Yet it is not an easy question to answer. One reason it is not easy to answer is the rapidity with which new volumes are appearing.

The following remarks cite recent works that, for some reason, deserve such special attention. This is not intended to be an exhaustive listing of recent works, but the number of study tools cited should furnish a beginning answer to readers' questions such as the ones cited above.

The descriptions are limited to some of the relatively recent volumes and sets, under the assumption that many will already know the merits of many of the older works. Anyone interested in a complete annotated bibliography should consult the information in note 1 above.

COMMENTARIES ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Several commentaries on the whole Bible have appeared and can be divided into two groups: those that follow a "synthesis" approach and those that are more analytical.

Works That Synthesize

The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986` .

The volumes in this series furnish surveys to Bible books in a lucid manner that explains passages concisely, deals with some problems, and shows the practical import of principles. Writers often draw on considerable scholarly help, resulting in a competent evangelical product. Joyce Baldwin does *The Message of Genesis 12-50* (1986). Derek Kidner contributes *Love to the Loveless* (Hosea) and *A Time to Mourn and a Time to Dance* (Ecclesiastes). Michael Wilcock is fairly helpful on Chronicles, John Stott very good on Galatians and Ephesians, R. C. Lucas vital on Colossians and Philemon. The series has other contributors and is helpful for lay readers and pastors-teachers desiring a readable and refreshing tracing of the progression of thought.

Raymond Brown, *et al.*, eds. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990. 1,475 pp.

This updates *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* that appeared twenty-two years ago by incorporating the results of recent scholarship. It represents some of the cream of Roman Catholic scholarship in commentary and special articles on topics such as the Pentateuch, wisdom literature, prophetic books, apocalyptic, Hebrew poetry, apocryphal sources, Dead Sea Scrolls, other Jewish literature, text and versions, modern OT criticism, biblical archaeology, and religious institutions of Israel. About sixty percent of the material is new.

Walter Elwell, ed. *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. 1,229 pp.

The purpose of this one-volume work is to help those without technical training to understand Scripture, an aim held in common with several other commentaries not written with scholars in mind. Contributors represent a variety of viewpoints, unity of content not being the goal (p. viii). Some of the better portions are on Genesis and Ezekiel (Victor Hamilton), Leviticus and Ezra/Nehemiah (Louis Goldberg), Joshua and Judges (Andrew Bowling), Ruth (R. K. Harrison), 1 and 2 Samuel (Herbert Wolf), Proverbs (R. K. Harrison), James (Douglas Moo), and the Johannine Epistles (James B. DeYoung).

James L. Mays, ed. *Harper's Bible Commentary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. 1,326 pp.

Here, eighty-two scholars from the Society of Biblical Literature provide introductory essays and commentaries. The work's essays deal with such topics as reading and interpreting the Bible, OT context, context of Apocrypha and NT, how the Bible relates to literature of the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman era, Jewish interpretation, and introductions to sections of the Bible such as Psalms and Wisdom, with a bibliography at the end of each. The work leans toward the JEDP theory about some OT books, Canaanite religious ideas, the view that Genesis 1-2 has two creation accounts, and other liberal theories.

John Phillips. *Bible Explorer's Guide*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1987. 274 pp.

This general introductory work, evangelical in nature, has two sections, Hermeneutics and Helps. Under the first are twenty-two divisions dealing with Words, Figures of Speech, Culture, Context, Types, Parables, Prophecy, Devotional Rule, Application, Christ the Ultimate Key, and others. The second has a quick survey of the Bible, summary of Bible history, symbols, helpful books, and the like.

Phillips, a premillennialist, is well-known for his *Exploring the New Testament*, a series of clear practical expositions of key books like John and Romans.

Lawrence O. Richards. *The Teacher's Commentary*. Wheaton: Victor, 1987. 1,110 pp.

This is an evangelical effort by a Dallas Seminary graduate to survey each book of the Bible and provide special material to help teachers of Sunday Schools, Bible study leaders, and pastors teach on different sections. The special features include illustrations and applications, definitions of biblical and doctrinal terms, background, maps and charts, and teaching suggestions. Coverage of sections is of a very general nature that picks out some key points and skips many others. Richards devotes five and one-half pages to the treatment of Psalms 74-150. Proverbs 10-31 and Ecclesiastes receive about the same. The amount of material that is bypassed will perhaps agitate readers. The page format is in two-columns of very readable type.

Works That Analyze

Frank E. Gaebelin, gen. ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. 12 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979-92.

This is the top general work of scholarly evangelicalism by seventy-two writers who are from several countries and hold to divine inspiration of Scripture and premillennialism (for the most part). The NIV is the basis for their comments. The Associate Editor is J. D. Douglas, and consulting editors are Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Bruce K. Waltke, James Boice, and Merrill C. Tenney. The work reflects a sensitivity to recent literature, issues, and views on exposition. Some very skilled and established scholars are among the contributors. Writing on introductory matters are Gleason Archer, Jr., G. W. Bromiley, Donald Guthrie, R. K. Harrison, Carl Henry, Harold Hoehner, Walter Kaiser, Bruce Metzger, Roger Nicole, Robert L. Saucy, Andrew Walls, Bruce Waltke, Donald Wiseman, and Edwin Yamauchi. Scholars that write on NT books include M. C. Tenney (John), R. N. Longenecker (Acts), James Boice (Galatians), Homer Kent, Jr. (Philippians), Robert L. Thomas (Thessalonians), D. E. Hiebert (Titus), Leon Morris (Hebrews), Edwin Blum (Peter and Jude), and Alan Johnson (Revelation).

David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, gen. eds. *Word Biblical Commentary*. Waco, TX: Word, 1982 .

This recent series is sometimes liberal and sometimes evangelical. Many of the projected fifty-two volumes that will compose the set are already available. An imposing group of about

fifty scholars, many of them internationally known, are contributing commentaries. John D. W. Watts is editing the OT, and Ralph P. Martin the NT. Each writer does his own translation of the biblical text and accommodates his exegesis to this. The technical scholarly matter is understandable and relevant to seminary students (in some cases, more advanced ones) and pastors as well as professional scholars and teachers. The introductions and commentaries on individual books incorporate a fair amount of detail as well as excurses on major problems and lengthy bibliographies of books and journal literature. In the verse-by-verse comments, Hebrew and Greek words appear and are followed by an explanation of their sense. Different views in a passage often receive detailed discussion, e.g., F. F. Bruce on 1 Thess 4:4 regarding whether *skeyow* (*skeuos*, "vessel") refers to a man's wife or his body. The following are among the other contributors: Gordon Wenham (Genesis, 2 vols.), Peter C. Craigie (Psalms 1-50), Marvin Tate (Psalms 51-100), Leslie Allen (Psalms 101-150), G. R. Beasley-Murray (John), James D. G. Dunn (Romans), Ralph Martin (2 Corinthians, James), Richard Longenecker (Galatians), Robert Mounce (Pastoral Epistles), and William Lane (Hebrews). This venture, like any other of its kind, varies widely in quality from volume to volume.

COMMENTARIES ON THE OLD TESTAMENT

Some commentary sets deal only with the Old Testament.

A Work That Synthesizes

Paul N. Benware. *Survey of the Old Testament*. Everyman's Bible Commentary; Chicago: Moody, 1988. 267 pp.

The author was a professor of Bible and Theology at Moody Bible Institute and now is on the faculty of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. The surveys are brief and sweeping and furnish a lay person with a quick glimpse that is helpful. Yet they do not deal with as much or provide nearly the help of other surveys such as that of Leon Wood.

A Work That Analyzes

Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985` .

This is a scholarly series steeped in critical issues, views, and reasoning that because of their liberal bent are unpleasing to staunch evangelicals. The works can provide help in some places, but too often they are of no help. Some volumes are better in explaining passages in ways that conservatives can appreciate. Frequent examples of this occur in Joseph Blenkinsopp's treatment of Ezra-Nehemiah. On the other hand, many parts have their greatest usefulness among readers

of a very liberal orientation. G. von Rad on Genesis and Deuteronomy and Robert P. Carroll on Jeremiah exemplify these.

COMMENTARIES ON THE PENTATEUCH

JPS Torah Commentary. New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1989-93.

Nahum Sarna's commentaries on Genesis and Exodus and Baruch Levine's on Leviticus are surveys, but Jacob Milgrom's treatment of Numbers is massive (520 pp.). Thorough study in a wide range of sources marks this series, especially the work of Milgrom. The commentary provides an explanation of passages that is typical of Jewish scholars. Jeffrey Tigay's volume on Deuteronomy is scheduled for release in 1993 and is not available for this review. The theological orientation of the commentaries is liberal, but the volumes contribute to the understanding of many points where liberal or conservative factors are not in question.

G. H. Livingston. *The Pentateuch in Its Cultural Environment.* 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987. 322 pp.

A professor of OT at Asbury Theological Seminary since 1953 has produced this readable, comprehensive, well-respected, evangelical work. He discusses peoples of the ancient Near East (Sumerians, Assyrians, Amorites, Egyptians, Hyksos, Hittites, Philistines, Canaanites, and others). Among other things, he describes relevant ancient scripts, literature (compared with the Pentateuch), concepts, practices, schools of thought on Pentateuchal studies, Mosaic authorship, Dead Sea Scroll relevance, the JEDP theory, literary criticism, form criticism, and canonical criticism. The last chapter discusses the canonization of the Pentateuch and factors relevant to it. Subject and Scripture indexes help locate information on various topics and verses.

John H. Sailhamer. *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. 522 pp.

An associate professor of OT, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, begins his volume with an introduction to the Pentateuch that covers background, authorship, sources, literary form, structure, purpose, theology, basic principles, and other matters (1-79). Then he gives a fairly detailed, well-outlined survey of each book, section by section—e.g. Genesis occupies 81-240 and Exodus 241-322). He concentrates on style and structure in relating details to their context. Besides providing surveys of and connecting thoughts in the text, he treats major problems such as Gen 1:1-2 and 6:2, 4 (the sons of God).

He incorporates the Hebrew text skillfully and is usually lucid. He holds a high evangelical view of the integrity and unity of the biblical accounts. He is thoroughly aware of literature on relevant issues as reflected in his sometimes very substantial documentation. Even though one may not agree with all the conclusions, this is still, on the whole, one of the most competent, informative books on the Pentateuch. It will be very helpful for teachers, pastors, and students. In an appendix Sailhamer lists all the commands of the law in various categories and gives examples where Jesus and NT writers derive principles (482-516). Discussions of many verses are insightful, e.g., the validity of a Messianic reference in Deut 18:18 (456). The same author furnishes more detail on Genesis in his commentary on the book in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*.

Herbert Wolf. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Chicago: Moody, 1991. 276 pp.

Wolf is associate professor of OT, Wheaton Graduate School. He provides an evangelical discussion of introductory aspects such as the fivefold division of the Pentateuch, unity, impact on other OT and NT books, theology (i.e., God, man, salvation, the Messiah, faith, atonement, covenants), the Samaritan Pentateuch, literary characteristics, and Moses' significance. He argues for Moses as the main author and for the unity of the Pentateuch. Then he deals with each of the five books. In Genesis, he discusses key problems in 1:1-2:3, the sons of God in 6:2, 4, the extent of the flood, and other issues. Sometimes when discussing differing views, as on the length of "day" in Genesis 1, it is difficult to discern the preferred view of the author (84-88). The same applies in his lengthy comments on the sons of God (97-100). A conclusion to all the interpretive problems would have improved helpfulness, as is illustrated in Wolf's stated preference for an early date of the exodus (148). Some of the problem discussions are excellent, as in the case of the much-attacked numbers for Israel in Numbers 2 (148-52). Overall, the book is well worth reading, though surveys of Pentateuchal books are shorter than Sailhamer's. It contains a good bibliography (223-61). Indices of subjects, authors, and Scriptures also add value.

COMMENTARIES ON GENESIS

The remainder of this commentary survey will focus on individual books or groups of books of the OT. As a general rule, this discussion will omit works already alluded to as parts of sets.

Victor P. Hamilton. *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1-17*. NICOT;

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. 522 pp.

