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CONTENTS

Editorial iv

THEME: Biblical Theology and Missions

ARTICLES

- The Sizemore Lectures, 2018.
The Promise of Biblical Theology:
What Biblical Theology Is and What It Isn't
ANDREAS J. KÖSTENBERGER 1-13
- The Sizemore Lectures, 2018.
The Practice of Biblical Theology:
How is Biblical Theology Done?
ANDREAS J. KÖSTENBERGER 14-27
- Some Knowledge of Hebrew Possible to All:
The Value of Biblical Hebrew For The Church
STEPHEN J. ANDREWS 28-51
- Epigenetics and Homosexuality: A Brief Survey
and Analysis
J. ALAN BRANCH 52-78
- Weapons, Wealth, and the End of the World:
Hag 2:6-7 in 1QM XII, 14; XIX, 6; and Heb 12:26-27
TODD CHIPMAN 79-96
- A Comparison of Native American Missional
Methodology: The Moravians and the New Lights
TRISTAN J. HURLEY 97-117

God's Heart for Missions: A Biblical Theology of the Great Commission JASON ALLIGOOD	118-136
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BOOK REVIEWS

Jonathan I. Griffiths, <i>Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study</i> (2017) (Reviewed by Pete Charpentier)	137-140
Crawford Gribben, <i>John Owen and English Puritanism: Experiences of Defeat</i> (2014) (Reviewed by Jenny-Lyn de Klerk)	140-143
Kevin DeYoung, <i>Taking God at His Word: Why the Bible is Knowable, Necessary and Enough and what Means for You and Me</i> , (2014) (Reviewed by Jeffrey Lee Flanagan)	143-146
Robin Lane Fox, <i>Augustine: Conversions to Confessions</i> (2015) (Reviewed by Coleman M. Ford)	146-149
Thomas R. Schreiner, <i>Covenant and God's Purpose for the World</i> , (2017) (Reviewed by Brandon M. Freeman)	150-152
B.L. Merkle and R.L. Plummer, <i>Greek for Life</i> , (2017) (Reviewed by Mark R. Kelley)	153-155
Zac Hicks, <i>The Worship Pastor: A Call to Ministry for Worship Pastors and Teams</i> , (2016) (Reviewed by Samuel G. Parkinson)	156-159
D.L. Allen, E. Hankins, and A. Harwood, <i>Anyone can be Saved: A Defense of Southern Baptist Soteriology</i> , (2016) (Reviewed by Jacob D. Rainwater)	159-162

Peter Enns, <i>The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires our Trust more than our Correct Beliefs</i> (2016) (Reviewed by Jeffrey T. Riddle)	162-165
David L. Allen, <i>The Extent of the Atonement: A Historical and Critical Review</i> (2016) (Reviewed by Edward G. Romine)	165-167
Michael Horton, <i>Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption and Everyday Life</i> , (2017) (Reviewed by Gary L. Shultz, Jr.)	168-170
David B. Garner, <i>Sons in the Son: The Riches and Reach of Adoption in Christ</i> (2016) (Reviewed by Bradley Sinclair)	170-173
J.G. Duesing, T. White, and M.B. Yarnell, III, <i>First Freedom: The Beginning and End of Religious Liberty</i> , 2 nd Ed. (2016) (Reviewed by Jonathon D. Woodyard)	173-176
Books Received	177-180

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Spring 2018 issue of the *Midwestern Journal of Theology*. I am again indebted to those who work so hard each Semester, to ensure the Journal appears. My particular thanks go to Dr. Jason Duesing, Provost and Academic Editor, for all his invaluable assistance, and also to Mrs. Kaylee Freeman, for all her work as Journal secretary.

We are honored to begin this issue, by publishing the 2018 Sizemore Lectures given at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The two wonderful lectures were given by Dr. Andreas J. Köstenberger from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, on the subject of Biblical Theology. His first lecture, given on March 13th, was entitled ‘The Promise of Biblical Theology: What Biblical Theology Is and What It Isn’t.’ His second lecture, given the following day, was entitled, ‘The Practice of Biblical Theology: How is Biblical Theology Done?’

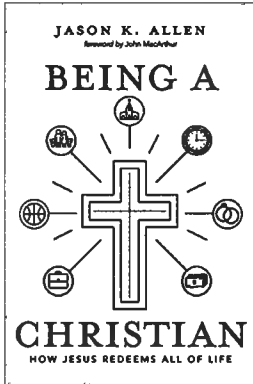
We are pleased to follow Dr. Köstenberger’s erudite analyses, with articles from three Professors and one Doctoral student at Midwestern Seminary, together with one article from Dr. Hurley of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. These articles begin with a thought-provoking piece from Midwestern’s Hebrew and Old Testament Professor Dr. Stephen Andrews, as he challenges the church, to reconsider the value of learning and using Biblical Hebrew. Dr. Alan Branch, Professor of Ethics at Midwestern, then gives a detailed and timely analytical survey of the relationship between epigenetics and homosexuality. This is followed by an in-depth study from Dr. Todd Chipman, an assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Midwestern, entitled, ‘Weapons, Wealth and the End of the World,’ as seen in and through the books of Haggai and Hebrews.

Our penultimate article is from Dr. Hurley of Scarborough College at Southwestern Seminary, who presents the fruits of his research into early missions in America, as he compares the missional methodology of the Moravians and the New Lights. Our final article, describing how missions is at the very center of God’s heart, comes from Jason Alligood, a Doctoral student at Midwestern, in his ‘Biblical Theology of the Great Commission’.

We again conclude this issue of the *MJT* with several relevant and thought provoking book reviews, helpfully secured and edited by Dr. Blake Hearson.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

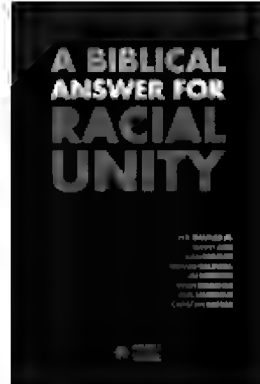
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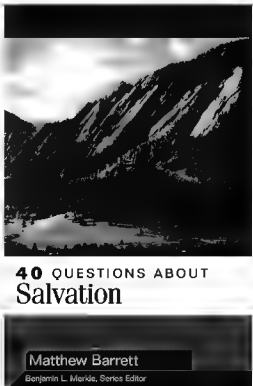
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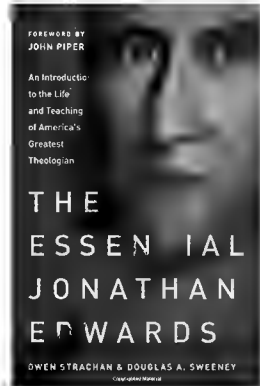
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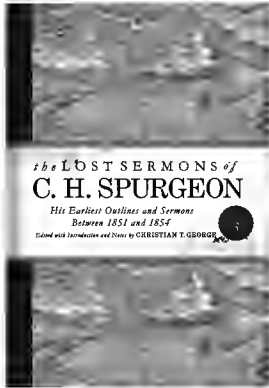
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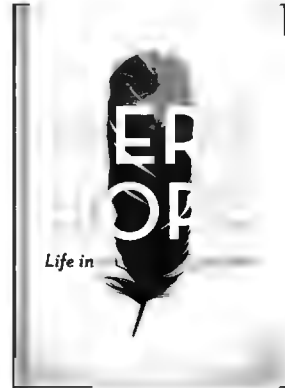
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by Christian T. George (B&H Academic)

June 2018

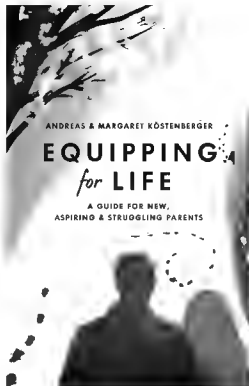


MERE HOPE:

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by Jason G. Duesing (B&H Publishing)

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EQUIPPING FOR LIFE:

A Guide for New, Aspiring
& Struggling Parents

by Andreas Köstenberger &
Margaret Köstenberger (Christian Focus)

June 2018

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Midwestern Journal of Theology: 17.1 (2018): 1-13

The Sizemore Lectures
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018:
The Promise and Practice of Biblical Theology

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Senior Research Professor
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**The Promise of Biblical Theology:
What Biblical Theology Is and What It Isn't**
March 13, 2018

It's a privilege to be delivering this year's Sizemore lectures on the topic "The Promise and Practice of Biblical Theology." Today, in my first lecture, I will explore "The Promise of Biblical Theology: What Biblical Theology Is, and What It Isn't." Then, I will follow this up with a lecture on "The Practice of Biblical Theology: How Biblical Theology Is Done: Studying a Book, Corpus, or Major Theme in Scripture." Specifically, I'll engage in a couple case studies on the letters to Timothy and Titus (commonly known as the Pastoral Epistles) and on the person of the Holy Spirit.

What Is Biblical Theology?

One might simply say, "Biblical Theology is theology that is biblical"—theology that is biblically grounded. The problem with this definition, however, is that all Christian theology should be properly grounded in Scripture, so positing this kind of definition seems to be merely stating the obvious.

So, how about the following: "Biblical Theology is the theology of the Bible." In other words, Biblical Theology is not our own theology, or that of our church or denomination, it is the theology of the biblical writers themselves. Old Testament theology, then, is the theology of the Old Testament writers, and New Testament theology the theology of the New Testament writers; Pauline theology is the theology of Paul, Johannine theology the theology of John, and so forth. If this is the way we define

Biblical Theology, this doesn't merely mean that you and I are constructing our theology based on the Bible (though we should of course do that). Rather, the focus is on the writers of Scripture and on their beliefs and convictions as they expressed them in the Old Testament and New Testament writings.

The academic discipline of Biblical Theology is commonly said to have begun with the German scholar Johann Philipp Gabler and his 1787 inaugural address at the University of Altdorf entitled "*On the Correct Distinction Between Dogmatic and Biblical Theology and the Right Definition of Their Goals.*" More recently, in the 1950s and 1960s, the Biblical Theology movement sought to popularize the discipline by blending historical criticism with confessional theology, but unfortunately did so by unduly dichotomizing between God's redemptive acts in history and the biblical text. The enterprise stalled to the extent that Brevard Childs could write a book in 1970 with the title *Biblical Theology in Crisis*. Also, James Barr severely criticized practitioners of the Biblical Theology movement for inadequate methodological and linguistic procedures, so much so that some thought he had killed the whole enterprise of Biblical Theology. Since then, however, especially within the North American conservative evangelical world, a new kind of Biblical Theology has flourished which is based on a high view of Scripture and yet is based on solid historical research and keen literary study. It is this kind of Biblical Theology that I am going to espouse in these lectures.

In Gabler's vein, the Swiss-German theologian Adolf Schlatter put the matter well a century ago when he wrote, "In speaking of 'New Testament' theology, we are saying that it is not the interpreter's own theology or that of his church and times that is examined but rather the theology expressed by the New Testament itself." In view of this, how should we go about discerning the theology of the Bible? Again, Schlatter's comments are helpful: "We turn away decisively from ourselves and our time to what was found in the men through whom the church came into being. Our main interest should be the thought as it was conceived by *them* and the truth that was valid for *them*. We want to see and obtain a thorough grasp of what happened historically and existed in another time." Schlatter calls this "the historical task," which is followed by "the doctrinal task" of systematizing the Bible's teachings on a given subject.

Some have conceived of the relationship between Biblical and Systematic Theology in terms of parent and child, with Biblical Theology being the parent and Systematic Theology being the child. I like to think of the relationship more as a genuine partnership between 2 related, adjacent disciplines. The image of a relay race comes to mind where one runner, Biblical Theology, hands off the baton to the next runner, Systematic Theology. The 2 disciplines run the race together, and win or lose together, but Biblical Theology is the first runner and Systematic Theology the second one. Or, actually, since Biblical Theology is properly based on introductory matters such as authorship, date, provenance, audience, occasion, and purpose for writing, as well as on the exegesis of specific texts, if you have a 4-person relay team, introductory matters would run first, followed by exegesis, then Biblical Theology, and last Systematic Theology! Hopefully introductory matters would get you off to a great start, exegesis would build a solid lead, Biblical Theology would even extend the lead, and Systematic Theology would get you home across the finish line! I don't know about you, but I'd love to be part of that kind of theological relay team!

So, then, when it comes to the handoff, do Biblical Theology first and Systematic Theology second. Incidentally, this is exactly what Schlatter himself did: He first wrote a 2-volume New Testament theology (*The History of the Christ* and *The Theology of the Apostles*) and subsequently a Systematic Theology (*Das christliche Dogma*), not to mention books on ethics, philosophy, and a vast variety of other subjects. Not only is it important to distinguish between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology and to do Biblical Theology first, but as Schlatter reminds us, it is also important not to unduly blur the line between these two disciplines. Otherwise, our view of the Bible's teaching may become distorted and our application imprecise if not invalid. Schlatter writes, "The distinction between these two activities [Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology] thus turns out to be beneficial for both. Distortions in the perception of the subject also harm its appropriation, just as conversely improper procedures in the appropriation of the subject muddy its perception." In other words, before moving to application, we need to engage in Biblical Theology, which Schlatter calls "the historical task."

All this discussion of definitional matters may seem rather pedantic, but I believe that it is exceedingly important that before we engage in the

practice of Biblical Theology, we have a clear understanding of what it is we're doing. Definitions matter. Whether you write a dissertation, or a smaller essay or research paper, or even engage in everyday conversation with your wife or husband or a friend, it's vital that the two of you are on the same page, and part of this is defining your key terms carefully and explicitly.

Alright, then, if you're on board with the basic definition I've set forth—that Biblical Theology is the theology of the Bible and the biblical writers themselves—this raises the obvious set of follow-up questions: How do you know what the theology of the biblical writers is? What is your method? Is ascertaining the theology of the biblical writers even a realistic goal? Those are valid questions. Students of the history of biblical interpretation know that scholars have increasingly come to realize that interpretation has an inescapable subjective component, and this is likely to affect our ability to arrive at a definitive understanding of the theology of a given biblical writer.

A few years ago, one of my students, Ed Herrelko, wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the role of presuppositions in Biblical Theology, a rather neglected topic. Specifically, he compared the Pauline theologies of James Dunn and Tom Schreiner. Both scholars profess to engage in Biblical Theology—they share the same essential definition of the nature and goals of Biblical Theology along the lines I just discussed—and yet, when you look at their respective works, they come to very different conclusions as to what the theology of Paul really was.

What this case study demonstrates, I believe, is that we all come to the practice of Biblical Theology with a set of presuppositions that will impact the outcome of our Biblical Theology work. In the case of Dunn's and Schreiner's Pauline theologies, such presuppositions include their *view of Scripture*, their views on *introductory matters*, and their *use of history*. Schreiner is an inerrantist who believes Paul wrote all 13 letters attributed to him in the New Testament. Dunn does not affirm inerrancy and holds to the Pauline authorship of only 7 of the 13 letters. Obviously, if you write a Pauline theology just based on Romans, Galatians, 1-2 Corinthians, and a few other letters, your Pauline theology will look different than if you base it on all 13 letters. Also, as mentioned, Dunn and Schreiner differ as to the use of first-century Jewish *background* in interpreting Paul's letters. Dunn is one of the major proponents of the "NPP," while Schreiner holds to a Reformed perspective. (We don't have

the opportunity to go into the details of the NPP debate in any great detail here, but in general terms, scholars such as Dunn put a lot more stock in Second Temple literature and proportionately less value on Scripture itself. If you're interested in this subject, you may want to check out the recent critique of Tom Wright by Tom Holland, capably reviewed by my student Mark Baker for *Books at a Glance*. You may also want to consult Tom Wright's history of Pauline scholarship, *Paul and His Recent Interpreters*, though, of course, Wright is not exactly unbiased, as he is one of the major proponents of the New Perspective.)

But back to our main topic: How do we properly engage in Biblical Theology? It's true that anyone aiming to discover the theology of a given writer of Scripture faces the inescapable reality of his own presuppositions. Now I hasten to add that presuppositions—or preunderstanding, as some call it—aren't necessarily a problem. If they are well grounded, which I believe a high view of Scripture and a belief in the Pauline authorship of his 13 New Testament letters certainly are, presuppositions can serve as an invaluable foundation for our Biblical Theology work. What is more, even if none of us is perfect as an interpreter, I would still argue that discovering the theology of the Bible, however provisionally, remains the proper aim of Biblical Theology. Just because we're able to arrive at a reconstruction of Paul's theology only imperfectly doesn't mean we should stop trying. This is where the scholarly community can do its work, so that through mutual dialogue and critique we can approximate an accurate picture of Paul's theology more closely. In fact, I believe aiming to discover the theology of Paul or any other biblical writer follows inexorably from an evangelical hermeneutic that aims to discover the intent of a given biblical author.

In the next lecture, I will give two examples of what such a project in Biblical Theology may look like, one from studying a corpus of Scripture—Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus—and another from studying a major theme in Scripture (the Holy Spirit). In addition, I've done work on a Biblical Theology of manhood and womanhood in my book *God's Design for Man & Woman*, on a Biblical Theology of mission in my book *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, and on Johannine theology. So, for me, this is not merely a theoretical discussion. Rather, I've tried to put Biblical Theology to work “for the church” in several of my writings because I believe Biblical Theology has great promise for preachers and teachers and serious students of God's word. Biblical

Theology matters and is worthy of your and my utmost attention and careful definition and execution.

Biblical Theology & Systematic Theology

Now that I've developed in some detail what Biblical Theology is, let's spend a moment distinguishing it from what it isn't, namely Systematic Theology. This brief reflection on a comparison and contrast between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology will help us sharpen our definition of Biblical Theology even further. We can define "Systematic Theology" as a methodical, thorough study and presentation of the biblical data on a given subject. D. A. Carson (last year's Sizemore lecturer) defines Systematic Theology as "Christian theology whose internal structure is ... organized on atemporal principles of logic, order, and need." Typically, Systematic Theology moves from prolegomena such as protology, cosmology, and bibliology to theology proper (God), Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, angelology/demonology, anthropology, hamartiology, ecclesiology (including missiology), and eschatology.

Yet while Systematic Theology can be very beneficial, there are also certain dangers associated with it. Carson highlights these in a recent editorial in the online journal *Themelios* (42/1 [January 2017]), entitled, "Subtle Ways to Abandon the Authority of Scripture in Our Lives," where he discusses ways in which biblical authority may be sidestepped, if even unconsciously. The fifth point in his list reads as follows:

"Allowing the Categories of Systematic Theology to Domesticate What Scripture Says.

Most emphatically, this point is neither belittling systematic theology nor an attempt to sideline the discipline. When I warn against the danger of systematic theology domesticating what Scripture says, I nevertheless gladly insist that, properly deployed, systematic theology enriches, deepens, and safeguards our exegesis. The old affirmation that theology is the queen of the sciences has much to commend it. The best of systematic theology not only attempts to bring together all of Scripture in faithful ways, but also at its best enjoys a pedagogical function that helps to steer exegesis away from irresponsible options that depend on mere linguistic manipulation, by consciously taking

into account the witness of the entire canon. Such theology-disciplined exegesis is much more likely to learn from the past than exegesis that shucks off everything except the faddish.

So, there are ways in which exegesis shapes systematic theology and ways in which systematic theology shapes exegesis. That is not only as it should be; it is inevitable. Yet the *authority* of Scripture in our lives is properly unique. Systematic theology is corrigible; Scripture is not (although our exegesis of Scripture certainly is).

Failure to think through the implications of this truth makes it easy for us to allow the categories of systematic theology to domesticate what Scripture says. The categories we inherit or develop in our systematic theology may so constrain our thinking about what the Bible says that the Bible's own voice is scarcely heard. Thus diminished, the authority of the Bible is insufficient to reform our systematic theology. ... It is the part of humility and wisdom not to allow our theological categories to domesticate what Scripture says."

That's Don Carson's caveat, and I would certainly agree. We need to be careful to engage in Biblical Theology *first* before moving on to Systematic Theology. In this way, we can guard against the tendency to read our own questions and issues into the text. Now that I've developed what I mean by "Biblical Theology"—what it is and what it isn't—I'd like to discuss two important aspects of Biblical Theology that will lay the groundwork for our case studies in the next lecture.

Biblical Theology & Hermeneutics

The first has to do with *hermeneutics*. Hermeneutics and Biblical Theology are closely related. Defined as the theory of biblical interpretation, hermeneutics is the basic approach we take to study any given passage of the Bible. In my book, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, I propose a threefold approach to interpreting Scripture that involves the study of history, literature, and theology. Each of these three elements corresponds to a reality which we face as biblical interpreters.

First, the Bible was given to us in a historical-cultural framework that we need to consider as we interpret the meaning of a given statement in Scripture.

Second, the Bible comes to us as a text, a body of literature, that requires careful linguistic and literary interpretation.

Third, as the inspired, inerrant Word of God, the Bible is divine revelation and disclosure of who God is and what his will is for our lives. For this reason, then, we should study the Bible historically, literarily, and, above all, theologically.

This threefold hermeneutic, in turn, should be grounded in our quest to ascertain the intent of the original author. In keeping with the inductive nature of biblical interpretation, and Biblical Theology as well, we should always ask first, "What did a given biblical writer intend to convey to his original readers when he wrote a certain passage?"

Only after we've answered this question by engaging in solid historical, literary, and theological study are we ready to move on to ask the second, related question, "Now that I know what Paul *meant*, what does that mean for me and my community *today*?" This is what some call the two horizons of biblical interpretation: the first horizon of the original author's intent, and the second horizon of our own contemporary world with our quest for relevance and application or appropriation.

I know that some skeptics object that these two horizons can never be bridged successfully because we no longer have access to the original author's intended meaning. My simple response is that we should usually expect to be able to infer with reasonable confidence what Paul, or John, or another author of Scripture, meant by what he said in a certain text. Of course, there are a few difficult passages where even godly interpreters differ, but by and large Scripture is clear and accessible to interpretation by those who come to the task with a spiritual disposition, a proper method of study, and the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

What Method?

Alright, then, so we've defined Biblical Theology as essentially the theology of the Bible that we need to discern, and we've proposed a triadic hermeneutic aiming to discern the authorial intent by studying the historical, literary, and theological dimensions of Scripture. That said, what method should we use when engaging in Biblical Theology?

My mentor Don Carson once remarked, “Everyone does what is right in his or her own eyes, and calls it Biblical Theology.” So, giving proper attention to method is very important. I’d suggest that such a method needs to include the following three essential ingredients. First, such a method should be *historical*. That is, unlike Systematic Theology, which tends to be abstract and topical in nature, Biblical Theology aims to understand a given passage of Scripture in its original historical setting. For example, when interpreting the well-known passage, “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the LORD, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jer 29:11), we should ask who the original recipients of this promise were and at what stage of Israel’s history this prophecy was uttered. Or when studying the Biblical Theology of tithing, for example, we need to interpret references to tithing in Malachi or Matthew regarding the specific salvation-historical situation at which a given passage in Scripture is found.

Second, Biblical Theology will seek to study Scripture *inductively, on its own terms*, in a way that pays special attention, not merely to the concepts addressed in Scripture but to the very words, vocabulary, and terminology used by the biblical writers themselves. Rather than investigating “sanctification” as a broader topic, for example, the biblical theologian will study the individual words that are used in the Bible to express what may be called the subject of Christian growth, words such as “set apart” (*hagiazō*) or “grow” (*auxanō*). This is the purpose of Biblical Theology: to understand the theology of the Bible on its own terms before systematizing its teachings on various subjects and making application. (By the way, a helpful book on the Biblical Theology of sanctification is David Peterson’s, *Possessed by God*.)

Third, Biblical Theology is primarily *descriptive*. That is, our primary goal in Biblical Theology is to listen to Scripture and to accurately describe the convictions and beliefs of the biblical writers themselves. While we should be actively engaged as good listeners of Scripture, we are focused on understanding and adequately representing the convictions of the authors of Scripture. Once we’ve done so, we are ready to ask questions of contemporary relevance and application.

Only One Way?

Before I wrap things up in this lecture, I’d like to discuss one more important question related to method in Biblical Theology. That is, is

there only *one* right way to do Biblical Theology, or is there a range of options? In a recent article in the online journal *Themelios* published by the Gospel Coalition, I've surveyed a wide variety of publications on Biblical Theology and proposed a simple taxonomy. I've suggested that there are essentially four major ways of engaging in Biblical Theology: (1) a study of major themes in Scripture book by book (what I call the "classical" approach); (2) a study of central themes throughout Scripture; (3) identifying a single center of Scripture; and (4) metanarrative approaches focused on discerning the Bible's major storyline.

Let's take a few moments and look at each of these approaches in turn.

First, people have studied the theology of a given *book* or *corpus* of Scripture. In the next lecture, I will give the specific example of the LTT. Focusing initially on the study of the theology of a given writer of Scripture one book or corpus at a time has the virtue of respecting the integrity of the book as a holistic discourse unit. Even when we study Paul's theology, for example, we'll likely find that he emphasized different attributes of God or aspects of the Christian life in his various writings, in part depending on the needs of the congregation to which he wrote. I think you can see how looking at each of Paul's letters one at a time will be essential and highly beneficial if we want to understand his thought as precisely as possible. Then, of course, we may try to provide a synthesis of Paul's thought more generally, but not until we've studied his message in each of his writings individually first. I call this the "classic approach" (picking up on a comment made by Greg Beale in his *New Testament Biblical Theology*), because this is the way people have traditionally conceived of and practically carried out biblical-theological study, and I certainly think this is how we should continue to conceive of Biblical Theology as far as its essence is concerned.

Second, some, such as Scott Hafemann and Paul House, have used a *central themes* approach. Rather than looking at the theology of individual books of Scripture, such scholars have tried to discern major themes throughout Scripture—such as God, Messiah, salvation, and so forth—and attempted to trace the way in which these themes integrate progressive biblical revelation. This, of course, can be a very valuable enterprise, as it showcases the unity and coherence of Scripture. At the same time, I would still argue that it would be best to start with a study of the theology of individual books of the Bible before moving on to

connecting the dots in form of central themes. In this way, we won't lose sight of the distinctive teaching of each individual book of Scripture.

Third, like the elusive quest for the Holy Grail, some biblical theologians have sought to identify the *center* of Scripture. Somewhat ironically, those who've tried to do so have come up with different results, which makes you wonder whether there is such a single center. It's easy to see that in a Bible made up of 66 books written over more than 2,000 years there will be a certain amount of diversity. Not every book of Scripture focuses on the same thing. Therefore, it would seem best to view Scripture as a unity in diversity where different writers—such as the four evangelists—each emphasize certain things depending on their personal vantage point and purpose for writing to a given audience. For my part, I believe that, rather than speaking of a single center, it may be better to speak of several integrative motifs in Scripture. In fact, I've written an essay for a volume edited by Scott Hafemann where I've argued for three major interrelated New Testament motifs, God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the gospel. Thus, most scholars in the field have rightly abandoned the quest for a single center; the only exception in recent decades is James Hamilton's, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*.

Let me elaborate on the limitations of a single-center Biblical Theology a little more. Quite clearly, there are multiple themes in Scripture. For example, there is the *creation/new creation* theme. The opening of Genesis is matched by the ending of Revelation. Paul writes that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, and neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters: what matters is a new creation. Also, Christ is the second or last Adam, the image of the invisible God. John says that in the beginning was the Word, but now the Word has come and lived among us, and died for us, and then Jesus breathes on his new messianic community and commissions his followers to fulfill their mission. So you can see that creation and new creation is certainly a vital Biblical Theology motif.

But creation theology is not the only significant, pervasive theme in Scripture. Another such theme is that of *covenant*. People differ as to whether you can speak of an Adamic covenant, but there is clearly a Noahic covenant, and then an Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenant. Finally, in keeping with the prediction of Jeremiah and other prophets, Jesus instituted a new covenant. Revelation shows how in the eternal

state, the covenant God dwells amid his people. In a recent book, Peter Gentry and Steven Wellum have argued that God's program can be encapsulated by the phrase "Kingdom through Covenant." So, at the very least, both creation/new creation and covenant are vital themes in Scripture.

Fourth, perhaps the most recent attempt in Biblical Theology is utilizing a *metanarrative* or story approach. That is, people look at the story of the Bible, the overall *storyline*, to describe its theology. In many ways, this is commendable and complements, even improves, upon previous efforts. It's possible to study the theology of the Bible book by book and then to come up with a composite picture and not to get the big picture totally right. Even when you trace the central themes of Scripture, it's possible to look at them individually, or even jointly, and not quite arrive at a full grasp of the metanarrative, the grand narrative, of Scripture. In this way, a metanarrative or story approach to Biblical Theology is an improvement.

On the other hand, it's easy to see that if looking at the big picture, the storyline of Scripture, is all we do, there are multiple ways to connect the dots. It's also possible, if not likely, that by looking at the grand narrative you'll overlook some of the plot twists and minor themes and characters in the biblical storyline. For example, you could construe the biblical metanarrative just from a few select books such as the book of Genesis, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, the Gospels, Romans, and the book of Revelation, and ignore the rest, such as the minor prophets or the lesser-known writers of New Testament epistles such as James or Jude. And what about wisdom books such as Job, Ecclesiastes, or the Song of Solomon? If you're not careful, you'll end up with what scholars call "a canon within a canon," that is, your favorite collection of biblical books—or the books that fit your construal of the biblical storyline—while neglecting or even subconsciously avoiding lesser voices or ones that are perhaps inconvenient.

That's why I recommend a metanarrative approach as the last step in a biblical-theological method but not as a substitute for a classic, book-by-book approach. In this way, if you start with a given book or corpus of Scripture (book by book), then try to identify major or central themes (central themes), and finally try to understand how these all fit together in the storyline of Scripture (metanarrative), I believe you've got the best of all worlds. You'll be well on your way to discern what is the theology of

the biblical writers themselves (as Schlatter rightly defined the aim of Biblical Theology), not just the story you've composed based on what you see to be the highlights in the biblical narrative.

Conclusion

Does all of this make sense? I certainly hope it does. In my *Themelios* article, I conclude with two important observations regarding engaging in Biblical Theology. First, we must be clear and define what we mean by Biblical Theology. Traditionally, Biblical Theology has been defined as an inductive, historical, and descriptive enterprise, to be followed by Systematic Theology. I would argue that this is the established definition, and we should stick to it. Second, we should continue to distinguish between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology. Not that one is superior to the other; both have their place. But the two disciplines are different, and we shouldn't confuse or intermingle them, or collapse the distinction. The reason why I'm saying this is because increasingly what I've seen is people claiming to do Biblical Theology while in fact imposing a systematic grid onto the Bible. Careful! Not everything that is sold under the rubric of Biblical Theology is in fact Biblical Theology, judged by the standard definition and cautions I've just discussed.

So, then, what I've done in this first lecture is define what Biblical Theology is (and what it isn't), have proposed a basic hermeneutic and method, and talked about four major approaches to Biblical Theology: book by book, central themes, single center, and metanarrative. In my second lecture, I'll try to flesh all of that out by giving several concrete examples of how Biblical Theology is done.

The Sizemore Lectures
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018:
The Promise and Practice of Biblical Theology

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**The Practice of Biblical Theology: How is Biblical Theology
Done?**

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In the previous lecture, I defined what Biblical Theology is and what it isn't; I've also discussed hermeneutics and method in Biblical Theology and surveyed four ways of engaging in Biblical Theology: book by book, studying the Bible's central themes, seeking to identify a single center, and tracing the Bible's metanarrative. Here let's move from theory to practice. Let's look at a couple specific examples of how to study the theology of a corpus of Scripture and how to study a given theme throughout Scripture. You know, when I'm working on a project where I survey the Biblical Theology of a given book or corpus of Scripture such as John's Gospel or the Letters to Timothy and Titus, or when I trace a theme throughout Scripture such as God's design for man and woman, or the mission motif, or the Bible's teaching on the Holy Spirit, once I have a solid method, all I need to do is execute. So, by defining our terms carefully in the previous lecture and honing our method was more than half of the battle. Here will be the fun part: exploring how Biblical Theology works in practice.

How, then, should we engage in biblical-theological study? Let me propose four general guidelines:

- (1) Read through the book multiple times and take notes or mark up your Bible as you try to identify significant themes and emphases.

- (2) In so doing, identify key passages where the Biblical Theology of a given book or corpus is most prominently enunciated, such as a preface, prologue, or introduction, summary and purpose statements, or conclusion.
- (3) Identify prominent themes and distinctive theological emphases: in so doing, consider also important literary features such as strategic placement, repetition, structure, and/or emphases.
- (4) Develop a hierarchy of themes: determine which of the prominent themes you identified in the previous step are major overarching themes and which are subthemes.

In view of these general guidelines, then, let's now look at our first case study, Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus or, as they are commonly known, the "Pastoral Epistles." (A brief side note here: in my recent commentary, I make the point that I don't find the designation "PE" particularly helpful. First, I don't believe Timothy and Titus were actual pastors. Rather, I believe they were apostolic delegates who were temporarily assigned to a given local church to help straighten out certain problems or to assist the church in appointing proper leadership. So, technically, they were not part of the local leadership structure as pastors or elders are but came alongside those leaders for a time to assist them in establishing the church or in dealing with a crisis such as the presence of false teachers, perhaps even among the elders. Second, today the label "PE" often plays into the hands of those who set off 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus from Paul's other letters into a separate category, making it easier to argue that those letters are late and pseudonymous. As conservative evangelicals, we certainly don't want to do anything that aids and abets in this process, as we believe that Paul is explicitly identified in each of these letters as the author and to deny this authorship attribution stands in conflict with a high view of Scripture. For these and other reasons I'll refer to 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus simply as "the letters to Timothy and Titus" or, for short, as the "LTT.")

Case Study #1: The Theology of the Letters to Timothy and Titus

Let's turn, then, to our first case study, the theology of the LTT. As mentioned, our biblical-theological approach calls us to be inductive, historical, and descriptive. The question, therefore, is not: How would

you or I outline these books or come up with theological categories, but how did *Paul himself*, judging by the texts we have, articulate his theological thinking in these letters? Remember: Biblical Theology is the theology of the Bible and of the biblical writers themselves, not our own theology read into the biblical writings.

Regarding the historical context, we see that these letters were most likely written by Paul as the final letters he wrote, toward the end of his life. That's clear especially in 2 Timothy where Paul is in a severe imprisonment that would soon thereafter lead to his martyrdom. Moreover, as mentioned, many scholars argue that these letters were written by someone other than Paul after his death, primarily because they exhibit some significant differences when compared to his earlier letters.

Why do many believe the LTT are pseudonymous? There are several reasons for this. First, the author of the LTT, when speaking of the church, does not use Paul's favorite metaphor of the body of Christ but instead speaks of the church as God's household. That seems to be a significant shift. Also, the author uses a different term for Christ's second coming (*epiphaneia* rather than *parousia*) and calls Timothy to emulate a series of Christian virtues rather than speaking of the fruit of the Spirit or of other Christian graces as in his earlier letters. Many also note the pronounced interest in church structure and leadership, which, they say, reflects an "early Catholicism" as we see in the writings of the 2nd-century Church Fathers. In my commentary as well as later in this lecture, I cite several additional reasons as well.

While none of these differences justifies the conclusion that Paul cannot be the author of the LTT, I believe that we do need to recognize that these letters are distinct and unique within Paul's corpus. As mentioned, I don't have much sympathy for those who argue for pseudonymity as I believe a high view of Scripture demands Pauline authorship and the evidence strongly supports it. That said, I don't see a problem with acknowledging that the LTT exhibit a rather distinctive set of biblical-theological themes.

For example, the author commonly uses the phrase "God our Savior" or "Christ our Savior." Paul never uses that phrase in his earlier letters. So, that's an undeniable difference. Or take the five "trustworthy sayings," for example, which, likewise, are found only in the LTT. The question, then, becomes: How do we explain these differences? One way

is to say that these letters were written by someone other than Paul. Or, one might argue that the author is the same—Paul—but he expressed himself differently. Why would he do that? Well, one possibility would be that in the respective locales to which he wrote people used different concepts and categories. We have plenty of archaeological evidence from Crete, for example, to suggest that people there worshiped other deities than Yahweh or Christ as Savior. So, it is certainly possible, if not likely, that Paul, by using the phrases “God our Savior” or “Christ our Savior,” makes the emphatic point that God, and Christ, are Savior, and those other deities the Cretans were worshipping were not.

Keeping these preliminary considerations in mind, let’s now move on to sketching the Biblical Theology of the LTT. Again, what follows is only a brief digest of what takes up about 150 pages in my recent commentary on 1-2 Timothy and Titus in the Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation series published by B&H, so if what I’m going to say in the next few minutes whets your appetite for more, by all means get my commentary and read the whole treatment of the Biblical Theology of the LTT there.