This first of two volumes on Genesis has a very informative introduction (about one hundred pages), surveying the history of critical theories but without reaching a firm conclusion on authorship. It has twenty-five pages of bibliography. The treatment of some problems is in detail, examining interpretive issues such as the length of the "days" in Genesis 1. It is thorough in giving the meaning of verses, taking into account biblical usage of words, context, and Near Eastern literature. It is a standout commentary along conservative lines, even covering many subjects relevant to Genesis. Only scholars will grasp some of what Hamilton writes. Others will have to keep rereading patiently to figure his meaning out. The author is indecisive in regard to the "sons of God" (6:2, 4) and in choosing between a local and universal flood. His explanations are at times very good, but at others fall short of adding much light as in the case of the ritual ceremony in Genesis 15. Yet he gives so much data that the reader is bound to benefit.

Allen P. Ross. *Creation and Blessing*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988. 744 pp.

This is a major contribution, stemming from an immense study in relevant literature written recently. Ross gives a broad exposition, section by section, not verse by verse, and handles major problems with expert awareness of views and discussion of arguments. It is a valuable scholarly work that surveys issues and the literature dealing with them.

Claus Westermann. *Genesis: A Commentary*. 3 vols.; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984-86.

The three volumes cover chaps. 1`22, 23`36, and 37`50. This form-critical scholar uses more than 1,500 pages to discuss critical matters, word meanings, history, and theology all in immense detail. By careful study a reader can glean much that is profound and helpful from the three volumes, but some statements will still puzzle him. The commentary portion is often helpful to the scholar. The bibliography supplies considerable assistance, though most entries are German works and few are evangelical. Textual comments and summaries on the history of interpretation of portions like Genesis 14, 15, and 16 are informative. Westermann thinks Genesis 37`50 was a later writing, originating during the period of David and Solomon and added to the rest of Genesis to form a unit. The commentary's low view of the authority of Scripture will disturb the conservative. It often argues against conservative views. It does not endorse the teaching of original sin in Genesis 3. The author devotes much space to theorizing

how the text of Genesis arrived in its present form. Incidentally, a one-volume condensation of this large work is also available (*Genesis, A Practical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987] 338 pp.). The briefer work concentrates on Westerman's personal convictions in a much simpler way, without the technical comments.

Ronald Youngblood. *The Book of Genesis. An Introductory Commentary*. 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.

This broad exposition is an extensive revision of the first edition of this work (chaps. 12`50 in 1976 and chaps 1`11 in 1980) by a professor of OT at Bethel Theological Seminary, West. A brief introduction (9-18) upholds Mosaic authorship and a date between 1445-1405 B.C. The author sees no gap in 1:2. He interprets the days of chap. 1 partly in literary order and partly in chronological order. He favors the claim of science that manlike creatures were on earth five million years ago (46), but that man in the Adamic race in a covenant relation with God has a more recent date. He chooses the human view of "sons of God" in Genesis 6 and opts for a local flood. This is a fairly good, very readable survey of Genesis, but does not have the overall value of those by Ross and Sailhamer.

BOOK COMMENTARIES ON THE REST OF THE PENTATEUCH

Bernard L. Ramm. *God's Way Out. Finding the Road to Personal Freedom through Exodus*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1984 and 1987. 166 pp.

This is a simple, clear, running commentary`not verse by verse`that centers on God's attributes and work, types of Christ and His church, NT truth related to Exodus, and application to life today. Ramm has intriguing chapter titles, sweeping surveys rich in connections to life now, notes on word meanings, and refreshment that warms the heart. Chapter 4 on Moses' excuses and God's answers is entitled, "God Can Use Even You." This popular-level survey is effective in simplifying a long book into three very manageable points: Divine Redemption, Divine Morality (the Law), and Divine Worship. Its contribution is in the perspective of the synthesis that encompasses so much detail.

B. Maarsingh. *Numbers*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. 221 pp.

This volume is lucid, brief, and vigorous in explaining words, phrases, and many issues with a learned grasp of text, exegesis, and ancient customs. Yet the author remains practical and has a freshness that encourages application and growth. Lay readers and even

advanced students will profit from this survey.

James Philip. "Numbers," in *The Communicator's Commentary*. Waco, TX: Word, 1987. 364 pp.

Philip has for a long time been a bright light for the evangelical faith in Scotland, pastoring the Holyrood Abbey Church, Edinburgh. Using good sources and explaining the text conservatively, he also shows practical applications for people today.

Patrick D. Miller. *Deuteronomy*. Interpretation Series; Louisville: John Knox, 1990. 253 pp.

This is a sweeping exposition—not a verse-by-verse discussion—with essays on structure, motifs, and sections in the book. This professor of OT Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary follows the line of many in thinking final redaction took place during Josiah's career. He does not, however, devote much space here to this subject. He has many helpful thoughts on the meaning of the text. His well-organized work aims to help teachers, preachers, and students by commenting on the RSV text. Synopses begin each chapter and orientate readers to the setting, Miller's opinion about the unit of structure under consideration, and how the section of Deuteronomy fits the larger structure of the book. Occasionally his ideas are arbitrary: e.g., "It is highly unlikely that we have here an accurate historical report of words and actions by Moses on the plains of Moab" (25). Yet the volume draws spiritual-life lessons that are quite worthwhile (e.g., chaps. 38-40). The problem for conservatives will be the position that the concern for possession of the land in Deuteronomy is expressed because the book was done centuries later than the wilderness era when Israel was in danger of being uprooted from the land (44). Even in the face of this extreme position, Miller summarizes many helpful things regarding the land (44-52).

JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH

Dale R. Davis. *No Falling Words. Expositions of the Book of Joshua*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988. 204 pp.

These twenty-one expositions by a former professor of OT at Reformed Theological Seminary furnish evangelical material to help preachers blend sound exegesis, theological substance, interesting exposition, and practical application. Davis groups his chapters under "Entering the Land" (Joshua 1-4), "Taking It" (chaps. 5-12), "Possessing It" (chaps. 13-21), and "Refining It" (chaps. 22-24). The book title comes from 21:45 (cf. 21:14), and the chapter titles are quite creative. These very readable studies do not deal with every verse, but with key

portions from each chapter. At times footnotes cite good sources and add important help. All told, the book is a good survey of Joshua that preachers or lay people can enjoy. It has many ideas to provoke sermons and point to application.

R. Kent Hughes. *Living on the Cutting Edge: Joshua and the Challenge of Spiritual Leadership*. Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1987. 172 pp.

This broad exposition is warm and popular in treating selected chapters from Joshua. Hughes often has good insights on analogies from Israel's victories for growth and victory today, through God's strength. He shows traits for effective leadership. Most lessons are good, but one that disappoints is, "Rahab's lie was a stupendous act of true faith" (37). Well, yes, she lied, and yes, she did have faith. But who says it is necessary to make the lie a part of the faith or faith a part of the lie? Also, on p. 36, Hughes advances the idea that a Christian musters faith out of a glass. In actuality, when a Christian wrongly persuades himself that he has to clutch at certain means to achieve faith, true faith is not generated by human fallacy, but by the Lord using means He can endorse: His Word. He can use us even though a Christian may fail Him by leaning on false means or tracing his effectiveness to the means the Lord may use rather than to the Lord Himself. On the whole, however, the book is usually quite helpful for preaching or just for devotional aims.

Dale R. Davis. *Such a Great Salvation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990. 227 pp.

This is a flowing and popular conservative exposition that is suggestive for pastors who preach individual messages or a series on Judges. Davis deals with problems in footnotes, so he can keep the vital message foremost and point out relevance for today. The book is frequently refreshing in helping a reader to grow in grace. The author keeps spotlighting the beauty of God.

Cyril J. Barber. *Judges, A Narrative of God's Power*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1990. 293 pp.

This is a well-organized and conservative exposition based on much study and skill in showing present relevance of the text. The Dale Davis book is fairly good, but this one is even better as a whole, though Barber does not see impropriety in some of Samson's episodes with women as he interprets the texts. He uses captivating headlines for sections, a vivid flow, arousing descriptions, analogies, illustrations, and applications. He capably handles many problems through notes that sometimes are rather lengthy and meaty. Like

Davis, he is competent, thought-provoking, and often sharp in exposing the contemporary timeliness of the book.

Cyril J. Barber. *Ruth, A Story of God's Grace*. Revision of a 1983 ed.; Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1989. 198 pp.

As with Judges, this conservative exposition is creatively lucid in a way many pastors, students, and lay people will value. It has nine chapters, including footnotes at the end of the work, some with substantial help drawn from wide reading. A section on critical studies (131-47) discusses authorship, date, unity of the genealogy in chap. 4 with the rest of the book, and themes. Using good illustrations occasionally, Barber usually touches on problems briefly, e.g., defending the chastity of Boaz and Ruth in lying near each other and explaining customs.

Robert L. Hubbard, Jr. *The Book of Ruth*. NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 317 pp.

This professor of Hebrew at Denver Theological Seminary believes that the book dates from Solomon's era—the point to which the genealogy of Ruth 4 reaches—and is a unity including 4:18-22. Using a detailed verse-by-verse approach, Hubbard is thorough and knowledgeable and documents well. He analyzes issues from several perspectives and is very familiar with customs and literature relevant to Ruth. He writes primarily for pastors and lay people.

SAMUEL, KINGS, CHRONICLES

John H. Hayes and Paul K. Hooker. *A New Chronology for the Kings of Israel and Judah and Its Implications for Biblical History and Literature*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1988. 112 pp.

These writers from Emory University reject co-regencies, antedating, and emendations. They say that the regnal years for Israel and Judah were dated from the first fall New Year festival when a king was on the throne—this New Year switched from Tishri to Nisan during Josiah's reign. They use only Massoretic text numbers and have their own explanations for numbers being inconsistent. They encounter big chronological problems in dealing with several reigns (e.g., 23, 28, 33, 74).

Russell H. Dilday. "1, 2 Kings," in *The Communicator's Commentary*. Waco, TX: Word, 1987. 512 pp.

This president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has given a thoroughly studied, clear, well-illustrated, and well-applied work. It will be of rich assistance to the expositor in

furnishing different views on issues. He includes many footnotes referring the reader to additional helpful sources.

Simon J. DeVries. *1 and 2 Chronicles*. Forms of the Old Testament Literature Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 439 pp.

This work will illustrate for serious readers advanced in their theological training how a scholar does a form-critical analysis. It also contains discussion of the history of this kind of study. It probes the structure, genre, setting, and aim of each section according to the opinion of DeVries, which a conservative student may choose to profit from or pass by in favor of what he regards as a more defensible view. This type of study can sometimes provide good insights, but it can also be very arbitrary and subjective.

Michael Wilcock. *The Message of Chronicles*. The Bible Speaks Today; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987. 288 pp.

This evangelical approach defends conservative views on a number of problems by viewing the books of Chronicles as error-free. Wilcock sometimes displays clarity, making delightful applications to present-day life. He shows readers why material occurs where it does and how it fits a need there. He is vicar of St. Nicholas Church, Durham, England. His book is worthwhile in developing the principles and movements within the books.

EZRA, NEHEMIAH, ESTHER

Joseph Blenkinsopp. *Ezra-Nehemiah. A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988. 366 pp.

The author supports the view that Ezra-Nehemiah gives a continuation of 1 and 2 Chronicles, being authored by the chronicler, an individual or a school. He also holds traditional views regarding the dating of Ezra in 458 B.C. and Nehemiah in 445 B.C. Often his treatment is in a good verse-by-verse style. He has a bibliography for each section, his own translation, textual notes, and a reasonably thorough commentary. He takes "the chronicles of Nehemiah" (1:1) to refer to Nehemiah as the subject, not the author. The author displays an immense awareness of the literature dealing with this period.

James M. Boice. *Nehemiah: Learning to Lead*. New York: Revell, 1988. 219 pp.

One of America's foremost expository pastors, who serves the Tenth Street Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, issues a call to pattern life after Nehemiah's style of leadership. He focuses on traits and shows how they can relate to today. He writes lucidly and uses

illustrations occasionally. His work is suggestive for expositors and provokes spiritual growth in usefulness to God.

Howard F. Vos. *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*. Bible Study Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. 191 pp.

This is a brief exposition from a conservative who is professor of history and archaeology at King's College. Vos surveys reasonably well and provides help for lay readers especially, those who want a simple, quick study, and for pastors or Bible teachers who need a panoramic look as well as some concise help with problems.

JOB

John E. Hartley. *Job*. NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 591 pp.

It is good to see this firmly evangelical work, a feature that shows itself in many places. Yet Hartley is sometimes subjective and without necessity does such things as transferring Job 27:13-23 to chap. 25. Generally, his careful handling of the text, syntax, views, and reasoning constitute this as one of the best conservative works on Job.

Roy B. Zuck, ed. *Sitting with Job: Selected Studies on the Book of Job*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.

Scholars such as R. Laird Harris, Francis Andersen, Norman Habel, and Don Carson contribute thirty-four chapters (or sketches) on key sections or topics. Zuck himself writes on 19:23-29 and on chap 28. The book's comments represent high expertise on subjects that an expositor will find very instructive while preparing for an individual message or a series on the book.

PSALMS

Tremper Longman, III. *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988. 166 pp.

The features of this evangelical work include discussions of such things as the main types of psalms, the aim of the psalm titles, Davidic authorship, lines of covenant thought, Messianic themes, relevance of psalms in the ministry of Jesus, charm of the psalms for readers today, and parallelism. As examples, Longman examines in detail Psalms 30, 69, and 93. This is a good and smooth-reading recent general introduction on some of the main issues connected with the psalms.

John Phillips. *Exploring the Psalms*. 5 vols.; Neptune, NJ:

Loizeaux, 1985-88.

One of America's fine Bible expositors from Moody Bible Institute's extension department supplies another of his lucid works. He has volumes on other books of the Bible. His outline for each psalm is intently alliterated with many of the points appearing to be quite appropriate. The exposition is broad and sweeping, with many statements that seize the reader's mind and heart. Using this along with their Bible text, preachers will find it suggestive and Christians in general will receive refreshment during their daily worship times because of its clarity and flow.

PROVERBS, ECCLESIASTES, SONG OF SOLOMON

Eldon Woodcock. *Proverbs*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988. 237 pp.

A Dallas Theological Seminary graduate and professor of Bible at Nyack College deals with key topics such as wisdom, fear, human relationships (i.e., adulterous woman, wife, family circle, speech), and counsel for a work ethic. Rightly heeded, the principles Woodcock sets forth in this clear presentation can lead to true success. The book is of special benefit to lay people in their devotional times, but it can prime the pump for preachers too.

James L. Crenshaw. *Ecclesiastes*. Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987. 192 pp.

Crenshaw writes this volume from a liberal perspective, furnishing an example of human rationalism at work on Scripture. In many cases the Duke University scholar in OT wisdom material makes a positive contribution in giving views and reasons by other writers on particular issues, but in many other ways he is disappointing. To him, Ecclesiastes has no reasoned structure, but is randomly arranged (cf. 47). Theologically the work is of little help. He understands the book to have a pessimistic outlook according to which life has no meaning (e.g., 25, 34, 53), causing him to downplay the positive side (20). His own merely human rationalism leads to an explaining away of verses about fearing God (102, 184, 190). He rejects the words, "remember your creator" (12:1), because he takes the statement to read correctly "your wife" in order to fit the context (184-85).

R. N. Whybray. *Ecclesiastes*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 179 pp.

Adept in wisdom literature, the writer finds a positive outlook in the book. God bestows meaning to life, and a person's pursuits have a fulfilling quality only from Him (cf. 27). Whybray furnishes

illumination at many points exegetically, but conservative readers will not always think he does this because he holds a third century B.C. date for writing. He also sees no unified flow through the book, but rather thirty-four unconnected subjects. At times his explanations leave matters insufficiently clear (cf. 127 regarding women in 7:28).

Raymond J. Tournay. *Word of God, Song of Love*. New York: Paulist, 1988. 194 pp.

Tournay has the Song written during the Persian era, but his evidence for this dating is not convincing. He combines two themes or levels of meaning, one about Solomon and his Egyptian wife in lovers' intimacy and the other an allegorical idea`Messiah and the daughter of Zion with her city where she dwells. The second is a Messianic yearning to encourage Jews of the Persian era to believe in the Messianic kingdom to come. It is as if the Messiah is asleep, delaying that new era. Here, Tournay labors the notion that the person sleeping in the Song is the many, not the woman. He has steeped himself in rabbinics and the Hebrew language as well as in scholarly literature on the Song.

JEREMIAH, LAMENTATIONS

Walter Brueggemann. *To Pluck Up, to Tear Down: A Commentary on the Book of Jeremiah 1`25*. Revised ICC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988. 222 pp.

Much good detail in this work will help students with the text and with principles for today. Yet the commentary is not especially good in comparison with others. Recurring redactional ideas are a further drawback. Often the author takes passages as having been written and redacted at a later date (e.g., 3:14-18; 24:1-10). The bibliography will provide some help for those who wish to do research on Jeremiah, but these sources are mostly liberal.

W. L. Holladay. *Jeremiah I: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1`25*. Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986. 682 pp, & *Jeremiah II: Chapters 26`52*. 1989. 543 pp.

Like the works by Carroll and McKane, this is highly respected by the scholarly community as a technical and critical commentary. It is quite beneficial on the text, grammar, structure, synthesis of sections, and literature dealing with relevant issues. A 95-page introduction begins Volume II, along with a bibliography that updates the one in Volume I. This is the most massive of the recent detailed works, totaling over 1,200 pages at more than 800 words per page. Holladay theorizes that 1:1 refers not to the year of Jeremiah's call, but to his

birth, 627 B.C., and uses this as a chronological starting point for the rest of the book. He often connects the themes of passages in Jeremiah with NT verses, and is skeptical about redaction that remodels the book in a Deuteronomistic pattern. Some criticize him for a highly individualistic translation in many passages and his pleading that the original text was the way his emendations propose. In a verse-by-verse commentary he explains more than Carroll or McKane, is masterful in grammar and syntax, and skillful in insights drawn from much study. Yet he retains an intelligible flowing style. Many herald this as the definitive work on Jeremiah to date.

Derek Kidner. *The Message of Jeremiah*. The Bible Speaks Today; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987. 176 pp.

This is a broad exposition of the book that is quite refreshing. Kidner displays his usual high standard of readability, conservatism, conciseness, and directness regarding many issues. Yet he is amillennial on the main prophetic section (chaps 30-33), expecting a spiritual rather than a literal realization.

Iain Provan. *Lamentations*. New Century Bible; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. 142 pp.

Provan is lecturer in Hebrew and OT studies at the university of Edinburgh. His introduction is informative and up-to-date on views of authorship, date and place, but because he is liberal, he is unable to arrive at a view except that the book was written between the sixth and second centuries B.C. (19). His information is valuable in spite of the fact that he does not believe that a commentary should give the text's meaning. Rather it should be "a catalyst for the reader's own imaginative interaction with it" (29). So usually he does not state his own view and seems unsure the book refers to the fall of Jerusalem or what its setting is (11, 29). Still, one can find much information on verses as to the text and meaning of words. He is of the opinion that Lam 3:21-27 focuses on humble repentance and trust in God's love, yet that chap 5 swings to an attitude opposed to this, reproaching God for unfairness (23). So he feels that the theology of the book is left "ending in a question mark" (24). Many will disagree with him here.

EZEKIEL

W. A. Criswell. *Expository Sermons on the Book of Ezekiel*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. 269 pp.

This author is a great man and preacher, but this work on Ezekiel is not good in too many places. It is warm and compassionate, and has much practical comment by way of applications for lay people

and pastors. This worthwhile part is helpful, for example, on "Why Study Prophecy?" and "The Preaching of Ezekiel." Another good feature is his appeal based on 18:31 to readers to lay hold of hope in God, casting away transgressions, "for why will ye die?" (22). He embraces premillennialism, but does not defend it well here. He lightly asserts the origin of Satan in chap. 28 and Isaiah 14, but without basing it on evidence. He assumes that chap. 37 teaches bodily resurrection as well as restoration to Palestine and that the northern invader of chap 38 is Russia (215). His strange mixture of views regarding the temple in chaps. 40 ff. is disturbing. It is a literal one with a literal river in Palestine, yet blessings flow from the church, and the river somehow flows throughout the world today, "blessing the deserts of the nations of the world" (227-58). The book is a disappointment.

DANIEL

John F. MacArthur, Jr. *The Future of Israel (Daniel 9:20-12:13)*. Chicago: Moody, 1991.

This is a brief premillennial dispensational series on the verses indicated by one of America's most able expository pastors.

John Phillips and Jerry Vines. *Exploring the Book of Daniel*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1990. 279 pp.

This work is a dispensational exposition with clarity of interpretation and practical application to stimulate thought about relevance for today. It does not wrestle deeply with interpretive issues.

MINOR PROPHETS

James M. Boice. *The Minor Prophets. An Expository Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983-86. 542 pp.

Boice assigns a catchy title to each chapter or section of the prophets. The large, two-column pages contain much good material on the relevance of the words for then and for now, dealing with such topics as love, repentance, and sincerity (Hosea 6). A prolonged contemplation of these pages and an application of their principles will produce substantial Christian growth. The author could improve the work by being more definite sometimes in specifying in what framework God will bless Israel in the future (e.g., Hosea 14). Vagueness such as in Joel 2:1-11, where he says the invader is neither locusts nor a human army, is a drawback. Wordiness and wandering in his discussions is another shortcoming, as in using Joel 2:28 to take

off into a long discussion of clericalism. He finds fulfillment of Joel 2:28 at Pentecost, yet it would help to point out some aspects that were not fulfilled on that occasion. He is more to the point on Zechariah 14.

Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. *Interpreting the Minor Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. 317 pp.

This well-informed survey by an associate professor of OT studies, Dallas Theological Seminary, looks broadly at each prophet's structure, message, doctrinal themes, and literary and rhetorical features. After a brief survey of overall themes i.e., sin, judgment, salvation the work examines each prophet in succession from Hosea to Malachi. Regarding long-range prophecy, Chisholm is presumably premillennial, but in several instances where he would expectedly commit himself, he maintains such a vagueness that no distinct word as to when fulfillment will come is discoverable (e.g., Hosea 3, 14; Joel 3:9 ff.; Zechariah 14). He surveys each book, section by section, with helpful comments and brief treatments of the main problems. At the end of each book survey, he sums up points of theology. He views Joel 2:1-11 as meaning a human army, but is not explicit in naming which army and what the time is. This volume is good, but general. The reader who consults the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* in this area will find more premillennial specificity in many cases.

H. D. Beeby. *Hosea: Grace Abounding*. International Theological Commentary, F. C. Holgren and G. A. F. Knight, eds. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. 189 pp.

Beeby's work is rich in helpful analysis of the text and has much to offer on word studies, exegesis, historical background, theological comment, and devotional principles. Beeby's assumptions on critical theories must temper its reading, however, because the assumptions at times lead to excising verses as redactional additions. These excisions derive from subjective opinion, not convincing evidence. In many respects, the work is not bad, neither is it truly great.

David A. Hubbard. *Hosea: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989. 245 pp.

This is a highly readable conservative effort that is often refreshing in its discussion of passages. It has sections treating the broad perspective and some good verse-by-verse comment. The introduction, among other things, is an orientation regarding the message of Hosea. In predictive prophecies where many premillennialists would feel he could be definite, however, Hubbard is not clear-cut as to a long-reaching millennial fulfillment.

Thomas McComiskey, Raymond Dillard, and Jeffrey Niehaus. *Hosea, Joel, Amos. An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. 509 pp.

This volume is part of a new series on the Minor Prophets with McComiskey as its editor. It is evangelical and shows expertise in exegesis, background, and sensitivity to hermeneutics, plus evidencing a good grasp of recent scholarship. Its bibliography is splendid. The format of the work puts a textual section first, followed by an expository part.

Ronald B. Allen. *Joel. Bible Study Commentary*; Zondervan, 1988. 120 pp.

Allen is skilled in Hebrew and interpretation, and writes in an appealing manner. He is conservative and premillennial. In his view the locusts are literal in chaps 1 and 2, yet supernatural in the latter case. He never seems to clear up what the supernatural locusts are in the future time of Armageddon, but stays general and vague. They sound like angelic hosts when Allen links them with Rev 9:11-16. The volume has good emphases on God's grace, compassion, anger, and love in 2:12-17. Apparently the author sees the "northern army" of 2:20 as a human one, not identified with the locusts of 2:1-11. He has a long and helpful discussion of whether Acts 2 fulfills the outpouring of the Spirit, and concludes it is a partial fulfillment (95). In 3:9 ff., he believes the blessing is in the millennium after the second advent, yet he identifies the fountain of v. 18 as the river in the ultimate state, the New Jerusalem (116), and is not clear on why or how he leaps from the millennium to the ultimate bliss.

Thomas J. Finley. *Joel, Amos, Obadiah. Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary*; Chicago: Moody, 1990. 417 pp.