The first thing to do then is read through the book multiple times and take notes or mark up your Bible as you try to identify significant themes and emphases. As I read these letters multiple times, I was struck by how firmly they are rooted in *mission*, or more specifically, in the apostolic mission of Paul and his associates. You really can’t separate the LTT from the book of Acts and the other Pauline letters. So, I’ve arrived at the settled conviction that the first major theme in the LTT—the foundational theme—is that of mission. Some of you may be underwhelmed by this conclusion and say, “Well, that’s kind of obvious.” Well, I’m glad if that’s the case for you, and I certainly agree, but when you peruse the majority of commentaries and monographs on the LTT, what you’ll find is that mission is hardly ever even mentioned, which kind of makes sense when you consider that the vast majority of scholars today hold to non-Pauline authorship and some of them may not even be true believers, so don’t have much of an interest in mission.

Second, a careful study of the LTT reveals that closely related to mission is the theme of *teaching*, the kind that flows from Paul’s apostolic preaching (the *kerygma*) and is passed on to his apostolic delegates as they guard it over against the false teachers. Regarding specific words or phrases conveying the “teaching” theme in the LTT

there is considerable variety. The vocabulary includes “the deposit,” “the faith,” “the word of God” or “the word of truth,” “Scripture,” “teaching” or the verb “to teach,” both positively and negatively (*heterodidaskalein*), and 5 “trustworthy sayings,” a distinctive feature of the LTT, as mentioned. The wide range of vocabulary and the prominence of the teaching motif in the LTT underscores that Paul placed immense value on right doctrine, or as he regularly calls it, “sound or wholesome teaching.” The reason for this is that he firmly believes that right teaching is healthful and life-giving while false teaching saps the life out of individual believers and of the church. So, mission and teaching are integrally related in the LTT and occupy pride of place in these letters.

Third, when it comes to repeated and prominent references, the “salvation” word group in the LTT is rather conspicuous, both the noun (*sōtēria*) and the verb (*sōzō*) and other related terms. I’ve already mentioned that God and Christ are referred to in the LTT primarily as “God our Savior” or “Christ our Savior,” so much so that some commentators have suggested that the LTT’s Christology is essentially equivalent to their soteriology. While this is probably an exaggeration, the observation is doubtless valid that Christ is featured in the LTT primarily in his role as divine Savior. Salvation, in turn, like teaching, is integrally related to mission, so it makes sense that all three—mission, teaching, and salvation—are prominent themes in the LTT. Salvation being a prominent theme also makes sense in that all people are sinners and need salvation, a foundational reality in and incentive for mission.

What is more, in conjunction with salvation, as mentioned, there are several references to *God* and *Christ*, which is why in my commentary I treat salvation, God, and Christ together under one and the same heading. Based on my study of the LTT, I would argue that salvation is in fact the main theme and God and Christ (as well as the Holy Spirit) subthemes in that God and Christ are the source and providers of salvation. This is an example, by the way, of how Biblical Theology can helpfully supplement, or even correct, ST in that we see here that from the vantage point of the writer of the LTT, salvation is the primary motif and God and Christ assume their significance in conjunction with salvation rather than as separate themes in and of themselves. In other words, Paul doesn’t frequently urge Timothy or Titus, or their churches, to contemplate God or Christ in their own right and with regard to their various attributes (though there are places where he erupts in a

doxology). Rather, Paul typically focuses on mission, teaching, and salvation, and *in that context* makes clear that the salvation he teaches and preaches about in his missionary practice has God as its source and Christ as its provider. Regarding the Holy Spirit, finally, it is apparent that he is less prominent than either God or Christ. In fact, the LTT feature only a small handful of references to the Holy Spirit, primarily in conjunction with Timothy's appointment to ministry, though there is one remarkable passage on the Spirit in Titus chapter 3.

Fourth, rather than speaking of the church as the body of Christ as he does in several of his earlier letters, Paul in the LTT sets forth the metaphor of the church as *God's household*. The main passage in this regard is 1 Timothy 3:14–15, where Paul writes, "I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the *household of God*, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth." Beyond *explicit* references to the church as God's household, the concept is *implicit* in substantial portions of the LTT, especially 1 Timothy and Titus. For this reason, many consider both letters in their entirety (or at least sizable portions) to be extended household codes which provide instructions on how God's people are to conduct themselves in the church. A conception of the church as God's household, I believe, also has important implications on how we conceive of the pastoral office. Just as a natural household has various members with a vast range of needs that the head of the household is called to meet, so pastors and elders are to attend to the needs of the various members of the church. They are to love and care for God's people in all their diversity and complexity and neediness.

Fifth, Paul talks in the LTT prominently about the *Christian life*, especially in terms of virtues believers are to pursue. In this regard, his apostolic delegates, Timothy and Titus, are to serve as examples, as those who are frequently charged with emulating Christian virtues such as love, righteousness, faithfulness, godliness, or self-control. This reminds us that the character of church leaders is an indispensable prerequisite for their effectiveness in ministry. We dare not neglect our personal lives for the sake of church ministry. As Paul tells Timothy, "Watch your *life* and doctrine closely" (1 Tim 4:16); and "Let no one despise you on account of your youth, but rather set believers an *example* in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity" (1 Tim 4:12). In addition, Paul talks about the

importance of good works and good citizenship. He also exhorts God's people to witness to the gospel in word and deed and to persist in their faith in the midst of suffering and adversity.

Sixth and finally, Paul speaks in the LTT repeatedly about the *last days*. Some interpreters have argued that the LTT date to a time when the expectation of Christ's return has largely faded into the background and the author is more interested in the church as a permanent institution than in spiritual gifts or eschatological expectations. This, as briefly noted, is called the theory of "early Catholicism," which implies that these letters are late and date to the end of the first or even the beginning of the second century by which time the church had developed a hierarchy of bishops and priests eventually leading to the Roman Catholic Church. I believe this view is demonstrably mistaken as it overlooks the connection with the mission of the early church in the book of Acts where we see that Paul and others appointed church leaders from the very beginning (see, e.g., Acts 14:23), not only in the late first or early second century. Also, the LTT display a very keen interest in the end times, including the workings of Satan, demons, and angels, and the second coming of Christ. In particular, Paul sees the end times as already present in the sense that the devil is actively at work through the false teachers who try to infiltrate and subvert the church and lead it away from the apostolic gospel. And most distinctively, Paul sees the present age of the church as the time between Christ's first and second comings, both of which he describes in similar terms (namely the word *epiphaneia*).

So, this has been a very brief sketch of some of the major contours of Paul's theology in the LTT. In light of this, let's briefly ponder the important question: How is this understanding of the Biblical Theology of the LTT different from a standard Systematic Theology treatment? Let me register a few general observations. (1) Starting with mission is very different, as Systematic Theology treatments never start with mission and some, if not many or even most Systematic Theology s, don't include mission at all. (2) Putting salvation in a preeminent place and subordinating God and Christ to salvation is also different, as Systematic Theology typically treats God and Christ prior to salvation, moving from theology proper to Christology and later to soteriology. (3) The depiction of the church as God's household may in many Systematic Theology s pale in comparison to the more prominent metaphor of the church as

Christ's body. (4) Viewing eschatology and ecclesiology jointly as we have done is also different from Systematic Theology which typically treats ecclesiology and eschatology separately. I could go on, but I think you get the point: Biblical Theology, if done well, can give us an independent set of legs to stand on that allows us to get closer to the Bible and enables us to critique and at times even correct standard Systematic Theology treatments, especially when looking at a given Old Testament or New Testament book or corpus.

I think the foregoing study of the theology of the LTT demonstrates rather clearly that while both Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology have a vital contribution to make, there is a marked difference between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology. Systematic Theology endeavors to bring Scripture closer to *our* day by trying to find answers to questions we have *today*. By contrast, Biblical Theology tries to bring *us* closer to *Scripture* by helping us see what the biblical writers *themselves* believed so we can conform *our* beliefs to *theirs*. In this way, we submit to the *authority* of Scripture and allow *it* to set the agenda for us rather than domesticating Scripture and conforming it to our agenda, ideology, or culture. With that, let's move to our second case study.

Case Study #2: The Holy Spirit

It's important for us to realize that there are several different legitimate ways to engage in Biblical Theology. One is to study all the themes in one book or corpus of Scripture, as we've just done with the LTT. Another legitimate way of engaging in Biblical Theology is to study one major theme throughout all of Scripture. As I mentioned yesterday, there are several examples I could give here such as the mission theme or biblical manhood and womanhood. But today, I'd like us to take a brief look at the Biblical Theology of the Holy Spirit, as a sneak preview of a joint project I'm currently working on with Gregg Allison, to be published as the inaugural volume in a forthcoming 15-volume series published by B&H and edited by David Dockery, Chris Morgan, and Nathan Finn. This project, incidentally, is a good example of what I was talking yesterday regarding the collaboration between Biblical and Systematic Theology. I've run the race first, and hopefully have gotten us off to a good start, by tracing the theme of the Holy Spirit all the way through Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Now Gregg has begun his work in Historical and

Systematic Theology, building on the Biblical Theology work which I have passed on to him.

As we study the Bible's teaching on the Spirit inductively, historically, and descriptively, we start with individual references to the Spirit in the Old Testament and New Testament. There are about 400 references to "spirit," *ruach*, in the Old Testament, but only about 100 relate to the person of the Holy Spirit; the rest refer to the human spirit or breath or to the wind (which at times serves as an emblem for God's judgment). Remarkably, the expression "Holy Spirit" occurs only twice in the Old Testament (Ps 51:11; Isa 63:10-11; and one of these references, Ps 51:11, is disputed); most commonly, the reference is to the "Spirit of Yahweh" or simply "the Spirit."

Similarly, in the New Testament not every reference to *pneuma*, "spirit," refers to the person of the Holy Spirit. Many are references to the human spirit or to the wind (see, e.g., Jesus' wordplay in John 3:6-8, where Jesus uses the word *pneuma* to refer both to the Spirit and to the wind). What is more, sometimes the Holy Spirit is referenced apart from the word *pneuma*. Take, for example, Jesus' reference to "the promise from the Father" in Luke 24:49 or "the gift my Father promised" in Acts 1:4. Theologically, there is a development from the Old Testament, where the Spirit is shown to be active in creation and later is said to come upon leaders or prophets at God-appointed times but does not indwell ordinary believers, to the New Testament, where the Spirit comes to indwell every believer starting at Pentecost.

One fascinating challenge when studying the Holy Spirit throughout Scripture is that there is only a limited amount of material on the Spirit in the Old Testament, which is why I will spend a bit more time on the Old Testament here. To begin with, there are 3 references to the Spirit in Genesis and 7 more in the remainder of the *Pentateuch*. The Spirit is first mentioned in the Bible as hovering over the waters at creation in Gen 1:2; the closest Old Testament parallel speaks of an eagle hovering over her young (Deut 32:11), so the word picture is likely that of the Spirit as a mother bird (see also Isa 31:5). In Gen 6:3, just prior to the universal flood, it is said that God's Spirit won't remain with humanity forever. In Gen 41:38, none other than Pharaoh recognizes the Spirit's presence with Joseph.

In the rest of the *Pentateuch*, the Spirit is depicted as coming on, or being with, several individuals: craftsmen building the sanctuary (Bezalel

and Oholiab; Exod 31:2; 35:34–35), the 70 elders (Num 11:17, 25), Balaam the prophet (Num 24:2), and Joshua, Moses' successor (Num 27:18; Deut 34:9). In the Pentateuch, then, the Spirit is shown in three primary functions: as an agent of creation, as an agent of judgment, and as an agent of empowerment for God's service.

Moving on to the *historical books*, in the days of the judges the Spirit is said to have come onto national deliverers such as Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson (Judg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; etc.). During the early days of the monarchy, the Spirit came first on Saul (1 Sam 10:6) and subsequently on David (1 Sam 16:13). In both time periods (the judges and the monarchy), the Spirit is shown to mediate God's presence and to empower the deliverers and rulers of his people. In addition, the references to the Spirit in Kings, Chronicles, and Nehemiah all involve his activity in conveying Yahweh's words to his people through prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, or Zechariah (1 Kgs 18:12; 2 Kgs 2:16; 2 Chr 24:20). Thus, in the historical books the Spirit's work is essentially twofold: raising up and empowering national deliverers and rulers and empowering God's spokespersons to prophesy.

There are few overt references to the Spirit in the *wisdom literature* (though see, e.g., Ps 33:6; 104:30; 139:7; Job 33:4). Overall, wisdom theology is grounded in creation theology where God's powerful, effective word is shown to be the grounds of everything that exists. Thus, the Spirit takes on foundational importance for how God's creation works and is to be inhabited, utilized, and enjoyed. The Spirit is also shown to teach God's will and to examine a person's inner being (Ps 143:10; Prov 20:27).

The Spirit is mentioned repeatedly in the *prophetic books*, especially Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. In Isaiah, the operation of the Spirit is linked with the coming of the Messiah (Isa 11:1–5; 42:1–4; 61:1–2; cf. Luke 4:18–19). In Isa 11:2, the prophet says that “the *Spirit of the LORD* shall rest upon him [the Messiah], the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.” In Isa 42:1, Isaiah prophesies, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my *Spirit* upon him, he will bring forth justice to the nations.” Finally, in a passage cited by Jesus in his hometown synagogue in Nazareth, Isaiah writes of the Messiah, “The *Spirit of the LORD* God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent

me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn" (Isa 61:1-2). The Spirit is also frequently mentioned in Ezekiel while being virtually absent from Jeremiah. Ezekiel prophesies that God will provide his people with a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek 36:25-27; cf. 39:29) and links the Spirit with restoration from the exile (Ezek 37:12-14). The #1 passage on the Spirit in the Minor Prophets (the Twelve) is Joel 2:28-29, the well-known passage cited by Peter at Pentecost, which speaks of a universal outpouring of God's Spirit on "all flesh" regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social status.

Moving on to the *New Testament*, we see the Spirit actively at work in strategic salvation-historical individuals such as John the Baptist, Mary, Elizabeth, Zechariah, and Simeon (*Luke* 1-2) in anticipation of the coming Messiah, Jesus, through whom God would be present with his people in an unprecedented manner. During his earthly ministry, Jesus is shown to possess the Spirit to an unlimited degree (*John* 3:32), and the Spirit is depicted at Jesus's baptism as descending and resting on him (*Matt* 3:16/*Mark* 1:10/*Luke* 3:22/*John* 1:32-33).

The future would hold the promise of even more significant pneumatological developments. John the Baptist, and later Jesus himself, indicated that the Messiah would baptize not merely with water but with the Holy Spirit (*Matt* 3:11/*Mark* 1:8/*Luke* 3:16/*John* 1:33; *Acts* 1:5). At this future giving of the Spirit (*John* 7:38), both Jesus and his Father would make their home with believers by the Spirit who would be with them forever (*John* 14:16-17, 21; cf. *John* 20:22; *Luke* 24:49).

Jesus' promise is realized following his ascension at Pentecost, when believers are filled with the Holy Spirit (*Acts* 2:4) in fulfillment of the promise of Joel 2 that in the last days God would pour out his Spirit "on all flesh" (*Acts* 2:16-21). Now it was not only the *leaders* of God's people who experienced the presence of the Spirit but *everyone* who called on the name of the Lord. Soon it became clear that the same presence of the Spirit was available to Gentile believers in Jesus as well (*Acts* 10:44-47), in keeping with John the Baptist's prophecy (*Acts* 11:15-17). Throughout the book of Acts, the Spirit is shown to empower and direct the early church's mission to the ends of the earth, so much so that Acts is not so much the Acts of the Apostles as it is the Acts of the Holy Spirit *through* the apostles.

The New Testament *epistles*, especially the writings of *Paul*, reinforce the notion that every believer now enjoys the Spirit's indwelling presence whereby references to the Spirit in Paul's writings are best studied in chronological rather than canonical order (i.e., Galatians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Corinthians, Romans, Prison Epistles, and LTT). Paul writes that believers have "received" the Spirit who has been given to them (Rom 5:5; 8:15). The Spirit is "in" believers (1 Cor 6:19) and has come to "dwell in" them (Rom 8:9, 11; 1 Cor 3:16). They possess the Spirit as "firstfruits" (Rom 8:23) and "guarantee" (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5). In terms of his activity, the Spirit is shown in Paul's letters to mediate God's presence, to impart life, to reveal truth, to foster holiness, to supply power, and to effect unity (see esp. Eph 4:1-5).

Moving on to the *General Epistles*, the Holy Spirit is featured in three warning passages in the letter to the *Hebrews*. The author issues warnings not to disregard the witness borne by God through the Holy Spirit, not to disregard manifestations of the Holy Spirit as the people of Israel did in the wilderness during the exodus, and not to disregard the Son of God and the blood of the covenant, enraging the Spirit of grace (2:4; 6:4; 10:29). The Spirit is also featured as the author of the sacred Old Testament writings who through Scripture still speaks today (3:7; 9:8; 10:15).

Peter, in his first letter, highlights the Spirit's role in sanctification (1:2). He reminds his readers that they are blessed if and when they are persecuted, because the Spirit of God rests on them (4:14). He also underscores the Spirit's role in the ministry of Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles (1 Pet 1:10-12; 2 Pet 1:21) and features the Spirit as an agent of Christ's resurrection. John, in his first letter, speaks of believers having an "anointing from the Holy One," that is, the Holy Spirit (2:20, 27). John also names the Spirit as one of three witnesses to Jesus together with Jesus's baptism and crucifixion (5:6-7) and as the one who bears internal witness to believers (5:10).

In the book of *Revelation*, finally, the Spirit is associated with each of John's four visions (the phrase "in the Spirit" is found at or near the beginning of each of the four visions in Rev 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; and 21:10). The Spirit is also repeatedly featured in Revelation as the "seven spirits of God" (1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6), and the letters to the seven churches in chapters 2-3 contain the consistent refrain, "He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Finally, the Spirit is shown to

be actively involved in the church's witness and mission amidst persecution and at the end of the book of Revelation, the Spirit and the church both longingly plead with Jesus to return soon (22:17).

Summary of the Bible's Teaching on the Holy Spirit

To summarize, from Genesis to Revelation, from creation to new creation, the Spirit of God is an active participant in the story of Scripture. He is life-giving, life-empowering, and life-transforming. While closely aligned with God, the Spirit operates as a distinct person along the salvation-historical continuum. He is at God's side at creation (Proverbs 8; cf. Gen 1:2). He empowers divinely appointed leaders, whether national deliverers, craftsmen constructing the Tabernacle, or royalty such as King David. In keeping with the prophetic vision, the Spirit anoints and rests on the Messiah (Luke 4:18–19; cf. Isa 61:1–2).

In this way, the Spirit is not only integrally involved in God's work throughout salvation history, he increasingly steps into the foreground. While his activity during Jesus's earthly ministry is accomplished in and through the Messiah, particularly in Jesus's healings and other miracles, he bursts onto the scene even more spectacularly on the day of Pentecost, following Jesus's exaltation, again in fulfillment of the prophetic vision as well as of the words of Jesus (Acts 2; cf. Joel 3; Acts 1:5, 8).

The church age may arguably be described as the age of the Holy Spirit, inaugurating the last days. Thus, the Holy Spirit serves as Jesus's successor on the earth, the "other helping Presence" sent jointly by God the Father and God the Son (John 14:26; 15:26), empowering the church's mission and witness and providing the energizing dynamic underlying the proclamation of Jesus's resurrection and triumph over Satan, the demonic forces, sickness, and even death. The book of Revelation, in keeping with Isaiah's portrayal, depicts the Spirit as the seven spirits of God before the throne of God (Rev 3:1; 4:5; 5:6; cf. Isa 11:2–3). In this way, the Spirit is presented as intimately associated with God and his sovereign rule and yet distinct in personhood.

The Bible, in both Testaments, provides a fascinating and intriguing conglomerate of puzzle pieces that make up the mosaic sketching the contours of a biblical theology of the Spirit. D. A. Carson has rightly said that the measure of any biblical-theological proposal is the way in which it deals with the question of the Bible's unity and diversity. Regarding a biblical theology of the Spirit, one detects a measure of both unity and

diversity, continuity and discontinuity. On the one hand, the same Spirit is operative throughout the full orbit and canvass of Scripture. On the other hand, the day of Pentecost marks a watershed with the pouring out of the Spirit on all believers.

The New Testament writers thus provide a multi-faceted portrayal of the roles and ministries of the Spirit. He regenerates, renews, transforms, guides, convicts, teaches, sovereignly distributes spiritual gifts, and fulfills many other functions in the corporate life of the church and in the lives of individual believers. He also sustains an intimate and integral relationship with God the Father and God the Son throughout salvation history past, present, and future.

Conclusion

With this, our journey through Biblical Theology has come to an end. Thanks so much for joining me in this discussion of how to engage in Biblical Theology so as to discern the theology held by the biblical writers themselves. As mentioned, engaging in Biblical Theology requires careful listening to the text and an inductive approach that is primarily historical and descriptive. To flesh this out, we've looked at two primary examples of engaging in Biblical Theology: studying the theology of a distinct group of writings in the Bible, the LTT; and studying a particular theme throughout Scripture, namely that of the Holy Spirit. Hopefully, engaging in Biblical Theology has gotten us into closer touch with what the Bible teaches on these subjects. If we come to the Bible prepared to submit to its authority, even where this is countercultural, we will be challenged to make life changes to align *our* lives with God's *will* for our lives. Rather than imposing our own views, and those of our culture, onto Scripture, we will be changed by the "living and active Word of God." Biblical Theology therefore holds great promise as it enables us to move closer to Scripture and, even more importantly, closer to God.

Some Knowledge of Hebrew Possible to All: The Value of Biblical Hebrew for the Church¹

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William Robertson Nicoll, the famous expositor of the Greek New Testament, wrote to a colleague in 1903, "What good is Hebrew to the majority of our ministers?"² Of course, Nicoll was probably not the first to ask such a question, and as long as seminaries continue to require Biblical Hebrew in their theological curriculum, he will definitely not be the last. Whether first or last, however, Nicoll's question certainly deserves an answer.

Why Study Hebrew?

But how shall we answer Nicoll? Why should ministers study Hebrew? Of what value is biblical Hebrew to the Church? According to W. L. Michel, Christian interpreters who understand the Hebrew Bible as

¹An earlier version of this article was published as "Some Knowledge of Hebrew Possible to All: Old Testament Exposition and Hebraica Veritas," *Faith & Mission* 13 (1995): 98-114. It has been revised and updated here.

²T. H. Darlow, *William Robertson Nicoll* (London, 1925), 362; quoted in Allan M. Harman, "The Place of the Biblical Languages in the Theological Curriculum," *Reformed Theological Review* 50 (1991): 91. The entire quote in context reads: "While I hold strongly that there ought to be a good proportion of ministers with a good theological education, knowing Hebrew and Greek and so forth, I feel it is wasted on many. What good is Hebrew to the majority of our ministers? Even in the Presbyterian Churches they never open a Hebrew Bible from one year's end to the other. I should like to see our students taught to read English, to know what English means, which only a small majority do. I am sure that all the theological training which is of the least use could be put into two years handsomely, given the proper teachers." For a different opinion roughly contemporary to Nicoll, see John Adams, *Sermons in Syntax or Studies in the Hebrew Text* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908): 1-3.

the Old Testament must read it in Hebrew.³ After all, the Old Testament was originally written in this ancient Semitic language,⁴ and anyone who wishes to comprehend its multifaceted treasures must learn “to listen, first of all, to the *Hebrew* text and hear what it has to say in its own context.”⁵

Interpreting the Old Testament for preaching requires an accurate understanding of the text. Before this can be achieved, however, a careful analysis of the text must be done, and since the Reformation, biblical scholars have generally understood this essential task to involve exegesis of the original Hebrew.⁶ Since ministers are called to preach and teach the Old Testament, it follows naturally that they must first learn the language the Rabbis called *לְשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ* (*lʿšōn haqqōdeš*), “the holy tongue.” Thus, for the minister, a knowledge of Hebrew is necessary because it opens up the only truly reliable exegetical window upon the text of the Old Testament.⁷

³ Walter L. Michel, “How Should the Old Testament Be Read?,” *Dialog* 31 (1992): 190.

⁴ Except, of course, for two words in Gen 31:47; and Jer 10:11; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; and Dan 2:4-7:28 which were written in Aramaic, a sister Semitic language.

⁵ Michel, “How Should the Old Testament Be Read?,” 190. Dick France goes so far as to recommend that all Christians should learn Hebrew and Greek: “For the Christian who is concerned to understand his Bible as accurately as he can, and who has at least a reasonable ability for learning languages, there could be few better uses of spare time.” See Dick France, “Word Study,” in *How to Study the Bible*, ed. John B. Job (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1972), 58. See also the case of Heinrich Bitzer in John Piper, “Brothers, Bitzer was a Banker,” in *Brothers, We are Not Professionals* (Nashville: B&H, 2002), 81-88.

⁶ As Bartelt has said, “It is, after all, only logical that those who preach in a church body which so strongly affirms both *sola scriptura* and verbal inspiration should have the ability to look at the very *verba in scriptura*.” Andrew Bartelt, “Hebrew, Greek, and ‘Real-Life Ministry,’” *Concordia Journal* 11 (1985): 122. See also Jason S. DeRouchie, “The Profit of Employing the Biblical Languages: Scriptural and Historical Reflections,” *Themelios* 37.1 (2012): 32-50.

⁷ This statement is not intended to be taken chauvinistically, disregarding the role of the Holy Spirit in the interpretation of the English translations of the Old Testament. Speaking at the inauguration of the London Theological Seminary in

Nevertheless, not all ministers have found this “obvious” answer so compelling in the busy arena of practical ministry. In 1988 several pastors were asked to participate in a discussion group conducted by Bethel Theological Seminary on the use of Greek and Hebrew in the pastoral ministry.⁸ Their conclusions raised once again the specter of Nicoll’s question:

The view was expressed that Greek and Hebrew provide integrity to the study of the Scripture and should be evident. The view was expressed that use of the original languages was much less than the desire to have them included in the curriculum. Others expressed the concern that the amount of seminary time that is devoted to study of Greek and Hebrew is not warranted by the amount of use that it [*sic*] received in sermon preparation. Many times the pastor is too busy to use the original languages effectively. The view was also expressed that the more educated the constituency, the more likely that Greek and Hebrew are important. Several pastors who work in rural settings did not feel that this was as important for them in their work. There was agreement that the languages are not equally important for all pastors in all situations. Several pastors indicated that the Greek

1977, Martin Lloyd-Jones strenuously objected to such a misconception: “So to say that a man cannot preach, and cannot even read his Bible if he does not know Greek and Hebrew, I am afraid, must be categorized as sheer nonsense. This is most serious, for it seems to me to show an ignorance of the spiritual character of the biblical message... The key to an understanding of the Bible is not a knowledge of the original languages. You can have such knowledge and still be ignorant of the message, as so many are and have been, unfortunately. It is the man who has a spiritual understanding who understands the Word of God.” See D. M. Lloyd-Jones, “A Protestant Evangelical College,” *Knowing the Times* (Banner of Truth, 1989), 369-70; quoted in Allan M. Harman, “The Place of the Biblical Languages,” 95. Lloyd-Jones’ point on the spiritual character of the biblical message is well taken. See also Philip H. Eveson, “The Biblical Languages: Their Use and Abuse in the Ministry (Part 1),” *Foundations* 10 (1983): 1-2. Note, however, the discussion below on the *Hebraica Veritas*.

⁸ See Edward A. Buchanan, *Final Report: An In-Depth Study of Pastoral Roles and Functions and Their Relationship to the Development of Curriculum at Bethel Theological Seminary* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Bethel Theological Seminary, 1988).

was more valuable than the Hebrew and that there should be more emphasis upon the use of the English text, since this is the text that is used for teaching and preaching.⁹

What was the value of Hebrew for these Bethel pastors? They found themselves too busy to use it effectively. Some even questioned whether the perceived limited use of the biblical languages in sermon preparation justified the amount of seminary study devoted to them. After all, to spend a year or more studying a language only to use it infrequently, if at all, after graduation appears to be absurd and futile.¹⁰ Consequently, these pastors, like Nicoll, concluded that it would be far better to remove the biblical languages from the theological curriculum altogether, or at least make them optional, and invest this time in the study of the English Bible.¹¹

Pastors, as well as students, need an answer that will justify not only the seminary study of Hebrew, but will also motivate them to maintain and enhance their language skills within the busy context of ministry.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 129-130.

¹⁰ Goodrick estimates that 90% of those who begin the study of Greek and 99% of those who begin Hebrew do not continue with their language studies after seminary training. See Edward W. Goodrick, *Do It Yourself Hebrew and Greek* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1980), 1.

¹¹ For Nicoll's view, see note 1 above. On the debate concerning the place of the biblical languages in the theological curriculum, compare the following: James Barr, "The Position of Hebrew Language in Theological Education," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 15/3 (April 1962): 16-24; E. Earle Ellis, "Language Skills and Christian Ministry," *Reformed Review* 24 (1971): 162-63; Scott J. Hafemann, "Seminary, Subjectivity, and the Centrality of Scripture: Reflections on the Current Crisis in Evangelical Seminary Education," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (1988): 129-43; Allan M. Harman, "The Place of the Biblical Languages in the Theological Curriculum," *Reformed Theological Review* 50 (1991): 91-97; Walter Harrelson, "Biblical Languages in the Theological Curriculum," *Theological Education* 3 (1967): 441-47; and Wayne G. Strickland, "Seminary Education: A Philosophical Paradigm Shift in Process," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 32 (1989): 227-35. For a non-Western perspective see Bernard L. M. Embree, "Report on the Teaching of Greek and Hebrew in the Seminaries of ATSSEA," *South East Asia Journal of Theology* 19 (1978):112-17.

They need an answer that will constantly remind them of the practical value of Hebrew. Accordingly, we must go beyond the obvious in order to answer Nicoll's question.¹² For the obvious answer, while certainly correct, does not really address the practical and personal needs expressed by the pastors in Bethel's survey. George Bernard Shaw once observed, "No question is so difficult to answer as that to which the answer is obvious." Here too, we find ourselves in the same circumstance.

Theological Motivation

In the middle of my first semester of teaching elementary Hebrew, a student who suffered from poor grades abruptly informed me that he was dropping the class. When I asked him why, he claimed that I did not sufficiently "motivate" him to study Hebrew. His previous teacher, he explained, spent ten to fifteen minutes at the beginning of each class giving a "devotional" highlighting some aspect of the Hebrew Bible. But since I did not open my class in the exact same way, however, I did not effectively inspire him to open his Hebrew textbook often enough.

Now despite the natural inclination to place the blame on the student's lack of study, I had to admit that he had a point. The best teachers motivate their students to love and be enthusiastic for the subject taught. Acquiring and maintaining effective Hebrew language skills requires adequate motivation. According to Jacques B. Doukhan and Bruce K. Waltke, this motivation must be theological in nature.¹³ In a paper presented to a gathering of the National Association of Hebrew Professors, Waltke gave a personal example of theological motivation:

¹² Unfortunately, as Baker astutely opined, "Learning Hebrew for learning's sake is not an acceptable option to most of today's students." See David W. Baker, "Studying the Original Texts: Effective Learning and Teaching of Biblical Hebrew," in *Make the Old Testament Live: From Curriculum to Classroom*, ed. R. S Hess and G. J. Wenham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 162.

¹³ See Jacques B. Doukhan, *Hebrew for Theologians: A Textbook for the Study of Biblical Hebrew in Relation to Hebrew Thinking* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993) and Bruce K. Waltke, "How I Changed My Mind About Teaching Hebrew (or Retained It)," *Crux* 29 (1993): 10-15. Eveson addresses motivation to study the biblical languages from four angles: theological, historical, biographical, and practical. See Philip H. Eveson, "The Biblical Languages: Their Use and Abuse in the Ministry (Part 2)," *Foundations* 11 (1983): 27-37.

I became motivated to comprehend the biblical languages when I realized that most of my knowledge of God was derived from Holy Scripture, and the accuracy of that knowledge was contingent upon the correctness with which I handled its languages. God incarnated himself in those languages, not only in the body of Jesus Christ to whom they point.¹⁴

For Waltke, the authenticity of the knowledge that God revealed himself through the Scripture “rested on a precise understanding of the biblical languages.” Consequently, the desire for sound theology provides a critical incentive to study the biblical languages:

True theology and precise exegesis are, to use modern jargon, systemically dependent upon one another. Without a right relationship to the Spirit who inspired Scriptures, good exegesis is impossible, and without grammatico-historical exegesis, good theology is impossible... Once students grasp how essential precise exegesis is to sound theology, they tune in. In fact, many informed students begin their study of Hebrew highly motivated for theological reasons.¹⁵

Many students do begin their study of the language highly motivated. But unfortunately, somewhere between the first and last class, a large number of students seem to abandon all hope of using their newly acquired Hebrew language skills to expound the Old Testament.¹⁶ What happened to the motivation? Jacques B. Doukhan argues that the real culprit is the traditional deductive method of teaching Hebrew.

¹⁴ Waltke, 10.

¹⁵ Ibid., 11-12. See also Bitzer’s admonition: “The more a theologian detaches himself from the basic Hebrew and Greek text of Holy Scripture, the more he detaches himself from the source of real theology! And real theology is the foundation of a fruitful and blessed ministry.” Heinrich Bitzer, ed., *Light on the Path: Daily Scripture Readings in Hebrew and Greek* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 10.

¹⁶ Don Parker, *Using Biblical Hebrew in Ministry: A Practical Guide for Pastors, Seminarians, and Bible Students* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995), 9.

According to him, this dry, boring, and time-consuming approach has killed the Hebrew language a second time:¹⁷

Rules which have been taught apart from the biblical text and apart from a reference to the religious dimension, hence apart from what essentially motivates the student of biblical Hebrew, will hardly be grasped and memorized. Not to mention the fact that this artificial and abstract systematization of the language does not do justice to the complex life of the language or to the biblical text. The student may succeed, but in many cases he will not be able to cope with the reality of the text and apply the rules he has learned.¹⁸

The traditional approach emphasizes the memorization of vocabulary lists, complicated rules, and verbal paradigms.¹⁹ “Relying on delayed

¹⁷ Doukhan, xxiv.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, xxiv-xxv.

¹⁹ Doukhan and Waltke both believe that a combined deductive and inductive approach should be used. See Doukhan, xxiv-xxv, and Waltke, 12-13. Others have proposed that the traditional approach should be revitalized with insights culled from modern applied linguistics. For biblical languages in general, see Gary G. Cohen and C. Norman Sellers, “The Case for Modern Pronunciation of Biblical Languages,” *Grace Theological Journal* 5 (1984): 197-203; Richard J. Erickson, “Linguistics and Biblical Language: A Wide-Open Field,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 26 (1983): 257-63; Eugene V. N. Goetchius, “New Developments in Language Teaching,” *Theological Education* 3 (1967): 466-81; and William S. LaSor, “Learning Biblical Languages,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 13, no. 6 (1987): 50-55. On Hebrew, specifically, see also J. H. Eaton, “The Teaching of Hebrew for Degrees in Theology,” *Theology* 72 (1969): 352-55; David Freedman, “Hebrew for Communication and Hebrew for Specific Purposes: Some Thoughts on Methodology and Materials,” *Hebrew Studies* 23 (1982): 181-186; J.H. Hospers, “Some Observation about the Teaching of Old Testament Hebrew,” in *Symbolae Biblicae et Mesopotamicae Francisco Mario Theodore De Liagre Böhl Dedicatae*, ed. M. A. Beek, et al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 188-98; and *idem*, “The Teaching of Old Testament Hebrew and Applied Linguistics,” in *Travels in the World of the Old Testament: Studies Presented to Professor M. A. Beek on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, ed. M. Heerma van Voss, *Studia Semitica Neerlandica*, 16 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 94-101.

gratification and bordering on overkill, the acquired language skills are easily lost apart from regular use.”²⁰ Without the proper incentives to continue, students and pastors quickly forget the rules and paradigms. A harried pastor is not likely to carry flashcards on hospital visitation in order to memorize vocabulary lists or the paradigms of weak verb forms.²¹ At least, not unless the motivation to do so is extremely high. When Bruce Waltke asked the students majoring in Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary what was wrong with the department, their answer was that “the department taught the nuts and bolts of Hebrew but without an adequate theological dimension.”²²

Now, the value of theological motivation for the study of biblical Hebrew has not gone unnoticed. Utilizing this type of motivation, however, to encourage and promote the practical value of Hebrew in the ministry is a different story. There are, in fact, many reasons that can be

²⁰ Parker, *Using Biblical Hebrew in Ministry*, 9.

²¹ On the fate of using the biblical languages in the real world, Eugene H. Peterson bemoaned: “Post-academic life is demanding and decidedly unsympathetic to anything that doesn’t provide quick and obvious returns. We are handed job descriptions in which our wonderful languages don’t even rate a footnote; we acquire families who plunge us into urgencies in which Hebrew radicals provide no shortcuts; we can’t keep up with all the stuff thrown at us in easy English—who has time for hard Greek? It isn’t long before the languages are, as we say, “lost.” See Eugene H. Peterson, “Foreword,” in David W. Baker, and Elaine A. Heath, *More Light on the Path: Daily Scripture Readings in Hebrew and Greek* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 5. The various problems associated with maintaining language skills in the ministry are discussed in: Andrew H. Bartelt, “Hebrew, Greek, and ‘Real-Life Ministry,’” 121-23; John Bright, “The Academic Teacher and the Practical Needs of the Clergy,” *Theological Education* 1 (1964): 35-52; Paul M. Doriani, “A Pastor’s Advice on Maintaining Original Language Skills,” *Presbyterion* (1993): 103-115; David Ford, “Keeping Up Biblical Languages while in the Ministry,” *Foundations* 14 (1984): 41-44; and D. Johnson, “The Perils of Pastors without the Biblical Languages,” *Presbyterian Journal* (10 September 1986): 23-24. For Hebrew in particular, see Don Parker, *Using Biblical Hebrew in Ministry* and Dennis R. Magary, “Keeping Your Hebrew Healthy,” in Scott M. Gibson, *Preaching the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 29-55.