This conservative and premillennial work by a professor of OT at Talbot School of Theology has a good bibliography of five pages and a very full discussion of many issues, a rich use of other studies, help in Hebrew exegesis, and a good effort on word meanings. Hebrew words are transliterated into English. Finley sees literal locusts in chaps. 1 and 2 of Joel. One wishes that he had listed and given arguments, yet he does give some when he arrives at individual verses. It sounds as though he believes rich blessing will come to Israel (not the church in this case) in 2:18-27, but it also sounds like he sees it realized in past history. He is not wholly clear. He sees a partial fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2 and the fulfillment of details of 3:9 ff. in the future tribulation period and Messianic Kingdom after the second advent, not in the church or the ultimate state. The

treatment of Amos 9:11-15 could be stronger in support for a premillennial view. The discussion about when the fulfillment will come to Israel is seemingly vague.

Gerhard F. Hasel. *Understanding the Book of Amos*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991. 171 pp.

This is not a commentary per se but a lucid and excellent survey that combines into a rich tapestry some of the helpful lines of thought in research on the book. Hasel sees Amos as the first of the writing prophets, ca. 780-760 B.C., and as a "microcosm for the study of all prophetic writings on the Old Testament" (11). He articulates issues in such a way as to point to the unity of the book.

Shalom M. Paul. *Amos*. Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1991. 409 pp.

Paul has produced a magisterial work that ranks above everything else. It is impressively thorough, well-written, and shows an awareness of many issues, possible interpretations, and much relevant literature—cf. nearly eighty pages of lists of sources (xix-xxvi, 299-367). Included is a very full discussion on the situation in which Amos ministered, his kind of ministry, features of it, views about when oracles occur, and literary traits of oracles. The author defends the authenticity of the oracles against arguments of interpolation. The verse-by-verse commentary is on large double-column pages and quite full of details about the text, word meanings, geography, customs, relation to other Scriptures, and views on problems. Footnotes crammed with further help are abundant and are often long. Summary remarks at the outset of sections help readers see connections, overall ideas, and movements of the book. Paul defends 9:11-15 against arguments from the majority who take it as unauthentic, i.e., from an exilic or post-exilic theological-redactor. He shows how well it fits with the book. He also does much to recognize the prophecy of a future glorious state for Israel and ties it with other passages. But he does not relate 9:11-15 to James' use of it in Acts 15:13-15. His bibliography lists two works under "Early Christian Interpretation" (316-17). In his section on Indices (354-406) where he lists literature consulted, the "New Testament" entry includes only seven passages and 7:43 is the only Acts reference.

Gary V. Smith. *Amos, A Commentary*. Library of Biblical Interpretation; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989. 307 pp.

This is a thorough conservative commentary that leaves few key stones unturned in an exposition based on Hebrew exegesis. Smith is helpful on the book's unity, verse-by-verse interpretation, and

theological relevance then and now. Expositors and lay readers will find substantial help.

D. W. Baker, Desmond Alexander, and Bruce K. Waltke. *Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988. 207 pp.

Baker on Obadiah, Alexander on Jonah, and Waltke on Micah combine to write a good, concise conservative commentary. It is quite competent and carefully thought through. Baker sees Obadiah 21 fulfilled in a king on earth after the second advent (43) and defends the unity of vv. 17-21 with the earlier part of the book. Alexander defends an early date of Jonah (8th century) against several arguments (51-63). He also argues for authorship by one writer (63-69), apparently the Jonah of 2 Kgs 14:25. He favors actual, historical events, not a parable or a form of fiction, and capably sums up answers to problems, but appears thin in regard to how to explain a great fish swallowing Jonah, though he believes it was a miracle (110-11). Waltke provides a good verse-by-verse study, enriched by expertise in exegesis, history, and customs.

Bryan Beyer and John H. Walton. *Obadiah/Jonah*. Bible Study Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988. 122 pp.

Bryan teaches at Columbia Bible College and Walton at Moody Bible Institute. Bryan dates Obadiah after the 586 B.C. fall of Jerusalem, because vv. 10-14 describe Edom's gloating at that fall. He understands vv. 17-21 to teach a premillennial view with a future millennial kingdom after the second advent. Yet he never says it is millennial, only that it is God's kingdom. He finds a future resettling of Israel in its land. Walton supplies much good information (e.g., the lots of Jonah 1). But since God's preparation of the great sea creature was a miracle, he sees no need to cite accounts of marine creatures swallowing men (29). He apparently does not view Nineveh's repentance as being a conversion to the Lord, to Judaism, or even to monotheism (51). It was not to spiritual salvation (53). Some will not find persuasive his explanation for why Jonah was angry (chap. 4).

Jack R. Riggs. *Micah*. Bible Study Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. 92 pp.

A Dallas Theological Seminary graduate and professor at Cedarville College follows a clear, simple, overall outline for the book: judgment (1:2-2:13), Messiah (chaps 3-5), and pardon (chaps 6-7). He fills in subpoints helpfully, commenting competently on the main details. His view of the kingdom is premillennial (49). His work is helpful for pastors, Sunday School or Bible class teachers, and lay

people in general.

Hans W. Wolff. *Micah, A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990. 258 pp.

This volume, highly regarded in critical circles, embraces the idea that Micah was written in post-exilic times and was the product of centuries of composition, with only some passages coming originally from Micah (cf. list on 8-9). His redaction segments are subjective and lack hard evidence that they are necessary. One can glean much that helps on Micah, but will often meet Wolff's theories about composition, which are obtrusive and interruptive for the person viewing the text as a unit by one writer.

D. W. Baker. *Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentary; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988. 121 pp.

Baker presents a brief introduction and a well-studied survey of each book, providing a good outline, handling most things rather carefully and from a conservative stance. He sees "Day" of Zephaniah 3 as one of wrath and also one of hope and help (116), but is very general and vague about when, where, and in what form the blessed state will be realized. He is typical of many who do not nail things down in any framework so as to clarify just where he stands.

Richard Patterson. *Nahum, Habbakuk and Zephaniah*. Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary; Chicago: Moody, 1991, 416 pp.

This is an outstanding conservative, detailed work backed by scholarly awareness and expertise. Comments reflect fine-tuned ability in the Hebrew text, philology, exegesis, history, and literature. Patterson has premillennial convictions in the final verses of Zephaniah. He shows the shaky reasoning of critical arguments against the unity of Nahum, and defends the unity of Nahum and Habakkuk. In a long excursus he defends NT uses of Hab 2:4 (21-23). But some will doubt that he captures the significance of the picture of a hind in Hab 3:19 when he sees only swiftness ascending and gracefully gliding (262-63). Yet in most details he is excellent. The work is well worth the cost and time spent on it.

O. Palmer Robertson. *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk and Zephaniah*. NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. 357 pp.

This is a very good conservative work, both perceptive on issues and lucid in style. The writer provides a good translation and commentary that is often graphic. He looks at Hab 2:4 from many angles (173-83) and clearly catches the picture of living by faith in 3:19

that ties in with 2:4b. To a great extent the explanations of verses are full enough and satisfying, but at times questions occurring to serious minds do not find treatment. For example, why make a sweeping statement about no deceit in a future remnant if this is in a state of imperfection and believers still have some deceit when less than absolutely perfect?

Maria Eszenyei Szeles. *Wrath and Mercy: A Commentary on the Books of Habakkuk and Zephaniah*. International Theological Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. 118 pp.

This work by a professor of OT, United Protestant Theological Seminary, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, has many thorough and good exegetical comments on the Hebrew text drawn from much study, but is mixed with some thin and cursory statements. Often the book helps with theological meaning, but the authoress at times reflects higher critical loyalties as when she claims arbitrarily that certain difficult statements must be a redactor's later insertion. She is flimsy or non-existent in convincing proof on Hab 2:6-20 (36; cf. also 41). A pastor or student using the work with good discernment can profit from it by exercising his own judgment.

Richard L. Coggins. *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*. Old Testament Guides; Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1987. 90 pp.

This work, available through Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake, Indiana, offers brief assistance on critical issues, historical matters, and exegesis. Coggins is not a particularly interesting writer, but he offers quite a bit of expertise that can be helpful as one reads and discerns carefully in choosing what is usable and bypassing the rest.

Pieter A. Verhoef. *The Books of Haggai and Malachi*. NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987. 364 pp.

This volume by a professor of OT, Emeritus, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, is conservative in its coverage of much current literature, introductory matters, and verse-by-verse content. Explanations of the text and the tracing of the flow of thought are competent. Verhoef takes issue with W. Rudolph who says that Haggai has no relevance for those of the Christian faith (vii), and strives to show the significance of both Haggai and Malachi for today. He has interacted with much scholarship within the text and in his footnotes. He believes that someone close to Haggai wrote the book with authentic material from Haggai. He upholds the unity of the book and traces the movement through the verses carefully in relation to its background. He seems to be premillennial in understanding the fulfillment of prophetic aspects about the temple beyond the second

advent. He deals at length with many of the problems by giving different views and factors to weigh`e.g., on God's love and hate (Mal 1:2-3), "one" (2:15), and "Elijah" (4:4-6).

Hans W. Wolff. *Haggai, A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988. 128 pp.

This work by an expert in exegesis, history, and critical study is a translation from the German *Biblischer Kommentar* series. Wolff sees three layers of composition from Haggai to the final writer. The chronicler, he feels, added interpolations at 2:5, 9, 14, 17-19, 21-22. The helpfulness of the large amount of information and expertise on exegesis is reduced by what some will consider arbitrary opinions about composition and rearrangement.

Homer J. Heater, Jr. *Zechariah*. Bible Study Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987. 122 pp.

Here is a good survey by a premillennialist that is well-organized and aware of the main issues, with contributions to make on most of them. Heater understands the four horns of 1:18-19 not to be the four empires of Daniel 2 and 7 or any other specific four, but a coming from the four quarters of the earth, a worldwide context (21). The four craftsmen are likewise. He sees the future for Jerusalem in chap. 2 as millennial, after the second advent. He is vague on the circumstances of God's taking evil from Israel and "setting it up among those who reject Him" in Shinar in Zechariah 5 (43). The explanations of details in chap. 14 as fitting into a premillennial view are helpful, but brief.

Beth Glazier-McDonald. *Malachi, The Divine Messenger*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars, 1987. 288 pp.

This 1983 dissertation at the University of Chicago does several things. It stands against the tide that holds the book to be prose and contends for the poetic character of the larger part. It explains the text, often in as much detail as many verse-by-verse commentaries. It is against emendations and argues for every verse fitting the flow of the context and being cogent to the situation of Malachi's day (ca. 450 B.C.). The writer shows a wide knowledge of scholarly literature, but often reasons against commonly accepted critical theory. For example, the "messenger of the covenant" in 3:1 is to her the Lord, not an addition to the text. Conservatives will appreciate much of the work, but textual and redaction-critical scholars frown on her upholding the text as it is, though she has done her homework.

CLASSIFICATION AND RATING OF COMMENTARIES

Space does not permit a thoroughgoing classification and rating of commentaries on individual books of the OT, but an appraisal of the works on Genesis provides an example of how commentaries may divide themselves into categories and how they compare with one another.²

Three distinctive categories of commentaries are (1) detailed exegetical works that may include more technical material, (2) competent expositional surveys, and (3) more predominantly devotional efforts that may include exposition and, at times, a handling of interpretive problems. A careful observation of the descriptions of commentaries earlier in this article will usually reveal in which category each book belongs.

This reviewer has also attempted to rank the commentaries in each category in accordance with his estimate of how well the writers explain the text. In this ranking, works that delve into speculative theories to the extent that they furnish no real explanation of the text may be omitted, no matter how painstaking their scholarship is.

In the sample charting of Genesis below, some of the ranked books do not appear in the annotations earlier in this article. The reason for this is that they were written prior to 1987. In cases where the books do appear in the above discussion, an asterisk (*) follows the author's name.

Table 1 showing the rating of commentaries on Genesis appears on the next page.

²A comprehensive categorization and rating of commentaries on all sixty-six books is available in the unabridged annotated bibliography referred to in note 1 above.

RATING OF COMMENTARIES ON GENESIS

Table 1

<i>Detailed Exegetical</i>	<i>Expositional Survey</i>	<i>Devotional Flavor</i>
1. H. C. Leupold 2. V. Hamilton* (only chaps. 1`17, so far) 3. G. Wenham* 4. J. Sailhamer* 5. H. Stigers	1. J. J. Davis 2. A. P. Ross (CAB)* 3. R. Youngblood* 4. D. Kidner	1. W. H. Griffith-Thomas 2. J. Phillips* 3. D. Barnhouse 4. A. W. Pink

BOOK REVIEWS

Joe Aldrich. *Prayer Summits. Seeking God's Agenda for Your Community.* Portland: Multnomah, 1992. 218 pp. \$9.99 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This book is provocative in many ways, especially in its examples of Christian leaders with doctrinal convictions who work humbly together in an overall unity with Christians of other denominations.

Aldrich, president at Multnomah School of the Bible, Portland, writes about approximately sixty leaders in the state of Washington at a "Prayer Summit" in 1990. They came from churches of Baptist, Church of Christ, and Episcopalian denominations. They prayed, confessed sins, and interceded for each other, while gaining victories over lusts, marital strains, and the sinful judgment of others. They agreed to weekly and monthly area-meetings for purposes of prayer, seeking revival, and drawing their wives into the same experience.

Chapter 2 tells how churches can hinder their corporate Christian impact by fostering disunity. Aldrich decries the practice of non-charismatics bad-mouthing the ministries of charismatics and of independents looking down on mainline churches. He furnishes some explanation of how to foster cooperation, but some readers will wish he were more definitive. His solution is in an analogy: Nehemiah wept, fasted, prayed, confessed Israel's sins, and sought to rebuild Jerusalem's wall (Neh 1:4-6; 2:17). Likewise, God's people need to seek unity. Aldrich needs to grapple more with how to balance contending for doctrinal purity and maintaining Christian love by clarifying specific challenges encountered in seeking this balance. How, for instance, can unity flourish in an environment where faulty exegesis of God's Word prevails, circulating concepts that can wound the church?

The author regards Hezekiah's call to Jerusalem as a prototype for revival (2 Chronicles 29-30). Zeal for holiness led to house cleaning, humbling, confessing, and unifying around God. "Lectures wouldn't have produced this unity," but worship did (52). Proclaiming God's Word rightly, though, can be itself a true expression of worship. Aldrich probably did not mean for this "either/or" to apply in every case, but some may get the impression he does. Other passages are explicit that preaching and teaching are crucial aspects in a worship that expresses and stimulates unity. Aldrich spells out good principles drawn from Hezekiah's "prayer

summit" (54-57).

To the author, unity is not *unanimity* or *uniformity* (69), but he needs to clarify this more. He deals with issues later, yet only briefly. He cites two examples, one of a person who may drive a Ford while another drives a Chevrolet and another of a person who prefers the KJV in contrast with another who chooses the NIV (70).

It is puzzling why Aldrich speaks of God as asking a man of prayer why he was not praying for a city's economy to fail, for corruption to win, for law and order to fall apart, for division and strife to run rampant, and for the godly to be persecuted, yet to show a godly victory in this (77). He needs to explain this better. True, God wants His people to be holy, however bad the situation. But does this carry with it an indication that God wants the godly to pray that ungodliness will prevail?

The book makes the point that unity does not pour all believers into the same mold e.g., that *all* must give altar calls or use the same mode of baptism. Unity does mean agreeing on such essentials as Christ's deity and humanity, Scripture's inspiration, the Trinity, substitutionary atonement, salvation by faith, holiness, and Jesus' bodily resurrection from the grave. Unity is invalid among people who deny these (pp. 106-7).

In chap. 12 pastors describe how "prayer summits" work. They note the twelve components that go into a summit. Then Aldrich provides eleven suggestions for starting a summit and fourteen details to tend to at a summit.

The closing challenge is, "May God enable us to get John 17 out of mothballs and into the mainstream of the life of the church" (218). The book will stimulate readers to consider the viability of "prayer summits." It also will provoke questions for thoughtful readers, some of whom will disagree with certain positions recommended in the book. It will help Christians analyze what their response should be to this type of prayer ministry.

Richard L. Bergstrom, Gary Fenton, and Wayne A. Pohl. *Mastering Church Finances*. Portland, Oregon: Multnomah. 1992. 166 pp. \$13.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Alex D. Montoya, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

Mastering Church Finances is a somewhat misleading title since it does not really help one master the area of finance in a church. The book is much too brief and the topic much too broad. Actually the authors set out to help the minister avoid some dangerous pitfalls in the raising and spending of money.

The book's limitations are probably not traceable to the

credentials of the authors. They all serve the institutional church well and are making a valuable contribution to the financial integrity of the church. Richard Bergstrom is with Church Dynamics International, a church consulting ministry. Gary Fenton comes with experience in fund raising and church building, having served in six pastorates. Wayne Pohl has led his church through two building programs.

Though the brevity of the book is a drawback, the volume serves a useful purpose in giving the positive side of raising funds. The authors stress the spiritual and vital nature of money in local churches, an aspect of ministry that ministers too often neglect. The other excellent emphasis of the book is on the care to be taken in the raising and spending of money. The accounts given are valuable for those who may be inclined to careless expenditure of church funds.

Among the better chapters are, "The Spiritual Side of Mammon," "Developing Generous Givers," "Ministry to Deep-Pocket Donors," and "Insuring Financial Integrity."

Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, eds. *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. 402 pp. \$19.99 (paper). Reviewed by Ken L. Sarles, Associate Professor of Theology.

As the title of this volume suggests, the search is on for a new definition of dispensationalism. Edited by two Dallas Seminary professors, this work represents the collective effort of a group of mostly younger, dispensational scholars. Recognizing the vast changes that have occurred in dispensational thought since the formative era of Darby and Scofield, baby-boomer dispensationalists are now testing the waters to discover a redefinition of the movement. The results are both provo-cative and troublesome, depending on the dispensational orientation of the reader.

The book is in four parts: (1) an introduction, an analysis of the historical emergence and creedal development of dispensationalism; (2) a section on Biblical Studies, a wide-ranging series of articles dealing primarily with dispensational implications of selected NT passages designed to showcase the latest in dispensational scholarship; (3) responses by three leading non-dispensationalists to the articles in section two; (4) the editors' assessment of the direction of dispensationalism based on conclusions drawn from the articles and responses.

To understand the volume's importance and value, one must discern its positive and negative features. Positively, Robert Saucy's article on the church as the mystery of God is very helpful. As Saucy points out, the mystery's "present manifestation is an eschatological

fulfillment of the promised salvation," though not yet complete because of OT prophecy still awaiting fulfillment. In other words, the union of Jew and Gentile in one body was an OT mystery not only ecclesiological, but also soteriological and eschatological.

W. Edward Glenny's article on Israelite imagery in 1 Peter 2 is also insightful. According to Glenny, Peter does not use Israelite characterization to define the church as a new Israel, but rather uses the historical situation of the OT people of God as a pattern for the New Testament people of God, creating a measure of continuity between the two peoples.

The article by Lanier Burns on the future of ethnic Israel in Romans 11 is a masterpiece of exegetical research. In addition to its other merits, it demonstrates the advances made in dispensational scholarship in recent years, a purpose quite in accord with the intent of the editors.

The editors, representing a new breed of dispensationalists, are to be congratulated for their courage in including critical responses to their position. Perhaps Bruce Waltke gives the most perceptive critique: "These younger dispensationalists cite older dispensationalists mostly to distance themselves from them. In truth, however, they are desperately trying to retain their heritage" (350). Though this may augur well for the future of dispensational scholarship, according to Waltke it does not hold promise for the future of dispensationalism as a belief system.

When attention shifts from the contributions of individual dispensational thinkers to the contribution made to dispensational thought, the negative features of the volume become apparent. The introductory article by Craig Blasing is perhaps the most disconcerting because of implications it raises. Having observed that all theological thought is historically *conditioned* (22, n. 28), Blasing fails to address the more profound question of whether all theological thought, including that of the biblical writers themselves, is thereby historically *determined*. This reviewer fears that the implied answer to the question may be affirmative, based on Blasing's elaboration:

Appreciation has grown for the historicity of both subject and object in the act of interpretation. This includes respect for the problem of historical distance resulting in horizontal differences between text and interpreter, the role of the interpreter's preunderstanding, and methodological applications of the hermeneutical spiral. Likewise, the role of community in interpretation is increasingly recognized. This leads to an awareness of the influence of tradition upon the interpreter's preunderstanding as well as the broader dialogic context of interpretive questions and possible answers (30).

As important as the historicity of a text is to proper interpretation, the great danger is that transcendent truth will be lost in the midst of

historically-conditioned, horizontally-spiraling, dialogical hermeneutics. In this reviewer's opinion, this approach could well spell the end, not only for dispensationalism, but for all objective and axiomatic theological content, if carried to its ultimate conclusion.

The negative features of the volume are not only hermeneutical and theological, but also attitudinal. The best illustration of younger dispensational "children" rising up against the "fathers" of scholastic dispensationalism is found in John A. Martin's article on the Sermon on the Mount. In arguing for the continual evolution of dispensational interpretation, Martin reflects his consciousness of the "generation gap" when stating that "younger scholars have been reluctant to produce material that would be perceived as 'going against' the older established works" (249, n. 2.). If the interpretive system is evolving away from that of past dispensationalists, at what point does dispensationalism become a new species? The peril is that so-called "developing dispensationalism" may in reality be none other than "disappearing dispensationalism."

An aversion to older dispensational thinkers can be detected in certain pejorative comments Martin makes regarding Chafer's distorted views based on "a slavish adherence to traditional interpretation" (250, n. 10) and Pentecost's "somewhat confusing and disjointed" interpretation (251). Such disparaging terminology, even if accurate, does not advance the discussion. Even more disturbing, however, is the author's citation as corroborative evidence of private conversations with some older dispensationalists whom he evaluates (251, n. 13; 253, n. 18). Such personal data is unsupportable by documentation and independently unverifiable, so it has no place in a scholarly publication.

The concluding assessment by the editors is perplexing. Though laudable for its irenic tone and conciliatory spirit, it reflects more difficulties than it resolves. The editors reject what they call "essentialist dispensationalism," an approach which seeks to identify the *sine qua non* of dispensational thought. Instead, they advocate a postessentialist form of dispensationalism, which in reality is a "*non sine qua non*" system. If they are advocating a form of dispensationalism that has moved beyond the concept of essence, "vacuuous dispensationalism" is a more accurate label for their system.

Quite frankly, the hermeneutic employed by the editors of this volume places them outside this reviewer's historic form of dispensationalism, no matter how broadly it is defined. As they have expressed it,

Dispensational theology should be a dialogic phenomena [sic] inclusive to the extent of all who are in Christ. It is aided by an inclusive hermeneutic that is reflected upon for improvement in its deployment. It is in fact a hermeneutic that is aware of the communal and dialogic nature of understanding (384).

In this interpretive method, the transcendent pole of the hermeneutical axis has been lost. If listening is the key, as the editors suggest, then the larger question is to whom should dispensationalists be listening? In the new hermeneutic, men are listening to one another and to the larger community, but are they listening to the divine voice of the text?

The last page of the work contains an ecumenical appeal to appreciate a diversity of opinion in the midst of a greater corporate unity, so that Christians can understand one another's emphases and thereby learn from each another. However, the emphasis on unity in diversity is itself an influence from a larger pluralistic culture, and therefore appears to represent a hermeneutical preunderstanding that must be challenged.

Craig L. Blomberg. *Matthew*. Vol. 22 in the New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman, 1992. 464 pp. \$24.95 (cloth).
Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This is one of the two best contributions so far in the NAC. At the beginning of 1993, four other volumes of a projected forty had appeared: *Mark*, by James A. Brooks; *Acts*, by John B. Polhill, the second of the two best; *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, by Richard R. Melick, Jr.; and *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, by Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, Jr. The series, using the NIV, is re-doing an old evangelical series, An American Commentary on the New Testament, in which John Broadus did notable work (*Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*. Valley Forge, PA.: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886. 610 pp., double cols.). Alvah Hovey was editor of the old series, and the editorial staff of the new one is David S. Dockery, General Editor, with consulting editors L. Russ Bush, Duane A. Garrett, Kenneth A. Matthews, Richard R. Melick, Jr., Paige Patterson, Robert B. Sloan, Curtis A. Vaughan, and Larry L. Walker. These "affirm the divine inspiration, inerrancy, complete truthfulness, and full authority of the Bible" (Editor's Preface). The helpfulness of the new series in furnishing details varies from volume to volume.