²² Waltke, 13.

adduced to prove that Hebrew is practical and necessary for the pastor.²³ But, as Johnson has suggested, the fault lies more with the teachers and professors of the biblical languages:

Perhaps they haven't "caught" from us—at least not often enough—the thrill of exploring the Word as God gave it, the joy of discovering the connection between an Old Testament and a New Testament passage, a connection which may be disguised by a dynamic-equivalence translation but stands out clearly in the original languages; or of seeing one line of Hebrew poetry amplify the meaning of another in the Psalms; or of experiencing the crescendo of Paul's thought in an extended Greek sentence that holds beautifully together to display the wonder of God's grace—even though no English translation can do it justice.²⁴

The following discussion, therefore, seeks to focus on just three of the many ways a knowledge of Hebrew practically benefits the church and the local church minister. It is offered with the distinct but humble hope that through it both seminary students and busy pastors will be theologically motivated to formulate a personal and positive answer to Nicoll's question.

The Hebraica Veritas

According to Don Parker, a computer employed in a Russian Bible project several years ago translated the well-known phrase "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" as "the Vodka is strong, but the meat is rotten."²⁵ This example points out in a humorous way the various pitfalls

²³ In addition to the studies cited above in note 20, see also, Lester J. Kuyper, "Endurance or Enjoyment?," *Reformed Review* 16 (1962): 44-46; James Lewis, "On the Value of Hebrew," *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 178 (1953): 11; and Walter L. Michel, "Why Study Hebrew," *Dialog* 18 (1979): 61-62. Compare from a different perspective, Samuel M. Blumenfield, *Why Study Hebrew?* (Chicago: Board of Jewish Education, 1951), 3 and Lewis Glinert, *The Joys of Hebrew* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3-8.

²⁴ Johnson, "The Perils of Pastors without the Biblical Languages," 24.

²⁵ Parker, *Using Biblical Hebrew in Ministry*, 2.

encountered in the process of translation.²⁶ But the truth is, transferring the particular idioms and rich nuances of one language into another is risky business. The Italians had a saying for it, “Traduttore traditore,” or “Translations are treacherous.”

Translations cannot provide the power and intimacy of the original. “Word-plays, sound effects, repetitions, word nuances, sentence emphases, Hebrew idioms and constructions make the text live and breathe.”²⁷ Bialik, the great Hebrew poet, is reported to have said: “Reading the Bible in translation is like kissing your bride through a veil.”²⁸ Or, to pick up on Parker’s more modern analogy, using a translation of the Bible is like watching a color movie on a black and white television set. In either case, something really essential is missing.

Two short examples will suffice to point out some of the limitations of our English language translations. The KJV renders 245 occurrences of the Hebrew word חֶסֶד (*hesed*) with nine or ten different translations. Chief among these are “mercy” (120 times) and “loving-kindness” (30

²⁶ For the special problems associated with the translation of Scripture, see among others, John Beekman and John Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974); Eugene A. Nida, *Toward a Science of Translating* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964); and Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969).

²⁷ Parker, *Using Biblical Hebrew in Ministry*, 3.

²⁸ See Jacob Milgrom, “An Amputated Bible, Peradventure?” *Bible Review* 10:4 (1994):17. A more passionate view is taken by William Chomsky: “Who can render in suitable translation the overtones, the cluster of associations and allusions attached to such expressions as *shema’ yisrael*, *kiddush ha-shem*, *hillul ha-shem*, *mesirut nefesh*, and a host of others? It cannot be done. Yet such expressions symbolize the warp and woof of our historical religious and national experiences. These expressions stir in every conscious Jew feelings and images such as could never be evoked in any other language. In the words of *Shema’ Yisrael*, for example, we hear echoes and reverberations of the agonized cries of our martyrs from the days of Akiba down to the ‘rebels’ of the Warsaw Ghetto. In comparison the English equivalent, ‘Hear, O Israel,’ sounds flat and insipid.” See William Chomsky, *Hebrew: The Eternal Language* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1957), 11.

times).²⁹ The trouble arises when the KJV translates other distinct Hebrew words with “mercy” as well.³⁰ There is no way to tell which Hebrew word is meant without the original text.

Paronomasia, or word-play, is generally impossible to recognize from the English translation.³¹ Recourse to the Hebrew text points out clearly the power behind the use of this unique figure of speech. Isaiah’s audience clearly heard the castigating pun in the “Song of the Vineyard” (Isa 5:7). Isaiah reported that the Lord looked for מִשְׁפָּט (mišpāt) “justice,” but instead found מִשְׁפָּח (mišpāh) “bloodshed”; מִשְׁפָּח (mišpāh) “righteousness,” but instead מִשְׁפָּח (mišpāh) “a cry.”

The grandson of Ben Sirach recognized this peculiar limitation of translation in 132 BC. In the prologue to Ecclesiasticus, he asked his readers to make allowances for any inadequate expressions that he may have used in translating his grandfather’s collection of late wisdom teaching from Hebrew into Greek. In addition, he acknowledged:

For the things said in Hebrew do not have the same power in them when translated into another language. Not only these things, but even the law, the prophets, and the rest of the books, have not a little difference when spoken in their own language.³²

This same issue resurfaced in the work of Jerome (c. AD 342-420), the famous translator of the Latin Vulgate.³³ While in Rome around AD 383,

²⁹ See Stephen J. Andrews, “Loving-Kindness,” in *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Watson E. Mills (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1990), 529.

³⁰ See idem, “Mercy,” in *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Watson E. Mills (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1990), 567-68.

³¹ Kudos to the CSB for trying to capture the wordplay (paronomasia) בִּזְמַן, זְמַן בִּזְמַן, זְמַן בִּזְמַן of Nahum 2:10 in “Desolation, decimation, devastation!” The NRSV does the same, but the other translations miss the boat.

³² My translation.

³³ See Sarah Kamin, “The Theological Significance of the *Hebraica Veritas* in Jerome’s Thought,” in “*Sha’arei Talmon*”: *Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, ed. Michael Fishbane and Emmanuel Tov (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 243-25; J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 153-67; and Stefan Rebenich, “Jerome: The ‘*Vir Trilinguis*’ and the ‘*Hebraica Veritas*,’” *Vigiliae Christianae* 47 (1993): 50-77.

Jerome began a revision of the Latin version, the *Vetus Latina*, on the basis of the Greek Septuagint (LXX) under the patronage of Pope Damasus. The LXX had long been regarded as the only true and legitimate divinely inspired version of the Old Testament. But Jerome soon recognized that since it was based upon the LXX, the old Latin version, the *Vetus Latina*, was twice removed from the original Hebrew text. Little by little, Jerome became convinced of the superiority of the Hebrew text.

Seven years later, in a “corner of his monastery” in Bethlehem, he started on a new Latin translation of the complete Old Testament *iuxta Hebraeos*, i.e., according to the Hebrew. Jerome’s action drew controversy primarily because he insisted on a revolutionary idea for his time: the Old Testament should be translated into the vernacular from the Hebrew. Thus, when a discrepancy was found to exist between the LXX and the old Latin, Jerome appealed to what he called the *Hebraica veritas*, “the Hebrew truth.” For Jerome, the *Hebraica veritas* was to be found in the pure and original Hebrew text of the Old Testament:

In dealing with the New Testament, whenever among the Latin writers a doubt arises and there occurs a discrepancy between individual copies, we have recourse to the original Greek in which the New Testament was written. So, also, in the Old Testament, if there are discrepancies between the Greek and Latin texts, we go back to the Hebrew.³⁴

Thereafter, the *Hebraica veritas* became for Jerome “a norm for quantitative accuracy and a means to the correction of wild, paraphrastic and ignorant translations.”³⁵ For him, in contrast to the LXX, the *Hebraica veritas* was “the original word of God which, he believed, prophesied the coming of Jesus.”³⁶ One might use the LXX in liturgy, “but

³⁴ Epistle 106:2. Cited and translated in Kamin, 243–44.

³⁵ James Barr, “St. Jerome’s Appreciation of Hebrew,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 49 (1967): 289.

³⁶ Kamin, 249. In Epistle 121:2 Jerome noted that a prime example could be found in the LXX treatment of the phrase לְבָנֵי קְרָאִתִּי מִמִּצְרַיִם “From Egypt I called my son” (Hos 11:1). The Greek renders the phrase as ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετεκάλεσσα τα τέκνα αὐτοῦ “Out of Egypt I have called his children.” Jerome commented: “If we do not follow the *Hebraica veritas*, it is clear that this does not pertain to

the *Hebraica veritas* should be studied by scholars for an understanding of the sacred writings.”³⁷ It is no surprise then that Jerome maintained the necessity of being a *vir trilinguis*, a student of the Word, competent in the Latin vernacular, Greek, and Hebrew.³⁸ And, even though Augustine severely criticized Jerome, he also had to admit that a Christian teacher who wishes to understand the sacred Scriptures must know Greek and Hebrew in addition to Latin, the vernacular of the day.³⁹

Perhaps because of the influence of Augustine, the study of the *Hebraica veritas* during the interval between Jerome and the Reformation was somewhat uneven. Nevertheless, there were a number of Christian Hebraists in that period who advocated the study of the original Hebrew text of the Bible.⁴⁰ However, the majority of exegetes were mostly content to rely upon the Greek or the Latin translations of the Old Testament.

The Reformation with its emphasis on *sola Scriptura* rejected the LXX and the Vulgate and inaugurated an intense study of Biblical Hebrew. Unqualified reliance upon an ecclesiastically sanctioned translation was seen as an abdication of the expositor's responsibility to “correctly handle the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15). Only the *Hebraica*

the Lord.” That is, “only according to the Hebrew text does the verse speak of Jesus” (Kamin, 251, n. 27.)

³⁷ Epistle 106. Cited and translated in Kamin, 253

³⁸ Cf. Rebenich, 56.

³⁹ See Philip Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 2:539-40.

⁴⁰ On Christian Hebraism after Jerome, see, for example, Jerome Friedman, *The Most Ancient Testimony* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1983), 12-52; idem, “Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica: Scripture and the Renaissance Myth of the Past,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11, 4 (1980): 67-85; Aryeh Grabois, “The *Hebraica Veritas* and Jewish-Christian Intellectual Relations in the Twelfth Century,” *Speculum* 50 (1975): 613-34; Raphael Loewe, “Hebraists, Christian,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2007), vol. 8: 510-551; and David Rudavsky, “The Study of Hebrew Among Christians,” *Immanuel* 2 (1973): 73-76.

veritas, the “Hebrew truth,” could guarantee orthodoxy in the exposition of the Old Testament.⁴¹

It is academically and theologically bankrupt to teach students that the difficult and time-consuming work of translation has already been accomplished. In fact, the abundance of English translations proves exactly the opposite point. Students must be taught not only the limitations of translations, but also how to look into the riches of God’s Word for themselves. In the face of all these translations (including those that are theologically and ecclesiastically sanctioned, e.g., 1611 KJV), they must be shown how to search for and find the *Hebraica veritas*, the “Hebrew truth.” Certainly, students need to learn the English text. But the church urgently needs those who will commit to be a *vir trilinguis*, competent in Greek, Hebrew, and the vernacular, whether that be English or a tribal language on the foreign mission field. In fact, the church itself, will not be reformed by doctrine or theology without first being reformed by Scripture alone.⁴² For this the study of the biblical languages is essential.

Interpreting the Old Testament for Preaching

A proper and right understanding of the Old Testament cannot be obtained by merely offering a prayer before reading the pertinent passage. Paul reminded Timothy that “rightly dividing the word of truth” required diligent study (2 Tim 2:15).⁴³ Stibbs puts it eloquently:

We cannot be truly sound in the faith unless we let the Scriptures inform all our beliefs; nor can we arrive at orthodox convictions unless we first set ourselves to understand exactly what Scripture does teach. This goal of true understanding is not one easily reached. Its pursuit requires prayerful diligence, painstaking labour, and sustained quest. If I have not as yet grasped the true meaning of the Word of God, I cannot as yet either properly obey it or intelligently proclaim it. If I covet to stand before men, glorying in the Bible as the Book of God-given revelation, and professing to be its expositor, surely I ought first to take care to see that what I am going to say is a faithful and

⁴¹ See Stephen J. Andrews, “Unsung Heroes of the Reformation: Christian Hebraists and *Sola Scriptura*,” forthcoming.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Paul most likely considered “the word of truth” to be the Old Testament.

justifiable interpretation of Scripture and not merely some hanging of my own fancies on a Scripture peg?⁴⁴

Interpreting the Old Testament for preaching is not an easy task. Perhaps for this very reason the church today faces a subtle kind of “implicit Marcionism” in the pulpit.⁴⁵ The difficulty with which most pastors handle the original Hebrew text may actually discourage serious exegetical study of the Old Testament. While it is certainly reasonable to expect many Sunday sermons to be preached from New Testament texts, pastors must make sure that they do not neglect proclaiming the entire counsel of God by excluding sermons from the Old Testament.⁴⁶

So how can the minister be motivated to do the necessary spade work required to wrestle with the text—to know “what God says in that text, not because Commentator X, Y, and Z have told him so, but because he’s seen it there in the Word.”⁴⁷ Perhaps the best way is to understand what practical value the hard work of Hebrew study provides for the interpretation and exposition of the Old Testament. We can say that a knowledge of Hebrew and a careful study of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament provides two benefits.⁴⁸ It makes it possible for the pastor to be an independent interpreter as well as a better expositor of the Word of God.

⁴⁴ Alan M. Stibbs, *Understanding God’s Word* (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1950), 9-10.

⁴⁵ See George L. Klein, ed., *Reclaiming the Prophetic Mantle: Preaching the Old Testament Faithfully* (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 7, 9-10. On the term “implicit Marcionism” see D. L. Baker, *Two Testaments: One Bible* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 84-85. I have also heard the term, “Neo-Marcionism” in less favorable circumstances.

⁴⁶ For two good examples on using Hebrew in preaching, see Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998) and Paul D. Wegner, *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching: A Guide for Students and Pastors* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009).

⁴⁷ Johnson, 24. See also Wegner, 17.

⁴⁸ DeRouchie, “Profit,” offers four reasons to use the biblical languages based on Ezra 7:9c-10.

An Independent Interpreter

I. *A knowledge of Hebrew enables the minister to be an independent interpreter.*

A general principle of scholarly research holds that the study of primary material is a priori better than an examination of secondary literature. Secondary literature is by nature based on the primary text. A knowledge of the primary Hebrew text, however, frees the pastor to function as an independent interpreter. This ability has several practical implications.

A. A knowledge of Hebrew will keep the minister and the church doctrinally sound.

Because we are talking about Holy Scripture, this issue is very serious. First, doctrines of the church must be founded on a careful analysis of the text in the original languages, not on translations or warmed-over theologies from the past. Second, ministers must understand the biblical truth in order to expound the key doctrines to their congregations. A knowledge of the Hebrew text will prevent ministers and churches from accepting doctrines which cannot stand the test of scriptural justification. A knowledge of Hebrew will effectively enable pastors "to respond to the bogus appeals to 'the original' by false teachers."⁴⁹

B. A knowledge of Hebrew acts as a corrective to the speculation of secondary literature.

Because the minister has direct access to the original biblical text, he can check the opinions advocated by various scholars and expositors. This is true not only for critical commentaries, but devotional ones as well. With a knowledge of the primary text, the minister can more readily discern between objective fact and subjective opinion.

C. A knowledge of Hebrew provides the minister with access to the best scholarly and devotional sources.

The best commentaries for the study of the Old Testament assume a knowledge of Hebrew and familiarity with the Hebrew text. A knowledge

⁴⁹ Johnson, 23.

of Hebrew also opens the door for a deeper study of Scripture through the best Hebrew lexicons, grammars, and concordances.⁵⁰

D. A knowledge of Hebrew gives the minister a more confident ability to evaluate the ancient and modern versions and translations of the Bible.

As Johnson has correctly noted, the abundance of English translations of the Bible make a knowledge of the original languages more necessary: “God’s people need the confidence that *their own shepherds*, whom they know and who care for them, can guide them through the labyrinth of modern translations.”⁵¹ The pastor must be able to explain “the reasons for the often sharply differing translations of the same verse as presented by the various new Bible translations such as the Jerusalem Bible, the New English Bible, the New American Bible, the Living Bible, the Today’s English Version, etc.”⁵²

A Better Expositor of the Word of God

II. *A knowledge of Hebrew equips the minister to be a better expositor of the Word of God.*

Saturday night specials cannot provide adequate exposition of Holy Scripture. A knowledge of Hebrew equips the minister with practical expository skills.

A. A knowledge of Hebrew deters the minister from making mistakes in the exposition of the biblical message.

Being able to judge the arguments of others by the primary text of the Old Testament will enable the minister to bypass the faulty interpretations of inadequate sources and base his exposition—both teaching and preaching—on the solid foundation of a faithful and correct interpretation of God’s Word.

⁵⁰ For different lists of helpful Hebrew tools, see, for example, LaSor, 51-52; Michel, “How Should the Old Testament Be Read?,” 193-95; Parker, 40-54, 226-34, and Wegner, 29-66. Wegner is especially helpful in navigating through the computer software available up to 2009.

⁵¹ Johnson, 23.

⁵² Michel, “Why Study Hebrew,” 62.

B. A knowledge of Hebrew provides the minister with a greater understanding of the world-view of the original audience to whom the text was addressed.

The Hebrew Bible was written by individual humans “who belonged to a specific culture and tradition, lived a specific experience, spoke a specific language and therefore had a specific way of thinking.”⁵³ A knowledge of Hebrew opens the door to the world of oriental thought, a world quite different from today.

C. A knowledge of Hebrew enables the minister to be a more profound expositor of the New Testament.

Even though the New Testament is written in Greek, it is full of Hebraisms and Hebrew expressions. The Old Testament offers “background, quotations, allusions, prophecies, types, proper names, loan words, figures of speech, and idioms for the New Testament.”⁵⁴ The New Testament cannot be read apart from the Old Testament. Both constitute the whole counsel of God.

D. A knowledge of Hebrew keeps the expositor's teachings, sermons, and messages fresh and alive.

A knowledge of Hebrew will provide the preacher with a never-ending supply of expository sermon points and illustrations. Concerning the need for freshness in the exposition of the Holy Scriptures, Martin Luther had this to say:

Although faith and the gospel may indeed be proclaimed by simple preachers without a knowledge of languages, such preaching is flat and tame; people finally become weary and bored with it, and it falls to the ground. But where the preacher is versed in the languages, there is a freshness and vigor in his preaching, Scripture is treated in its entirety, and faith finds itself constantly renewed by a continual variety of words and illustrations.⁵⁵

⁵³ Doukhan, 191. For a brief discussion of Hebrew thought, see *Ibid.*, 191-218.

⁵⁴ Parker, 4. See the examples listed in the same place.

⁵⁵ Cited in Michel, “How Should the Old Testament Be Read,” 192. Compare also Bartelt, 121.

Years later, Adams put it another way, “Let the Hebrew student apply himself . . . to the science of Hebrew grammar and to the exposition of Hebrew thought, and he will yet find, alike in the study of the language, and in the treatment of Biblical Theology, that expository preaching, like his native air, has become the joy and strength of his ministry.”⁵⁶

E. A knowledge of Hebrew opens a whole new area for the Holy Spirit to work within the expositor’s heart and life.

The psalmist wrote, *בְּלִבִּי צִפְנֹתֵי אִמְרֹתֶיךָ לְמַעַן לֹא אֶחְטֵא-לְךָ* “In my heart, I have treasured your words—in order that I might not sin against you” (Ps 119:11). What a precious privilege to cherish the text of the original in our hearts. It is difficult, if not impossible, to read God’s great self-revelation to Moses in the Hebrew text of Exodus 34:6-7 without a sense of the awesome glory of His presence. A. T. Robertson, the great Greek grammarian, once said, “I have never looked into the Greek New Testament five minutes without finding something I never saw before.”⁵⁷ He also said, “Grammar is a means of grace.”⁵⁸ Both of these statements are also true for the Hebrew Old Testament.

Some Knowledge of Hebrew Possible to All

A. T. Robertson began the first chapter of his book, *The Minister and the Greek New Testament*, with the challenging sub-heading, “Some Knowledge of Greek Possible to All.”⁵⁹ Conventional wisdom suggests that this might be a reasonable expectation for the study of Greek, but not for Hebrew. Is some knowledge of Hebrew possible to all?

⁵⁶ Adams, *Sermons in Syntax*, 3. Compare also his earlier work, John Adams, *Sermons in Accents, or Studies in the Hebrew Text* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906), iii-iv.

⁵⁷ Everett Gill, *A. T. Robertson: A Biography* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1943), 189.

⁵⁸ A. T. Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament* (New York: George H Doran, Co., 1923), 23.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 15. Robertson maintained that “There is no sphere of knowledge [i.e., the study of the biblical languages] where one is repaid more quickly for all the toil expended” (*Ibid.*).

A basic misconception and prejudice has arisen—a kind of sacred cow—that considers Hebrew to be a much more difficult language to learn than Greek.⁶⁰ But this is simply not true. Michel has enthusiastically stated that anyone can learn Hebrew: “The basics of Hebrew are easily mastered by anyone—even by those who are convinced that they cannot learn a foreign language.”⁶¹

Actually, like learning most languages, Hebrew does require quite a good bit of study time. Still, it is one of the easiest languages to learn. Hebrew contains a simpler grammar than Greek or Latin. There are no declensions, and the basic vocabulary is small (only about 225 words occur more than 200 times in the Hebrew Bible). Even the so-called irregular verbs are regular in their irregularity. The alphabet appears to be a major obstacle in the path of the student. But the Latin alphabet is a descendent of the Semitic by way of Phoenician and Greek. Once the student realizes a *lamed* (ל) became a *lambda* (λ) in Greek and finally an “l” in English the reading of Hebrew can be mastered quite quickly.

But perhaps the biggest deterrent to the study of Hebrew is a misunderstanding of a different sort. There is a misconception about how much Hebrew is needed. The classical theological curriculum has always required formal study of both biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek. But many seminaries have not clearly stated what level of proficiency the student is expected to achieve after a year or more of instruction.

Students who assume that a high level of competency is required before Hebrew can be utilized in ministry are more likely to quit before they ever get started. Likewise, busy pastors may not have the time to retain an idealistic level of language fluency, and because they also assume a higher level is mandatory, they may not attempt to do the exegetical homework necessary to undergird the sound exposition of the Scriptures.

Neither one realizes that there are levels of proficiency in the study of biblical Hebrew. Moving from one level to another takes time and

⁶⁰ Cf. Doukhan, xxi-xxii. For other objections, see Eveson, “Biblical Languages (Part 1), 3-6.

⁶¹ Michel, “How Should the Old Testament Be Read?,” 193

practice.⁶² But it can be done, for it is far better to use Hebrew at any level than to never use it at all. And if the objection is raised that “a little learning is a dangerous thing,” we need only to ask with Huxley, “Where is the man who has so much as to be out of danger?” Acquiring Hebrew skills is a life-long process, a marvelous and blessed journey that begins with a first single step.

Based on levels of proficiency developed by Foreign Service Institute of the United States Department of State and by the Educational Testing Service, a publisher of standardized language tests, David A. Black proposed four reading levels for Greek. These same levels were adapted for biblical Hebrew fluency by Parker and Wegner.⁶³ My own are as follows:

1. Reading Level One.

Readers at this level are just beginning with the alphabet, vowels, and other Hebrew basics such as nouns, particles, and other parts of speech. They may be able to read isolated nouns and verbal forms. Students are able to look up words in English concordances keyed to Hebrew dictionary. Interlinears and Hebrew-quoting commentaries are not so bewildering. Pastors are able to incorporate some Hebrew into their messages at this point. Elementary Hebrew courses are generally designed to reach this level.

⁶² See Ford, 42-43, and Doriani, 109-113, for practical tips for keeping up and developing a knowledge of biblical Hebrew while engaged in a busy ministry.

⁶³ David A. Black, *Using New Testament Greek in Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 27-29. See Parker, 224 and Wegner, 20-22. Wegner's compilation includes computer software up to 2009. The value of computer programs in helping students to obtain proficiency in reading Hebrew is not as clear. Wegner allows for the introduction of such resources at level one. A problem arises in the tendency to rely on the computer parsing before laying a solid basic foundation in the grammatical and syntactical principles of Hebrew study. The ultimate goal would be to employ the software programs to support the learning development of the student and not to supplant or replace it. Use of the computer programs is a great boon for the active pastor, but they will prove to be of the most help if a solid foundation is set first.

2. Reading Level Two.

Students at this level have an introductory knowledge of general Hebrew grammatical concepts and a knowledge of the most common vocabulary. Students rely mainly upon set procedures for finding Hebrew roots, and extensive use of the lexicon is a mainstay of this stage. Paradigms and analytical lexicons are consulted frequently for anything beyond the strong verb forms. Reading out loud is slow and tortuous. Translation proceeds at a snail's pace, although the student at this level is easily capable of critically interacting with Hebrew-based commentaries and tools. Uncomplicated texts with basic sentence patterns and common words are read without much difficulty. Seminaries hope that students will reach this level of proficiency before graduation.

3. Reading Level Three.

At level three, students possess a working proficiency of basic Hebrew grammatical principles and a vocabulary of words occurring 200 times or more in the biblical text. Readers are beginning to recognize forms and roots without extensive recourse to analytical lexicons or paradigms. Reading is often with expression and comprehension. Basic narrative texts are read without difficulty. Handling poetic and prophetic texts is slower.

4. Reading Level Four.

Level four represents an advanced proficiency requiring an extensive vocabulary and a detailed knowledge of Hebrew morphology and syntax, including historical grammar and comparative Semitic linguistics. Lexicons, concordances, and reference grammars are routinely employed to understand the most challenging of passages. Most narrative and poetic texts are read with a minimum aid of a dictionary. The development of solid Hebrew vocabulary skills is critical for this stage.

The End of the Matter

So back to Nicoll's question, "What good is Hebrew to the majority of our ministers?" How should we answer him? Hebrew will be as good to our ministers as they make it. They can forget it, ignore it, and even disparage its study. But if they do, they are the losers for it. A knowledge of Hebrew can literally transform a ministry, whether that ministry be

preaching, counseling, Christian education, or otherwise. Indeed, Hebrew and Greek provide a sure foundation for all practical ministry skills. W. L. Michel summed it up quite nicely:

Theological education is like a house and the knowledge of the biblical languages is like the foundation of that house. A house built on sand cannot stand (cf. Matt 7:26-27). How foolish and sinful any program of theological education which jeopardizes all of theological education by not providing a thorough foundation.⁶⁴

Despite the best intentions, however, a great disparity exists between the desire of the seminaries to equip theological students with effective and ongoing original language skills and modern pastors who sincerely plan to use Hebrew and Greek in their own pastoral ministry but find little time to do so. Perhaps, the key to this problem lies in theological motivation. Motivation communicated to the students in class and to the pastor in ministry. "Putting time and effort into language study is like putting money in the bank. As one's capital increases, so does the interest."⁶⁵

Interpreting the Old Testament for preaching can be done effectively with a working knowledge of Hebrew. Students and pastors alike need to be encouraged by the example of professors and denominational leaders to direct their study of the biblical languages toward the goal of practical application in the ministry. They must be encouraged to maintain and even increase their facility in the use of the languages. Hebrew and Greek refresher and exegesis courses should become a staple of continuing education courses for seminary graduates.

Learning Hebrew is like learning to ride a bicycle. First, one rides with the help of training wheels. Then, the training wheels are removed, and the rider launches forth on an unassisted, though precarious trip. As confidence mounts, a whirl around the block poses no problems or fears. Skill in bicycling is maintained to the extent that the rider exercises the ability to ride on a regular basis. But even if the bicycle is old and rusty, it can be dusted off and properly lubricated, and with the missing parts

⁶⁴ Michel, "How Should the Old Testament Be Read?," 193.

⁶⁵ A. Berkeley Mickelson, *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 114.

replaced, taken down the lane for a shaky spin. The moral is, of course, to keep practicing, and this is true also for the biblical languages. Whether a student can ride his Hebrew bicycle with ease and grace, or shaky at best, he still can arrive at his destination, the sure and faithful interpretation of Holy Scripture.

In the end, tragic consequences occur when the original languages fall into disuse in the church.⁶⁶ Without the confidence to interpret properly, pastors won't be able to preach with power and certainty. Expository preaching will fall into disfavor. Doctrine will lapse. Pastors will need to rely on translations, elite professionals, and secondary literature. "Secondhand food will not sustain and deepen our people's faith and holiness."⁶⁷ According to John Piper, pastors need to maintain "the most important pastoral skill—exegesis of the original meaning of Scripture."⁶⁸ What is at stake is the Gospel itself. At least, so argued Martin Luther:

Let us be sure of this: we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit [Eph. 6:17] is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored. . . . If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall . . . lose the gospel.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ For sobering elaboration on this point see Piper, "Bitzer," 82-85.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁶⁹ Cited in DeRouchie, 32. For a slightly different context and translation, see Piper, "Bitzer," 81: "Languages are the scabbard that contain the sword of the Spirit; they are the casket which contains the priceless jewels of antique thought; they are the vessel that holds the wine; and as the gospel says, they are the baskets in which the loaves and fishes are kept to feed the multitude ... As dear as the gospel is to us all, let us hard contend with its language."

Epigenetics and Homosexuality:
A Brief Survey and Analysis

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One of the most fascinating and burgeoning fields of scientific research is epigenetics. *Epigenetics* refers to chemical modifications of the human genome that alter gene activity without changing the DNA sequence. While many are familiar with arguments regarding *genetics* and homosexuality, epigenetics is now a growing focus of research into possible avenues of biological determination regarding sexual identity.

In October, 2015, Tuck Ngun of UCLA's Center for Gender-Based Biology presented a paper at the annual meeting of the American Society of Human Genetics which suggested epigenetics may have a major influence on sexual orientation. Ngun claimed applying certain algorithms to data gathered from a specific sample of identical male twins allowed him to achieve a high degree of predictive accuracy regarding a person's sexual orientation based on DNA methylation patterns. In other words, he claimed to have discovered a fairly accurate method of determining if someone is a homosexual by merely examining the epigenome. Ngun's research is related to previous suggestions by researchers associated with the National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis and led by William Rice of the University of California, Santa Barbara. In 2012, Rice and his colleagues proposed epigenetics may explain the heritability of some forms of homosexuality. These claims are startling and debatable to some while they provide a satisfying explanatory force to others. However, a review of current research into epigenetics demonstrates certain epigenetic tags may possibly be a contributing, but not a causative, factor in the development of a homosexual orientation. To substantiate this claim, I will begin by defining and differentiating between genetics and epigenetics, then the work of Rice, et al and Ngun will be summarized, Finally, I will conclude with a brief critique of claims related to epigenetics and homosexuality and suggestions will be offered concerning how a robust understanding of epigenetics may possibly interact with Christian doctrine and ethics.

I. Genetics and Epigenetics

In order to understand how findings in epigenetics are being leveraged in moral debate, it is important to define and differentiate between genetics and epigenetics. We will begin by summarizing genetics and epigenetics, and then discuss ways epigenetics may possibly influence human health.

Genetics

Genetics is the study of heredity and variation in living organisms, especially the process of parents passing genes to their children. At the center of genetics is DNA, a long molecule stretched in a chain of nucleotides or “base pairs.” Each human has around 6 billion nucleotides in each of the approximately 50 trillion cells in the human body.¹ Four types of bases are found in DNA – Adenine (A), Thymine (T), Cytosine (C) and Guanine (G): Adenine always bonds with Thymine and Cytosine always bonds with Guanine. The base-pairs can be likened to letters, and DNA to a text or code that tells our bodies what to do.² The structure of DNA has been described as a “double helix” or “winding staircase.”

Nessa Carey suggests another way to think of DNA is to compare it to a zipper. While the zipper is not a perfect analogy, it gives us a basic understanding. One thing we all know about a zipper is that it is formed of two small strips of fabric facing each other: Similarly, DNA is composed of two strips facing each other. Likewise a zipper has “teeth” on each strip. The four bases of DNA are analogous to the teeth in a

¹ The estimates for the number of cells in the human body vary. Some of the difficulty relates to measuring by weight (higher number) versus volume (lower number). In 2013, one group of scientists suggested 37.2 trillion cells in the average human. Eva Bianconi, Allison Piovesan, Federica Facchin, Alina Beraudi, Raffaella Casadei, Flavia Frabetti, Lorenza Vitale, Maria Chiara Pelleri, Simone Tassani, Francesco Piva, Soledad Perez-Amodio, Pierluigi Strippoli, & Silvia Canaider, “An Estimation of the Number of Cells in the Human Body,” *Annals of Human Biology* 40.6 (July 2013): 463 – 471. This number was derived by estimating the number of cells in each individual organ or area of the body. DNA is almost unimaginably small and is only 2 nanometers across or 2,000 times thinner than human hair

² Ted Peters, *Playing God? Genetic Determinism and Human Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 3.

zipper. The bases on each side of the DNA “zipper” can link up to each other chemically and hold the zipper together. The two fabric strips of a zipper on which the teeth are attached are equivalent to the DNA backbones. The two sides of the DNA zipper are basically twisted around to form a spiral structure – the famous double-helix. The zipper analogy does have limits because the teeth of a DNA zipper aren’t all equivalent. If one of the teeth is Adenine (A base), it can only link up with Thymine (T base) on the opposite strand. Likewise, if one of the teeth is guanine (G base), it can only link up with Cytosine (C Base). Carey explains, “This is known as the base-pairing principle. If an A tried to link with a C on the opposite strand it would throw the whole shape of the DNA out of kilter, a bit like a faulty tooth on a zipper.”³

DNA sends “messages” via Ribonucleic Acid (RNA). The central dogma of molecular biology explains that DNA is decoded to make RNA, and then RNA is used to make polypeptides that subsequently form proteins.⁴ The flow of genetic information is almost always unidirectional: DNA to RNA to polypeptides to proteins. That is, the sequence of DNA specifies the synthesis and sequence of RNA by a process known as transcription. Messenger RNA in turn specifies the synthesis and sequence of polypeptides, which are the building blocks of proteins by a process known as translation.⁵

Chromosomes are bundles of DNA. Humans have 46 chromosomes arranged in 23 pairs, one of each pair from each parent. Within chromosomes are genes, a sequence of DNA on a chromosome that is required for production of a functional product, which can either be a

³ Nessa Carey, *The Epigenetics Revolution: How Modern Biology is Rewriting Our Understanding of Genetics, Disease, and Inheritance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 44. Carey is formerly a senior lecturer at Imperial College School of Medicine in London and is now director of exploratory research at CellCentric.

⁴ Tom Strachan and Andrew Read, *Human Molecular Genetics*, 4th ed. (New York: Garland Science, 2011), 2.

⁵ William B. Dobyns, Susan L. Christian, and Soma Das, “Introduction to Genetics,” in *Swaiman’s Pediatric Neurology*, 5th ed., vol. 1, *Principles and Practice*, Kenneth Swaiman, Stephen Ashwal, Donna M. Ferriero, and Nina Schor, eds. (New York: Elsevier, 2012), 277.

protein or a functional RNA molecule.⁶ Genes vary in size, from just a few thousand base pairs to over two million base pairs. Genes tell each cell what to do and how to do it. To put it differently and in the broadest sense, genes are simply units of hereditary information. The Human Genome Project has revealed that there are probably about 20,500 human genes.⁷

Recent findings indicate genes are not quite as simple as was once thought. Until the advent of genome-wide analysis, a typical human gene was imagined to be well-defined and separated from its neighbors by identifiable intergenic spaces. We now know some genes overlap with others or are entirely imbedded within much larger genes. Furthermore, intergenic DNA – which makes up most of the genome – is now recognized as being much more functionally important for the correct expression of genes. As Strachan and Read say, “There is a growing awareness that the way in which our genome works is much more complex than it once appeared.”⁸

The complexity and intricacy of DNA leaves us with many unanswered questions. For example, if every cell in the human body contains the entire DNA code, why do cells only perform specific functions? Furthermore, some genetic anomalies have posed questions regarding DNA and the inheritance of traits. For example, on rare occasions, identical twins have different hair color. But if they share identical DNA, how could the hair colors be different? The answers to these questions and others are found in *epigenetics*.