The work of Blomberg, professor of NT at Denver Seminary with degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and the University of Aberdeen, often reflects wide reading, clarity in discussing problems, good theological syntheses, and informed reasoning for his interpretations. His Matthew introduction is concise, well-packed, knowledgeable (21-49). He favors a date between A.D. 58-69 and Matthew as author. This gospel to him is historically reliable (47) as he also argues in his book *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (InterVarsity, 1987). He has also written *Interpreting the*

Parables (Downers Grove: IVP, 1990), an outstanding work.

The author supplies relevant footnote details from good sources, and his explanations in the main body are fairly consistent in providing helpful material`e.g., his discussions of Matthew's use of Isa 7:14 in 1:22-23 and of how Hos 11:1 relates to the calling of God's son out of Egypt in 2:14-15. He gives eight views on the Sermon on the Mount and favors full application of the sermon to today as well as to Jesus' day. In reflecting an acquaintance with different views on 19:9, he concludes that adultery is a valid ground for both divorce and remarriage. His view that the "great distress" (24:21) is the entire period from A.D. 70 to the second advent (359-60) is surprising. To him it is all an era of tribulation for the saved. At 24:40-41, he joins many premillennial dispensationalists in saying that the ones "taken" from the earth are the unsaved removed in judgment at Christ's second coming and those "left" are the saved who remain to enter the earthly reign of Christ in its millennial era (366). Unlike many dispensationalists, however, premillennialist Blomberg appears to favor a posttribulation rapture of the church (370). In this he displays an uncharacteristic lack of clarity that makes it difficult to ascertain his view.

The work has good indexes on selected subjects, persons, and Scriptures (435-64). Though much less detailed than Broadus, Blomberg's informed survey succinctly covers many important points and is abreast of recent scholarship. Among recent commentaries on Matthew by premillennial evangelicals, his ranks not far behind Donald Carson's work which has more pages ("Matthew," in the *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1984, 596 pp.). Neither of these creditable works, the long one by Carson or the concise one by Blomberg, has the detail of John MacArthur's premillennial commentary (*Matthew*, 4 vols., Moody, 1985-1990). For non-technical reading that offers considerable help, the longer work discusses more of the ramifications of the text.

Donald K. Campbell and Jeffrey L. Townsend, gen. eds. *A Case for Premillennialism: A New Consensus*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1992. 290 pp. \$21.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

The 1990's have seen a resurging discussion of premillennialism in general and dispensationalism in particular. *A Case for Premillennialism* illustrates the resurgence, being one of two volumes from the campus of Dallas Theological Seminary in 1992`the other being *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church* edited by Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock (also reviewed in this issue of *TMSJ*).

Campbell and Townsend have collected fourteen essays written primarily by graduates of or current/former faculty members at DTS. D. Edmond Hiebert and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., are the exceptions, along with Kenneth Kantzer who writes the foreword. Half of the essays deal with books of the Bible, such as Genesis by Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., and Ezekiel by Mark F. Rooker, while others deal with specific chapters, such as Isaiah 2 by John H. Sailhamer and Romans 9-11 by S. Lewis Johnson.

Of the fourteen chapters, the most significant are chap. 2, "Evidence from Genesis" by Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. (35-54); chap. 5, "Evidence From Jeremiah" by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. (103-17); chap. 6, "Evidence from Ezekiel" by Mark F. Rooker (119-34); chap. 7, "Evidence from Daniel" by Kenneth L. Barker (135-46); chap. 11, "Evidence from Romans 9-11" by S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. (199-223); and chap. 13, "Evidence from Revelation 20" by Harold W. Hoehner (235-62). To get an overview of the book, it is good to start with chap. 14, "Premillennialism Summarized: Conclusion" (263-71) in which Townsend summarizes the evidence from each of the individual chapters.

It is good to get an update on where DTS stands regarding premillennialism in these times of adjustment and rethinking. This reviewer commends the general editors for their attempt to give the wider Christian public a sense of the range of current thinking at Dallas Theological Seminary. Though it is not pleasant to write a review with questions or critical observations, it is necessary for focusing the discussion. The following represent several of this reviewer's responses/reactions while reading the volume:

(1) The subtitle, "A New Consensus," is a bit surprising. If this is "new," how does it relate to the "old"? Secondly, if there is consensus, what is it, given the wide range of authors' e.g., Elliott Johnson, a traditional dispensationalist, compared with Darrell Bock, a progressive dispensationalist, compared with Walter Kaiser, a non-dispensational premillennialist?

(2) It is surprising that Kenneth Kantzer writes the foreword for such a volume since he has been no friend of dispensationally-oriented premillennialism in the past. As a matter of fact, in the opening sentence of this volume he writes, "Premillennialism is not a fundamental doctrine of evangelical faith. For example, the Bible certainly does not set it forth in the same unequivocal terms or give it the same central position that the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, or the second coming have" (7). One wonders why this recognized Christian scholar is a leading contributor on this particular subject when he candidly downplays its importance in the study of theology.

(3) The general editors write in the preface, "The editors of this volume were motivated by a felt need for a presentation of exegetical

evidence for premillennialism, the view that there will be an earthly reign of Christ preceded by His second coming. . . . This project therefore was undertaken to present the best exegetical evidence for premillennialism in a positive way. Our purpose was not to attack amillennialism or postmillennialism so much as to state positively why we, the editors and authors of this volume, are premillennialists" (13). In light of the commendable goal of the dispensational editorial team, why is the term `dispensational' noticeably absent throughout much of the volume? Premillennialism has several variations, one of which is historical premillennialism held by many faithful men who follow a covenantal approach to theology in the areas of soteriology and ecclesiology. In addition, historical premillennialists generally interpret the book of Revelation in ways radically different from dispensationalists.

In summary, individual essays contribute to ongoing scholarship and summarize current thinking, but in this reviewer's opinion, the cohesive impact of this volume falls short of the expectation suggested by its title, *A Case For Premillennialism: A New Consensus*. Nevertheless, for those who want to stay current in the premillennial discussion, this reviewer recommends *A Case For Premillennialism* as "must" reading.

Donald A. Carson. *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. 230 pp. \$11.95 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

Carson believes that the greatest lack today among Christians is in knowing God intimately in prayer. This well-known professor of NT at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School offers another in a long line of quality books. He hopes to stimulate a recovery by deriving principles on prayer from Pauline passages and other relevant texts.

He laments that much of the prayer that goes up (how high?) in the Western church "coexists with abounding Christian activity that somehow seems hollow, frivolous, and superficial . . .," and that there is ". . . enthusiastic praying . . . that overflows with emotional release but is utterly uncontrolled by any thoughtful reflection on the prayers of Scripture" (9). Living Bible-shaped lives of prayer will be a foundation for growing in other matters of the spiritual life. It will save Christians from "running after God's blessings without running after him" (16).

Chapter 1 is a kind of survey on critical aspects in prayer. Among these are *planning* to pray, curbing mental drift, cultivating a prayer partner, insisting on models that are truly biblical, and praying

in triumph over harsh trials. The chapter also deals with matters of having vision, breadth, and contrition balanced with bold passion in power. It advocates having a prayer list, having symmetry in elements of prayer (such elements as praise, confession, and intercession), leaping past formalism and unreality, and resting in God's presence and will.

Chapter 2 begins expositions in Paul in which he notes lessons that can fan a blaze of prayer. Using a clear outline, he develops 2 Thess 1:3-12, 1 Thess 3:9-13, Col 1:9-14, Phil 1:9-11, Eph 1:15-23 and 3:14-21, and Rom 15:14-33. He interweaves principles of prayer from scores of other texts. So he clarifies praying that is true to the Word, and his emphases correct unbiblical habits.

"Praying for Others" (chap. 4) highlights intercession for people and thanking God for them. The author cites forty-two of Paul's prayers, showing what Paul prayed for in contrast to what people often stress (cf. 75). He also articulates hindrances such as grudges, unwillingness to forgive, adultery, divorce, and half-hearted religion.

Chapter 7 deals with excuses people use, such as too busy, too dry, no need, too bitter, too ashamed, and too content with mediocrity. The next chapter offers help to Christians in hurdling excuses via Paul's example in Phil 1:9-11. Insightful factors on God's sovereignty and the relevancy of man's prayer come in chaps. 9-10. Also of much help is the valid focus on power in Ephesians 3 (chap. 11) and "Prayer for Ministry" in Romans 15 (chap. 12).

In his "Afterward," Carson gives "A Prayer for Spiritual Reformation." This stems from emphases throughout the book`e.g., the Spirit's power, knowing God, better, and a passion for Him.

This work is one of the best recent efforts that integrate biblical praying with the whole Christian life. It stimulates the reader to seek further similar discussions, as on notable passages in Daniel's life and the life of Christ.

One emphasis a serious reader comes away with is how urgent it is to get on with what the book calls for: to pray and not just say nice things about how important prayer is. This means to pray the way God directs, especially through the example and instructions of a brother who says so much about it` Paul.

Ian Cairns. *Deuteronomy: Word and Presence*. International Theological Commentary, Fredrick Carlson Holmgren and George A. F. Knight, gen. eds.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992. x + 309 pp. \$18.95 (paper). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible Exposition and Old Testament.

The stated aim of this commentary series is to develop the

theological significance of Deuteronomy and emphasize its relevance to the church. It is quickly obvious, however, that this volume only achieves the goal marginally. Cairns, parish minister and lecturer in biblical studies in his native New Zealand, instead spends considerable time pursuing form/source analysis and occasionally the historical, leaving essentially absent any notations of Deuteronomy's relevance to the church.

The commentary adds little new or enlightening information. Critical sections such as the reiteration of the ten commandments (5:6-21) or the *shema* (6:4-9) receive brief assessment. It devotes primary attention to re-creating scenarios that might depict the text's "true" origin or compilation. The commentator does acknowledge that the book itself states that Moses "wrote the words of this law in a book" (Deut 31:9, 24). However, he is quick to correct this statement: "But the framework as a whole is certainly from another hand. Moreover, there are clear indications that the material in general reflects a situation long after Moses' time" (1).

It is evident from the opening pages that Cairns has embraced the tenets of the well-repudiated Documentary Hypothesis. He suggests a 7th century B.C. 6th century B.C. date for the book, assigning varying strands of the text to the Elohist (E) source and others to the Yahwist (J) (cf. 5-24).

Probably the best summary of the author's theological persuasion is given by the publisher:

In this commentary Ian Cairns presents Deuteronomy as a slowly evolving complex composite. . . . Despite Deuteronomy's structural complexity, however, Cairns shows how the theme "Word and Presence" permeates the entire book: God is the living presence who can be encountered and known through his word addressed to each generation in turn (back cover).

Deuteronomy: Word and Presence is a prime example of the destructive nature of modern critical methodologies. It invalidates both the text and the context, allowing the researcher to re-create them according to his own, present-day perspective. Unless one is studying how not to do biblical research, this volume will be of little value.

Ed Dobson, Speed B. Leas, Marshall Shelley. *Mastering Conflict and Controversy*. Portland, Oregon: Multnomah, 1992. 192 pp. \$12.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Alex D. Montoya, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

The authors have written *Mastering Conflict and Controversy* to deal with the realities of church life, in that conflict is always brewing

within the ranks of God's people. Moses had his conflicts with the nation fresh out of Egypt, Paul had his "Corinthian experiences," and churches today fare no better.

The three writers are well qualified to address the issues of conflicts in churches. Marshall Shelley, author of *Well-Intentioned Dragons: Ministering to Problem People in the Church*, demonstrates great insight into church conflicts. This reviewer profited much from his work. Especially helpful was the chapter on "Surviving a Power Play."

Ed Dobson is no stranger to conflict, having spent much time as an associate of Jerry Falwell. Dobson has two outstanding chapters, "Restoring a Fallen Colleague" and "Restoring Battling Members." The former is the restoration account of Baptist preacher Truman Dollar, and reveals the agony of both pastor and church when a pastor falls into sin. It is a potent reminder to everyone to "take heed lest he fall."

Speed Leas has written two books on church conflicts and his experience throws light on this crucial topic. He has contributed Part III entitled "Understanding the Conflict." This section includes "Discerning the Causes" and "The Ten Most Predictable Times of Conflict," both of which are very beneficial.

If a minister is to have a long, successful, and happy pastorate, he must learn to overcome conflict in his congregation. Conflict is not all bad nor can it be avoided or altogether eliminated. Rather, as the book states, one must learn to master it.

H. Wayne House. *Christian Ministries and the Law*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. 249 pp. \$15.95 (paper). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

H. Wayne House has served the church well with this primer on the church and law in the late 20th century. House, a man trained biblically and legally, acted as both compiler and contributor along with six other practicing attorneys (6). In his preface he delivers the appropriate disclaimers that point to Richard R. Hammar's *Pastor, Church and Law* as the more complete volume for which House's work serves as an introduction.

The book is divided into four parts:

Part 1 - The American Legal System

Part 2 - Counseling, Church Discipline, and Conflict Resolution

Part 3 - Corporation, Christian Schools, Property, Taxes, and Political Activity

Part 4 - Counseling Church Members Regarding the Law.

Though not all pastors or leaders of a para-church ministry will encounter each issue discussed, they certainly will be faced at

sometime in their ministries with many of the ones addressed.

For pastors, the following chapters could be of particular significance:

"A Look at the First Amendment" (chap. 5, 43-53)

"The Minister as Counselor" (chap. 6, 57-64)

"Church Discipline and the Right of Privacy" (chap. 7, 65-78)

"Reconciling Disputes among Christians" (chap. 8, 79-88)

"Tax Planning for Religious Workers" (chap. 13, 141-50)

"Charitable Giving: Funding the Christian Challenge" (chap. 14, 151-64)

"Should Christians Sue?" (chap. 16, 175-82)

"Is Bankruptcy Ethical for the Christian?" (chap. 17, 183-191).

Among the four appendixes, Appendix D, a listing of Christian Conciliation Ministries of North America (219-20) is immediately the most helpful since this information is not readily available to most pastors. The volume has a medium-sized bibliography (235-38) that emphasizes more the legal side of the issues than the practical side as faced in the church. These materials are a bit out-of-date in that the majority are clustered in the mid-1980's.

Of special significance to pastors is chap. 6, "The Minister as Counselor." Jeffrey A. Aman contributed this summary of the now-famous *Nally v. Grace Community Church of the Valley* clergy malpractice case. As one familiar with the details of the case, this reviewer found it to be a helpful summary for those who have watched at a distance and/or have received incomplete information.

This book is recommended to all pastors, leaders of Christian organizations, and professors of pastoral ministry in schools preparing men for ministry. It surveys a majority of the church/state and legal issues that Christian workers face in the late-20th century and certainly will face well into the 21st century.

H. A. Ironside. *A Historical Sketch of the Brethren Movement*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1985 reprint of 1942 ed. 219 pp. \$8.95 (paper). And H. Pickering, ed. *Chief Man among the Brethren*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1986 reprint of 1918 ed. 228 pp. \$11.95 (paper). Reviewed by Kelly Osborne, Assistant Professor of Classics, Hope College, Holland, MI.

A review of books that focus on the history of what appears to many a rather minor and obscure segment of the evangelical church, namely, the so-called "Plymouth Brethren," could seem to be unusual in *The Master's Seminary Journal*. One has, however, only to note that John Gerstner, in his book *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism* recently the subject of a review article in

this journal and elsewhere`devotes a complete chapter to the role of the "Brethren" (hereafter, B.) in developing the teachings of Dispensationalism. That brings a realization that the members of this group have had an influence out of all proportion to their numbers.

Though numerous histories of the B. have been published over the last 100 years, this reviewer knows of no publication that treats the subject as even-handedly as Ironside's *Historical Sketch*. The Plymouth Brethren movement "Plymouth" being originally a nickname to believers from one of the largest early meetings, which was located in Plymouth, England`had its origin in the 1820's in Ireland and England when small groups of believers throughout the British Isles spontaneously and without knowing about one another began meeting for the purpose of studying the Word of God and "breaking bread" (i.e., celebrating the Lord's Supper). They were dissatisfied with the ecclesiastical pretensions of the Church of England and the Dissenting denominations, and therefore sought to meet in simplicity without any designated leader or ordained clergy officiating. One of these groups met in Dublin, Ireland, and eventually included a young Church of Ireland cleric by the name of J. N. Darby.

From its humble and unorganized beginnings (chap. 1), Ironside traces the growth of the movement throughout Great Britain and the Continent (chaps. 2`3), the first major split in 1848 between what developed into the "Open" and the "Exclusive" branches of the B. (chaps. 4`5), subsequent events and splits among the Exclusives (chaps. 6`10), post-1848 developments among the Open B. (chap. 11), and the failed efforts in the 1890's toward a *rapprochement* between some branches of the Exclusives and the Opens (chaps. 12`13). In a final chapter Ironside offers some critical comments of his own. Five appendixes of "Miscellaneous Papers and Documents Pertaining to Brethren's History, Methods and Doctrines" end the volume.

As the book's title indicates, Ironside's treatment of B. history is not exhaustive, but he does use primary sources throughout. A word of caution: B. history is difficult to read, partly because of the sometimes laborious style of 19th-century English, and partly because of the complexities involved in the numerous splits as well as the intricacy of arguments about frequently obscure issues faced in those splits. Nor is it pleasant to see the tragic results of decisions and actions taken when, in the course of time, dissension grew and attitude of brother towards brother hardened. Nevertheless, the people of God today can learn important lessons from this.

From time to time, Ironside adds his own comments that often provide a helpful perspective in the midst of the historical minutia (e.g., 7, 20, 29-30, 45, 56, 69, 109-10, 121, 171, 174). Among them several are worthy of special note:

- (1) In the earliest days, the B. devoted themselves to the study and practice of the Word of God in a simplicity and humility

- of mind that puts most late 20th-century believers to shame.
- (2) American, and especially, conservative evangelicals might be better served if they concentrated more effort on understanding and following the clear and simple teachings of the Word of God (cf. 174).
 - (3) The terrible results of speaking or acting hastily and without careful consideration for the ultimate consequences (i.e., in the power of the flesh) ought to drive every Christian to his knees in prayer before he attempts to speak "the truth in love" (Eph 4:15) so that he will avoid speaking the truth without love.
 - (4) The consequences of spiritual pride in thinking oneself or one's "movement" or "denomination" somehow better than others are dreadful (cf. 174).

Finally, this book would benefit greatly from the addition of name and subject indexes.

In contrast to Ironside's work, H. Pickering's *Chief among the Brethren* is much easier reading. It concentrates on the positive contributions of many of the B.'s leaders (representing both Exclusive and Open B.) during the movement's first century. Arranged chronologically by date of birth, one hundred brief articles summarize the lives of individuals such as J. N. Darby, C. H. Mackintosh, William Kelly, J. G. Bellett, F. W. Grant, and George Muller. Even many who know little or nothing of the B. movement may recognize some of these names. A number of different authors, including Pickering, contributed articles. This results in a certain "variety of style" (from the Preface). Nevertheless, it is a joy to read about the lives of these men of God, their faithfulness and self-sacrifice in the cause of making Christ known. This book may be used profitably alongside Ironside's work to gain a better perspective on the character and labors of some whose names appear in *Historical Sketch* solely as opponents in controversy. *Chief Men* includes a useful alphabetical index with dates at the front of the book.

Loizeaux has rendered the Christian reading public a definite service in reprinting these two volumes that have long been unavailable.

George W. Knight, III. *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992. 514 pp. \$39.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Alex D. Montoya, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles is a scholarly critical commentary written by George W. Knight, III, professor of New Testament at Knox Theological Seminary in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

The author begins with a list of sources consulted to acquaint the reader with the abbreviations used, but this also is impressive as to the serious nature of the volume. The style is weighty but lucid, scholarly yet readily accessible to those with a limited knowledge of the original languages. This makes it helpful for the diligent pastor or preacher, a feature this reviewer looks for in a book of this type. The treatment of the text is thorough with a rich display of textual and syntactical research.

The author treats the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles extensively, and ends by saying,

Our conclusion is that the Pastoral Epistles were indeed written by the apostle Paul to his colleagues. This conclusion is based not only on the clear self-testimony of the letters to Paul as their author, their frequent personal references to Paul, their basic Pauline teaching, and their basic Pauline vocabulary and style, but also on the satisfactory resolution of the perceived or real differences, which in the end point toward rather than away from that authorship (52).

He dates the epistles somewhere after Paul's release from the first imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28) and the death of Nero, "from the latter part of the early 60's to the mid-60's" (54)

The exposition follows the order of writing of the three: 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy. There are two excursuses, the former on "the Bishops/Presbyters and Deacons: 3:1-13" and the latter on "Motivation for Appropriate Conduct: 2:1-10." The latter shows that Paul's instructions in Tit 2:1-10 do not arise from cultural appeasements, but from the rule of righteousness prescribed for all believers. This is a timely section in light of current pressures on the church to water down its stand on righteous living by conforming to a changing culture.

The treatment of 1 Tim 2:11-15 reinforces the traditional interpretation of the role of women in ministry. The author states, "Here he prohibits women from publicly teaching men, and thus teaching the church" (141), and concludes, "It is noteworthy, however, that Paul does not use 'office' terminology here (bishop/presbyter) but functional terminology (teach/exercise authority). It is thus the activity that he prohibits, not just the office" (142).

All in all, this is a commendable commentary, extremely helpful in dealing with the difficult passages in the text. It deserves to be added to any preacher's library as a primary source on the study of the Pastoral Epistles. The Bible student will be satisfied with this investment.

Dependence of the First Three Gospels. Trans. by Robert W. Yarbrough. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992. 219 pp. \$10.99 (paper). Reviewed by Robert L. Thomas, Professor of New Testament.

For many years famous as a NT scholar with an extremely liberal bent, Linnemann experienced the new birth, and almost simultaneously the realization dawned that these liberal scholarly conclusions were totally incompatible with a relationship to Christ. So the current volume is to rectify previous misleading teachings.

Is There a Synoptic Problem? uses tools of literary research to demonstrate the improbability that literary dependence of any sort existed in the composition of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It shows through credible evidence that proponents of literary dependence have never proven that the three authors copied from each other, copied from the same source, or both. On the other hand, explanations of their compositions without literary dependence are more plausible and probable. The application of historical-critical methodologies to the gospels, such as assumptions of literary dependence, entail serious undermining of the authority of the Word of God (15).

Part 1 of the book examines closely the assumptions of the prevalent method of gospel study, the historical-critical. Linnemann reviews part of an earlier work (Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990] 130-34) to recall how unscientific so-called scientific theology really is (chap. 1). Yet the correctness of scientific theology's conclusions is a foregone conclusion throughout theological training programs in Germany (chap. 2).

Part 2 faces the question of whether literary dependence among the Synoptic Gospels is a fair assumption. The author first establishes a five-step process through use of linguistic data to evaluate the possibility of literary dependence, particularly as relates to the widespread two-source hypothesis with its view of Markan priority. The purpose of this is to "clear away the rubbish heaps of hypotheses that have denied access to God's Word and cast doubt on its veracity" (73).

"Tedious detail" well describes application of the five steps to the issue of literary dependence (chaps. 3-7). Before reaching a conclusion from the resultant data, the author examines seven possible forms that literary dependence could have taken: copy, précis, quotation, redactional reworking, tendentious ideological/theological reworking, plagiarism, free reworking, and creative rewriting (chap. 8). A review of all the data leads to the inevitable necessity of "bidding farewell, finally, to the unproved and unprovable claim of literary dependence among the three Synoptic Gospels" (152).

Part 3 of the work faces the possibility that the Synoptic Gospels originated independently. A monistic worldview that, consciously or unconsciously, presupposes that God has not created the world, ruled

history, and intervened through Christ's redemptive act is the only obstacle to literary independence among the Synoptics (158-59) a nonexistent obstacle for discerning Christians (chap. 9). Evangelical proponents of literary dependence are blind to the implications of their endorsement of literary-critical hypotheses and, through their endorsement of them, fail to do full justice to Scripture (178). The gospels originated during a short span of time and in widely separated areas, making literary dependence impossible (chap. 10).

Part 4 answers the question, "Why Four Gospels?" Their purpose was to supply four independent witnesses of the words, deeds, death, and resurrection of Jesus (chap. 11). Using the four together, one can construct a comprehensive portrait of Jesus (chap. 12).

This thorough analysis of the Synoptic Gospels purposes to erect a warning sign "Caution! Trap!" that will keep any further victims from falling into the clutches of what is falsely called "science" (Epilogue).