Epigenetics

Epigenetics – a word with a rough literal meaning of “on genes” – refers to chemical modifications of the human genome that alter gene activity without changing the DNA sequence.⁹ DNA is wrapped around

⁶ William B. Dobyns, et al, “Introduction to Genetics,” in *Swaiman’s Pediatric Neurology*, 5th ed., 281.

⁷ This number is much lower than thought before the project began, with initial estimates ranging from 50,000 to 140,000 genes. The lower number of genes is a very surprising discovery.

⁸ Tom Strachan and Andrew Read, *Human Molecular Genetics*, 4th ed., 346. This paragraph is summarized from Strachan and Read pages 276 and 346.

⁹ Or stated slightly differently, epigenetics refers to all modifications to genes other than changes in the DNA sequence itself which alter gene expression.

proteins called histones and both DNA and the histones are covered with chemical “tags.” These histones and chemical tags (or “epi-marks”) are part of each person’s *epigenetics* and constitute an extra layer of information attached to our genes’ backbones that regulates their expression.¹⁰ As science has discovered more and more about genetic traits, we have learned that these epigenetic structures regulate genome activity and govern which genes in the DNA of any given cell will be active. These epigenetic structures can be thought of as switches and knobs which turns things “on or off” or “up and down.” Perhaps the most fascinating difference between DNA and epigenetics is that while the genome does not change during cell division throughout a person’s lifetime, the epigenome can change over a lifespan.

Nessa Carey suggests another helpful analogy for understanding epigenetics is to think of actors reading a script for a movie. For example, Director Baz Luhrmann hands Leonardo DiCaprio his shortened version of Shakespeare’s script for *Romeo and Juliet*, on which the director has written or typed various notes – such as directions for camera placements and other technical information. Whenever DiCaprio’s copy of the script is photocopied, Luhrmann’s additional information is copied along with it. Claire Danes, playing the part of Juliet, also has a script for *Romeo and Juliet*. While the notes on her copy are different from those on DiCaprio’s, Danes’ notes will also survive photocopying. Nessa Carey explains the analogy and says, “That’s how epigenetic regulation of gene expression occurs – different cells have the same DNA blueprint (the original author’s script) but carrying varied molecular modifications (the

Joanna Downer, “Backgrounder: Epigenetics and Imprinted Genes,” accessed April 24, 2014,

<http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/press/2002/november/epigenetics.htm>; and William B. Dobyns, Susan L. Christian, and Soma Das, “Introduction to Genetics,” in *Swaiman’s Pediatric Neurology*, 5th ed., vol. 1, *Principles and Practice*, Kenneth Swaiman, Stephen Ashwal, Donna M. Ferriero, and Nina Schor, eds. (New York: Elsevier, 2012), 277.

¹⁰ “Study Finds Epigenetics, Not Genetics, Underlies Homosexuality,” National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis, December 11, 2012, accessed April 24, 2014,

http://www.nimbios.org/press/FS_homosexuality.

shooting script) which can be transmitted from mother cell to daughter cell during cell division.”¹¹

Among several epigenetic mechanisms, perhaps the most important is *methylation*, an epigenetic signaling tool that can fix genes in the “off” position. During methylation, a quartet of atoms called a methyl (CH₃) group attaches to a gene at a specific point on the DNA strand itself.¹² There, the methyl group remodels the chromatin, the substance of the cell nucleus, and affects how the gene is expressed.¹³ The effect of this process is effectively to tell a particular gene not to code or to “be quiet.” DNA methylation has important consequences and allows particular gene expression patterns to be stably transmitted to daughter cells.¹⁴ By “turning off” other genes, the epigenetic mechanism of methylation makes sure that a particular cell only does the task assigned to it. Thus, Methylation usually results in silencing of a gene.

Another very important epigenetic mechanism is acetylation which regulates diverse cellular processes such as gene expression, recombination, and DNA damage repair.¹⁵ For some time the thought was that methylation turned genes “off” and acetylation turned genes “on.” However, in many cases gene expression is more subtle than genes being either “on” or “off” like a toggle switch: it’s much more like the volume dial on a radio with traits being amplified or muted.¹⁶

¹¹ Nessa Carey, *The Epigenetics Revolution*, 55.

¹² It often attaches to the fifth carbon atom of a cytosine ring.

¹³ Sally Robertson, “What is DNA Methylation?,” accessed July 14, 2016, www.news-medical.net/life-sciences/What-is-DNA-Methylation.aspx and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, “Epigenetics: A New Frontier For Alcohol Research,” *Alcohol Alert* 86 (no date): 2; accessed August 4, 2016, <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AA86/AA86.pdf>.

¹⁴ Tom Strachan and Andrew Read, *Human Molecular Genetics*, 4th ed., 262.

¹⁵ Acetylation neutralizes the charge of lysine, which attenuates electrostatic interactions within and between nucleosomes, allowing other nuclear proteins to access the underlying DNA sequences. Yu Wang, Scott P. Kallgren, Bharat D. Reddy, Karen Kuntz, Luis López-Maury, James Thompson, Stephen Watt, Chun Ma, Haitong Hou, Yang Shi, John R. Yates III, Jürg Bähler, Matthew J. O’Connell, and Songtao Jia, “Histone H3 Lysine 14 Acetylation Is Required for Activation of a DNA Damage Checkpoint in Fission Yeast,” *The Journal of Biological Chemistry* 287.6 (February, 2012): 4386.

¹⁶ Carey, *The Epigenetics Revolution*, 68.

Histone modification is another important epigenetic mechanism. Histones serve as a kind of “spindle” around which DNA wraps itself. As was noted above, histones have chemical “tags” which affect the expression of genes. Histones can be modified in many ways, and these modifications can turn genes both on and off, depending on the situation.¹⁷ Whether genes are expressed and “on” or unexpressed and “off” is related to how tightly they are wrapped around histones. Genes that are “loosely” wrapped are “on” and can be expressed meaning they can make proteins necessary for a specific function. Genes that are “tightly” wrapped are “off” and can’t be read by the cells.

Epigenetics and The Dutch Hunger Winter

Within the field of epigenetics, some have strongly argued that stress during pregnancy can result in epigenetic changes which can be transmitted from mother to child and affect the child’s health, with the Dutch “Hunger Winter” of 1944 – 1945 often being cited as evidence. In September, 1944, the Allies attempted to drive into Germany through the Netherlands in operation Market Garden. The operation failed and left the Netherlands in a desperate situation after the Germans imposed a total embargo on the Dutch population because of their support for the Allies. Food rations declined to extremely low levels between February and May 1945, resulting in an individual average daily official ration below 1000 calories.¹⁸ Children conceived and born during the Dutch famine have served as a kind of “natural experiment” to study the effects of malnutrition during pregnancy on the health outcomes of the children being carried in utero during the famine. Numerous deleterious effects among this study group have been documented, including higher incidence of glucose intolerance for children exposed to famine during

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, “Epigenetics: A New Frontier For Alcohol Research,” *Alcohol Alert* 86 (no date): 4, accessed August 4, 2016, <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AA86/AA86.pdf>.

¹⁸ Ernst J. Franzek, Niels Sprangers, A. Cecile J. W. Janssens, Cornelia M. Van Duijn, & Ben J. M. Van De Wetering, “Prenatal Exposure to the 1944–45 Dutch ‘Hunger Winter’ and Addiction Later in Life,” *Addiction* 103 (2008):433.

any stage of gestation.¹⁹ Children exposed to the famine earlier in gestation were more prone to negative outcomes such as coronary heart disease, a higher susceptibility to formation of abnormal fatty masses in the arterial walls, disturbed blood coagulation, and increased stress responsiveness. Women exposed to famine in early gestation also had an increased risk of breast cancer.²⁰

One of the more surprising findings from the Dutch Hunger Winter has been the long-term effect on the weight of children born during this era. If a mother was well-fed around the time of conception and malnourished for the last few months of gestation, the baby was likely to be born small. Furthermore, these children tended to remain small throughout adulthood and had much lower obesity rates than the general population. In contrast, if the baby was conceived during the height of the famine and the mother suffered malnutrition during the early months of conception, but was then well-fed, the baby was likely to have a normal birth weight. A somewhat unexpected finding is that people born to this second group – conceived in famine, but normal birth weight – had higher obesity rates than normal in adulthood.²¹ Even more surprisingly, some of the negative traits associated with nutritional deprivation may be passed down to succeeding generations.²² Prenatal

¹⁹ A. C. Ravelli, J.H. van der Meulen, R. P. Michels, C. Osmond, D. J. Barker, C.N. Hales, et al, "Glucose Tolerance in Adults after Prenatal Exposure to Famine," *Lancet* 351 (1998): 173–177.

²⁰ T. Roseboom, S. de Rooij, R. Painter, "The Dutch Famine and Its Long Term Consequences for Adult Health," *Early Human Development* 82.8 (August 2006): 485 – 491.

²¹ The description of these two groups is summarized from Nessa Carey, *The Epigenetics Revolution*, 3 – 4. The programming of adult obesity by intrauterine food restriction without accompanying changes in birth weight has been replicated in rodent and sheep animal models. Laura C. Schulz, "The Dutch Hunger Winter and the Developmental Origins of Disease," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 107.39 (September 28, 2010): 16757. Research on children born during the Chinese famine of 1959 – 1961 found higher rates of obesity in adulthood for the women, but not men. Z. Yang, W. Zhao, X. Zhang, R. Mu, Y. Zhai, L. Kong, C. Chen, "Impact of famine during pregnancy and infancy on health in adulthood," *Obstetrics Review*, Supplement 1 (March, 2008): 95 – 99.

²² T. J. Roseboom, R. C. Painter, A.F. van Abeelen, M.V. Veenendaal, S.R. de Rooij, "Hungry in the Womb: What are the Consequences? Lessons from the

exposure to the Dutch Hunger Winter is also associated with increased rates of schizophrenia²³ and drug addiction.²⁴

Epigenetic mechanisms are largely credited with being the driving force behind the outcomes observed in children of the Hunger Winter. Their subsequent health was negatively affected by the crisis they endured in utero. While their DNA did not change, the manner in which it has been expressed appears to have been modified. A 2015 study of the Dutch Hunger Winter has suggested that the patterns of methylation were affected in utero in children of the famine. These authors emphasize the gestational timing of prenatal exposure to famine has a significant influence on the process of methylation, with early prenatal development being the most critical period for malnutrition to have epigenetic effects.²⁵ Of special interest is that the researchers discovered

Dutch Famine,” *Maturitas* 70.2 (October 2011): 141 – 145. Some readers may notice an echo of Lamarck’s theory here: the inheritance of acquired traits. While remaining within the Neo-Darwinian synthesis, advocates of evolution are beginning to admit some traits acquired by parents may be passed down to succeeding generations. But these are in the minority and seen as a subset of the overall evolutionary process which focuses on changes in the genome itself as opposed to the epigenome. The implications of new discoveries in epigenetics on the theory of evolution are far beyond the scope of my purposes here.

²³ E. S. Susser and S. P. Lin, “Schizophrenia after Prenatal Exposure to the Dutch Hunger Winter of 1944–45,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 49 (1992): 983–988; E.S. Susser, R. Neugebauer, H.W. Hoek, A.S. Brown, S. Lin, D. Labovitz, et al. “Schizophrenia after prenatal famine. Further Evidence,” *Archives of General Psychiatry* 53 (1996): 25 –31. Children exposed to the Chinese famine of 1959 – 1961 also demonstrated a higher incidence of schizophrenia. See David St. Clair, Mingqing Xu, Peng Wang, Yaqin Yu, Yourong Fang, Feng Zhang, Xiaoying Zheng, Niufan Gu, Guoyin Feng, Pak Sham, Lin He, “Rates of Adult Schizophrenia Following Prenatal Exposure to the Chinese Famine of 1959–1961,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 294.5 (August 3, 2005): 557 – 562.

²⁴ Ernst J. Franzek, Niels Sprangers, A. Cecile J. W. Janssens, Cornelia M. Van Duijn, & Ben J. M. Van De Wetering, “Prenatal Exposure to the 1944–45 Dutch ‘Hunger Winter’ and Addiction Later in Life,” *Addiction* 103 (2008):433 – 438.

²⁵ Elmar W. Tobi, Jelle J. Goeman, et al, “DNA Methylation Signatures Link Prenatal Famine Exposure to Growth and Metabolism,” *Nature Communications* 5 (July 7, 2015):

<http://www.nature.com/ncomms/2014/141126/ncomms6592/full/ncomms6592.html>. The researchers were associated with Leiden University Medical

genes associated with growth and development were affected by epigenetic changes which resulted in these genes being expressed differently, thus affecting the growth of the Hunger Winter children.

The concept that maternal stress during early gestation affects children's epigenetics is central to new theories regarding the origin of homosexuality. Just as the children of the Dutch Hunger Winter give evidence of continuing epigenetic changes regarding the way their genes are expressed, some researchers are now suggesting that prenatal stress may influence the way genes related to sexual development in the brain are expressed, resulting in same-sex attraction and a homosexual orientation.

II. Homosexuality and Epigenetics

Suggestions that homosexuality may have an epigenetic origin are rather recent. The two most well-known statements of this argument to date are from an article by William R. Rice and colleagues in 2012 and a paper delivered Dr. Tuck Ngun of UCLA presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Human Genetics in October, 2015.

Rice, Gavrillets, & Friberg, 2012

In 2012, a team of researchers associated with the National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis and led by William Rice an evolutionary geneticist at the University of California, Santa Barbara, joined by Sergey Gavrillets, a mathematician at the University of Tennessee, and Urban Friberg, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Uppsala, suggested epigenetics may explain the heritability²⁶ of some forms of homosexuality. Published in December, 2012 in *The Quarterly Review of Biology*, they argued that epigenetic changes to the early embryo can affect the expression of genes related to androgen signaling which then influences later sexual orientation.

Two major theoretical premises undergird the claims of Rice and his colleagues. The first premise is that androgen levels drive sexual

Center, Harvard University, and Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. The researchers compared the DNA of the Hunger Winter children at 1.2 million CpG methylation sites comparing them with same-sex siblings not exposed to famine.

²⁶ "Heritability" is a term used to describe the complex interaction between genes and environment which results in many traits we express.

orientation in a manner similar to the way they drive the development of genitalia. The entire process of prenatal gender-specific growth is driven by the release of hormones at specific junctures. As children grow in the mother's womb, certain sex hormones are produced in quantity at specific times to help their tiny bodies grow in a gender-specific direction. Testosterone, an androgen, is especially important in this process. Both boys and girls produce testosterone, but testosterone production peaks in male babies at around 16 weeks of gestation, but after this declines to around the same level as in prenatal females. Sexual development in females is also driven by hormones, or more specifically the absence of male hormones. Since girls do not have testes, not enough testosterone is produced to masculinize genitalia and, thus, the external genitalia develop in a female manner.²⁷ In humans, the process of sex determination and forming of the external genitalia is virtually complete by the 13th week of gestation.²⁸ The theory of Rice, et al assumes that androgens are also central to the development of sexual orientation. Mainly, they argue that homosexuals received the correct hormones to guide their genitalia in proper development, but later in prenatal development – especially in the brain – they received the incorrect level of hormones or the wrong hormones, resulting in a homosexual orientation.²⁹

²⁷ Since females do not have the SRY gene, the primitive gonads become ovaries and not testes. Female ovaries actually produce a small amount of testosterone. Both males and females produce testosterone and estrogen, but males produce far more testosterone and females produce far more estrogen.

²⁸ Margaret M. McCarthy, "Estradiol and the Developing Brain," *Physiological Review* 88.1 (January 2008): 91 – 124, accessed July 9, 2014, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2754262/pdf/nihms117872.pdf>, 7.

²⁹ The authors say, "The androgen signaling pathways differ among organs and tissues, the same inherited sexually antagonistic-epi mark can affect only a subset of sexually dimorphic traits, e.g., no effect on the genitalia, but a large effect on a sexually dimorphic region of the brain." William R. Rice, Urban Friberg, and Sergey Gavrilets, "Homosexuality As A Consequence of Epigenetically Canalized Sexual Development," *The Quarterly Review of Biology* 87.4 (December 2012): 358. Elsewhere, Vilain and Ngun concur with one of Rice's core assertions and say, "We believe it is very likely that sex-specific epigenetic marks are at least (partly) responsible for sexually dimorphic traits including sexual orientation." Tuck Ngun and Eric Vilain, "The Biological Basis

A second major premise is that a mother or father could pass down the wrong epigenetic marks to their children. Usually, epigenetic “tags” or “marks” develop very early soon after conception. The parents’ epigenetic tags are erased and replaced by unique ones for the child. But if epigenetic marks that direct sexual development are not erased correctly, a mother could pass down epi-marks consistent with female development to her son, resulting in an attraction to men, and vice versa for a father and his daughters.³⁰ In other words, a young fetus inherits epigenetic marks that are not consistent with the baby’s sex. They then hypothesize these sexually-antagonistic (opposed to the child’s sex) epigenetic marks “influence androgen signaling in the part of the brain controlling sexual orientation, but not the genitalia nor the brain region(s) controlling gender identity.”³¹ In other words, the epigenetics cause a child to process the wrong sex hormones or sex hormones in the wrong amounts into the brain. Thus, they hypothesize this causes the child to experience same-sex attraction as he or she matures. But determining whether or not these proposed epigenetic marks affecting sexual orientation exist has not been proven. Furthermore, to prove they have not been erased will be difficult to test because such marks, if they exist, will probably be in the brain.³²

Rice, et al make a fascinating admission and say, “*Although we cannot provide definitive evidence that homosexuality has a strong epigenetic underpinning, we do think that available evidence is fully consistent with this conclusion.*”³³ While they admit they cannot provide definitive evidence that homosexuality is caused by epigenetic changes in utero, they say in their conclusion, “If our model is wrong, it can be rapidly falsified and discarded.”³⁴ The work by Rice and his team is a specific type of academic research called “meta-analysis, a quantitative,

of Human Sexual Orientation: Is There a Role for Epigenetics?,” *The Epigenetic Shaping of Sociosexual Interactions: From Plants to Humans* 86 (2014): 175.

³⁰ Sabrina Richards, “Can Epigenetics Explain Homosexuality?”

³¹ William R. Rice, Urban Friberg, and Sergey Gavrillets, “Homosexuality as a Consequence of Epigenetically Canalized Sexual Development,” 358.

³² This is Vilain’s opinion. See Sabrina Richards, “Can Epigenetics Explain Homosexuality?” But again, Vilain finds a great deal of Rice’s work compelling.

³³ William R. Rice, et al, “Homosexuality as a Consequence of Epigenetically Canalized Sexual Development,” 357. Emphasis added.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 362.

formal study design used to assess systematically previous research studies in order to derive conclusions about a particular body of research.³⁵ Such work is also called a *review* article, meaning it is an article that synthesizes other research already in print and suggests possible implications. Meta-analysis is often the first step in defining avenues for future research by summarizing what has been done, what conclusions have been reached, and providing suggestions for future research. Essentially, Rice, et al. are saying to other researchers, “Hey, you might look over here.” In 2015, Tuck Ngun claimed to have discovered some findings quite consistent with Rice’s model for epigenetics and homosexuality.

Tuck Ngun, 2015

On October 8, 2015, Tuck Ngun, a post-doctoral scholar at UCLA, presented a paper titled “A Novel Predictive Model of Sexual Orientation Using Epigenetic Markers” at the annual meeting of The American Society of Human Genetics. The lead researcher was Eric Vilain (Ph.D., M.D.), associate professor and Chief of the Division of Medical Genetics at UCLA.³⁶

Ngun and Vilain previously published a paper in 2014 in which they evaluated and critiqued the epigenetic model proposed by Rice and colleagues in 2012. Ngun and Vilain agreed with much of Rice’s model, but disagreed that “sex-reversing sensitivity to androgen signaling via epigenetic markers will result in homosexuality in both sexes.”³⁷ Ngun and Vilain reject this premise because they think the different biological and genetic factors affect homosexuality in men and women. Essentially, they argue there are different types of homosexuality while Rice, et al appear to be striving at a model which is universally applicable to all

³⁵ This definition is from A. B. Haidich, “Meta-Analysis in Medical Research,” *Hippokratia* 14 (2010): 29.

³⁶ “Eric Vilain, M.D., Ph.D.,” David Geffen School of Medicine, accessed August 10, 2016,

https://people.healthsciences.ucla.edu/institution/personnel?personnel_id=94
³⁵ Ngun presented his findings earlier on March 21, 2015 in Philadelphia at the meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development. Accessed October 10, 2016, <https://gendercenter.genetics.ucla.edu/node/75>.

³⁷ Tuck Ngun and Eric Vilain, “The Biological Basis of Human Sexual Orientation: Is There a Role for Epigenetics?” 175.

homosexuals. Nonetheless, the suggestions of Rice's work gave a trajectory for the research by Ngun and Vilain.³⁸

Ngun claimed an algorithm his team developed can predict sexual orientation in males at a rate of 67% accuracy using epigenetic information from five to nine regions of the human genome.³⁹ The data was generated using a sample composed of DNA derived from the saliva of 37 pairs of identical twins who were discordant for sexual orientation (one was homosexual and one was not) along with a control group of 10 pairs of identical twins who were concordant for homosexuality (both were homosexual). Ngun and his colleagues looked for epigenetic modifications made to the genes of the 47 sets of male twins. Specifically, they analyzed 140,000 regions in the genomes of the twins and looked at 400,000 methylation marks, which can be thought of as "chemical Post-It notes" that dictate when and where genes are activated.⁴⁰ The team then used an algorithm they developed to search out gene regions in which methylation patterns differed significantly between the two groups. They found five sites of particular interest— three in regions of intergenic DNA, the role of which is unclear, and two in genes whose roles are relatively well established. One of the genes the Ngun team identified as having epigenetic changes is involved with the production of MHC II

³⁸ Ngun and Vilain said, "Rice, Friberg, and Gavrillets (2013) have proposed steps to test their epigenetic hypothesis. Our group is currently testing the hypothesis that discordance in sexual orientation between [monozygotic] twins is related to discordance in epigenetic traits."³⁸ Tuck Ngun and Eric Vilain, "The Biological Basis of Human Sexual Orientation: Is There a Role for Epigenetics?," 178.

³⁹ T. C. Ngun, W. Guo, N. M. Ghahramani, K. Purkayastha, D. Conn, F. J. Sanchez, S. Bocklandt, M. Zhang, C. M. Ramirez, M. Pellegrini, Eric Vilain, "Program Number 95: A novel predictive model of sexual orientation using epigenetic markers." A Paper Delivered October 8, 2015 at the Annual Meeting of The American Society of Human Genetics, accessed February 26, 2106, <https://ep70.eventpilotadmin.com/web/page.php?page=IntHtml&project=AS-HG15&id=150123267>. One of the frustrating aspects of Ngun's research is that the paper has not been published. I personally wrote to Ngun via the USPS asking for a copy, but received no reply.

⁴⁰ Ed Yong, "No, Scientists Have Not Found the 'Gay Gene,'" *The Atlantic* October 10, 2015, accessed July 15, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2015/10/no-scientists-have-not-found-the-gay-gene/410059/>.

molecules which are important for a healthy immune system, but are also thought to affect sexual attraction by affecting response to odor.⁴¹

The Vilain-Ngun team then split their sample of 37 discordant twin pairs into two groups. Using the test results from 20 of these pairs, they developed a model to predict if a person in one of the seventeen remaining pairs is straight or gay based on the methylation patterns of their genes. When they tested their model on the remaining pairs of male twins using their algorithm, they claimed it correctly predicted sexual orientation 67 per cent of the time.

In their 2014 article, Ngun and Vilain suggested that slight variations in the uterine environment may explain why some twin pairs are discordant for homosexuality. For example they suggested the twins may receive different nutrients even though they share the same uterus, saying, “Although the nutrient bath in which both twins develop may be highly similar, there could be differences that could affect epigenetic markers on genes relevant to sexual orientation.”⁴²

The burgeoning field of epigenetics has provided a new avenue of research for people seeking a biological basis for homosexuality. Does Ngun’s research into epigenetics provide compelling reasons to believe homosexuality is an innate trait caused by epigenetic modifications?

III. Evaluation of Arguments Regarding Epigenetics and Homosexuality

An evaluation of the data regarding homosexuality and epigenetics reveals some fascinating insights into the way we as humans function and the manner in which the human genome expresses particular traits. However, data to date does not substantiate the claim that prenatal epigenetic changes “hard-wire” someone for homosexuality. To demonstrate this claim, I will review some of the data about epigenetics

⁴¹ Much of the information in this summary is found in Jessica Hamzelou, “Gay or Straight? Saliva Test Can Predict Sexual Orientation,” *New Scientist* October 8, 2015, accessed August 10, 2016, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn28307-gay-or-straight-saliva-test-can-predict-male-sexual-orientation/>. See also Claus Wedekind and Dustin Penn, “MHC Genes, Body Odours, and Odour Preferences,” *Nephrology, Dialysis, and Transplantation* 15.9 (2000): 1269 – 1271.

⁴² Tuck Ngun and Eric Vilain, “The Biological Basis of Human Sexual Orientation: Is There a Role for Epigenetics?,” 173.

in general, Ngun's research in particular, data regarding epigenetics and drug addictions, and then move to a Scriptural-theological evaluation of the data.

Epigenetics in General: Possible Insights

Christians must not hastily dismiss the evidence concerning epigenetic changes derived from the Dutch Hunger Winter: If the mother had a low caloric intake during pregnancy, the child often had problems with either being underweight or obese as an adult based on the period during the famine the child was in utero. This should not surprise us as many Christians are quite aware of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and the negative outcomes in children associated with a mother who drinks while the child is in utero. What seems to be more surprising is the degree to which the *grandchildren* of the Dutch Hunger Winter also experience some of the same problems.⁴³ But at the same time, we must not adopt a deterministic approach. The data indicates a higher occurrence and susceptibility to certain negative outcomes, but it does not point to an unalterable fixed destination in the lives of these people. Epigenetic factors can increase one's *susceptibility* to any number of problems, but human volition still plays a significant role in the progression of diseases associated with Dutch Hunger Winter children.

When considering epigenetics and homosexuality, it is at least possible that epigenetics play a role in some cases of same-sex attraction. But epigenetics are far from determinative. Perhaps our view should be influenced by the more robust model regarding prenatal epigenetics and disease. What we see is that prenatal epigenetics may contribute to an increased susceptibility to certain diseases such as cancer or heart disease, but these susceptibilities are affected by myriad of other factors related to the choices a person makes. Likewise, prenatal epigenetic changes may possibly increase a person's likelihood of being homosexual,

⁴³ One study using pigs claimed sire pigs who were exposed to inordinate amounts of stress experienced epigenetic changes on their sperm. These changes were passed on to offspring and led to alterations in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal stress axis, affecting the offspring's response to stress. See Ali B. Rodgers, Christopher P. Morgan, N. Adrian Leu, and Tracy L. Bale, "Transgenerational Epigenetic Programming Via Sperm microRNA Recapitulates Effects of Paternal Stress," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 112.44 (November 3, 2015): 13699-13704.

but embracing a gay identity is fueled by many other factors related to human volition. In other words, a predisposition to increased likelihood of homosexuality does not mean one is *predetermined* to be a homosexual.

Concerning the influence of epigenetics on inherited diseases, one standard source says, "There is currently little evidence for epigenetic changes as *primary* causes of human hereditary disease."⁴⁴ If this is true about diseases with a known etiology, it seems imprudent to make global pronouncements about a behavioral trait like homosexuality based on epigenetics. Epigenetic changes may play a contributing role in development of sexual orientation, but they hardly seem determinative.

One of the over-arching difficulties regarding arguments that maternal stress can affect the epigenetics of a child in utero is related to the influence of maternal care. It is well established in animal-research that different amounts of maternal care can have a profound, lasting effect on stress-related behavior in animal offspring. Thus, when studying the maternal transmission of traits, this makes it difficult to parse the effects of epigenetic mechanisms transferred in utero versus outcomes which are the result of maternal care or abuse.⁴⁵ In other words, it is difficult to know if some traits are the result of epigenetic changes inherited in utero or if the traits are the result of maternal care (or lack thereof) after the child is born. In regards to homosexuality, even if epigenetic marks are discovered which are conclusively associated with expression of the trait – and none have yet been discovered, it may be difficult to determine if the epi-marks were established prenatally or postnatally.

Analysis of Ngun's Data

The data presented by Ngun⁴⁶ in October, 2015 has received a fair amount of criticism from others in the research community. The fact

⁴⁴ Strachan and Read, *Human Molecular Genetics*, 4th ed., 513

⁴⁵ Eric J. Nestler, "Transgenerational Epigenetic Contributions to Stress Hormones: Fact or Fiction?," *PLOS Biology* 14.3 (March 25, 2016):5.

⁴⁶ Ngun is himself a homosexual. He received his PhD. In December, 2012, writing on the molecular mechanisms underlying sexual differentiation in the brain. Ngun claimed he was not afraid of critiques of his work and said, "Trust me, I've had to deal with a lot worse as someone who grew up gay and an outsider. Dealing with critiques about my work are nothing compared to dealing

that the report does not appear headed to publication is further confirmation of a rather lukewarm reception to his findings. The most glaring problem with the study is its size: the sample is tiny. Ed Yong of *The Atlantic* comments on this weakness in the Ngun paper and says, “The field of epigenetics is littered with the corpses of statistically underpowered studies like these, which simply lack the numbers to produce reliable, reproducible results.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, remember that the team split their sample into two sets: One was a “training set” whose data they used to build their algorithm, and a “testing set” whose data they used to verify it. While this is standard practice in research, Ed Yong says the result here is to weaken further this underpowered study and says, “But splitting the sample means that the study goes from underpowered to really underpowered.”⁴⁸

Andrew Gelman, a statistician at Columbia University, claimed the Ngun study inaccurately presented results as statistically significant. Gelman roundly critiqued Ngun’s methodology and said, “Now let me say right here that I think the whole training/test-set idea has serious limitations, especially when you’re working with $n=47$.”⁴⁹ Gelman also added, “In general it seems like you’re asking for trouble when you start publicizing technical claims without supplying the accompanying evidence.”⁵⁰ Ngun himself acknowledged that the study was underpowered in social media, but blamed his small sample on lack of funding and said, “Yes, we were underpowered. The reality is we had basically no funding. . . . the sample size was not what we wanted. But do

with people telling me I’m going to hell.” October 9, 2015, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://vizbang.tumblr.com/post/130817769270/a-brief-digression-from-pretty-pictures>.

⁴⁷ Ed Yong, “No, Scientists Have Not Found the ‘Gay Gene,’” *The Atlantic* October 10, 2015, accessed July 15, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2015/10/no-scientists-have-not-found-the-gay-gene/410059/>.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Emphasis in original. Sten Linnarsson, professor of Molecular Systems biology at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden (and no fan of conservatives!), tweeted about the Ngun study, “This is terrible science in so many ways I lost count.” October 8, 2015, @slinnarsson.

⁴⁹ Andrew Gelman, “Gay Gene Tabloid Hype Update,” *Statistical Modeling, Causal Inference, and Social Science*, October 10, 2015, <http://andrewgelman.com/2015/10/10/gay-gene-tabloid-hype-update/>.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

I hold out for some impossible ideal or do I work with what I have? I chose the latter.”⁵¹ This seems like a bad case of special pleading. Essentially, Ngun is saying, “I know that in research it is important to have a good sample size. I couldn’t afford that because I had no funding. But I still want you to take my research seriously because I’m sincere and genuine and doing the best I can with what I have.” Earnestness and a strong desire to do research cannot compensate for an underpowered study.

John Greally of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine also noted that deriving the DNA sample from saliva could lead to misleading results for the type of research the Ngun team was doing. The epigenetic marks in the saliva could be quite different from those in the brain, which is the area of Ngun’s focus. Greally also pointed out that the team developed a “new” algorithm to evaluate the data and asks, “Why use a new algorithm to identify these predictive markers, did current approaches not yield any results?”⁵² Greally also says the authors tried to give their report an air of plausibility by noting specific roles played by the genes they identified, subtly suggesting they may influence sexual orientation. The problem with epigenetics research in general and the Ngun study in particular is that while it may be plausible that epi-marks on these genes affect someone’s sexual orientation, it is also possible that sexual orientation affects the epi-marks. In other words, what Ngun demonstrated was a correlation in his data between sexual orientation and the epi-marks. His data does not demonstrate which direction, if any, causation is moving.

Other scientists have suggested the Ngun data may be an example of a “false positive.” John Joe McFadden, a molecular geneticist at the University of Surrey, said, “Studies that associate biomarkers with particular traits are notoriously prone to false positive results due to the

⁵¹ Tuck Ngun, “A Brief Digression from Pretty Pictures,” October 9, 2015, accessed February 26, 2016,

<http://vizbang.tumblr.com/post/130817769270/a-brief-digression-from-pretty-pictures>.

⁵² John Greally, “Over-Interpreted Epigenetics Study of the Week,” October 9, 2015,

<http://epgntxeinstein.tumblr.com/post/130812695958/over-interpreted-epigenetics-study-of-the-week-2>.

tendency of these studies to find spurious associations that are down to sheer chance.”⁵³

Of some interest is that a paper Eric Vilain co-authored in the Spring of 2016 did not mention the findings of his own research team. Vilain and Ngun’s 2014 paper was cited, but not their findings delivered in the Fall of 2015. In fact, the only data cited in the paper Vilain co-authored in 2016 was from a 2011 study of 34 identical twin pairs which revealed no support for the hypothesis that epigenetics influences male sexual-orientation!⁵⁴

There also seem to be contradictory claims about how many regions of interest were discovered in the epigenome. For example, Michael Balter in *Science* said Ngun had found “five regions” while Ngun’s abstract refers to nine regions of interest. I suspect he started with nine regions of interest, but narrowed it down to a subset of five.⁵⁵

Ngun’s summary of research regarding genetic and biological factors associated with increased rates of homosexuality is also misleading. For example, he states, “Male sexual orientation has been linked to several genomic loci, with Xq28 and 8p12 being the most replicated.”⁵⁶ Ngun is

⁵³ Jessica Hamzelou, “Gay or Straight? Saliva Test Can Predict Male Sexual Orientation,” *New Scientist*, October 8, 2015, accessed August 10, 2016, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn28307-gay-or-straight-saliva-test-can-predict-male-sexual-orientation/>. A false positive is a result that indicates a given condition or attribute is present when it is not.

⁵⁴ See J. Michael Bailey, Paul L. Vasey, Lisa M. Diamond, S. Marc Breedlove, Eric Vilain, and Marc Epprecht, “Sexual Orientation, Controversy and Science,” *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 17.2 (April 25, 2016): 77. The authors cite S. Bocklandt, W. Lin, M.E. Sehl, F.J. Sanchez, J.S. Horvath, and Eric Vilain, “Epigenetic Predictor of Age,” *PLoS One* 6.6 (2011): e14821

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0014821>.

⁵⁵ Michael Balter in *Science* said Ngun had found “five regions” while Ngun’s abstract refers to nine regions of interest. See Michael Balter, “Can Epigenetics Explain Homosexuality Puzzle?” *Science* 350. 6257 (October 9, 2015): 148.

⁵⁶ Tuck C. Ngun, W. Guo, N.M. Ghahramani, K. Purkayastha, D. Conn, F.J. Sanchez, S. Bocklandt, M. Zhang, C.M. Ramirez, M. Pellegrini, and Eric Vilain, “Program Number 95: A Novel Predictive Model of Sexual Orientation Using Epigenetic Markers,” Paper Presented at the American Society of Human Genetics 2015 Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD, October 8, 2015, accessed February 26, 2016,

referring to Dean Hamer's 1993 claim to have found co-inherited genetic information among homosexual brothers in the gene-dense Xq28 region. Actually, several attempts to replicate Hamer's findings have resulted in conflicting data. In 2015, Alan Sanders and Michael Bailey claimed to have replicated Hamer's findings concerning homosexuality and the Xq28 region in addition to discovering an area of interest at chromosome region 8q12. First, Ngun incorrectly identifies the region as *8p12*, when Sanders and Bailey's research clearly says 8q12.⁵⁷ But more importantly, Ngun overstates the strength of the findings regarding each of these regions, with all research demonstrating that the findings to date in these areas have a very weak predictive power.

Ngun also says "each male pregnancy a woman has increases the chance that her next son will be homosexual by 33% (the fraternal birth order effect)."⁵⁸ But this oft-repeated claim has many weaknesses, including the fact that around half of all homosexual males have no brothers, data from other sources which questions the existence of the fraternal birth order effect altogether, and the fact that the fraternal birth order effect (if it exists) can only account for homosexuality in one out of every seven homosexual men.⁵⁹ Finally, Ngun makes a passing reference to early life androgen exposure being associated with more homosexuality among women. Apparently, he has women with Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia in mind, but doesn't mention that most of these women have a heterosexual identity. Ngun implies these findings – Xq28 and 8q12, the fraternal birth order effect, and prenatal androgen exposure in women – have a stronger influence than the data actually allows. In fact, findings in each of these areas only demonstrate a lower level of correlation between certain variables and a higher level of self-reported same-sex attraction. And there is still possibility that the

<https://ep70.eventpilotadmin.com/web/page.php?page=IntHtml&project=AS HG15&id=150123267>.

⁵⁷ The centromere divides each chromosome into two major regions: the smaller "P" region and the larger "Q" region.

⁵⁸ Ngun, et al, "A Novel Predictive Model of Sexual Orientation Using Epigenetic Markers."

⁵⁹ James M. Cantor, Ray Blanchard, Andrew D. Paterson, and Anthony Bogaert, "How Many Gay Men Owe Their Sexual Orientation to Fraternal Birth Order?" *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 31.1 (February 2002): 63 – 71.

Xq28 and fraternal birth order claims may yet be disproved. Ngun simply over-states the data to make his own claim sound more plausible.

Ngun's own response to the data and critiques of it is a bit confusing. On one hand, he said that the researchers want to replicate the study in a different group of twins and also determine whether the same marks are more common in gay men than in straight men in a large and diverse population.⁶⁰ But Ngun told another source he had quit the lab at the Geffen School of Medicine out of fear of how the data they were generating might be used. He said, "I don't believe in the censoring of knowledge, but given the potential for misuse of the information, it just didn't sit well with me."⁶¹ Ngun seemed concerned that his research could be used by evil people or governments to identify homosexuals for the purpose of persecuting them. Yet, the weak and flawed nature of his findings make this fear sound quite unreasonable.

Epigenetics and Drug Addiction

As was noted above, one problem with Ngun's data is that he assumes the epigenetic tags he identified caused homosexuality, when it may in fact be the case that homosexuality caused a difference in the epigenetic tags. Research into alcoholism indicates this is at least a plausible scenario.

A robust body of evidence strongly indicates that alcoholism can lead to epigenetic changes which actually strengthen the alcoholism itself. An emerging model suggests that some genetic factors may predispose some people to alcoholism. These genetic factors are accentuated because expression of certain genes can be modified by excessive alcohol consumption – epigenetic changes can be induced by alcohol which modifies gene expression. These changes encourage further alcohol use and ultimately contribute to addiction.⁶² One source says, "Although

⁶⁰ Sara Reardon, "Epigenetic Tags Linked to Homosexuality," *Nature* October 12, 2015, accessed August 10, 2016, <http://www.nature.com/news/epigenetic-tags-linked-to-homosexuality-in-men-1.18530>.

⁶¹ Jessica Hamzelou, "Gay or Straight? Saliva Test Can Predict Male Sexual Orientation."

⁶² For a summary of the findings on alcoholism and epigenetics, see Harish R. Krishnan, Amul J. Sakharkar, Tara L. Teppen, Tiffani D.M. Berkel and Subhash C. Pandey, "The Epigenetic Landscape of Alcoholism," *International Review of Neurobiology* 115 (2014): 75 – 116.

researchers are still piecing together all the details, findings to date suggest that epigenetic changes in gene expression induced by alcohol consumption may be the source or contributing factor in the brain pathology and adaptations in brain functioning associated with alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence and may contribute to alcohol relapse and craving.⁶³

One group of researchers in 2012 studied the brains of 17 alcoholics along with a control group of 15. In their small sample, alcohol abuse was associated with widespread changes in brain gene expression.⁶⁴ In other words, consumption of alcohol was associated with a change in the epigenome which subsequently altered the manner in which genes were expressed in the brain, probably contributing to alcoholism. With some caution, I suggest that we should at least be open to the possibility that something similar may occur in homosexuality. People who engage in homosexual behavior may find that the behavior itself is reinforced by epigenetic changes brought on by the homosexual behavior. In this way, the behavior may become compulsive and feel quite “natural.”

Such an epigenetic mechanism may also partially explain the higher rate of the experience of childhood sexual abuse experienced by homosexuals, a trend admitted by most pro-homosexual authors.⁶⁵ We know the age of sexual debut, the context in which it occurred, and the age and gender of the person with whom the sexual debut occurred have a strong organizing effect on later sexual identity. It is at least plausible that in some cases of child abuse, the abuse itself initiates a cascade of epigenetic changes which contribute to same-sex attraction in adulthood. Such a hypothesis has limited explanatory power since the majority of homosexuals do not report being abused as children.

⁶³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, “Epigenetics – A New Frontier for Alcohol Research,” *Alcohol Alert* 86 (November 1, 2013): 4.

⁶⁴ Igor Ponomarev, Shi Wang, Lingling Zhang, R. Adron Harris, and R. Dayne Mayfield, “Gene Coexpression Networks in Human Brain Identify Epigenetic Modifications in Alcohol Dependence,” *The Journal of Neuroscience* 32.5 (February 1, 2012): 1884 – 1897. I acknowledge this is a small sample.

⁶⁵ Because this is commonly admitted, I find it odd that Ngun and Vilain take issue with the idea that childhood abuse can contribute to a later homosexual identity, a claim they call “discredited.” Ngun and Vilain, “The Biological Basis of Human Sexual Orientation: Is There a Place for Epigenetics?,” 172.

It is important to remember that epigenetics is a somewhat new sub-discipline within genetics, so the exact mechanisms of epigenetic function are still being unraveled at a broad level, much less in the specific case of homosexuality. The degree to which sexual behavior affects the epigenetic signals within a person are speculative at present, but it is at least plausible that participation in homosexual behavior may alter one's epigenetics.

Biblical-Theological Critique

When evaluating possible relationships between epigenetics and homosexuality from a Biblical-theological grid, two central ideas emerge: A rejection of biological determinism and the dangerous and compulsive nature of sin.

Within arguments about an epigenetic cause for homosexuality, there is in the background a strong and unmistakable message of biological determinism. It is a worldview which insists humans are not morally accountable agents made in the image of God. Instead, humans are viewed as biochemical automatons merely responding to stimuli. Within this worldview, sex has no intrinsic value other than its necessity as the device to pass on DNA and continue the process of human evolution.⁶⁶

These deterministic arguments often point to homosexuality in animals as proof homosexuality is a stable and recurring characteristic like many others. For example, in a 2013, Rice, Friberg, and Gavrillets discussed George Murray Levick's (1876 - 1956) observations of homosexual behavior among penguins in Antarctica during 1912 - 1913. Rice, et al seem to take great delight in the fact Levick recorded these specific observations in Greek because he found them so offensive that he didn't want the average person to read about them.⁶⁷ The not-so-subtle message is that we can laugh at such things now because we live in

⁶⁶ From an evolutionary perspective, homosexuality should not be a favorable trait. This at least partly explains why some are arguing for an epigenetic origin of homosexuality as opposed to a genetic origin. Others have suggested male homosexuality is retained as a recessive trait which provides certain advantages to females and increases female fecundity.

⁶⁷ William R. Rice, Urban Friberg, and Sergey Gavrillets, "Homosexuality Via Canalized Sexual Development: A Testing Protocol For A New Epigenetic Model," *Bioessays* 35 (2013): 764.

a more enlightened era. The authors then move on to argue that homosexual behavior in animals is some sort of evidence in favor of modern, tolerant attitudes about homosexuality.

What Rice, et al do not report is that it was not mere homosexuality among the penguins that offended Levick. He also recorded necrophilia, abuse of weak penguins by “gangs” of stronger penguins, the abuse of female penguins by the same gangs of males, and the devouring of chicks by other penguins.⁶⁸ Certainly Rice and his colleagues do not think these other actions are morally neutral merely because they commonly occur in the animal kingdom.

Integrating epigenetics into a Christian anthropology is part of our view of the human body. Christians do not believe the body is evil, but we confess that humans are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps. 139:14). The greatest affirmation that the human body is good is the Christian hope of the resurrection, wherein believers will receive a new and glorified body (Rom. 6:5; 1 Cor. 15:42 – 44). Furthermore, humans are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26 – 28) and humans alone have the responsibility as God’s image bearers to exercise stewardship over creation. At the same time, Christians also believe humans have a soul, the immaterial aspect of a human that transcends nature.⁶⁹ We are not *just* a body; we are a body-soul unity, the body and soul being connected at all points.⁷⁰ While the condition of our body certainly affects the way we feel about ourselves, we are more than a complex biochemical machine. Because humans have a soul, we can exercise volitional control over our response to appetites, desires and temptations. At the same

⁶⁸ Robin McKie, “Sexual Depravity of Penguins that Antarctic Scientist Dared Not Reveal,” *The Guardian*, June 9, 2012, accessed August 10, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jun/09/sex-depravity-penguins-scott-antarctic/>.

⁶⁹ There are basically two ideas about the origin of the soul which have been advocated by orthodox Christians. 1) Creationist: God creates each individual soul at the moment he gives it a body. 2) Traducianist: Each soul is derived, along with the body, from the parents.

⁷⁰ The view I am advocating for the relationship of the soul to the body is perhaps best described by Millard Erickson as “conditional unity.” Consistent with this view is rejection of ideas claiming the human body is inherently evil. See Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 554 – 557.

time, the human body and the human genome have been negatively affected by a historic space-time Fall. The deleterious effects of sin can be found in both the genome and the epigenome. It should not surprise us if we discover things in these areas of research which contribute to various human sins, including homosexuality.

One of the tragedies of sin is that while most people know how to begin a particular sin or sinful habit, very rarely do we realize the third and fourth order consequences of sin. One of the most painful results of sin is that it is habit-forming. As was noted earlier, alcohol and drug abuse can negatively affect the epigenetics of particular genes in the brain and reinforce addiction. This is probably also related to brain plasticity – the manner in which neural pathways form and become reinforced and stronger each time we engage in various sins. In this way, we begin to live out the consequences of Jesus' warning, "Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34). D.A. Carson comments on John 8:34 and says sin "actively enslaves" and that, for Jesus, sin is "vicious slavery to moral failure, to rebellion against the God who has made us."⁷¹ The slavery Jesus describes here is an inward condition from which one cannot flee and which is rooted in a wrong relationship with God. As George Beasley-Murray said, "Such a slave needs a redeemer!"⁷²

At present, we can only speculate as to the degree that human volitional sin affects epigenetics and the subsequent expression of certain genes. Yet what we do know about epigenetics is consistent with the idea that sin is indeed *slavish*. Participation in sexual sin actively enslaves one to further indulgence in the sin, an indulgence which may feel freeing, but is actually a deeper progression into bondage. At the same time, we must not rush to a hurried conclusion that says everyone experiencing same-sex attraction does so because of choices they have made which have altered their epigenome. While some people have certainly contributed to the strength of their same-sex attraction by their

⁷¹ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 350. Leon Morris comments on Jesus' statement here and says, "Those who sin are slaves to their sin whether they realize it or not. This means they cannot break away from their sin. For that they need a power greater than their own." Leon Morris, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel According to John*, rev. (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1995), 407.

⁷² George R. Beasley-Murray, *The Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 36, *John* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 134.

behavior, others experience same-sex attraction for reasons which elude us. The consistent Biblical witness is that regardless of the source of sexual temptation, the appropriate expression for sex is only within heterosexual and monogamous marriage.

Conclusion

Epigenetics is a burgeoning area of research with fascinating discoveries about how genes are expressed. Though touted by the media, Ngun's research is flawed with a small sample size, a confusing use of algorithms developed by the team itself, and an imprudent assumption that the epigenetic changes they observed caused homosexuality without considering the opposite hypothesis – homosexuality may have caused the changes. Furthermore, other research has not found the types of connections Ngun claims. Christians can expect other claims regarding homosexuality and epigenetics to emerge in the coming years. A rejection of biological determinism combined with a robust understanding of the manner in which sin actively enslaves will help interpret the data in a manner consistent with Christian ethics.

Weapons, Wealth, and the End of the World:
Hag 2:6-7 in 1QM XII, 14; XIX, 6; and Heb 12:26-27

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Those looking to scripture for hope of earthly financial enrichment from God do not find a friend in the Epistle to the Hebrews. To the contrary, Hebrews' audience has a history of suffering for Christ (Heb 10:32-34). The author exhorts his listeners to imitate the faithful of the old covenant who endured great trials of faith (Heb 11), ultimately looking to Jesus for persevering aid (Heb 12:1-2). But Hebrews is not without hope. The author calls his audience to a worldview that includes both present and future blessings: in the present age, forgiveness of sin in Christ (1:3; 2:14-18; 4:14-16; 7:26-28; 9:11-14; 10:11-18; 12:22-24; 13:11-12, 20) and rich fellowship in the community of faithful brothers (3:12-14; 10:19-25; 12:12-17; 13:1); and at Christ's return (9:28; 12:25-29), the removal of sin and struggle in the eternal city of God (Heb 9:28; 13:14).

Developing this new covenant worldview for his audience, the Author employs the Hebrew scriptures at every turn. His use of Israel's sacred texts provides points of contact for comparing worldview expectations of the new covenant with those rooted in the old. Some of the texts he chooses are also employed by authors during the Second Temple period, providing a second window of comparison with Hebrews.

Haggai, *The War Scroll*, and Hebrews: Worldviews in Tension

I wish here to do a bit of worldview comparison between Hebrews, a Qumran scroll and one of the minor prophets, analyzing phrases and imagery from Hag 2:6-7 in 1QM XII, 14; XIX, 6 and Heb 12:26-27. Taken together, Hag 2:6-7 offers three propositions: (1) a statement of the means by which God promises to aid the returned exiles (shaking of the natural world and the nations opposing Israel), (2) a statement of purpose (the wealth of the nations brought to Israel), and (3) a statement of result (provision for the second temple). While the *War Scroll* and

Hebrews would be free to use the prophetic text for their own purposes, I suggest that Hebrews has less contextual affinity with the prophet's original setting than that identified in 1QM.

To demonstrate this thesis, I will first offer a brief analysis of Hag 2:6-7 in its context, including echoes from the exodus tradition and Exod 12:35-36. Second, I will identify how Hag 2:7 is used in the speech of the chief priest in 1QM XII, 14 and XIX, 6. I will then turn to Heb 12:26, analyzing how Hag 2:6 contributes to the worldview expectations the Author establishes for his readers.

Haggai 2:6-7 and Echoes of Exodus 12:36-36

Haggai prophesies the word of YHWH to the returned exiles, challenged and discouraged by their situation in Judah. The authoritative phrase “declares the LORD” (Hag 1:13; 2:4, 8, 9),¹ permeates the prophet's announcement of YHWH's future plans for His people and the second temple. As noted *supra*, Hag 2:6-7 records three propositions, the first details the means by which YHWH would aid His people: by shaking the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land (מרעיש את־השמים ואת־הארץ ואת־הים ואת־החרבה). It may be that Haggai predicts the shaking of these created phenomena as a prelude to YHWH's immediately subsequent declaration in Hag 2:7a, that He would shake the nations (את־כל־הגוים). If so, Haggai moves from the general to the specific, from the cosmic to the salvation historical.

What is the purpose and result of YHWH's powerful intervention for the returned exiles? In Hag 2:7b YHWH states that the nations He shakes, “will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory” (ובאו חמדת כל־הגוים ומלאתי את־הבית הזה כבוד). The wealth of the nations is thus viewed as YHWH's supply for the furnishing of the second temple—just as the wealth of Egypt had enriched the Israelites in the exodus (Exod 12:35-36). Haggai's choice of the feminine noun חמד emphasizes the outward attractiveness of the wealth of the nations, the value of these items expressed in their beauty.² John A. Kessler summarizes Haggai's use of Holy War imagery from the exodus writing that the divine declaration in Hag 2:6-7 “is an oracle describing the

¹ Unless noted otherwise, all English scriptural citations are taken from the NASU.

² David Talley, “חמד,” *NIDOTTE* 2:167-68.

eschatological glory that the temple will receive. Yahweh is the divine warrior, coming judge, and ultimate victor. In a way superseding the defeat of the gods of Egypt and the spoiling of the Egyptians (Exod 12:36b) Yahweh will destroy the resistance of the nations (Hag 2:20-23) and lay claim to the riches of the world.”³

The exodus tradition frames the prophet’s theological worldview described in Hag 2:6-7. Here the prophet writes as a singular event the time from Israel’s plundering of Egypt (Exod 12:35-36) to YHWH’s promise that He would accompany Israel into the promised land even despite their idolatry with the golden calf (Exod 33:14-17). In the sequence of plagues recounted in Exodus 5-14, the plundering of the Egyptians initiates the climax of the narrative. As Moses announces YHWH’s declarations, water is turned to blood; frogs, flies, and locusts cover the land; fleas swarm upon livestock. And Exodus 12:35-36 brings this sequence to a crescendo, recounting the Israelites’ request that the Egyptians give them silver and gold and jewelry and clothing, plundering Egypt of its wealth. Haggai thus has in the exodus tradition of Exodus 5-14 a pattern for describing God’s power over the created/cosmic elements and applying it to the personal/salvation historical. In the exodus tradition (reflecting Abraham’s earlier enrichment in Egypt after the Sarah incident of Gen 12:10-20), Holy War and the obtaining of wealth begin to be woven together in Israel’s worldview.⁴ The fusion of these concepts is seen in Hag 2:6-7 as well. The prophet announces that YHWH’s declaration of judgment will re-order the created world—and the nations of men—for the prosperity of Israel and the adorning of the second temple.

³ John A. Kessler, “The Shaking of the Nations: An Eschatological View,” *JETS* 30.2 (1987): 166.

⁴ Max Rogland comments that Haggai’s phrase “represents a kind of ‘boastful’ statement meant to inspire confidence in YHWH’s hearers: the shaking of the cosmos and the ensuing time of prosperity are being presented as a trifling, easy achievement in comparison with the deliverance from Egypt” (“A ‘Cryptic Phrase’ in Hag 2:6,” *JBL* 136.3 [2017]: 591-92).

Table 1. Clause Statements of Haggai 2:6-7

	Means	Purpose	Result
Hag 2:6-7	God shakes Created Phenomena and the Nations	God brings the Wealth of the Nations to the Returned Exiles	The Second Temple adorned with Glorious Treasure

Ralph L. Smith underscores the eschatological character of Haggai's prophecy and inquires if the prophet uses the language of Holy War to speak of the YHWH's work in overturning worldly powers.⁵ Smith's observation is validated by the fact that Hag 2:6-7, including motifs of the exodus tradition, informs the worldview expressed in the *War Scroll*.⁶

⁵ Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (WBC 32; Dallas: Word, 1994), 157-58. Kessler suggests that Haggai 2 displays the standard formula of eschatological Holy War, "The most significant (constituent) being the cosmic portents accompanying the intervention of Yahweh against his enemies. These events bring terror and disarray upon Yahweh's foes," ("The Shaking of the Nations," 164).

⁶ Carol L. and Eric M. Myers note that Haggai's prophecy reflects "the deference involved when vassal nations send costly items to a foreign capital whose regime dominated theirs. The capital's symbolic role as the center of a far-flung empire was enhanced by the incorporation of items from the farthest parts of its dominion into its buildings and treasuries. The eschatological vision has Yahweh rather than any human ruler as the cosmic emperor" (*Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, [AB 25B; Garden City: Doubleday, 1987], 53). And this eschatological frame is noted as a point of contact for Hebrews and Qumran. J. C. McCullough notes that both understood the Scriptures to have an end-time significance for the people of God, and both believed themselves to be the people of God in the end time ("Some Recent Developments in Research on the Epistle to the Hebrews: II," *IBS* 3 [1981]: 32).

Haggai 2:7 in 1QM**The Structure and Message of 1QM**

David Flusser summarizes both the richness and complexity of studying the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QM in particular, writing:

It is not easy to understand the minds of apocalyptic authors, especially with regard to their systematic constructs—completely groundless—that they believe will come to be realized. And it is that much more difficult when it comes to certain of the Qumran texts, such as the War Scroll: not only did they believe their fantastic plans would come to fruition, they allotted themselves a central and active role in effecting a chain of events that they themselves fabricated.⁷

Various theories have been set forth for interpreting the *War Scroll*. Yigal Yadin argues that 1QM should be understood as the solution to questions regarding how Israel was to maintain both ritual and tactical rules for Holy War.⁸ Philip Davies proposes that any conclusions about the meaning of 1QM must be understood in light of the author's sources and the composition history of all extant columns.⁹ Jean Duhaime identifies points of contact between 1QM and contemporary war manuals, and suggests that 1QM be interpreted as a utopian manual for war.¹⁰ Finally, Brian Schultz suggests that textual markers in the manuscript of 1QM are clues to identifying the author's flow of thought and should thus guide interpretation of the contents of the scroll.¹¹

⁷ David Flusser, "Apocalyptic Elements in the War Scroll," in *Qumran and Apocalypticism* (vol. 1 of *Judaism of the Second Temple Period*; trans. Azan Yadin; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 158.

⁸ Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (trans. Batya and Chaim Rabin; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁹ Philip R. Davies, *1QM, The War Scroll from Qumran: Its Structure and History* (BibOr 32; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1977).

¹⁰ Jean Duhaime, "War Scroll (1QM; 1Q33; 4Q491-496 = 4QM1-6; 4Q497)," in *Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents* [vol. 2 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck)], 1995; *ibid.*, "The War Scroll from Qumran and the Greco-Roman Tactical Treatises," *RevQ* 13.1-4 (1988), 133-51.

¹¹ Brian Schultz, *Conquering the World: The War Scroll (1QM) Reconsidered* (STDJ 76; Leiden: Brill, 2009). Like other scholars working on 1QM, Schultz

Schultz' identifies five units of thought in 1QM:¹² Historical Setting and Overview of the War (I, 1-II, 14), General Description of the Army and Weaponry (II, 16-VII, 7), Tactical Issues of the War (VII, 9-IX, E), Prayers & Speeches to be Said at War (IX, E-XIV, E), Specifics for the War against the Kittim (XIV, E-XIX, E).¹³ Schultz' frame provides a window for identifying how the author of the *War Scroll* uses Hag 2:7, initially in the prayers and speeches the sect's priests are to make during the war (XII, 14) and then again in XIX, 6 as the congregation rejoices in victory.

Hag 2:7 in 1QM XII, 14

Haggai 2:7 is one of several scriptural references cohering the *War Scroll's* flow of thought in columns X-XII. Texts describing divine election and its benefits are of special interest to the author of 1QM. He wants

notes the importance of identifying the literary progress of the author's thoughts. In eight locations, the author of 1QM skips a line of text: III, 12; V, 15; VI, 7; VII, 8; XII, 6; XVI, 2; XVI, 10; and XVIII, 9. Schultz argues that these breaks represent the author's marking of discourse units. At certain points in 1QM the author provides what seem lesser divisions, leaving a portion of a line open and beginning a new sentence on the immediately subsequent line (I, 7, 15; IV, 5, 14; V, 2; IX, 9, 16; XI, 12; XII, 16; XIII, 3, 6; XIV, 1, 15; XV, 3; XVI, 14; XVII, 3, 9; and XIX, 8) (*ibid.*, 44, 57). Schultz cautions interpreters from uncritical adherence to these textual divisions saying: "It remains imperative to note the 'quality' of the sense delimiters, even though these may not be reflecting any overall systematic hierarchical division of the text" (*ibid.*, 51), and "attempting to evaluate the 'weight' of the shift between units is far from an objective task" (*ibid.*, 56). Schultz suggests that interpreters identify the consistency of these textual markers and then see if these denote "a logical progression of ideas" (*ibid.*, 57). In his observation, "On several occasions in (1QM), it does appear as though there is some kind of thematic unity between all the units contained between two large unit delimiters, almost as systematically as if it was an outline" (*ibid.*, 72).

¹² *Ibid.*, 74-78.

¹³ Schultz' research leads him to conclude that though the author of 1QM originally intends to describe the sect's warfare during the messianic age (detailed in II, 16-XIV, E), "Eventually it (1QM) was modified so as to include a description of the battle that would bring about the expected messianic age" (described in XIV, E-XIX, E) (*ibid.*, 7). Schultz suggests that the two stages of the one great end-time battle described in 1QM resemble each other because, "The pre-messianic age was expected to mirror as accurately as possible that which was to come" (*ibid.*).

his readers to be reminded again and again that God chose Israel to be His people and to demonstrate His dominion and power—even through Holy War. In what Schultz cites as the author of 1QM's rules for war,¹⁴ the Chief Priest is to begin his exhortation by praying Deut 7:21-22 (X, 1-2), reminding the Sons of Light that since God is in their midst they must remain pure and abstain from shameful nakedness. He is then to cite Deut 20:3-4 (X, 3-4). This is Moses' command that the Chief Priest exhort Israel in the mighty acts of God. The Chief Priest is to cite Num 10:9 to remind Israel that when God hears the sound of the trumpets, He is mindful to deliver them (X, 7-8). The priests thus serve in the Holy War not only by their presence among the troops directing the battle with various trumpet blasts but also through the words spoken by the Chief Priest. The words of the Chief Priest both encourage the valiant and cause the faint of heart to turn back to the camp. Having cited specific texts from Deuteronomy and Numbers, the Chief Priest surveys the OT recounting for the warriors God's mighty acts of deliverance. Pharaoh and his army were no match for Moses and the elect congregation of Israel (XI, 9-10; cf. Exod 14); Goliath could not stand against Israel's God and His chosen king David (XI, 1-3; cf. 1 Sam 17); and God's power rose above the schemes of Assyria and Gog (XI, 11-16).

The Chief Priest is to announce that the Kittim of his day and the hordes of Belial are likewise no match for Israel's God. He is the God of war (XI, 8-9), the creator of the universe, the ruler over nature (X, 9-15), the captain of the heavenly angelic troop (XII, 1-6). During the battle, the Chief Priest is to proclaim that God's presence among the warrior-sect fulfills Balaam's prophecy concerning the star rising out of Jacob (XI, 6-7; Num 24:17-19). For Israel, only God is the King of glory (XII, 7-8); God is the ultimate warrior, the hero of battle (XII, 8-10), the One who takes up the sword against the guilty (XII, 11-12). The Chief Priest is to petition God not only to destroy His enemies but also to restore the fortunes of Israel. Employing imagery reminiscent of Exod 12:35-36, the author of 1QM includes language of Hag 2:7 in the manuscript he writes for the Chief Priest to read as he encourages the troops in battle. The Chief Priest

¹⁴ Davies proposes that cols. II-IX and cols. XV-XIX are "deliberate compositions, with a coherent structure and purpose," but cols. X-XIV contain "no introduction or conclusion, no unity of style, subject matter, or background" (*Structure and History*, 91), suggesting that a liturgical book prompts the composition of cols. X-XIV (*ibid.*, 92).

is to cast a vision of the day when the gates of Jerusalem would need to be opened continually to receive the wealth of the nations (שער[י]ן תמיד (להביא אליך חיל גוים 1QM, XII, 14).¹⁵ The author of 1QM generally follows the text of Hag 2:7, save the use of the masculine synonym חיל (wealth)¹⁶ for the feminine חמד (beautiful things) noted *supra*. The Chief Priest is thus to exhort the troops that via God's conquering power operating through them, they would be victorious over their enemies (XII, 12-17; cf. XIX, 5-6).¹⁷ Haggai states that the wealth of the nations would supply for the construction of the second temple. The author of 1QM sees the wealth of the nations not so much as compensation for Israel's lack of resources in constructing the second temple but simply as a reciprocity of God's greatness as deliverer of His warrior people.¹⁸

¹⁵ Text and translation from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds. Vol. 1 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

¹⁶ It may be that the *War Scroll's* term for wealth offers a wider semantic field (see "חיל," *NIDOTTE* 2:116-26). In the OT, references to חיל include not only financial increase (cf. Gen 34:29; Deut 8:16) but also, more commonly, military strength (cf. Exod 14:4; 2 Kgs 6:14; Ezek 17:17)—though the former is likely in view in 1QM XII, 14 (and XIX,6 discussed *infra*) despite the military theme of the scroll.

¹⁷ Among the differences between cols. III-XIV, E and the Kittim War (XIV, E-XIX, E) are the priestly speeches of encouragement the Chief Priest offers in the latter. Schultz comments that "this may be directly related to the fact that there are no reversals expected during the War of the Divisions. In cols. XIV, E-XIX, E, the speeches always come right after the next set of troops is called to the front, but after the previous round has suffered a setback" (*Conquering the World*, 254). Because cols. X-XIV refer to both Jerusalem (a marker for the War of Divisions) and the Kittim (designating the Kittim War), they could be interpreted as describing either the Kittim War or the War of Divisions. Schultz concludes that they go with the latter but could reflect a tradition that also informed the Kittim War (*ibid.*, 255-58, 298). Since the Kittim War appears to be a time of struggle and even setbacks and the War of Divisions appears longer but victory seems almost automatic, one should not expect the same prayers or sequence of prayers to be offered in each (*ibid.*, 302). Schultz suggests that the High Priest will not be with the troops during the War of Divisions because he will be serving in the temple (*ibid.*, 324).

¹⁸ Catherine M. Murphy writes that while a military metaphor distinguishes 1QM, its worldview coheres with that presented in CD and 1QS. The Qumran community is not only oppressed but impoverished to the benefit of their

Hag 2:7 in 1QM XIX, 6

Throughout 1QM the author describes both the spiritual and human components of Holy War. In depicting the concluding battle, he notes that God lifts His hand against Belial and his lot as the Sons of Light engage their enemies (XVIII, 1-3). The priests are to sound the trumpets calling Israel to completely destroy their human foes (XVIII, 4-5). When the sun sets on the day of battle, the Chief Priest and the accompanying priests are to call together the warriors of Israel and lead them in benediction to God for His goodness and persevering aid during the war (XVIII, 6-8).

The concluding columns of 1QM describe Holy War as a display of God's greatness and kingly dominion over all spiritual and physical reality. The author notes that God displays His sovereignty in redeeming His people and removing the dominion of their enemy (XVIII, 11). God chooses to do this through battle, slaughtering the human opponents of His people and removing Belial from his throne of destruction (XVIII, 13-18).

Lawrence Schiffman notes that the Dead Sea Scrolls express a worldview consistent with other pseudepigraphical texts of the Second Temple Period: the end will be characterized by God's direct intervention in the world as He destroys the enemies of His people and ushers in a messianic age of peace.¹⁹ From his diachronic analysis of Holy War Schiffman concludes that in apocalyptic Jewish thought, war is

opponents (*Wealth in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Qumran Community* [STDJ 40; Köln: Brill, 2001]. The *War Scroll* calls the community to hope in the future day when God would literally reverse their fortunes with those of their oppressors. In this way, God or His delivering representative in 1QM "is the (economic) agent of this community's redemption" (ibid., 229). And this impoverished state, Murphy suggests, is a spiritual matter. She notes that the description of Belial's dominion in 1QM XIV, 9-11 would have economic implications (ibid., 227-28). Together with the hope that the wealth of the nations would be bought to the community at the conclusion of their final victory (1QM XII, 12-14), 1QM understands the depressed financial state of the community to be the result of Belial employing the nations to oppress the Sons of Light.

¹⁹ Lawrence H. Schiffman, "War in Jewish Apocalyptic Thought," in *War and Peace in the Jewish Tradition* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman and Joel B. Wolewelsky; New York: Michael Scharf Publication Trust of the Yeshiva University Press, 2007), 487.

understood to be an instrument by which God brings about the redemption of His people.²⁰ Column XIX of the *War Scroll* describes the victorious people of God rejoicing in Zion because of the victory of their God (cf. Exod 15:1-21; Pss 18, 107-118). Duhaime comments that, “The Sons of Light will experience, blessings, especially glory, joy, long life, and everlasting knowledge.”²¹ And to this list can be added the concept of riches as the nations and kings who opposed Israel bring tribute to the victorious people of God, in accord with the promise of Hag 2:7. In 1QM XIX, 5 the author writes that all the cities of Judah should open their gates so that “the wealth of the nations” (חיל גוים) may be brought to them (1QM XIX, 6). The author’s language here mirrors exactly a phrase also in 1QM XII, 14 noted *supra*. The human enemies of Israel are yet described as God’s enemies, those whom God plunders for the sake of enriching Zion and the cities of Judah as the sect rejoices in victory.

Table 2. Clause Statements of Haggai 2:6-7 Identified in 1QM

	Means	Purpose	Result
Hag 2:6-7	God shakes Created Phenomena and the Nations	God brings the Wealth of the Nations to the Returned Exiles	The Second Temple adorned with Glorious Treasure

²⁰ Ibid., 492.

²¹ Duhaime, “War Scroll (1QM; 1Q33; 4Q491-496 = 4QM1-6; 4Q497),” 87. Apocalyptic Holy War expectations of the Second Temple period include a post-war victory celebration when the people of God praise and exalt Him for the joy and peace they experience upon the destruction of their opponent(s) (1 En. 38:1-6; 39:5-7; 45:1-4; 60:28-29; 62:14-15; 70:3-4; and 4 Ezra 7:26-28; 9:7-9; 12:33-35; 13:12-13, 39-40, 46-50). *Infra* this study identifies how the author of Hebrews interprets Hag 2:6-7, diverging from the interpretation offered in the *War Scroll*. I will suggest that Hebrews’ uses the prophetic text to describe Christ’s second coming (Heb 9:27-28; 10:35-39) as the victory *par excellence*, potently addressing the victorious-but-suffering situation of the audience (Heb 2:1-4; 3:12-14; 4:1-15; 12:1-13; 13:8-15).

	Means	Purpose	Result
1QM XII, 14 and XIX, 6	(God raises His Sword to fight; 1QM XII, 11-12; XIX, 4)	God brings the Wealth of the Nations to the Victorious Sect	The Victorious Sect rejoices in Riches and God's Victory

Conclusion

Thus, in both 1QM XII, 14 and XIX, 6 the author employs Haggai's promise that YHWH would bring the riches of the nations to His people. The *War Scrolls* appears more concerned with the purpose clause in Hag 2:7b (i.e., the enrichment of Israel) than the means clause in Hag 2:6-7a (i.e., the shaking of natural phenomena and the nations). While the author of the *War Scroll* remained consistent in his use of Hag 2:7 in both cols. XII and XIX, it should be noted that his use of the prophet's phrase and imagery differs from Haggai's original setting. Haggai 2:7 is a promise within a section of corporate lament. The returned exiles grieve at the diminished scale of the second temple and though the prophet's word is intended to encourage them, the very fact that the returned exiles have to rebuild calls to mind Israel's sin, rebellion, and removal from the land.

But the *War Scroll* knows nothing of Haggai's lament. The language and vision of the prophet is re-framed entirely in terms of celebration. Further, while Haggai and the returned exiles understand that the wealth of the nations are to be used for the restricted purpose of temple construction, in 1QM XII, 14 and XIX, 6 the wealth of the nations seems to be used freely, for the adorning of the victorious sect. Perhaps the author of 1QM imagines Haggai's promise that God would shake the cosmos and Israel's foes to be fulfilled by God's intervention in the battle to aid with congregation with His mighty sword (1QM XII, 11-12; XIX,

4).²² It is the means clause of Hag 2:6-7 that especially concerns the author of Hebrews, the locus of investigation to which this study now turns.

Haggai 2:6 in Hebrews 12:26-27

The way that Hebrews uses Hag 2:6 in Heb 12:26-27 is foreshadowed by the citation of Ps 101:26-28 LXX (102:26-28 MT; 102:25-27) in Heb 1:10-12. There the Author places Jesus, God's powerful Son, as the addressee of the Psalm phrases—emphasizing the Son's role in creation and the consummation of the cosmos. As such, the Son is far superior to the transient angelic beings that serve as a foil for Jesus in Hebrews 1-2. Paul Ellingworth notes the connection between the use of the Psalm text in Heb 1:10-12 and Hag 2:6 in Heb 12:25-27 noting that these texts help to explain one another.²³

How might the Author use Hag 2:6 in Heb 12:26? George H. Guthrie notes that the language of Haggai's prophecy "well serves Hebrews' appropriation of the passage to refer to Christ's second coming as a cataclysmic event, and this use of the passage as referring to the end times has consonance with similar interpretations in broader Judaism."²⁴ Second Temple literature often describes the end times as a time of war, when God intervenes and participates in Holy War by altering the natural world in some way to deliver His faithful ones from their opponents. God's declarations shaking and transforming the earth à la Hag 2:6 (cf.

²² In Second Temple literature, sword imagery is used as a Holy War metaphor for God's declarations of judgment against human and spiritual foes (1QM [XII, 11; XIV, 9, 15; XVII, 5-6; XVIII, 1-3; and XIX, 4]; 1 En. [62:12; 63:11-12]). The Author of Hebrews uses sword imagery for the word of God (Heb 4:12-13).

²³ Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 126. The connection between the Author of Hebrew's use of the Old Testament to describe the alteration of the heavens and the earth in Heb 1:10-12 and 12:25-27 is noted also by F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 364; Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (ed. Helmut Koester; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 380; William L. Lane *Hebrews 1-8* (WBC 47a; Dallas: Word, 1991), 31; and Gert J. Steyn, *The Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews* (FRLANT 235. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 355; et al.

²⁴ George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews" in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 989; cf. Myers and Myers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1-8*, 52.