This reviewer does not concur with every minor point along the way, but this does not keep him from calling Linnemann's work probably the most significant volume on the Synoptic Problem to appear thus far in the twentieth century. Hopefully, many NT scholars will heed the case it builds, regardless of the personal price. After all, the integrity of Scripture is at stake. The book is replete with tables, charts, and statistical lists that help visualize and verify various points made by the author, but even so, it will take clear thinking and patience to appreciate fully the information therein. The volume ends with a brief bibliography and an index.

John MacArthur. *Colossians & Philemon*. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 1992. 249 pp. \$19.99 (cloth). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This lucid evangelical exposition with a brief section on introductory matters and a verse-by-verse commentary based on the NASB text has an appropriate title to fit each of its twenty chapters. Other works published in the MNTC to this point are on Matthew (4 vols.), Romans (1 vol. so far), 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and Hebrews. The volume offers frequent help for teachers of Bible classes, pastors, students, and lay people as MacArthur answers most questions that readers may ask about the text. His fairly full, yet not tedious exposition has meaningful correlations with other Scriptures.

Positive factors are plentiful. Christ as "firstborn of all creation" (Col 1:15) receives elucidation. It is Paul's idea of Christ's preeminence

in rank (as Lightfoot and many others), not that He was the first created being as taught erroneously by the Jehovah's Witnesses. The word choice and the context that views Christ as God support this.

In his discussion of the meaning of Christ's blood in reconciliation (1:20-21), MacArthur will not persuade all evangelicals that certain passages do not go back ultimately to literal blood as a beginning point when death occurs (cf. 63: e.g., Matt 23:30-35; 27:24, 25; Acts 5:28; 1 Cor 10:16). To recognize both *death* and instances of *blood* shed when death occurs does not at all commit one to the notion that Christ's blood has been caught up and preserved in some vessel in heaven, a view that sees the blood as applied to people physically to effect their forgiveness. MacArthur does not embrace such a conception, but contends that Christ's shedding of *blood*, so utterly important, atoned for sins in *death*, and not apart from death. Both the shedding of blood and death occurred (63, bottom). His *blood shed*, shed in *death*, purchased redemption (cf. Rom 5:9-10).

Clarity marks the explanation of the filling up of what is lacking in Christ's afflictions (77). Reference is not to Christ's sufferings on the cross, which He filled up and that need no addition. Rather the idea is bearing sufferings that persecutors of Christ inflict against Him by hurting His people. These are not *atonement* sufferings (for Jesus paid it all!), but *affiliation* sufferings. His people absorb them because they are identified with His cause.

The author illumines much in regard to legalism, mysticism, and asceticism (2:16-23). He casts much light on the Christian life in discussing 3:1-4:6. Sin's presence and power still affect us. He comments, "Sin is like a deposed monarch who no longer reigns nor has the ability to condemn, but works hard to debilitate and devastate all its former subjects. Sin is still potent, and success against it demands the Spirit's power" (135-36). The Christian combats sin by being strong in God's Word (cf. "the word of Christ," 3:16), the equivalent of Spirit-filled experience (Eph 5:18). Other remarks raise a question about the meaning of the brief statement that Christ is "our life" (cf. Phil 1:21). What does this mean?

On Philemon, a section discusses slavery in relation to Christianity. MacArthur also keynotes forgiveness, hence a threefold outline: spiritual character (vv. 4-7), action (vv. 8-18) and motivation (vv. 19-25). Forgiveness receives copious exposition (207-9), with ten statements that sum it up and a listing of its eight basic elements (218-20).

An illustration of forgiveness at the end will be worth the price of the book for some. Mitsuo Fuchida, Japanese pilot in the attack on Pearl Harbor, later became a Christian. His conversion came after he received profound impressions of Christianity such as Peggy Covell's sacrificial service that displayed to the Japanese people a love that forgives, though the Japanese had killed her beloved parents (232-35).

A book may be a fine one, yet not satisfy all readers all the time.

An example of the need for more explanation is how believers can walk "worthy of the Lord" (Col 1:10). They have been and are unworthy, and it requires God's grace to save and enable them. How can they be worthy, then? Of course, the answer is that God makes them worthy in their lifestyle by His enablement. To God be the glory.

Another need for more explanation relates to how a Christian can be "totally controlled" by the Spirit, yet not be in some sense sinlessly perfect (28). Further, the statement that God removes the curse of Genesis 3 during the millennium (58) needs explanation. The removal of the curse does not seem *complete* until the new heavens and new earth *after* the millennium (Rev 21:3-5; 22:4-5).

Overall, this work is very rewarding. It will prove useful in the frequent cases where it makes special contributions, and many will appreciate what they glean from it.

Gene Newman and Joni Eareckson Tada. *All God's Children: Ministry with Disabled Persons*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993. 126 pp. \$10.99 (paper). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Assistant Professor of Old Testament.

The revised edition of *All God's Children*, a welcome update of the 1981 publication, is a practical tool for pastors and church workers interested in ministering to the disability community. Co-participants in producing the revised edition are Camille Beckham, Vesta Bice, Donna Hall, Linda Harry, Nena Huston, B. J. Maxson, DeAnn Sampley, and Lynne Seno, each with singular and focused expertise, but all deeply committed to disability ministry.

Statistics show that only five percent of churches have an outreach to disabled persons and that ninety-five percent of the people who have disabilities are not active in any church (back cover). Even though those figures present a challenge for the church, modern technology has done much to make churches accessible for the disabled, and increased awareness of disability needs has heightened the sensitivity of God's people.

Chapters 1 and 2 give a biblical perspective on disabilities and discussions of pastor and volunteer roles in facilitating and carrying out disability ministry.

A concise and user-friendly description of the nature and characteristics of various disabilities comes in chaps. 5-9 (Mental Retardation, Deafness, Physical Disabilities, Visual Impairments and Learning Disabilities, respectively). Each chapter has salient discussions of such matters as definition, causes, and classifications, all of which serve as an abbreviated reference material for future use.

The final chapter, entitled "Getting Started," follows a ten-step format to help the pastor or church worker define goals, train teachers and workers, establish adequate emergency procedures, resolve logistical problems, and, in general, give ministry tracks to follow (107). These steps include:

- Begin With a Vision and Prayer
- Contact Church Leaders
- Determine a Target Population
- Identify and Bridge Barriers
- Define a Philosophy, Purpose, and Goals
- Recruit and Train Leaders and Volunteers
- Determine Classroom, Curriculum, and Transportation Needs
- Develop a Budget
- Public Relations
- Know the Participants.

Several minor typographical errors are worth noting: "enchances" (115) "language, perception" (98).

Donald T. Phillips. *Lincoln On Leadership*. New York, NY: Warner, 1992. 188 pp. \$17.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

Although *TMSJ* has never reviewed a secular book, the uniqueness of this book and its applicability to the all-too-often neglected art of leadership in ministry makes it a prime candidate for examination. Many churches appear to be microcosms of this nation's "civil war" in the 19th century, so a study of Lincoln and his responses to reunite a warring nation is appropriate in deriving principles of leadership that might bring reconciliation.

Phillips has held significant leadership positions in business and is a devoted student of Lincoln. According to him (xii), material on Lincoln's leadership style is virtually non-existent. To the best of his knowledge, his own volume, over eight years in the making, is the first book focusing exclusively on Lincoln and leadership.

Phillips builds on the landmark book *Leadership* written by James MacGregor Burns. Burns defined leadership in this manner:

Leadership is leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent *the values* and the motivations`the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations`of both leaders and followers. And the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their *followers' values* and motivations.

Lincoln On Leadership divides into four parts: Part I/People, Part II/Character, Part III/Endeavor, and Part IV/Communication.

Phillips writes in a direct, pithy style, primarily relying upon Lincoln's written correspondence with his political colleagues and military representatives. It deals with both the up and the down side of leadership. Phillips provides the unvarnished truth about Lincoln's dealings with a wide variety of people during what might be, arguably, the most tumultuous years in United States history.

Each of the fifteen chapters ends with a summary of the material under the rubric "Lincoln Principles." The book is extremely well documented and contains a helpful detailed index. Also, a sizable bibliography is available for further study.

Perhaps the reader's appetite will be whetted to purchase and devour this fine book by noting a sample from the final two paragraphs:

It was Abraham Lincoln who, during the most difficult period in the nation's history, almost single-handedly preserved the American concept of government. Had he not been the leader that he was, secession in 1860 could have led to further partitioning of the country into an infinite number of smaller, separate pieces, some retaining slavery, some not. He accomplished this task with a naturalness and intuitiveness in leading people that was at least a century ahead of his time.

Lincoln knew that true leadership is often realized by exerting quiet and subtle influence on a day-to-day basis, by frequently seeing followers and other people face to face. He treated everyone with the same courtesy and respect, whether they were kings or commoners. He lifted people out of their everyday selves and into a higher level of performance, achievement, and awareness. He obtained extraordinary results from ordinary people by instilling purpose in their endeavors. He was open, civil, tolerant, and fair, and he maintained a respect for the dignity of all people at all times. Lincoln's attitude and behavior as president of the United States essentially characterized the process that symbolizes acceptable and decent relations among human beings. Abraham Lincoln was the essence of leadership (172-73).

Cliff Schimmels. *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Sunday School*. Wheaton: Victor, 1991. 208 pp. \$9.99 (cloth). Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Assistant Professor of Old Testament.

The author, professor of Education at Wheaton College for over seventeen years, has written extensively on educational issues. His book has two forerunners: Ann Boylan's *The Sunday School* and *All I Ever Need to Know I learned in Kindergarten*, the former of which chronicles the earliest known origins and development of the Sunday School in the United States and England and the latter of which introduces what may prove to be a new genre of popular literature.

In his witty anecdotal style, Schimmels takes the reader back to the simplicity of his country Sunday School that made long-lasting impressions on him. Profoundly simple truths taught decades earlier now result in life-changing experiences that continue.

Those who question the ability of a faithful child (or maybe it is the faithful little country church) to affect lives would do well to read and ponder the message of this small book. For those who grew up in Sunday Schools like Schimmel's, the challenge is to believe that to "go home again" to that setting would be to savor some of those lingering and sometimes vague recollections of the institution that so shaped their lives. Memories are important, but the lessons are still life-changing.

Some say Sunday School is dying. For the sake of childlike faith of all ages, this reviewer hopes they are wrong.

John F. Walvoord. *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook*. Wheaton: Victor, 1990. 809 pp. \$27.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

For decades, John Walvoord has been recognized as the dean of dispensationally oriented premillennialists because of his vast writings on the subject. This volume represents a compilation of all Scripture prophecies in one volume. Its chief value is not found in a complete exegesis and/or thorough exposition of every passage, but rather in the fact that it is a one-volume comprehensive summary of prophetic material, readily available for reference by anyone, whether layman, pastor, or scholar.

Walvoord provides fifteen chapters with over six hundred pages of identification and brief explanation. Of even greater value to the busy pastor will be Appendixes A and B which summarize the first fifteen chapters. Appendix A covers all of the OT prophecies from Gen 2:16-17 to Malachi 4:5 (648-713). Appendix B overviews the NT from Luke 1:13 to Rev 22:20 (716-769). The topical and Scripture indexes are thorough.

Sixteen charts appear throughout the book. Some of the more helpful include those on the millennial temple (201, 203, 205), the predicted order of prophetic events related to Israel (382), the predicted events relating to the nations (400), the predicted events related to the church (422), the major divine judgements (468), and the major events of unfulfilled prophecy (551).

Many will be surprised by or not prepared for what Walvoord labels the "Period of Preparation." This phase occurs after the rapture, but before the beginning of Daniel's 70th week. He refers to it on pp. 385, 485, 550-51. He writes,

Immediately after the rapture of the church, there will be a time period which may be called a period of preparation. In this period there will emerge a ten-nation group forming a political unit in the Middle East. A leader will emerge who will gain control first of three then of all ten (cf. Dan. 7:8, 24-25). From this position of power he will be able to enter into a covenant with Israel, bringing to rest a relationship of Israel to her neighbors (9:27), and begin the final seven-year countdown culminating in the Second Coming (550).

While certainly possible in terms of its timing, this period is not necessary. Many, including this reviewer, suggest that these events will develop prior to the rapture and will be in position to launch Daniel's 70th week at the time of the rapture.

Other intramural points of disagreement with Walvoord's book are possible, but on the whole, it is an eminently useful handbook to identify a vast amount of information on the prophetic Scriptures. It will greatly expand minds of laymen who have no in-depth knowledge of biblical prophecy. It will also save an immense amount of time for pastors when used as a tool to deal with sizable amounts of data in small periods of sermon-preparation time.