Exod 12:35-36; 19:18; Judg 5:4; Pss 68:7-8; 102:25-27; et al.) provide a window for comparing Hebrews with Second Temple Holy War motifs observed in 1QM XII, 14 and XIX, 6 (cf. 4 Ezra 3:17-19; 6:14-18; 10:26-56; 13:35-36).²⁵

It will be observed in what follows that the Author of Hebrews differs in his interpretation of God's declarations shaking the earth, viewing these distinctly in light of salvation history and God's final word in His Son (Heb 1:1-2). Hebrews' use of Hag 2:6 in Heb 12:26-27 follows a comparison between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion (Heb 12:18-24). Hebrews emphasizes the physical reality of Mount Sinai with its foreboding shadow. Interpreting Exodus 19, the Author of Hebrews notes that YHWH's holy presence comes upon Mount Sinai in fire, a penetrating voice, lightening and gloom (Heb 12:18-19). The Author reminds his audience that Mount Sinai—an earthly, physical reality—is not their destination. He writes, "For you have not come to what could be touched" (Ὁὐ γὰρ προσεληλύθατε ψηλαφωμένῳ, Heb 12:18), establishing a contrast with the heavenly, untouchable Zion he describes in Heb 12:22-24. The Author of Hebrews thus places the touchable Mount Sinai in the category of created things soon to be shaken (τῶν σαλευομένων μετὰθesis ὡς πεπονημένων, Heb 12:27). He notes that since none could escape God's declarations Mount Sinai, it would be impossible to elude the present word spoken from heaven (Heb 12:19-20, 25), God's word of the new covenant.

The frightening detail provided in the description of Mount Sinai in Heb 12:18-21, together with the elaboration of the divine voice shaking it, serves as the point of departure for the Author's use of Hag 2:6 LXX. He cites Hag 2:6 LXX, διότι τάδε λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ Ἐτι ἅπαξ

²⁵ Christopher Rowland argues that the revelatory act of God recorded in Exodus 19 establishes a schema for later apocalyptic categories of thought saying, "Revelation is after all at the heart of the Jewish religion" ("Apocalyptic Literature," in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture* [eds. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988], 180). Bruce notes points of contact between descriptions of the shaking of the earth in Haggai, the *Similitudes*, and Rev 20:11 and 21:1 (Bruce, *Hebrews*, 364). Attridge writes that the shaking of the earth "became a regular feature of prophetic predictions of the Day of Yahweh and of eschatological tableaux," arguing that the idea of 'quaking' "is the core of the final verses of the chapter (Hebrews 12)" (Attridge, *Hebrews*, 380).

ἐγὼ σείσω τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν (“For thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land’”) in Heb 12:26, ἔτι ἅπαξ ἐγὼ σείσω οὐ μόνον τὴν γῆν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν οὐρανόν (“Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven”). The Author of Hebrews adjusts the text of Hag 2:6 LXX in four ways: (1) inverting τὸν οὐρανόν and τὴν γῆν, (2) inserting the adverbial phrase οὐ μόνον modifying σείσω, (3) inserting ἀλλὰ before καὶ, and (4) eliminating the concluding phrase of the verse, καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν.²⁶ William L. Lane suggests that the Author’s use of Hag 2:6 LXX in Heb 12:26 stops short of reflecting contemporary apocalyptic traditions which understand the Sinai earthquake as a cosmic event.²⁷ But the Author takes precisely this course, as Guthrie notes, “The shaking of the earth ties the warning (to heed the speaker of God’s word, Heb 12:25-26) back to the terrible confrontation at Sinai. Thus, at the Sinai event God ‘shook the earth,’ but he has promised a cosmic ‘shaking’ for the future, a shaking that will include the heavens.”²⁸

For Hebrews, Haggai’s temporal adverbial phrase ἔτι ἅπαξ (“yet once more”), modifying the verb σείσω (“I will shake”), echoes the divine word shaking the earthly Mount Sinai in Heb 12:18-21. As noted already, Haggai and the Chief Priest of 1QM describe the shaking and wealth of the nations in light of Exod 12:35-36, the record of the children of Abraham plundering the Egyptians. But the Author of Hebrews quotes Hag 2:6 LXX after the immediately preceding contrast of Mount Sinai and Mount Zion (Heb 12:18-24), alluding only to the description of Mount Sinai shaking as YHWH speaks to Moses and the people in Exod 19:18 (cf. Judg 5:4-5). Thus, after describing the shaking of Mount Sinai, Hebrews employs Hag 2:6 with its reference to the shaking of the earth (τὴν γῆν, Heb 12:26). Hebrews’ interpretation of the earth as a reference to Mount Sinai (the locus of shaking in Heb 12:18-21) reflects Holy War expectations expressed in part in 1QM XII, 14 and XIX, 6 (cf. the logic of the Eagle and Son of Man visions in 4 Ezra 10-12).

But Hebrews’ part-for-whole interpretation of Mount Sinai (Heb 12:18-21; cf. Exod 19:18; Judg 5:4) for the earth (Heb 12:26) counters

²⁶ Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 686-87.

²⁷ William L. Lane, *Hebrews 9-13* (WBC 47b; Dallas: Word, 1991), 478.

²⁸ Guthrie, “OT in Hebrews,” 990.

the paradigm of militant earthly conquest expressed in the *War Scroll* and other Second Temple texts like *4 Ezra*. According to Hebrews, even the earth is a limited sphere of shaking. The Author of Hebrews employs Hag 2:6 LXX to state that when God shakes the earth, He will also shake the heavens. The shaking of earth and heaven will thus reveal the unshakable kingdom of the new covenant (Heb 12:27-28)²⁹—surpassing the shaking of Egypt during the exodus or Mount Sinai when the children of Abraham received the Law.

Herbert Wolf notes the connection between the treasures (“desire of the nations,” KJV) Israel receives during the exodus and the treasures Haggai prophecies would come to the returned exiles for the edification of the Second Temple.³⁰ Wolf argues that Haggai’s prophecy is fulfilled in Christ’s first Advent, Christ being the ultimate “desire of the nations.”³¹ But in Heb 12:26-27 the Author employs Hag 2:6-7 LXX with reference to Christ’s return and the alteration of the natural world that will reveal the final realities of the new covenant. In the worldview of Hebrews, what differentiates Christ’s first coming and His return? I suggest that though Hebrews accentuates the present effects of Christ’s work on the cross to forgive sin finally, it is the hope of a final, sinless domain that compels the audience to endure their present struggle against sin (Heb 2:1-4; 3:12-4:13; 5:11-6:8; 10:26-38; 12:12-17). Ellingworth suggests that the purpose of the quotation of Hag 2:6 LXX (2:6 MT) in Heb 12:26-27 reflects that of the epistle as a whole: “to encourage the addressees to hold fast to their faith during the final cataclysm in which God will shake both parts of his creation, but from which his kingdom, in which believers share, will emerge henceforth unshakable.”³²

²⁹ Attridge suggests that Melchizedek (7:3), Christ as High Priest (5:6; 6:20; 7:26-28) and the heavenly city (12:22-24; 13:13-14) are some of the unshakable, remaining things Author has in mind (*Hebrews*, 381). Author describes the new covenant in Hebrews 8-10, and see also how the new covenant is described as a permanent phenomenon in 2 Corinthians 3.

³⁰ Herbert Wolf, “The Desire of All the Nations’ in Haggai 2:7: Messianic or Not?” *JETS* 19.2 [1976]: 97-98.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 687.

Table 3. Clause Statements of Haggai 2:6-7 Identified in 1QM and Hebrews

	Means	Purpose	Result
Hag 2:6-7	God shakes Created Phenomena and the Nations	God brings the Wealth of the Nations to the Returned Exiles	The Second Temple adorned with Glorious Treasure
1QM XII, 14 and XIX, 6	(God raises His Sword to fight; 1QM XII, 11-12; XIX, 4)	God brings the Wealth of the Nations to the Victorious Sect	The Victorious Sect rejoices in Riches and God's Victory
Hebrews 12:26	God shakes Created Phenomena and the Heavenly Domain	God removes the Created Phenomena and reveals the Heavenly Domain	The Faithful enjoy Fellowship with God in the Sinless, Heavenly Domain

Conclusion

To review: what would prompt the Author of Hebrews to interpret Hag 2:6 LXX in Heb 12:26-27 without any reference to international conflicts or the hope of some kind of earthly enrichment so prominent in the prophet's own setting and 1QM? The Author of Hebrews employs Hag 2:6 to articulate in militant apocalyptic imagery the complete removal of the created order—corresponding with Mount Sinai (Heb 12:18-21), the earthly cult of Israel (cf. Heb 8:1-5; 9:1-14, 23-24), and perhaps even the world-conquest aspirations of 1QM. But where the *War Scroll* explicitly employs what I have labeled the purpose and ends propositions of Hag 2:7 to encourage the Qumranite warriors that God

will give them earthly, worldly dominion—and the wealth of the nations, too—Hebrews counters by employing just the means clause of Hag 2:6 LXX.

For the Author of Hebrews, when God shakes the earth He will do so not for the sake of establishing Israel as the permanent world power with her earthly, made-by-man cultic religious services, but to remove these altogether. According to Hebrews, these final realities of the new covenant will begin with Christ's return, which he writes will be "without reference to sin" (χωρίς ἁμαρτίας, Heb 9:28). And the absence of sin at Christ's return underscores the theme of Christ's priestly perfection—a theme cohering Hebrews' flow of thought. Christ, the Author of Hebrews writes, made purification for sin (Heb 1:3) by defeating the devil at the cross (Heb 2:14) and laying down His own life as a propitiatory sacrifice to God for the sins of Abraham's descendants (Heb 2:16-18; 10:1-14). Hebrews emphasizes that as a high priest, Christ was sinless (χωρίς ἁμαρτίας, Heb 4:15) even though He experienced every kind of temptation common to humanity. Having completed His earthly ministry, Christ is now separated from sinners (Heb 7:26), seated at the right hand of God (Heb 12:2) where His blood yet speaks a testimony of His faithful sacrifice unto God (Heb 5:7-8; 12:24). It is the hope of an unshakable kingdom (Heb 12:28), a heavenly city (Heb 13:14) of festive worship (Heb 12:22-24), a sinless sphere of relating with God and fellow saints that the Author of Hebrews employs to help his audience endure their present struggle against sin.

As the Author of Hebrews writes in his interpretation of Psalm 101:26-28 LXX (102:26-28 MT; 102:25-27) in Heb 1:10-12 and restates in his interpretation of Hag 2:6 LXX in Heb 12:26-27, God's declarative word orders and alters the natural world to signal a shift in salvation history, ultimately revealing the heavenly sphere of sinless communion with God and the faithful.³³

³³ Contra G. W. Buchanan who suggests that Author presents the physical land of promise (Heb 11:9), shaken of old covenant structures and practices, as the unshakable kingdom (*To the Hebrews: Translation, Comments and Conclusions* [AB 36; New York: Doubleday, 1972]), 225). Buchanan's reading of Hebrews is inextricably related to international politics, understanding the alteration of natural phenomena to signal a change in the world situation: when God establishes His king in earthly Zion to reign over the nations, He declares natural phenomena to announce that a new era has dawned. In Buchanan's analysis,

Christ's followers thus enjoy Sabbath rest in the earthly Jerusalem. For the Author of Hebrews, this seems too small a sphere of dominion for the victorious Messiah and all the realities of the new covenant. As Radu Gheorghită writes, "The culmination of God's eschatological address, commencing with his speaking *ἐν υἱῷ* (1.2), will be an event no longer limited to the earthly domain, but will affect the heavenly one, as well" ("The Minor Prophets in Hebrews," in *Minor Prophets in the New Testament* [LNTS 377; London: T. & T. Clark, 2009], 131). See also Guthrie, "OT in Hebrews," 941, 991.

A Comparison
of Native American Missional Methodology:
The Moravians and the New Lights.

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The 18th century is known for several things, especially in North America. These years saw the French and Indian Wars, the creation of new colonies along the eastern coast of North America. They witnessed the formation of and beginnings of the United States of America. The 18th century also is when a series of evangelical revivals, largely occurring in the north eastern coast of North America took place. These revivals are now referred to as the “Great Awakening.” Closely connected to the Great Awakening is the missionary movement it created. On the one hand the Great Awakening inspired individuals to live out their Christian faith through missionary activity to the Native Americans. On the other hand prior to and throughout the Great Awakening there were already missionaries in North America emphasizing Native American evangelism. The purpose of this paper is to compare the missional methodology of the Moravians and the New Lights, in particularly that of David Brainerd in regards to Native American evangelism. Each of those compared are not only products of revivalism but also are foundational to what would later be referred to as the Modern

Missionary Movement of the early 19th century.¹ The Moravians² and the New Lights are both pivotal movements in not only Native American evangelism but also in modern missions and should therefore be understood systematically in their methodology.

The Moravians: Historical Context

It is fitting to begin with the Moravians, who largely sprouted out from among the early German and Dutch Pietists or as Thomas Kidd describes them, "The two main branches of European Pietism, Reformed and Lutheran..."³ On the one hand Dutch/Reformed Pietism was largely developed or made popular by Willem Teellinck (1579 – 1629) and Gysbertus Voetius (1589 – 1676). Teellinck was a supporter of what is referred to as the "second reformation"⁴ and through his preaching popularized piety for the layman.⁵ He stressed practical religion in such sermons as, "Concerning the Needful Duty of the Christian Coming to the Holy Supper; focused on the Words of Christ in Luke 22:19, 'Do this in my remembrance.'⁶ Teellinck made concrete a common core of piety while Voetius developed a more scholarly and systematic Pietism.

¹ It is evident that William Carey, whom the majority of missiologists refer to as the father of the Modern Missionary Movement found great inspiration from both the Moravians and David Brainerd, see Samuel Pearce Carey, *William Carey, D.D., Fellow of Linnaean Society* (Carey Press, 1934), John Clark Marshman, *The Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward, Embracing the History of the Serampore Mission* (London, 1859) and also Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India, 1793-1837: The History of Serampore and Its Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1967).

² David Schattschneider, "William Carey, Modern Missions, and the Moravian Influence," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 22, no. 1 (January 1998).

³ Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale, 2007), 24.

⁴ Tony Maan, "The Eucharistic Presence of Christ in Seventeenth Century Dutch Protestant Popular Piety: Toward a Catholic - Protestant Rapprochement?," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 269.

⁵ Joel Beeke, "The Dutch Second Reformation (Nadere Reformatie)," *Calvin Theological Journal* 28, no. 2 (1993): 312.

⁶ Willem Teellinck, *Dengaende de Schuldige plicht der Christenen ontrent the heyliche Avondmael. Ghedaen over de woorden Christ Lucas cap.22. vers. 19: 'Doet dit tot minjer ghedachtenisse.'*

Voetius published *Exercitia et Bibliotheca Studiosi Theologiae* in 1644 through the University of Utrecht. This volume theologically upheld the two revolutionary ideas that when intertwined created the basis of Pietism: genuine godliness and proper living.⁷ These men among others cultivated the idea of individual devotion to God and connected such with sacrificial ministry.⁸ The Dutch Pietists were largely concerned with a genuine faith religion as opposed to what Kidd refers to as “...formal religiosity...”⁹

On the other hand, since the Dutch Pietists emphasized genuine faith the German Pietists contributed largely to the aspect of godly living. Perhaps the most influential of the Moravian movement regarding German Pietists are what Michele Gillespie refers to as the “...Halle based leaders”: Jakob Spener and August Herman Francke.¹⁰ Frederick Herzog refers to Spener as the founder of Pietism as a movement, “What many had felt and said in one way or another, Spener was able effectively to communicate, evoking a wide response.”¹¹ This was done through the publication of Spener’s *Pia Desideria*¹² in 1675. In this writing Spener offered six proposals to correct the current condition of the Church,

⁷ Voetius also wrote two other revolutionary Pietistic works, *Proeve van de cracht der godtsalicheyt* (1628) and *Exercitia Pietatis* (1664) neither of which have been translated into English. Johann Georg Welch still holds *Exercitia Pietatis* as the foremost work among the Reformed. Tanis, James, *Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity: Reformed Pietism in Colonial America*, ed. F. Ernest Stoeffler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 34.

⁸ For an excellent source dealing specifically with the Dutch Pietists see, Fred Van Lieburg, *Living for God: Eighteenth Century Dutch Pietist Autobiography* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006).

⁹ Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 25. See also Ted Campbell, *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Columbia, 1991).

¹⁰ Michele Gillespie and Robert Beachy, comps., *Pious Pursuits: German Moravians in the Atlantic World* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 4.

¹¹ Frederick Herzog, *European Pietism Reviewed* (California: Pickwick Publications, 2003), 19.

¹² Also titled, *Heartfelt Desire for a God-pleasing Reform of the True Evangelical Church. Together with Several Simple Christian Proposals Looking Toward This End.*

them being ultimately the main points of Pietism.¹³ For Spener, primitive Christianity as expressed in the New Testament functioned as a model for both individual and communal ecclesial activity.¹⁴

August Hermann Francke (1663 – 1727), the other of the Halle-based leaders is perhaps the most influential individual for the Moravians. It was Francke that, "...translated the Pietism program into a vast network of influence and outreach."¹⁵ One of the many ways that Pietism grew was through an orphanage opened in 1695 in Halle largely due to the workings of Francke. Along with the Halle orphanage Francke organized Bible distribution as well as Protestant care in Eastern Europe as well as in the colonial United States. In very similar ways to that of Spener, Francke's writing and sermons emphasize the importance of Christians being godly examples within the community as well as being daily in God's word and to keep a diary.¹⁶ There is no doubting that

¹³ These 6 proposals are, (1) Beyond the daily preaching of the pulpit, there should be diligent reading of the Scripture by the head of the household. (2) Each Christian is a priest and part of being such is to teach others concerning living and salvation. (3) The majority of Christianity exists in practice. (4) Christians must have great concern for the protection of the Spiritual life. (5) Spener placed great emphasis on educational reform, calling for Biblical practice within Theological training. (6) The sermon and or preacher should edify the inner life of the hearer rather than an opportunity for showmanship. It is interesting to note the similarity between Spener and Luther. Herzog, *Pietism Reviewed*, 14-7.

¹⁴ For a comprehensive biography of Spener see, K. James Stein, *Phillip Jakob Spener: Pietist Patriarch* (Chicago: Covenant Press, 1986). See also, Johannes Wallman, *Phillip Jakob Spener und die Anfanges des Pietismus* (Tubigen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1970) and Georg Gremels, *Die Ethik Phillip Jakob Speners nach seinen Evangelischen Lebenspflichten* (Hamburg: Lit Verlag, 2002).

¹⁵ Herzog, *Pietism Reviewed*, 20.

¹⁶ Francke's titles included, "Rules for the Protection of Consciousness and for Good Order in Conversation or in Society" (1689), "A Letter to a Friend Concerning the Most Useful Way of Preaching" (1725), "If and How One May be Certain that One is a Child of God" (1707), "Pure and Unblemished Worship" (1704) and "Admonition to the Twelve Students Traveling to Lapland" (1722). Peter Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 99-166.

Francke played a pivotal role in the development of the Moravians.¹⁷

At this point it would be helpful to review five principles developed by Stephen Neil pertaining to early Pietist missions¹⁸ as a framework for future Moravian missions. The first principle is that Church and school are to be synonymous. Because the Pietists placed such a great deal on reading the Word of God, they attempted to educate Children and adults so that they would be able to read the Bible themselves. Secondly the Pietists recognized the importance of Bible translations. How else would the Bible be useable in foreign lands? Third, that the preaching of the Gospel must be based on knowledge of the natives. Fourth, the aim of missionary activity is obvious and individual conversion. These previous two principles were largely an attempt to genuinely convert natives rather than to westernize them. The final theory composed by Neil is that the Pietists sought to as quickly as possible initiate native converts into ministry as to have them eventually take over.¹⁹ These five tenets are helpful in understanding the development of Moravian missional methodology.

The final individual that will be examined is not only the founder of the Moravian movement but also is often regarded as the true father of modern missions, Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf.²⁰ Zinzendorf was born in May, 1700 and from a very early age revealed promising signs of leadership and blessing.²¹ His father died from tuberculosis hardly a

¹⁷ Sadly there are not many biographies or works of Francke in English, see Gary R. Sattler, *God's Glory, Neighbor's Good: A Brief Introduction to the Life and Writings of August Hermann Francke* (Chicago: Covenant, 1982). See also Peter C. Erb, *Pietists: Selected Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), Marianne Beyer-Frohlich, *Pietismus und Rationalismus* (Leipzig, 1933), Gustav Kramer, *August Hermann Francke: Ein Lebensbild* (Halle, 1880), Erich Beyreuther, *August Hermann Francke 1663-1727: Zeus des lebendigen Gottes* (Marburg: Verlag der Francke, 1956).

¹⁸ Composed mostly from a work concerning the Royal Danish Mission, Arno Lehmann, *Alte Briefe aus Indien* (Halle, 1957).

¹⁹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (London: Penguin, 1986), 195-7.

²⁰ B.M Brian, "Zinzendorf, Father of Modern Missions," *Missionary Review of the World*, no. 23 (1900).

²¹ Warneck gives an entire chapter to the Moravian missional movement, focusing largely on Zinzendorf. Gustav Warneck, *Outline of a History of*

month after Nicolaus was born, but upon his deathbed he recognized that his son was unusually blessed, "...I should bless you who are already more blessed than I who am about to stand before the throne of Jesus."²²

It is clear that Zinzendorf was part of a family that embraced Protestantism and encouraged a personal relationship with Jesus Christ,

When I was six years old, my preceptor, Herr Christian Ludwig Edeling...spoke a few words to me about my Savior and his merits; and in what sense I belonged to him and to him only. These words made so deep and lively an impression on me that I fell into a long protracted paroxysm of tears...This confidential interchange of thoughts and feelings prompted all my endeavors in later years to establish bands or societies for mutual conference and edification.²³

All biographers will agree that Zinzendorf was largely influenced by Martin Luther and August Hermann Francke.²⁴ On one hand Luther influenced Zinzendorf concerning the love of God's Word, the beauty of the sacraments and the necessity of Christian freedom. On the other hand Francke influenced Zinzendorf concerning the practicality of the gospel, the power of Christians united and the need of a renewed missions movement.²⁵ Weinlick emphasizes that the links made while studying with Francke at the University of Halle lead to the launching of Moravian missions.²⁶

Protestant Missions from the Reformation to the Present Time (New York: Revell Company, 1903), 53-73.

²² Natzmer, Gneomar Ernst von, *Die Jugend Zinzendorfs*, trans. John R. Weinlick, 1.

²³ John Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf: The Story of His Life and Leadership in the Renewed Moravian Church* (Pennsylvania: Moravian Church Press, 1989), 19.

²⁴ W. Walker, "Zinzendorf: Life and Work," in *Great Men of the Church*, (Chicago: Chicago University, 1908). See also, A.J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf the Ecumenical Pioneer* (London: SCM Press, 1962), Ernest Stoeffler, *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1973).

²⁵ For an excellent introduction to Zinzendorf's theological outlook see Craig Atwood, *Community of the Cross: Moravian Piety in Colonial Bethlehem* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), 45-75. See also, David Schattschneider, *Souls for the Lamb: A Theology for the Christian Mission According to Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf and Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenberg* (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1976).

²⁶ Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf*, 29-30.

In short, Zinzendorf transformed his central European estate into the center of the Moravian religious and education effort beginning in the early 1720's known as "Herrnhut."²⁷ Within the first five years Herrnhut had grown tremendously and was attracting not only Moravian immigrants, but German Pietists and other persecuted Protestants who dissented from their congregations. Within ten years this group of "Herrnhunters" grew and developed a new religio-socio-economic environment which highly emphasized missions per Zinzendorf's interests.²⁸ In fact the idea of missions became so important to the Moravians that the term "Moravian" became synonymous with missions.²⁹ Within twenty years the Moravians established Missionary presence in the West Indies, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, South America, Southern Africa, Labrador (South and Mid-Eastern Canada) and in eastern North America emphasizing Native American evangelization.³⁰ The methodology of the Moravians Native American Missions will now be explored.

The Moravians: Missional Methodology

The methodology of the Moravians can largely be drawn based on the convictions of both the influences and beliefs of the Moravian leaders. A specific Moravian missional methodology is difficult to arrange due to

²⁷ It is difficult to say exactly when the estate became the "estate." Weinlick asserts that prior to August, 1723 with the effects of the Covenant of the Four Brethren which is when many assume to be the beginning of the Moravian Movement, there was an established orphanage already. Ibid, 66-7.

²⁸ Gillian Gollin, *Moravians in Two Worlds: A Study of Changing Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 2. See also Hunter James, *The Quiet People of the Land: The Story of the North Carolina Moravians in Revolutionary Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1976)

²⁹ John Weinlick and Albert Frank, *The Moravian Church through the Ages: The Story of a Worldwide, Pre-Reformation Protestant Church* (Pennsylvania: Moravian Church Press, 1989), 75.

³⁰ "The remarkable nature of this world-wide missionary movement can be appreciated only when it is borne in mind that the entire congregation at Herrnhut in 1732 numbered about six hundred, that the great majority of its members were very poor, that the means of transportation and the maintenance of communications were exceedingly limited..." Taylor Hamilton and Kenneth Hamilton, *History of the Moravian Church: The Renewed Unitas Fratrum 1722-1957* (Pennsylvania: Moravian Church Press, 1967), 34-59.

the fact that there was no systematized Moravian outlook on theology or more specifically missiology at the time. It is important to understand that the Moravians in colonial North America involved in Native American evangelization were of a similar mind set to that of Zinzendorf; meaning that the purpose of evangelization was based on the desire to ultimately spread the Gospel to those who had not heard it. The following methodology is based on both the theological outlook of Nicolaus Zinzendorf and intense research of mission narratives regarding Native American evangelism primarily in Georgia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

Zinzendorf and the Moravians held to and largely developed an interesting theological idea regarding personal relationship with Jesus Christ and with the community: that is “theology of the heart” and it relates directly to the Moravian missional methodology.³¹ Zinzendorf recognized that the greatest threat to Christianity was not unity over doctrine or beliefs but a heart that was not passionate after Jesus Christ. Atwood asserts that this “theology of the heart” was developed by the earlier devotional material of writers such as Jan Amos Comenius, Johannes Arndt, Paul Gerhard, and Pierre Poiret yet it was the Moravians that took such an idea mainstream.³² The theology of the heart was a response to the academic struggles for Christians in light of the Enlightenment. Rather than depending on reason concerning salvation, the Moravians relied on ones will, emotions and actions being set to glorify Christ. Such devotion was prevalent among other contemporary Protestants yet for the Moravians such devotion was not only central but more intense. From such devotion the missionary enterprise emerged.

An important aspect of the Moravian missional methodology is their uniqueness regarding views of civility. Rachel Wheeler is among a growing number of historians and missiologists that assert that the Moravians were unlike any other European or American missionary

³¹ For a more detailed description of Zinzendorf's theology see Arthur Freeman, *An Ecumenical Theology of the Heart: The Theology of Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf* (Pennsylvania: Moravian Publication Office, 1998).

³² While the Moravian movement was not “mainstream,” the theology of the heart was implemented by anyone who claimed to be of the United Brethren. Atwood, *Community of the Cross*, 43.

society.³³ Previous to the Moravian missionary presence in North America there was already missionary work being done. However the work being done was for the most part rejected by Native Americans in light of several aspects. The first of such aspects was that missionaries claimed that while both the white man and the Indian were created by God they were still created separately.³⁴ This idea created an intense resentment to the Gospel message simply because most Indians thought that missionaries were attempting to civilize them in order to enslave.

Secondly most Indians recognized a strong disconnect between the claims of missionaries and the actual lifestyle lived.³⁵ In several Native American accounts, primarily drawn from the Mohawks³⁶ it is clearly seen that the Indians had no problem understanding the simple claims of Christianity, the issue was that the missionaries were not living by the teachings they preached.³⁷ In most accounts this was largely due to the abuse of alcohol exhibited by the “white men.”³⁸

The final reason why evangelization was difficult among Native Americans was because the Indians continually concluded that their old ways were better than the ways of the Europeans. Early missionaries underestimated the learning capacity of the Indian and condensed the Gospel to something suitable only for children. In so doing the Indians never encountered a god that was more powerful than their native god, *Manitou*.³⁹

³³ Rachel Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 83.

³⁴ Michael McNally, *Ojibwe Hymn Singers: Hymns, Grief, and a Native Culture in Motion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 14.

³⁵ Paul Wallace, *Conrad Weiser: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk* (Pennsylvania: Wennawood Publishing, 1996), 144. See also James Merrell, “Shamokin, ‘The Very Seat of the Prince of Darkness’: Unsettling the Early American Frontier,” in *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 16-57.

³⁶ Robert Spencer and Jesse Jennings, *The Native Americans* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965). See also Robert Hamilton, *The Gospel Among the Red Men* (Nashville: SBC, 1930) and G.E.E. Lindquist, *The Red Man in the United States* (New Jersey: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1973).

³⁷ Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope*, 83.

³⁸ Peter Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

³⁹ Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope*, 84.

The Moravians went against what the Native Americans had seen in previous missionaries. Because of their strict discipleship, love for one another and their Biblical teaching the Moravians saw success among the Indians where previous missionaries failed. The Moravians were outcasts themselves and untied to any particular crown or set of rules. This methodology is tied closely with the “theology of the heart” and the fact that the Moravians understood the Indians concerns about enslavement and political pressure. It is important to state at this point that while this aspect of Moravian methodology is clear, it does at the same time have it failures. Because the Moravians were not largely concerned with civilizing or imperialism, the Moravians did not focus on planting “Moravian” churches or establishing denominational outfits. This eventually constituted to the numerical decline of the Moravians in later centuries.

Another methodology that should be reflected upon is the Moravian ability to face both utter danger and daunting task in order to spread the gospel. The Moravians exemplify the courageous missionary spirit in that they ventured into what were essentially undiscovered regions of colonial North America. More specifically the Moravians focused strongly on the southern colonies, especially Georgia⁴⁰ and North Carolina.⁴¹ Of course that is not to say that the Moravian missionaries were not present in the northern colonies.⁴² Wherever the Moravians were they made it their mission to take the Gospel to the natives. The missionaries took on learning languages and acquiring cultural knowledge without modern aids; and several were quite successful.⁴³ In

⁴⁰ Adelaide Fries, *The Moravians in Georgia, 1735-1740* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1967). See also Rowena Malinton, *The Moravian Springplace Mission to the Cherokees* (2 vols., Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2007).

⁴¹ Daniel Thorp, *The Moravian Community in Colonial North Carolina: Pluralism on the Southern Frontier* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989). See also Levin Reichel, *The Moravians in North Carolina: An Authentic History* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1968).

⁴² John Heckewelder, *A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians, from its Commencement, in the Year 1740, to the Close of the Year 1808* (Arno Press, 1971).

⁴³ Wellenreuther, Hermann and Carola Wessel, *The Moravian Mission Diaries of David Zeisberger, 1722-1781*, trans. Julie Tomberlin Weber (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

short, the Moravians took the words of Paul, “I have become all things to all men...” (1 Cor 9.22) literally in their mission activity. This courageous stand regarding missions is what largely influenced the leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement and is a pivotal methodology.⁴⁴

There has been three distinct methods presented thus far concerning Moravian missions: a theological, a social and a personal. In theological terms the Moravians connected solidly their understanding of the theology of the heart with their mission activity. This relationship between faith and action stimulated all those who were of the Moravian community to a genuine missional action. In regards to a social methodology the Moravians were much less concerned with civility than were previous missionary societies. Because of this the Native Americans were more open to hear what the missionaries had to say and were more likely to incorporate Christian practices into their community. Not only were the Moravians uninterested in claiming ground for a particular ruler, they were individually courageous in the face of a new wilderness. They took the example of Christ suffering on the cross as a beacon for any peril they encountered. The early Moravians were indeed mission pioneers and their methods established the foundation for the Modern Missionary Movement. William Carey exclaimed, “See what these Moravians have done...”⁴⁵ Let us now look into the methods of another mission movement, that of the New Lights.

The New Lights: Historical Context

Much like in the context of the Moravians, the New Lights were part of a movement made up of several different theological approaches and individuals. Before getting into the historical makeup of the New Lights, it would be beneficial to define what is meant by “New Lights.” The term New Lights refers to a movement largely begun by Jonathan Edwards with the majority being concentrated in and around New England; hence it is also referred to as “New England Theology.”⁴⁶ This movement

⁴⁴ Karl-Wilhelm Westmeier, “Becoming All Things to All People: Early Moravian Missions to native North Americans,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 21, no. 4 (October 1997).

⁴⁵ J.E Hutton, *A History of Moravian Missions* (London: Moravian Publication Office, 1922), 3.

⁴⁶ Edwards Amasa Park defined the movement. “It signifies the formal creed which a majority of the most eminent theologians in New England

emphasized the legitimacy of the occurring spiritual awakenings and compared to the Moravian movement was much more concerned with theological unity. Frank Lambert includes in his description of the New Lights, "...reborn men set out to create a new society compatible with the vision opened in the Great Awakening."⁴⁷ The handbook of this movement was primarily Edwards, *Freedom of the Will* which dealt with the reconciliation of absolute Calvinist predestination and the demand for holiness.⁴⁸ The New Lights can be defined as Edwardsean Puritans. While the New Lights were not a self-sustaining denomination it is a legitimate movement and constitutes an important shift in mission thought within Calvinist Evangelicals. The missionary efforts of the New Lights have had a definite influence in mission methodology and theology throughout the Modern Missionary Movement.⁴⁹

The missiology of the New Lights was chiefly influenced by several Puritan leaders, namely Richard Sibbes, Richard Baxter and Jonathan Edwards. Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) was exposed very early on to Protestant thought. Sibbes lived and died as a minister of the Church of England but supported the Puritan movement independently. There is a great deal of silence concerning his personal life and about his accomplishments. He remains known through his vast collection of sermons and as an extremely influential preacher in the early seventeenth century.⁵⁰ Douglas Elwood concluded that Sibbes is among the purest examples of the Puritan tradition.⁵¹ Within the theology and

have...sanctioned, during and since the time of Edwards. It denotes the spirit and genius of the system...in their writings." Douglas Sweeney and Allen Guelzo, eds., *The New England Theology: From Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 15.

⁴⁷ Frank Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 135.

⁴⁸ Sweeney, *New England Theology*, 15.

⁴⁹ R. Pierce Beaver, *Ecumenical Beginnings in Protestant World Missions* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1962), 18. See also _____, *Church, State, and the American Indians* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1966).

⁵⁰ Sibbes is responsible for the conversion of several Puritan leaders including John Cotton. Sidney Rooy, *The Theology of Missions in the Puritan Tradition: A Study of Representative Puritans, Richard Sibbes, Richard Baxter, John Eliot, Cotton Mather, and Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 16.

⁵¹ Douglas Elwood, *The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (New York, 1960), 107.

sermons of Richard Sibbes there are three distinct principles that can be drawn regarding missiology. First that God is sovereign over all. More specifically that God's sovereign will is not altered by man's act of faith. Predestination, providence and election all work together and includes missions.⁵² Secondly that God uses means, namely humans to accomplish redemption. For Sibbes such redemption was seen in the Church and its ordinances and the preaching of the word. "Preaching is the chariot that carries Christ up and down the world."⁵³ God could convert the elect by a direct spiritual act, but rather He chooses to use the weakest means to do so, such being missional activity. Thirdly Sibbes asserted that man must respond to the gospel. While predestination is given a great deal of emphasis in Sibbes sermons, he continually calls attention to the seemingly contradictory idea of man's responsible choice for Christ and godly living. Sibbes saw no way of avoiding this direction regarding predestination and repentance. "The answer is ours but the power and strength is God's, whereby we answer..."⁵⁴ These three theological principles are foundational for the New Light mission's movement.

Richard Baxter (1615-1691) is another pivotal figure in Puritan missional theology. Baxter was passionately concerned with both church unity and conversion.⁵⁵ For the most part Baxter aligns with Sibbes in the three principles discussed earlier regarding predestination and repentance yet Baxter introduced new developments. Baxter developed the idea of God's sovereign will as seen in a "beyond-time and beyond-logic" position.⁵⁶ The tension between God's will and man's action was contradictory but Baxter did not linger on it, he concluded that such is a mystery of God and that man indeed is obliged to spread the gospel⁵⁷ Baxter also describes functions of two types of ministers, that of the "fixed" and "unfixed." On the one hand the fixed minister refers to a

⁵² Sibbes, Richard, *The Complete Work of Richard Sibbes, D.D.*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart (Edinburgh, 1862), 510.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 515.

⁵⁵ Geoffrey Nuttall and Owen Chadwick, *From Uniformity to Unity 1662-1962* (London, 1962), 184-85.

⁵⁶ Rooy, *Theology of Missions in the Puritan Tradition*, 153.

⁵⁷ Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter, I - IV* (London, 1888), I 639.

minister that has particular duties within a local, particular church.⁵⁸ On the other hand the unfixed minister is someone who employed themselves in converting pagans or as Baxter put it "...a pastor in the universal church."⁵⁹ Here Baxter recognized the ministry office of the missionary and emphasizes the spiritual gifts of the missionary. Baxter calls attention to the human responsibility to use our spiritual gifts not only to spread the gospel but by them to see our own conversion. Baxter even developed what might be called an early missional methodology based on the Great Commission, that the proper order of pagan conversion is to preach the gospel, to baptize and to teach all things.⁶⁰ Baxter holds a particular place within Puritan tradition as developing Sibbes understanding of missions in a practical manner.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) is perhaps the most important theologian/pastor of the eighteenth century. Largely known for his work within the Great Awakening, Edwards also is responsible for the "New Light" missionary movement. As seen in the developments of Sibbes and Baxter, Puritans were treading through the tension of Calvinism and missions for decades previous to Edwards. Yet Edwards redefined not only the developing previous missional ideas but also he connecting missions and the end times. "Edwards hoped, in his devout heart of hearts, that the Great Awakening was the overture to the day of judgment and the millennium."⁶¹ This was done through the thesis of Edwards, *History of Redemption* which Perry Miller states is the "unity of history."⁶² It is clear that Edwards introduction of theology structured historically was a radical break from structure of Puritan theology which is why the New Light movement can be described as an Edwardsean-Puritanism.⁶³ Edwards was under the impression that the events of the Great Awakening were preparatory for a soon dawning millennial reign

⁵⁸ Ibid, 556.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 641.

⁶⁰ F.J Powicke, "Some Unpublished Correspondence of the Rev. Richard Baxter and the Rev. John Eliot, 'The Apostle to the American Indians' 1656-1682," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, no. 15 (1931).

⁶¹ Sweeney, *The New England Theology*, 14.

⁶² Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (Cleveland, 1959), 313.

⁶³ Rooy, *Missions in the Puritan Tradition*, 293.

of the Church.⁶⁴ This millennial reign of the Church was to come about by the successful labors of the missionaries. This particular view of connecting the eschaton and mission work is specific to the New Lights and is evident in the diary of David Brainerd.

Two other key aspects of Edwards influence on the New Lights was his aggressive Calvinistic offense to the watering down of theological determination. This was largely in response to the British Enlightenment, where the idea of a sovereign God was turned upside down in the face of modernity. For Edwards, God was completely sovereign over history yet a popular notion that mere material substance and forces controlled human actions emerged with the Enlightenment.⁶⁵ The New Lights also emphasized civil action. While they did express a separation of church and state, the New Lights emphasized the church's role in America's policies. On one hand the New Lights could not change laws regarding alcohol, slavery and Sabbath observation. Yet on the other hand they viewed public awareness as a vital demonstration of their Christianity and organized anti-alcohol and anti-slavery organization that encouraged Christian involvement in politics.⁶⁶

In short there are six distinct theological outlooks on missions for the New Lights. First that the tension between God's will and man's action does not disregard the importance of missionary work. Second that God indeed chooses means to accomplish redemption. Third that man must respond to the gospel. Fourth that there is a stark reliance of God's coming kingdom to missionary work. Fifth is an aggressive Calvinistic view of sovereignty. Finally that Christians are in a way responsible for directing governmental policies in order to create a virtuous society. These theological outlooks are important in developing a New Light missional methodology.

The New Lights: Missional Methodology

The missional methodology of the New Lights can be largely drawn from the missionary work of David Brainerd (1718-1747) as described in his diary. *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* was published in 1749 by

⁶⁴ Charles L. Chaney, *The Birth of Missions in America* (California: William Carey Library, 1976), 272-3.

⁶⁵ Sweeney, *The New England Theology*, 17.

⁶⁶ Tocqueville, Alexis de, *Democracy in America*, ed. Harvey Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 277-8.

Jonathan Edwards⁶⁷. Interestingly Edwards published the diary not as historical literature, but as revival literature.⁶⁸ In no other of Edwards' writings did he so vividly embrace the religious faith of one man. Edwards did utilize case studies in some of his writings such as *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1736), *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741), *Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival of Religion in New England* (1742) and *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746). Yet for Edwards, Brainerd was the perfect example of a product of the Awakening and genuine spirituality.⁶⁹ Edwards wrote, "There are two ways of representing and recommending true religion and virtue to the world...the one is by doctrine and precept; the other is by instance and example."⁷⁰ David Brainerd was the epitome of the second representation of true religion, "It (the publication of the diary) transformed an obscure, sickly, largely ineffectual young missionary into a saintly figure who embodied authentic spirituality, not simply ephemeral revivalistic enthusiasm, and who had sacrificed his life for Christianity."⁷¹ Such is the reason as to why this paper equates him with the New Light missional methodology.⁷²

Overall Brainerd's life and personality is somewhat sad. It is obvious from reading his diary that he struggled greatly with intense feelings of sadness regarding his position with God; he described it as

⁶⁷ For an excellent article read Joseph Conforti, "Jonathan Edward's Most Popular Work: "The Life of David Brainerd" and Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Culture," *Church History* 54, no. 2 (June 1985).

⁶⁸ Originally published under the title, "An Account of the Life of the Late David Brainerd, Minister of the Gospel, Missionary to the Indians, from the Honorable Society in Scotland, for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, and Pastor of a Church of Christian Indians in New-Jersey. Who Died at Northampton in New England, October 9th 1747 in the 30th Year of His Age: Chiefly Taken from his own Diary, and other Private Writings, Written for His Own Use; and Now Published." Edwards, Jonathan, *The Life of David Brainerd*, ed. Norman Pettit (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 5.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

⁷⁰ Sweeney, *The New England Theology*, 47.

⁷¹ Joseph Conforti, "David Brainerd and the Nineteenth Century Missionary Movement," *Journal of the Early Republic* 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1985): 312.

⁷² David Weddle, "The Melancholy Saint: Jonathan Edward's Interpretation of David Brainerd as a Model of Evangelical Spirituality," *The Harvard Theological Review* 81, no. 3 (July 1988).

“melancholy.”⁷³ Yet in spite of seemingly overwhelming introversion Brainerd was compelled to preach and influenced by individuals such as Gilbert Tennent and James Davenport. Brainerd was involved in the evangelization of several Northeastern Indian Tribes, namely the Delawares and the Susquehanna.⁷⁴ It is important to understand that while Brainerd is still a popular evangelical missionary hero; his ministry did not see mass conversions and was quite frankly unsuccessful,⁷⁵

“David Brainerd...was a complex individual who can only be understood within his own...context. Without this context, Brainerd arrives on the mission field as little more than a religious desperado grasping at a final straw after having his original goals torn away by a too-powerful establishment.”⁷⁶

Yet this does not negate the fact that much can be gleaned from his methodology.

Before Brainerd’s methodology based on his diary will be explored, it would be helpful to understand the methodology for missions that Brainerd was given at his ordination. Brainerd was ordained and commissioned by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in 1744. The ordination sermon was given by Ebenezer Pemberton and includes a particular approach to missions. Pemberton drew three conclusions based on Luke 14:23⁷⁷ that relates specifically to the task of the SPCK. First is that the heathen is in a “melancholy” state. Because the heathen had yet to hear of the gospel they were in a perishing and helpless state as described in Romans 1:20. Secondly, that the servants of the redeemer are called to “care” for the helpless heathen in order to invite them to the house so that it will be full. Thirdly, that the ministers of the gospel are to compel the heathen to come into the masters’ house so that the house will be full, alluding to

⁷³ Edwards, *Life of David Brainerd*, 19.

⁷⁴ Richard Ellsworth Day, *Flagellant on Horseback: The Life Story of David Brainerd* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1950).

⁷⁵ William Hutchinson, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 30-2.

⁷⁶ John Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd: The Making of an Evangelical Icon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 188.

⁷⁷ “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full.’”

the fulfillment of God's kingdom.⁷⁸ Along with these three points Pemberton asserts that the basic beginning of evangelization is to compare the heathen of their guilty state, to convince them of the evil of sin and to establish a fear of the Lord. In ending an evangelistic discussion Pemberton reveals the importance of exhibiting the advantages of accepting the Gospel call.⁷⁹ While such methods were drawn for the SPCK it is not excessively clear as to whether or not Brainerd follows such. Let us now explore Brainerd's diary and establish specific methods for the New Lights.

As mentioned earlier, Brainerd struggled with introspective doubts regarding his personal faith. This is clear from statements such as, "I seem to be declining with respect to my life and warmth in divine things: had not so free access to God in prayer as usual of late."⁸⁰ Not only did Brainerd struggle with doubts concerning his stance before God, but he also understood his unworthiness before God, "Had a humbling and pressing sense of my unworthiness. My sense of the badness of my own heart filled my soul with bitterness and anguish."⁸¹ It is clear that Brainerd struggled with what many refer to as depression or melancholies throughout his life. It seems strange therefore as to why Edwards uplifted Brainerd as the prime example of the New Light movement. The reason was because both Brainerd and Edwards did not see the introspective process as negative, but they saw it as sense of personal piety. This personal piety was exemplified by Christ,

"Jesus Christ...when He came...He not only declared the mind and will of God...but He also in His own practice gave a most perfect example of the virtue He taught. He exhibited to the world such an illustrious pattern of humility...self-denial...meekness...as neither men nor angels ever saw before."⁸²

⁷⁸ R. Pierce Beaver, comp., *Pioneers in Mission: The Early Missionary Ordination Sermons, Charges, and Instructions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966), 112-14.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 117, 119-20.

⁸⁰ Edwards, *Life of Brainerd*, 157.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁸² Edwards, Jonathan, *The life and Diary of David Brainerd*, ed. Philip E. Howard Jr. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1957), 43.

For the New Lights personal piety was an important characteristic of the missionary and this is exemplified in the life of David Brainerd.⁸³

In regards to the New Lights there seems to be a confusing reputation as to whether or not their missionary efforts were of genuine spiritual concern or more geared toward civilizing the Indians. Beaver argues that the “avowed missionary intent of colonization” was not a motive for Puritan and New Light missionaries.⁸⁴ Rather there are three motives that Beaver argues for, first was for the glory God. Cotton Mather asserts that the missionary activity was not due to any feelings of guilt or indebtedness to the Indians, but was for the glory of God.⁸⁵ The second missionary motive for the New Lights was Christian compassion.⁸⁶ This can be seen in the sermon given by Ebenezer Pemberton as previously discussed. The third motive according to Beaver was the desire to match the Roman Catholic mission endeavor in the new world in hopes of creating a Protestant North America.⁸⁷ While these are astute observations and go against the cold hearted idea of mere colonization, recent scholars have asserted that Brainerd and the New Lights were concerned with colonization. “...it never occurred to him that they could truly become Christian disciples without abandoning their traditional way of life and adopting the European mode...Christianity was a religion of civilization.”⁸⁸ Based on Brainerd’s personal diary it seems most clear that both Beaver and Grigg is correct in their assertions. The New Lights were concerned with God’s glory being revealed, they did reveal genuine compassion regarding the state of the unsaved Native not based on civil guilt. They also were concerned with civilizing the Indians.

⁸³ “Brainerd...set a striking example of deep Christian devotion, ‘of true and eminent Christians piety in heart and practice; tending greatly to confirm the reality of vital religion and the power of godliness, most worthy of imitation, and many ways tending to the spiritual benefit of the careful observer...As much as any that he proclaimed, they shaped the popular perception of Edwardsean spirituality during the heyday of New England’s New Divinity.” Sweeney, *The New England Theology*, 48.

⁸⁴ R. Pierce Beaver, “American Missionary Motivation Before the Revolution,” *Church History* 31, no. 2 (June 1962): 216.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 217-8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 218.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 219.

⁸⁸ Grigg, *Lives of David Brainerd*, 188.

This is not negative methodology, the New Lights attempted civilization not in an effort to enslave the Indians but because they saw Christianity as orderly.⁸⁹ The Moravians methodology reveals a similar approach in that they emphasized educational reform in their mission attempts.

One methodology that is clear in Brainerd's diary is his concern for the coming Kingdom of God. This approach to mission work is not only expressed clearly in Edwards writings as previously discussed, but is evident in Brainerd's diary. "Then God gave me to wrestle earnestly for others, for the kingdom of Christ in the world..."⁹⁰ Such is more evident in the following quote, "I was especially assisted to intercede and plead for poor souls and for the coming of Christ's kingdom in the world..."⁹¹ There is a clear connection in Brainerd's methodology concerning evangelism/conversion and the coming millennial reign of Christ. From this connection it could be assumed that the missionary attempts were not based on genuine concern for souls but rather the desire for God's kingdom to begin. This is not the case, the New Lights intricately weaved together a missional methodology that included genuine compassion, civility and hope in the already-not-yet.

There are three more methods that Brainerd incorporated into his ministry based on his journal entries. Brainerd relied heavily upon prayer and fasting in his personal preparation. For Brainerd, both prayer and fasting was a way to seek the presence of God in order to gain assistance from God in his attempts.⁹² The aspect of fasting was most likely tied with the idea of personal piety and humility. This is a particular area that the New Lights emphasize in their methodology. Thirdly Brainerd simply "preached" to the Indians. There are numerous entries where Brainerd simply writes that he preached to the Indians. It is difficult to say as to how the sermons went or what was emphasized, but it can be assumed that piety and individual faith was emphasized. It also may be possible that Brainerd undertook a similar pattern as described by Pemberton, to convince the Natives of their sinful state and encourage them to accept Jesus. It is clear based on his journal entries that Brainerd preached exegetically, primarily dealing with specific texts focusing on the Gospel.

⁸⁹ Thomas Kidd, "'Bringing Them to a Subjection to the Religion of Jesus': Native American Missions," in *The Great Awakening*, 189-212.

⁹⁰ Edwards, *Life of David Brainerd*, 159.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 161.

⁹² Edwards, *Life of David Brainerd*, 228,236,344,446.

Another assessment that is clear based on the diary is that the Indians were largely uninvolved with his preaching, “The assembly appeared not so lively in their attention as is usual...”⁹³

The New Lights emphasized four things in their missional methodology as seen in the life of David Brainerd. First that each Christian should have a deep sense of personal piety similar to that of Christ. For Brainerd this appeared frequently in his diary and for Edwards revealed a genuine godliness. In spite of personal doubts, the Christian is to remain faithful to doing God’s work. Secondly, the New Lights showed a genuine concern for the soul condition of the Native that was connected strongly with civility. It is incorrect to only assume that the New Lights were concerned with civility, they did have compassion and desired that the Indians be Christianized. Thirdly, and perhaps most distinct is the New Lights connection of missionary labor and the soon coming millennial reign of Christ. Fourthly, the New Lights encouraged personal devotion for the missionary; this is seen in the intense reliance on prayer and fasting asserted by Brainerd. Connected with this personal devotion is the idea that from fasting and praying God’s power would inhabit the missionary. The New Light missional methodology was largely accepted by American Evangelicals throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The work of the New Lights also inspired the Modern Missionary Movement in that they largely created a missionary endeavor that worked within Calvinism.

Conclusion

The Moravians and the New Lights are undoubtedly the founding fathers of contemporary missions. They exhibited new approaches and further developed existing methods. The Moravians developed the theology of the heart, revolutionizing the idea that faith and actions go hand in hand. The New Lights also emphasized this aspect in their missiology but did so in a Calvinistic setting, therefore revolutionizing again missional methodology. The matter of civility was also revolutionized with the New Lights and the Moravians. In earlier centuries the Roman Catholic attempts at missions were nothing much more than bringing European culture to native lands. The Moravians took the other extreme in that they avoided civility in their mission

⁹³ Ibid, 367.

ventures. Not that the Moravians did not believe in an orderly Christianity, but that they did not bring with them the baggage of any crown. In the middle of this spectrum the New Lights combined a genuine compassion for lost souls and civility. Both the New Lights and the Moravians looked to Christ as being central to their missionary endeavors. For the Moravians it was Christ's example on the cross that encouraged them to venture into unknown wilderness to proclaim the gospel. For the New Lights it was Christ's immanent return that encouraged them to take the gospel message to the Natives. Both the Moravians and the New Lights brought a revolution to missions that emphasized the culmination of personal faith in Christ and the necessity of proclaiming the gospel to others. It was this idea that encouraged William Carey in taking what was being done regarding Native American missions to the world.

God's Heart for Missions:
A Biblical Theology of the Great Commission

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According to Matthew 28:18b-20, Jesus gives what has been traditionally called the Great Commission to his Disciples. Here he states, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."¹ This is said to be the commission which the Disciples take up, and that which launches the New Testament church, witnessed in the pages of the Acts of the Apostles and is continued in the work of the Apostles and their associates throughout the rest of the NT until today. In short, this Great Commission endeavor has been called "missions."

It has been said that "missions" is God's heart.² If this statement can be proven biblically, it must also then be more than a New Testament ideal because God is immutable.³ This paper will seek to evaluate the Great Commission from a Biblical Theology perspective, and assess if its outworking for the New Testament church flows from an overarching development of God's reconciliatory work as part of His unchanging character. Furthermore, this valuation will attempt to observe whether

¹ Unless otherwise specified, all Bible references in this paper are to the *English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016).

² A quick Google search reveals this is a common theme. Two examples: "The Heart of God / A Heart of Mission" by Mary Fisher, <https://urbana.org/blog/heart-god-heart-mission>, and "Mission: God's Heart for the World," a Bible study guide by Paul Borthwick, outlined here: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/m/mission-gods-heart-for-world.html>

³ It will be assumed by this author that the case for such a theological stance does not have to be proven previously to work out such a presupposition within the context of this paper.

this commission, as stated by Jesus in the Gospels, is passed down from the Disciples to the New Testament church as the means of furthering the reconciliatory work of God until Christ returns.

The Reconciliatory Work of God

From the earliest pages of Scripture, we see that YHWH is a relational Deity. He makes man in His image and forges a relationship that is communicable and perfect (Gen 1:26). YHWH communicates His relationship with mankind through what He mandates of him (Gen. 1:28), and by what He has given him (Gen. 1:29). YHWH communicates to Adam a covenant in which his relationship to God can be broken, if he eats of what he has been told not to eat (Gen. 2:17). It is presumed that this relationship can be characterized as worshipful, but personal, in that what seems normal is that mankind is used to God walking with them in the Garden (Gen. 3:8).

It is in the context of this relationship, that mankind falls, being deceived by the serpent, breaking God's command, and as a result, also his relationship with God as it was. But hope (a reconciliatory hope) is established when YHWH speaks of a "seed" that will have his heel bruised by the serpent, but whose heel will crush the head of that deceiver (Gen. 3:15)! This promise is the beginning of the work of YHWH in reconciling mankind to himself.

Walt Kaiser argues that the beginning of missions is indeed found within the opening chapters of Genesis. He states, "Genesis begins in the first eleven chapters with a focus on all the families and nations of the earth much before one family [Israel] is called to serve all the other families of the earth."⁴ He also submits that "[r]ight from the beginning of the canon there is more than just a passing concern that all the nations of the earth should come to believe in the coming Man of Promise, the One who would appear through the Seed of the woman Eve, through the family of Shem, and then through the line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David."⁵ Similarly, Scobie states that "[although] the salvation/judgement history that occupies a great deal of the OT is mainly concerned with God's dealings with Israel, God's concern for all

⁴ Walt Kaiser, "The Great Commission in the Old Testament." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 13 (January 1996): 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

the nations never drops out of sight."⁶ J.H. Bavinck concurs, and further sees a fully biblical theology of missions from beginning to end.⁷ But to what degree can this be seen as the beginnings of so-called "missions"? Or to what degree may one see the so-called "Great Commission" in effect from these earliest pages of the Torah? If this is able to be seen, to what lengths is the "Great Commission" able to be traced throughout the whole canon? These questions need to be answered in light of examining the commission itself.

Examining the Great Commission

After Christ is raised from the dead, He meets with His men and gives them what has been called the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18b-20, Luke 24:44-49, [cf. Acts 1:8]). The Lord himself does not give it this title, but the title does seem to capture the nature of the charge given. To examine the commission properly, a brief survey of the pertinent passages should be made.

The Context of the Great Commission

The Great Commission is set at the end of Matthew's gospel after Jesus has been raised and Mary Magdalene and the other Mary are told by the angel to go and tell His disciples that He has been raised and to wait for Him in Galilee (Matthew 28:1-8). Jesus himself comes to them and tells them the same thing (Matthew 28:9-10). It is within the context of Jesus meeting them in Galilee that He gives them the commission.

The Lucan account is also set at the end of his gospel and is

⁶ Charles H. H. Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology*, First Edition, First Printing edition. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 510. Others have also argued for this view of God's reconciliatory work toward the nations. William Carver states, "The origin of missions is ultimately to be found in the heart of God....This attitude of God is eternal and is determinative in all His dealing with men." William Owen Carver, *Missions in the Plan of the Ages: Bible Studies in Missions* (New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), 12-13.

⁷ Bavinck states, "[I]f we investigate the Old Testament more thoroughly, it becomes clear that the future of the nations is a point of greatest concern....for from the first page to the last the Bible has the whole world in view, and its divine plan of salvation is unfolded as pertaining to the world," J. H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 1993), 11.

introduced to the eleven when Jesus appears among them and others who are with them, and tells them that these are the things that he had told them must be fulfilled from the Law and the Prophets (Luke 24:36-49).

Elements of the Great Commission from Matthew

The first element to notice within the commission is the authority Jesus announces. Christ states, “ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῶ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς” (all power has been given to me in heaven and in [the] earth).⁸ Therefore, the first part of the commission is to assure the disciples that Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth. This seems to be for their benefit, their assurance. James Boice succinctly states that in its context Jesus’ statement is one that is in concert with Ephesians 6:12, so that the disciples understand it to be an authority that is “over all other authorities... [his] resurrection proves his authority over any power that can possibly be imagined. Consequently, we do not fear Satan or anyone else while we are engaged in Jesus’ service.”⁹

The elements that follow are the command itself, and though one command, there are three elements, plus another statement of assurance. It has been argued that the foundational element is the phrase “μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη” (you make disciples of all nations/ethnicities).¹⁰ Furthering the argument of the foundational element being this phrase, it is more particularly argued that the verb μαθητεύσατε is the core of that foundation, “you make disciples.”¹¹ This of course is not to discount the rest of the command as unimportant. David Croteau makes the important observation, that to imply that we

⁸ Author’s translation. Kurt Aland, Barbara Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th Edition. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), Mt. 28:18. There are textual variants and later additions, but they have negligible impact to the meaning of the text.

⁹ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew: The Triumph of the King: Matthew 18-28* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2001), 647.

¹⁰ Author’s translation. NA28, Mt. 28:19. There are textual variants, but they have negligible impact to the meaning of the text.

¹¹ D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark,*

Luke, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 595.

are not to “go” because “making disciples” is the core it to misunderstand the intent of Christ here. It is properly understood as “as you are going.”¹² In other words, this should be way of life for the disciples to whom Jesus is speaking. The means of accomplishing this are through baptizing and teaching. The baptism formula that Jesus gives is “βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος” (baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit).¹³ The teaching formula Jesus gives is “διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετείλαμην ὑμῖν” (teaching them to observe all which I have commanded you).¹⁴ As a sort of *inclusio*, just as Jesus had said that He had been given authority before he issues the command, afterward He tells them “καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ’ ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος” (and behold, I myself will be with you all the days, even to the end of the age).¹⁵ The authority with which He sends them, will be the same authority which is with them to the end.

Elements from the Great Commission in Luke.

Luke’s account seems to summarize several aspects of the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry, and so the commission given is shortened as well. In fact, the commission is fitted within the context of Jesus explaining how all that He has told them in his earthly ministry, is being fulfilled. The commission itself is captured in the phrase κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἅφεςιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ (proclaim in his [Jesus’] name repentance for the forgiveness of sin for all peoples beginning from Jerusalem).¹⁶ This account gives the added feature of repentance, which is a theme of Jesus’ preaching in the Synoptics and which could be assumed in the Matthean account by the outward act of Baptism.¹⁷ The aspect of making

¹² David A. Croteau, *Urban Legends of the New Testament: 40 Common Misconceptions* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015) Kindle Edition, Location 1774.

¹³ Author’s translation. NA28, Mt. 28:19. There are textual variants, but they have negligible impact to the meaning of the text.

¹⁴ Author’s translation, *Ibid.*, Mt 28:20.

¹⁵ Author’s translation, *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Author’s translation, *Ibid.*, Lk 24:47.

¹⁷ This is seen in the account of Peter’s preaching where, when the men who are convicted by his preaching ask him what they must do. Peter tells them they

disciples of all the nations could also be seen in the language of Jesus' name being proclaimed to the nations. The elements of both of these passages are clear, and are directed at those who stand with Jesus just before his ascension. The question to be explored in this paper is in what sense is this related to God's reconciliatory work throughout the canon?

Elements of the Great Commission in the Old Testament

Beginning with the first element shown previously, in what way is the authority of YHWH in reconciliatory work shown? This author would submit that it is seen in the promise of Genesis 3:15 in which, though there is a curse being pronounced, a promise is included. Kaiser raises the point that beyond just the curse motif in Genesis 3:15 "[there is] a sudden turn of events, God predicted that the Serpent would bruise the heel of one woman's 'seed,' a male descendant from among her offspring...[m]ost surprising of all, however, the male child of the woman's 'seed' would strike back [a lethal blow], striking the head of the serpent."¹⁸ Sailhamer sees this statement of two seeds as that of a power struggle. The dominant one in this struggle is seen as the seed of the woman.¹⁹ Though it would seem obvious that God is the authority in this scenario, the author of the Pentateuch sets out to build this case. How does one know that God is authoritative? It is through the special revelation of Himself through His Word. Herman Bavinck states, "[i]n revelation God becomes knowable."²⁰ It is by special revelation that God makes Himself known. The sovereignty and authority of God is put on display in the earliest chapters of God's revelation of Himself, namely in creation. Therefore, God's authority to reconcile man by His means is also seen in the earliest chapters by way of the promised seed of Gen. 3:15. "[I]n the midst of the dirge of gloom and rebuke came God's

must "[r]epent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38). The command to repent inwardly is tied to the outward sign of baptism.

¹⁸ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*, 2 edition. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 2-3.

¹⁹ John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 107-108.

²⁰ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 1, *Prolegomena* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 341-342.

surprising word of prophetic hope."²¹

Looking at the second element, the question is, in what way, as they were going, were OT saints "making disciples?" Is this a valid mission of the OT people of God? Kaiser again is helpful in stating that "[t]he message of the O.T. was/is both universal in its scope and international in its range. This is clear right from the start in Genesis 1-11 with its universal audience. It also is very clear from the fact that when God first called Abraham to be his chosen instrument, the Living God gave the first great commission to him."²² Sailhamer agrees that "Abraham is represented here as a new Adam and the 'seed of Abraham' as a second Adam, a new humanity," the seed by which all the "families of the earth' are to be blessed."²³ Is this the equivalent of "making disciples?" The basest meaning of disciple is a learner. The word for disciple (μαθητανω), is not found in the LXX. However, the concept that Israel was to teach the nations about God is found within the context of the OT. There are implications of this in understanding God's covenant with Abraham, and the promise that the nation which would come from him would be a blessing to the world. But also, as Michael Grisanti states regarding the Mosaic covenant, "[b]y conducting their lives in conformity with the demands of the Law, the nation of Israel would have been able to function as God's servant nation, representing God and His character before the surrounding nations of the world."²⁴ This is highlighted in the distinctive way in which Israel is to live in light of the nations around them (Lev. 18:24-30). In this way, there is instruction about who YHWH is.

This is demonstrated in Rahab's response to finding out that the men of Israel are on their way to Jericho and she relays that the Canaanite's heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you devoted to

²¹ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 43.

²² Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "The Great Commission in the Old Testament." *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 13 (January 1996): 3.

²³ Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 139-140.

²⁴ Michael A. Grisanti, "Israel's Mission To The Nations In Isaiah 40-55: An Update," *Master's Seminary Journal* 9, no. 1 (1998): 40.

destruction. And as soon as we heard it, our hearts melted, and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, for the LORD your God, he is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath (Joshua 2:10-11).

Here there is seen a particular way in which the nations come to know something about YHWH which sets him apart from the gods of the nations. Rahab uses the proper name of YHWH (as signified in English by "LORD"), and acknowledges the personal nature by the possessive, "your God." The testimony of YHWH comes with Israel and this is seen not only in the power of YHWH demonstrated in the supernatural occurrences, but also in the way Israel represents Him as they follow in obedience.

Grisanti further points out that though the nations are to fear YHWH, His word to Isaiah is that they would not only understand who He is, but also repent: "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance" (Is. 45:22-23). However, the question which Grisanti addresses is, what active role, if any, does Israel play in this? He shows that this is part of a larger debate concerning whether Israel is a missionary to the nations (externally calling the nations to YHWH) or if Isaiah's goal is to call Israel back to YHWH himself (internal repentance for the nation itself). Grisanti concludes that either of these positions are extremes, and that the prophet Isaiah neither depicts Israel as a nation of world-traversing missionaries, nor does he exclude the nations from participation in divine redemption. Consonant with relevant antecedent Scriptures, the prophet argues that God's special dealings with His chosen people not only benefit Israel, but also carry significance for all nations. Isaiah underscores Israel's role in providing a witness to the nations.²⁵

However, he also concludes that this is not equivalent to NT missionary endeavors, but simply a way for the nations to raise inquests regarding YHWH.²⁶ It is this author's opinion that though Grisanti may be right, the element of teaching the nations about YHWH is still applicable to Israel. This would seem to combine the idea of making disciples and teaching into the same element of the Great Commission.

²⁵ Ibid., 61.

²⁶ Ibid.

Another element of making disciples in the Great Commission is baptizing. For the NT believer, baptism is the external initiation rite that symbolizes one's identity with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. But, as Peter commands that those who desire to be saved must repent and be baptized, it also seems to capture the symbolism of the converts sins being washed away.²⁷ Is there a sense in which either of these can be paralleled in the OT?

Concerning identity, Presbyterian covenant theology equates NT baptism with OT circumcision. Louis Berkhof, writing from this perspective states, "By the appointment of God infants shared in the benefits of the covenant, and therefore received circumcision as a sign and seal."²⁸ Because Presbyterian Covenantalism sees a strict continuity between the Abrahamic and the New Covenant, their view is that the baptism of infants correlates to OT circumcision as the means of communicating covenant status for children.²⁹ This author does not disagree that there may be a correlation between OT circumcision and NT baptism, but that if the physical sign is given to those born under the Abrahamic Covenant, could it not be seen that the sign and seal given in the New Covenant, which is a spiritual covenant, is related to a spiritual new birth? Jeffrey Johnson proposes that Presbyterian Covenant Theologians "combine the physical and outward aspects of the nation of Israel with the spiritual Kingdom of God—the church. By meshing these two covenants, they mix infant circumcision—the sign of being born into a physical nation, with water baptism—the sign of being born into a spiritual nation."³⁰ This disagreement aside, the point still stands, that in part, circumcision was to set Israel apart from the nations surrounding her³¹ and it was a sign and seal of the Abrahamic covenant. All who were born into Israel were to have the sign, and all who were proselytized were

²⁷ Due to the nature and scope of this paper, an attempt will not be made to argue for credobaptism; the position will be assumed.

²⁸ L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1938), 633.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Jeffrey D. Johnson, *The Fatal Flaw: The Fatal Flaw of the Theology Behind Infant Baptism* (Conway: Free Grace Press, 2017, Kindle Edition), Locations 3391-3393.

³¹ The terminology of circumcised and uncircumcised becomes a language of distinction in the OT (e.g. Gen. 34).

to be given the sign.³² So those who would learn about Israel, would also learn through the means of circumcision that Israel's God was distinct from their gods.

Another way in which a baptism is imagined is through the Noahic flood. In his first epistle, Peter writes:

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison,²⁰ because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water.²¹ Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,²² who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him (1 Pet 3:18-22).

In what sense does baptism correlate to Noah and his family being brought safely through the flood? Karen Jobes submits, "The very water that threatened to kill Noah and his family was at the same time the means of their deliverance."³³ As Edwin Blum states, "Baptism is the 'copy,' the 'representation,' or even the 'Fulfilment' of the OT deliverance from judgment."³⁴ Within the context of 1 Peter, baptism is represented as a means of having an "appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Peter seems to suggest that baptism symbolizes resurrection life. Noah and his family were "saved" through water, though in reality God saved them by providing the way. So too, the believer of the NT era is "saved" through the resurrection of Jesus as symbolized in water baptism. Still, how does the Flood narrative lend itself as instructional for a "Great Commission" understanding in the OT? It seems best to put this all together in the one focus of an OT view

³² This is seen in God's third covenant conversation with Abraham in Gen. 17:9-14, and instruction is given concerning the sojourner who joins Israel such as in Ex. 12:48.

³³ Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 252.

³⁴ Edwin A. Blum, "1 Peter," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 243.

of the Great Commission.

The Call to “Come and See”³⁵

All of what has been submitted previously seems best to fit under the rubric of YHWH's revelation of Himself to the nations. From the Garden to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to the Nation of Israel and Moses, the call of YHWH is not for Israel to “go and tell,” but for the nations to “come and see.”³⁶

The Garden displays the original relationship of YHWH and man, it was a perfect relationship. This was broken by the fall, thus requiring reconciliation, which begins with the promise of the Seed. The narrative of the Flood begins with a call to repentance from man's wickedness to a way of YHWH's salvation through the ark, where the Seed is carried through the waters of the Flood via Shem, the Nation of Israel is established in Abraham who is promised to be the Seed-bearer, one who would bless all the nations of the earth and Abraham's nation would be first set apart by way of circumcision. Israel is to be set apart from the other nations by way of obedience in the Mosaic law and therefore receive the blessings of YHWH. And the nations surrounding them would know by this that they are YHWH's and by virtue of that, Who YHWH is. The wisdom literature and the prophets continue this display of who YHWH is and also remind the nation that the Seed, the Messiah is still in view and still anticipated. This seems to be the call, the commission of the OT and we see all the elements of the Great Commission within it, but the call to Israel is to be what God has called her to be, not so that they “go and tell,” but that the nations might “come and see.”³⁷

There is then a comprehensiveness to the idea of what God is doing not only for Israel, but through the Nation as well. Graeme Goldsworthy

³⁵ This term is borrowed from Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 36.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ The only time where this is not explicitly the case seems to be Jonah. Though it is not the whole nation who is tasked with warning of impending judgement, Jonah is to go to a wicked Nineveh and declare judgment if they do not repent. For a longer discussion of the arguments for and against this view, see Daniel C. Timmer, “Jonah and Mission: Missiological Dichotomy, Biblical Theology, and the *via Tertia*,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 70, no. 1 (2008): 159175.

argues that if one takes the progressive revelatory view of *Heilsgeschichte* (Salvation History), that it would be a mistake to perceive it as only for Israel and to not have the nations of the world in view as well.³⁸ YHWH is seen to be a reconciliatory God with all the authority, and employing all the pieces of the Great Commission as seen in the New Covenant, yet perhaps not stated as directly.

Elements of the Great Commission in the Gospels

Besides the particular “Great Commission” passages themselves, the elements of the Commission are present within the life and ministry of Jesus. When Luke records Jesus’ words that “repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in [Jesus’] name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem,” there is little doubt that this draws upon the message of Jesus from the beginning of his earthly ministry. Luke records five instances where the word *μετάνοια* (repent) is used. Two times uses are attributed to John the Baptizer, and three to the ministry of Jesus. Each time the word is used in regard to sinners repenting, with the exception of Luke 3:8 where sinners are told to bear fruit that is in keeping with repentance. The mission of the great commission as given by Luke includes calling sinners to repentance, just as John the baptizer had done (as the forerunner to Christ) and as Jesus himself had done.

The element of authority in the Great Commission can be seen in the authority of God in the Gospels in and through the life of Jesus. Though it is at the end of His earthly ministry when Jesus claims this authority is given to Him, there are demonstrations of God’s authority earlier in the life and ministry of Jesus. At the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry after He is baptized by John, there is a scene in which the “the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:16b-17; Mark 1:9-11). In the parallel passage in Luke 3:21-23, it’s shown that directly after this, Jesus begins His earthly ministry. In Peter’s sermon at Pentecost he attributes the ministry of Jesus as that which is “attested to [them] by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did

³⁸ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 60.

through him in [their] midst" (Acts 2:22).

The question of the authority of God as seen through Jesus is not in question throughout the Gospels. However, the question may be raised as to the nature of the authority which is mentioned in Great Commission. Nolland states:

The main question about Jesus' authority statement is that of whether Matthew is speaking here of a newly acquired authority or an authority whose reality has been challenged by the Passion events. Matthew has represented Jesus quite frequently in the Gospel as one who has authority. Is something more now involved? Verbally closest from the earlier materials is 'authority on earth to forgive sins' in 9:6. But also important is 'everything has been passed on to me by my Father' in 11:27, which seems to have a comprehensiveness to match that of 28:18 ('all authority in heaven and on earth').³⁹

Nolland finds it best to see the authority spoken of in the Great Commission as a "reaffirming] of authority after the rejection of Jesus."⁴⁰ If this is indeed a reaffirmation, then it seems right to understand that Jesus was imbued with the authority of God from the beginning of His ministry.

In regard to making disciples, this is what Jesus did in His earthly mission. He lives out the example of disciple making before the world. He calls men of lowly stature and of questionable character to follow him, to learn from him, to suffer with him. Michael Wilkins submits that the four gospels each offer unique views of Jesus and His disciples. "Combined," he says, "the sketches of the disciples in each Gospel give us a well-rounded perspective of what Jesus intended discipleship to mean."⁴¹ The whole idea of discipleship, the very mission to which Jesus calls His disciples, is on display in His earthly ministry to them. When He told them to make disciples, He was calling them to do as He did.

Along with this comes the teaching aspect of Jesus' time with His followers. In many ways Jesus' first teaching (the Sermon on the Mount,

³⁹ John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids; Carlisle: Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2005), 1264.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Michael J. Wilkins, "Unique Discipleship to a Unique Master: Discipleship in the Gospel according to Mark," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 8, no. 3 (2004): 51.

Matt. 5-7) captured what He intended to communicate in His earthly mission as well as the pattern for what the disciples are to teach others. Jesus instructed from a Great Commandment perspective, that the disciples should love God and love others, dismantling the Pharisaic legalism of the era. He taught them much about the life of a Christian. With this in view, the rest of Jesus' ministry to them was learning from Him as he taught the crowds, used parables to illustrate or obfuscate, preached sermons that condemned legalism, reached out to those who were the maligned of society, sacrificially washed their feet to demonstrate servanthood and love, and then called them to do the same to one another. Yes, when Jesus called them to teach others what He had taught them, the disciples minds must have flooded with all that meant.

Concerning baptism, the first seen is the baptism of John which is a baptism of repentance and also a way of one identifying and agreeing with his message.⁴² John's baptism seems to set the course for an understanding of Christian baptism based on Jesus's commission for the Disciples. It is interesting to note that Jesus himself never seemed to have baptized anyone,⁴³ however the pattern of baptism as a means of identification has been established before the eyes of the Disciples, so that when Jesus states this as a part of the commission, they understand what He means. There is in the commission, however, the addition of whose name into which disciples are to be baptized: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The baptismal formula is distinct from the other forms of baptism known at the time, including John's baptism, but still

⁴² Osborne submits, "John's practice had several theological ramifications: (1) It was intimately connected with radical repentance, not only of the Gentile but astoundingly (to his contemporaries) also of the Jew. (2) It was eschatological at the core, preparing for the Messiah, who would baptize 'with the Holy Spirit and with fire' (Mt 3:11), and therefore looked to the final separation between God's people and the wicked at the Eschaton (i.e., "the End," cf. Mt 3:12). (3) It symbolized moral purification and so prepared the people for the coming kingdom (Mt 3:2; Lk 3:7-14)." Grant R. Osborne, "Baptism," *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 258.

⁴³ Though John 3:22 states that Jesus and His disciples were baptizing, John clarifies in 4:2 that the disciples were the ones baptizing, not Jesus. Carson states, "Only the Fourth Gospel mentions that Jesus baptized, and 4:2 specifies that he himself did not perform the rite but left it to his disciples." D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester; Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press; Eerdmans, 1991), 209.

maintains an identity element.⁴⁴ Therefore, the case can be made that when Jesus declares the Great Commission to His disciples, the elements of which He speaks have been demonstrated to them, and would have brought to mind His ministry to them and amongst them.

Elements of the Great Commission in the New Testament Church

Having seen the OT reconciliatory work of YHWH in general, that Israel was to be a light to the nations, and then to be reminded of the context of the Great Commission in the Gospels, the next premise to delineate is whether the commission Jesus gave to the Apostles is the same commission given to the NT church.

The mission of the Apostles is seen in part in the book of Acts. From the beginning, Peter preaches the Good News of Christ and many are baptized (Acts 2). From here we see the pattern of "church life" as that which may be regarded as "disciple-making." Acts 2:42-47 shows that they gathered together under the Apostles teaching, breaking bread together, selling and sharing their possessions, fellowshiping, and seeing God add to their numbers.

In addition to this, the NT Church is born into an era of persecution, and from its earliest days there is a scattering which occurs. Acts 8:1-8 outlines the beginnings of this dispersion, so that the gospel and disciple-making becomes a broader effort. This is in line with what Jesus told His disciples at the beginning of Acts, where he states "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8b).

The elements of the Great Commission are then seen within not only the early days of the church as pictured in Acts, but also as the letters which are written to the churches throughout Asia are distributed. These elements are not outlined in a concise manner as it is in Matthew's Gospel, but nonetheless the elements are present and disseminated throughout. Taking for example, 1 Corinthians, where Paul does give a succinct gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4), but also mentions baptism (1 Cor. 1:10-17)⁴⁵ and as well, in the essence of the letter, is discipling the Corinthian

⁴⁴ Blomberg states, "In [or into] the name' means declaring allegiance to or becoming associated with the power and authority of Jesus." Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 432.

⁴⁵ Though Paul says that he was sent to preach the gospel and not baptize, it is

church. The quintessence of the Great Commission is not lost in any of the Epistles.

What Paul and Peter and the other writers of the NT are doing is archetypal disciple-making. The very efforts of Paul and Barnabas are witness to the Great Commission continuing on. They planted churches, trained up leaders, and gospel ministry was begun in the Near East. In the midst of this planting and training, Paul tells Timothy to pass on what he has learned to faithful men (2 Tim. 2:2), and tells Titus that the work of the pastor is to train men and women who likewise train other men and women (Titus 2). It is in the warp and woof of the New Testament that the expanse of the Great Commission is seen. As Christopher Wright states,

[m]ost of Paul's letters were written in the heat of his missionary efforts: wresting with the theological basis of the inclusion of the Gentiles, affirming the need for Jew and Gentile to accept one another in Christ and in the church....confronting insipient heresies with clear affirmations of the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ, and so on.⁴⁶

Though the Great Commission is not stated directly as the mission of the church, its elements are seen throughout the New Testament. However, some have proffered that the Great Commission was only for the eleven disciples, and is not meant to be transferred to the church which comes after them.⁴⁷ From a different perspective, there are those who say that the Great Commission itself is not a mandate for the disciples to proclaim the Gospel at all.⁴⁸ In response to these kinds of statements Ernest

clear in the context not only that he did baptize some, but also that baptism had occurred. The issue is not that Paul saw baptism as unnecessary, but rather that the Corinthian division over who had baptized them was foolish.

⁴⁶ Mike Barnett and Robin Martin, eds., *Discovering the Mission of God: Best Missional Practices for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 36.

⁴⁷ For one example of this, see Bob Seidensticker, "The Great Commission and How It Doesn't Apply to You"

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/crossexamined/2015/02/the-great-commission-and-how-it-doesnt-apply-to-you-Jesus/#Z5cvAEfMMwdf0jTU.99>

⁴⁸See Ernest Pickering, "Distinctive Teachings Of Ultra-Dispensationalism," *Central C. B. Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1961): 40.

Pickering offers “[t]hat this commission was to be obeyed throughout the church age seems evident from the promise of the Lord that He would support them in the ministry, ‘even unto the end of the age.’”⁴⁹ From these evidences, and from the pages of the early church itself, it seems clear that the mission of the church as the Great Commission, remains the same throughout the ages.

Elements of the Great Commission in the Early Post-Apostolic Era

A further evidence of Great Commission work in the age of the NT Church can be seen in the history of the church. It would be too large an undertaking to bring the scope of all of church history into view, but peering into the world of the early postapostolic era will prove to show the pattern of the Great Commission continued on. In order to accomplish this, there will be a brief survey at the purpose of the *Didache*.

The *Didache* is said to be “a ‘catechetical handbook’ for those who had recently joined the Christian family from among the Gentiles.”⁵⁰ William Varner concludes that this “was the first Christian Handbook of which we are aware.”⁵¹ What is included in this handbook that would give evidence that the Great Commission was assumed to be the mission of the early postapostolic church? It is assumed to be the teachings of the Twelve Apostles passed down from Jesus to them, and then to the church. All of it is seen to be a catechism for pre-baptized communicants.⁵² Those who were evangelized, were then catechized and

⁴⁹ Ibid., 41.

⁵⁰ William Varner, *The Way of the Didache: The First Christian Handbook* (Lanham: UPA, 2007), 3.

⁵¹ Ibid., 14.

⁵² This is why Varner concludes as he does that this is the “first Christian Handbook” stating, “Many writers have noticed that the command to baptize in 7:1 indicates that the baptism was to take place ‘after you have said all these things beforehand.’ In other words ‘all these things’ must refer to the instruction that had already been given in the first six chapters. It seems to be evident, therefore, that the first six chapters are a compendium of pre-baptismal catechetical instruction that was to be taught to recent converts from paganism to prepare them for that decisive act by which they entered the Christian community. If that was indeed the effect that the text had on later generations, it will help to confirm our explanation of why the book originated.” Ibid.

subsequently baptized. The early church appeared to practice the very words of Jesus in the commission.⁵³

Fulfilment of the Great Commission in the Consummation

The great commission has as its goal the making of disciples of every tribe, tongue and nation. In Revelation 5 we see a picture of the commission in the vision of John when he sees the multitudes singing to the Lamb as One slain, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:9-10).

John's vision gives us a picture of what has been happening since the Fall, which is God's reconciliatory work, realized ultimately in the Second Person of the Trinity putting on humanity and laying down His life for His sheep. This all culminates in the eternal state where representatives of all the nations of the earth are walking by the light of the glory of God. The Commission to make disciples of all the nations is complete and those who have been reconciled by God unto Himself are in His presence forever.

Conclusion

Is it a true and all-encompassing statement to say that the heart of God is missions? The study undertaken in this paper has sought to show that when one takes the elements found within Jesus' "Great Commission" statement and applies it as a hermeneutical grid through which the reconciliatory nature of God can be seen, it is possible to see a great commission-like theme throughout the Scriptures. One may be able to argue against this in the minutia of one for one statements, but it does not seem possible to argue against the overarching theme of God's reconciliatory work, and these elements being present throughout the

⁵³ It is interesting to note that there is a reversal of the order which Jesus gave, that the teaching would come before the baptizing. There appear to be practical reasons for this, especially concerning Gentile converts who would need to be taught the basics of the faith. For more information on the *Didache* and the exact words used, please see William Varner, *The Way of the Didache: The First Christian Handbook* (Lanham: UPA, 2007).

scope of biblical theology. As D.A. Carson states:

The promise that through Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed, gradually expanded into a major theme in the Old Testament, now bursts into the Great Commission, the mushrooming growth of the Jewish church into the Gentile world, the spreading flame reaching across the Roman Empire and beyond, in anticipation of the climactic consummation of God's promises in the new heaven and the new earth.⁵⁴

⁵⁴D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, Fifteenth Edition. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 263.

BOOK REVIEWS 137-176

Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study. By Jonathan I. Griffiths. In *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, 42. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017. 153 pp. \$22.00, Paperback. ISBN 978-0-8308-2643-8.

Jonathan Griffiths writes *Preaching in the New Testament* from the perspective of a scholar and practitioner. He has served as a teacher for The Proclamation Trust's Cornhill Training Course and is the Lead Pastor of the Metropolitan Bible Church in Ottawa, Canada. Thus, he is well-suited to address the biblical basis for preaching and its implications for contemporary ministry.

Preaching in the New Testament aims to answer two primary questions. The first question asks if preaching is a distinct word ministry in the church (2), and the second question enquires about the continuity which may exist between Old Testament prophecy and New Testament apostolic ministry and contemporary preaching (3).

To answer these questions from the New Testament, Griffiths structures his work in three parts. Part 1 begins with "a brief biblical-theological overview of the theology of the word of God" (5). Next, the author summarizes key information related to three Greek words for preaching, namely, *euangelizomai*, *katangellō*, and *kēryssō*. After an excursus on "The identity of the preachers in Philippians 1:14-18" (41-43), the first part of the book concludes with a treatment of how a New Testament understanding of preaching impacts other word ministries in the church.

The second part of *Preaching in the New Testament* consists of six exegetical studies. The first focuses on 2 Timothy 3-4, with special attention given to 2 Timothy 4:2. Griffiths begins with this specific text because he asserts that "[2 Timothy 4:2] is arguably the New Testament passage concerning preaching that most clearly and directly applies to pastor-teachers in the post-apostolic age" (53). Following an excursus on "Biblical-theological connections between New Testament preaching and Old Testament prophecy" (61-66), the remaining exegetical studies are presented in canonical order and center around Romans 10, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 2-6, 1 Thessalonians 1-2, and Hebrews, respectively. Although these swaths of the biblical text are lengthy, Griffiths does a masterful job of providing sufficient interaction with the

details of key passages within their broader discourse settings while maintaining his focus on the theme of preaching.

Part 3 is the most succinct section of the book. Here Griffiths collects key exegetical observations from the second part of his resource in one convenient list and unpacks insights from his overall study. Taken together, these closing observations provide an answer to the two primary questions which set the course for this work.

The following two strengths and weaknesses may be noted for *Preaching in the New Testament*. Beginning with the strengths, Griffiths' work may serve to supply an antidote for the pragmatism which ails some aspects of contemporary preaching and which could eventually call into question its relevance for ministry today. The author pinpoints this important issue when he asks, "Is a view that in any sense sets pulpit preaching apart from other forms of word ministry simply a carry-over from an earlier age of evangelicalism – a piece of historical and cultural baggage which has no real basis in Scripture and which is best discarded" (3)? Of course, the fruit of Griffiths' exegetical efforts yields the following modest but clear response: "Preaching is not the sole ministry of the word mandated by the New Testament, but rather forms part – albeit a distinct and highly significant part – of the variety of word ministries envisaged for the post-apostolic era" (133). Consequently, those who value the essential role of preaching in the local church will receive solid affirmation from a careful reading of Griffiths' theological and exegetical arguments.

Another strength of Griffiths' work is the balanced way in which he presents some of his conclusions. For instance, Griffiths does not view preaching in corporate gatherings as dispensable, but neither does he consider other word ministries unnecessary. Instead, he argues for a biblical balance when he explains that "the distinctive nature and significance of preaching suggest that the preaching of the word of God should drive and fuel the other word ministries within the church" (133). Thus, rather than setting forth a false dichotomy between preaching and other word ministries, the author contends a biblical balance exists where various types of word ministries all serve important roles in the church.

In relation to some weaknesses in *Preaching in the New Testament*, it would be helpful for Griffiths to provide more clarity on some points which are integral to his overall thesis. Specifically, one of the main

summary points Griffiths emphasizes is that “the ‘preaching’ to which our three key verbs refer in the New Testament is usually carried out by figures of recognized authority” (35). However, it seems that by way of implication this “recognized authority” is primarily, if not exclusively, presented as vertical in nature, that is, God grants this authority to those who preach. Yet, readers may wonder if there is some sense in which an outward affirmation of God’s call to preach is also important? While a “yes” answer appears to be the case here, readers have to wait until nearly the end of Griffiths’ book for this answer, and it only surfaces in a footnote on page 128. So, Griffiths seems to argue that preaching is limited to those who are both called by God *and* affirmed by the church, but with this aspect of preaching being crucial to an understanding of its biblical basis, more clarity on this point would be beneficial.

Lastly, since Griffiths’ work interacts with some implications for preaching in contemporary ministry, one might expect for Griffiths to argue more directly for a specific approach to preaching which dovetails best with the biblical basis for preaching outlined in his book. However, this only seems to surface indirectly in the author’s study. For example, the word “exposition” appears in Griffiths’ concluding chapter when he describes an important aspect of Old Testament prophetic ministry in post-apostolic preaching (127). So, it appears that Griffiths would argue for an expository approach to preaching, and this makes sense in view of the theological propositions he summarizes early in his work to frame his entire discussion of preaching (16). Thus, an expository approach to preaching as opposed to, say, a topical approach would flow best from the high view of Scripture embedded within the overall fabric of Griffiths’ study, and a more straightforward argument for this approach to preaching would perhaps serve to further strengthen his work.

Griffiths’ goal in *Preaching in the New Testament* is an ambitious one, and aside from some weaknesses which are likely more the result of his self-imposed, restricted focus than anything else, he accomplishes his goal in a clear and concise manner. Readers will find here a wealth of information and insight related to the biblical basis for preaching which should fuel a life-long commitment to handle God’s truth rightly and to proclaim it to others today. For at least these important reasons, *Preaching in the New Testament* should be welcomed with enthusiasm as a vital resource for all those who are called to serve in the specific word ministry known in Scripture as “preaching.”

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John Owen and English Puritanism: Experiences of Defeat. By Crawford Gribben. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. 424pp. \$35.00, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0190860790.

Crawford Gribben teaches history and anthropology at Queen's University, Belfast and researches the development of religious ideas in the modern era. In this new biography of John Owen, Gribben aims to describe Owen's "intellectual habits" and "interaction with the literary cultures of his various environments" (ix) to show changes in Owen's theology as reflected in changes in his immediate context. Gribben recognizes his indebtedness to previous biographies and the growing amount of literature on Owen's theology. However, he aims to challenge the common portrayals of Owen as a static figure (even encouraged by Owen himself, who did not draw attention to his changing beliefs but asserted his self-confidence and avoided talking about his personal life) by showing how he experienced defeat, which led to change.

Owen was born after the Reformation in England, a time of great change. The Puritans claimed to continue the reform that had not been completed by challenging the accepted form of church government. Already, separating from the Church of England had demonstrated their failure to reform from within the state church. Thus, Owen was not raised in a time of Puritan triumph but failure. Owen's schooling followed common practices, but his experience at Queen's College became embroiled in Arminian and Calvinist debates, showing that assumptions in Reformed orthodoxy were now being challenged. After Owen's graduation and ordination, he began his divinity studies, but was soon compelled by his conscience to leave Oxford (thus experiencing vocational defeat), because he could not uphold Laud's recently imposed rules. Upon leaving Oxford, Owen felt unimportant and entered a crisis of faith. Though he began working as a tutor for the Lovelaces, he soon found that their differing stances on the war made their relationship untenable and Owen willingly re-entered a time of uncertainty and

disadvantage. He overcame this by throwing himself into scholarly projects.

When Owen began his work as a pastor, he propounded views of ecclesiology, covenant theology, and toleration that differed from the Presbyterian norm, and would thus have to advance his views through the channel of a public career. Owen finally gained the public recognition that he was hoping for when he was invited to preach after the execution of Charles I. His sermon became popular and set him up as a leader of the new direction in which England was going. This made returning to local church ministry seem uneventful and even discouraging, and the loss of his eldest son, after already losing children years before, increased Owen's difficulty. Soon, Owen met Cromwell and accompanied him to Ireland, where Owen was dismayed by the suffering there, but also encouraged by responsiveness to his preaching.

After issues in Ireland and then Scotland had been dealt with, Owen was asked to get Oxford under control. He must have felt triumphant upon his return, but his Puritan attitudes were not welcome among the royalists who still had control of the university; thus, he had to promote his views by focusing on piety rather than dissenting issues. He also began working towards the creation of national reforms, but they would not be accepted or put into play.

With Cromwell as Lord Protector, Owen's career reached its climax. He continued work on a national level but his disillusionment with the status quo under Cromwell began to simmer under the surface. Owen returned to Oxford, where reforms had been successful, but was soon demoted. He opposed the idea of Cromwell taking the crown and even publicly criticised him. This led to his return to the pastorate, where he began to lead the Independents in creating a confession (the Savoy Declaration) as part of their attempt to fill the power vacuum created by the death of Cromwell and ascension of his son. These hopes were dashed when the revolution ended and the monarchy was restored. Owen's colleagues were arrested and killed for their involvement in the king's execution, and the Clarendon Code brought persecution that would force Owen to be constantly moving and changing employment. He channelled his energy into writing and eventually became the pastor of a house church where he would stay until his death, spending his final years as a Nonconformist leader, writer, and pastor. He died without seeing his

dreams fulfilled for the church, though he was an influential Puritan leader.

Overall, Gribben regularly interacts with scholarship, corrects common hagiography, and offers a fair evaluation of general trends and developments in Owen's life and context. However, he also seems to unnaturally squeeze some details of Owen's life into the pre-formed mold of defeating experiences. First, Gribben regularly interacts with past and current scholarship on Owen, making this biography not only useful for understanding Owen's life but also the history and current state of interpreting Owen and potential research topics. As an archivist, this reader was excited to see that Gribben often went back to early printings instead of solely relying on Goold's set of Owen's works. Second, Gribben presents a needed corrective to the trend of overemphasizing Owen's strengths by presenting his shortcomings and failures. Third, Gribben is able to offer general evaluations of Owen's life and context as a whole, as well as developments in his thought over time, the nature of this biography as a chronological account of Owen's life that cross-references other contemporary sources. Perhaps the greatest strength of Gribben's work is that he constantly makes Owen and his context interact with each other. This is seen for example in his explanations of when and why Owen wrote some of his discourses, his involvement in print culture, and his connections to contemporaries like Josselin, Bunyan, and Hutchinson.

However, at times Gribben seems to prod and pull at the details of Owen's life to make them fit into the theme of defeat. Perhaps this is permissible as a corrective to accounts that push to the opposite extreme, or perhaps it is an inevitable consequence of attempting to present a person's complex life in a more coherent way. But this reader would argue against concluding that Owen was "always pushing for providence to lead in the direction he preferred" (248); or that he "made no distinctive and enduring contribution to English or Reformed theology," (270) since he was not innovative. There would be no agreement either, on the argument that Owen's perspective of his own life was one wherein "every success had been undone in defeat" (262); or that those who express their indebtedness to Owen as a spiritual example by getting t-shirts with his face on it, are not in tune with what Owen saw as his weightier successes like his commentary on Hebrews (272). As someone specializing in millennial thought, it is possible that Gribben took Owen's unfulfilled

expectations for the church in his time too far, and as someone trying to critique accounts of Owen's life that divorce theology from context, it is possible that Gribben emphasized context to the point of neglecting theology.

In conclusion, Gribben rightly contextualizes and critiques Owen in a way that advances Owen studies, but could have produced a balanced conclusion by more thoroughly explaining Owen's own understanding of the purpose of the Christian life and what success looks like, as well as his godly intentions as a pastor and writer. Perhaps if Gribben further explored the nautical theme in Owen, using his commentary on Hebrews 6:19, where he says hope is described as an anchor, because it "will hold fast and retain the ship in safety against all outward violence" and will allow the crew to "attend to their occasions" on shore, Gribben could have been more in-tune with the use of Owen as a spiritual authority and example of someone who trusted God and pressed forward in the midst of defeat.

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***Taking God At His Word: Why the Bible Is Knowable, Necessary, and Enough, and What That Means for You and Me.* By Kevin DeYoung. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. 138 pp. \$17.99, Hardcover. ISBN 978-1-4335-4240-4**

Known for addressing controversial topics with clarity and grace, Kevin DeYoung (M.Div., Gordon-Conwell) serves as senior pastor at Christ Covenant Church in North Carolina and teaches systematic theology at Reformed Theological Seminary. He has authored numerous books, including *Just Do Something*, *The Hole in Our Holiness*, and *Crazy Busy*, and he serves as a regular blogger for the Gospel Coalition.

In this short and easy-to-read book, DeYoung examines Scripture's teaching about Scripture. DeYoung focuses each chapter around a biblical passage, drawing out its contribution for his doctrine of Scripture. In chapter one, he introduces Psalm 119 and explains his hope that it would "be an expression of all that is in our heads and in our hearts" (16). This

psalm, he claims, “shows us what to believe about the word of God, what to feel about the word of God, and what to do with the word of God” (16). DeYoung desires readers to express a similar love and admiration for God’s word, and he uses the remaining seven chapters to build towards this goal. In chapter two, DeYoung employs 2 Peter 1:16-21 to contend that Scripture is the divine, inerrant, word of God. This passage, DeYoung argues, shows that the biblical authors grounded their beliefs in the true events of history, not on myths or fables. Peter’s conviction rests in both his own eyewitness testimony, as well as the authority of Scripture.

Chapters three through six make up the core of this book. Using the SCAN acronym, these chapters cover the sufficiency, clarity, authority, and necessity of Scripture. Regarding the *sufficiency* of Scripture, DeYoung turns to Hebrews 1:1-4. He claims that because redemption is finalized in Christ, revelation must be final as well. “Scripture is enough,” DeYoung writes, “because the work of Christ is enough. They stand or fall together” (52). Next, DeYoung uses Deuteronomy 30:11-14 to defend Scripture’s *clarity*. This doctrine affirms that the saving message of Jesus is plainly taught in Scripture and can be understood by all (44). In addressing the Bible’s *authority*, DeYoung contrasts the divergent responses to Scripture in Acts 17:1-15. The Bereans were of more noble character because they saw Scripture as authoritative. While general revelation is helpful in teaching about God, we should never allow it to supersede special revelation. Finally, DeYoung examines 1 Corinthians 2:6-13 and the *necessity* of Scripture. General revelation alone is insufficient for salvation. “We need Scripture because without it we cannot know the love of God” (89).

The last two chapters serve to tie the book together. Chapter seven asks, “What did Jesus believe about the Bible?” Through examining several passages (John 10:35-36; Matt. 5:17-19; 12:38-42), DeYoung describes Jesus’s high view of the Scriptures. Jesus “never disrespected, never disregarded, never disagreed with a single text of Scripture” (109). In his final chapter, DeYoung encourages Christians to endure. Using 2 Timothy 3:14-17, he identifies four reasons Christians should stick with the Scriptures: the history and heritage of their faith, Scripture’s ability to save, the divine origin of Scripture, and Scripture’s practicality in leading to holiness.

Many Christian authors seek to impact people's lives, influence their thinking, and lead them to a greater love for God and His word. To this end, DeYoung's *Taking God At His Word* will find success with many. The book succeeds for three main reasons. First, DeYoung writes with exemplary style and clarity. Taking a complex topic, he delineates it into something any church member can enjoy. He is direct and unequivocal about his meaning. This fact—along with the book's short length—makes it accessible and unimposing to all. Second, DeYoung pairs forceful teaching with memorable illustrations. One example is his turn on the classic *elephant and the blind men* analogy. While acknowledging the analogy works to explain human's inability to fathom the divine on their own accord, he then poses the question, "What if the elephant talks?" (69). DeYoung's sudden turn demonstrates perfectly the uniqueness of Scripture and why it is trustworthy and clear. While I highlight this one example, DeYoung saturates his book with pointed teachings, memorable illustrations, and persuasive application. A third reason worth mentioning is DeYoung's transparency. His love and passion for God's word is evident, and the effect is contagious. Because of this, readers will find their own passion and appreciation for God's word increase. DeYoung's desire for people to love Scripture feels genuine, and it helps the book succeed. For all that the book accomplishes, nothing is more important than this.

A final benefit worth mentioning is the book's appendix. DeYoung lists thirty books dealing with topics of Scripture. These topics include apologetic concerns, the doctrine of Scripture, how to study Scripture, and inerrancy. For each reference, DeYoung gives a short description and rates each work into *beginner-intermediate-advanced* categories, helping readers identify which book to pick up next. This list is a valuable guide for anyone seeking further study.

While I admire DeYoung's love for Scripture and his honorable goal in this book, I am personally uncomfortable with his hermeneutical approach. He claims that this is a book "unpacking what the Bible says about the Bible" (23). Yet in forming and defending his doctrine, DeYoung uses passages that do not speak about the Bible. For instance, DeYoung mixes the concept of the *Bible* with *Jesus* (Heb. 1:1-4), with the *Mosaic Law* (Deut. 30:11-14), and with the *Holy Spirit* (1 Cor. 2:6-13). In addressing Psalm 119, DeYoung acknowledges the different aspects of God's revelation. But then goes on to claim that Psalm 119 is "about the

Bible itself" (12). DeYoung's blending and blurring of concepts forces the Bible to say things about itself it never actually intends to say. His approach disregards the author's original intent, and allows the interpreter to dictate meaning. The inspired Scriptures simply never refer to a sixty-six-book canon, leading me to question whether DeYoung's approach allows the Bible to authentically speak for itself.

Taking God At His Word provides a short, readable depiction of an Evangelical doctrine of Scripture. Many churches will cherish its brevity and clarity. Members sympathetic to DeYoung's perspective will benefit from its content. I recommend this book for anyone wanting to better understand an Evangelical view of the Bible.

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Augustine: Conversions to Confessions. By Robin Lane Fox. New York: Basic Books, 2015. 688 pp. \$35.00. Hardback. ISBN-13: 978-0465022274.

Augustine persists as one of the most discussed and written upon subjects in history. For generations, Augustine has been appreciated, approached, and appropriated from numerous angles. Like a precious stone, Augustine has been admired and cherished from his own time through today. For Gottschalk of Orbais, he was the pearl of predestination. For Thomas Aquinas he was the sacred stone of sacramental theology. To Luther and Calvin, he was the rare jewel of the Reformation. Specifically, his *Confessions* endures as a timeless classic, appreciated by Christians and non-Christians alike for its uncanny ability to describe a universal spiritual angst. For Robin Lane Fox, retired Oxford classicist and author of *Augustine: Conversions to Confessions*, the bishop of Hippo is the pearl of philosophical enquiry and the great gem among great men in late antiquity.

As one "intrigued by his restless intelligence and his exceptional way with words," Lane Fox seeks to understand Augustine as an "intensely introspective" human being just like you and me (xi, 12). Turning the gem to discover one intriguing facet, Fox approaches his subject from the

philosopher's perspective, tracing Augustine's philosophical journey in detail as given in the *Confessions*. Admiring another angle of this jewel, Fox commends the Christian commitments of Augustine, if somewhat hesitantly. Rotating the precious stone yet again, Fox elucidates Augustine as a man of his times, albeit unique in many senses. As a trained historian, Lane Fox ultimately produces a text of significant historical investigation. In all this, Lane Fox produces a lengthy yet readable volume. His work, at times humorous, is not always charitable, yet remains a respectable biography of Augustine.

Conversions to Confessions is presented in six parts, with chapters discussing numerous themes among the numerous "conversions" of Augustine's life. For its length, readers will find it hard to believe that this is only a partial biography. Stopping in CE 397, the year Augustine began writing his *Confessions*, Lane Fox provides a study of Augustine's process of "conversion" which culminated in the writing of his spiritual autobiography. Lane Fox uses "conversion" language to describe shifts in practice and belief in favor of adopting a new one. Lane Fox affirms that conversions happen not exclusively from one religion to another, but "are possible within one and the same religious commitment" (8). This is the hub on which the text turns. The journey of Augustine is one of conversions, at times subtle, but not necessarily radical shifts. For Fox, Augustine was nursed upon the milk of Christian teaching and self-identified as a Christian albeit as a catechumen and one who held Christian Scripture in strong distaste.

Fox triangulates Augustine in history by comparing him to two contemporary figures of antiquity. Libanius, a rhetor some forty years older, serves as a pagan counterpart to Augustine. Libanius also later wrote an autobiography of sorts, a life guided by, in his case, the pagan goddess Fortuna. Synesius, an even nearer contemporary of Augustine, serves as a Christian counterpart to Augustine yet of much different temperament. Lane Fox compares and contrasts Synesius with Augustine's own assimilation of Neoplatonism into his Christian thinking. He also compares the reactions of both Christian leaders who were appointed as clergy against their will. These two men of late antiquity provide historical counterpoints which simultaneously shed light on Augustine's context, while revealing his unique spirit and place in history. Fox traces the training and early careers of Libanius and Augustine, demonstrating their dual concern for public oration.

This book provides valuable reflection on Augustine as philosophical wanderer. I also found Fox's chapters on Manichaeism and Neoplatonism satisfying and helpful. Additionally, Lane Fox's view of *Confessions'* structure and narrative arc, potentially confusing for readers, is helpful and compelling. Lane Fox is thorough in these particular chapters, yet with others, it is possible to get lost in the weeds of Lane Fox's massive text. Lane Fox, with all his helpful elucidation on various facets of Augustine's life and influences, presents some topics with a tad bit of oversimplification. His explanation of the Arian viewpoint is not historically nor theologically complete. Additionally, Lane Fox conceives of Augustine as always within the bosom of the church. As Augustine himself confesses, he was raised on the milk of God's word. Although this is true, likely through the diligent efforts of his mother Monica, Augustine's conversion in the Milanese garden represents more than just a conversion to ascetic Christianity free from the tethers of sexual lust. While there is a thread of sexual reformation in *Confessions*, the thrust of the work relates to the rescue of a wandering soul who is far from God. The instance of the pears in book two demonstrates Augustine's view of sin, and as such, it is not related to sex at all. This story highlights the dramatic effects of sin upon the human soul, allowing the progressive story of Augustine's life of sin and eventual conversion to have a more dramatic impact. Seeing Pontician's desire to forsake all for Christ (after reading Scripture and the *Life of Antony*), Augustine states that the Lord "used his [Simplician's] words to wrench me around to front myself" (*Conf* 8.16). For the majority of Augustine's life, his path towards wisdom and knowledge was completely self-directed. Like a lost puppy seeking shelter, Augustine drifted from ideology to ideology seeking the best one to solve his questions and dilemmas. His inner spiritual struggle continued to toss him to and fro, and each time he would walk away still clinging to a life of the flesh. Though beginning to discover the truth, Augustine says, "But I held back" (*Conf* 8.2). It was God, through the examples of fellow believers and ultimately through Scripture, which finally (truly) converted Augustine. This alone was God's direction and power despite Augustine's attempts to do otherwise. The thesis of conversion from sex to celibacy as the driving force of *Confessions* simply doesn't account for the entirety of Augustine's perspective. It's a significant dimension of Augustine's story, but not the operating agency.

This said, Lane Fox does provide some useful correctives to a simplistic understanding of Augustine's conversion experience. He helpfully asserts that Augustine's garden experience gave him a more balanced view of the Christian God. Augustine, free from inner turmoil which had plagued him for so long, was now *compos mentis* in regards to the God of the Bible. Lane Fox's suggestion, however, that Augustine's conversion to wisdom is on par with his conversion to Christianity is slightly dubious. Certainly conversion comes in many forms, from the sudden to the subtle, but the shift to orthodox Christianity was certainly more than a gentle nudge along the same spectrum for Augustine. Augustine, who once adhered to Manichaeism, an absolutely other-than faith from Christianity, could not possibly have made only a slight shift in his thinking. His anti-Manichean writings, following his conversion to orthodoxy, demonstrate something more than just a modest alteration of thinking. Lane Fox's wonderful treatment on Manichean theology and Augustine's writings on Genesis and creation would seem to understand the dramatic shift in Augustine's thinking, though his thesis does not appear to account for this.

Though he proposes a potentially contentious way of reading Augustine's life of "conversions," his work will certainly prove helpful to scholars of Augustine, worthy to be read alongside other modern biographies. That said, this text is not intended for the Augustine novice or casual reader. Though I disagree with his conception of Augustine and his "conversions," there is much to commend in Lane Fox's scholarship of Augustine's early life. One wonders if he needed almost 700 pages to accomplish his task, but in some ways his attention to detail is admirable. As mentioned previously, his chapters on Neo-Platonism and Manichaeism are some of the most thorough within modern scholarship. Even if scholars may contend greatly with Lane Fox and his arguments, as they surely will, his efforts and positive contributions in this text should not go unnoticed nor underappreciated.

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Covenant and God's Purpose for the World. By Thomas R. Schreiner. Wheaton: Crossway, 2017. 119 pp. \$14.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-4335-4999-1.

In recent years, increased attention has been given to the role of covenants in the biblical storyline. *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* by Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum (Crossway, 2012) sought to chart a course between dispensational and covenant theologies under the label "Progressive Covenantalism." This framework seeks to underline God's revelation through covenants, the relationship between the covenants, and how all the covenants find their fulfillment in Christ. Dr. Thomas Schreiner, James Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has continued the progressive covenantalism conversation in his lucid monograph, *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World*. Schreiner's volume is accessible to every thoughtful Christian and rich in biblical material.

The covenants form the backbone of the Bible, unfolding its story from beginning to end. For this reason, Schreiner observes, "We can't grasp how the Scriptures fit together if we lack clarity about the covenants God made with his people" (12). The aim of Schreiner's book is to biblically explore how the covenants progress, interrelate, and ultimately, climax in Christ.

Schreiner defines *covenant* as "a chosen relationship in which two parties make binding promises to each other" (13). It entails mutuality and election, oaths and signs, as seen in ancient Near Eastern context (51, 61-65) and biblical history. The *progressive* nature of the covenants looms large in the volume, with each covenant making up a separate chapter.

The first covenant explored is the covenant of creation, which Schreiner admits might be "the most controversial in the book...for...we don't find the word *covenant* anywhere in Genesis 1-3" (19). Nonetheless, Schreiner compellingly argues from 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17 that a covenant can be present even when the word is absent, as in the case of God's promise to David (20). A close examination of early Genesis reveals "the constituent elements of a covenant were present at creation" (21). Furthermore, a correct reading of Hosea 6:7,

along with the parallel between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, confirm a covenant of creation (22).

God's covenant with Noah is set before the reader in chapter 2. There Schreiner shines light on the parallels between Adam and the new kind of Adam, Noah (33). Noah dwells on a similar earth with animals (Gen 1:20-21; 8:17-19) and seasons (Gen 1:14-18; 8:22). He was commanded to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28; 9:1, 7). Like Adam and Eve, Noah was to rule the created order (Gen 1:26, 28; 2:14; 9:2). God promised to preserve the human race through his covenant with Noah, hence Schreiner says it could be titled the "covenant of preservation" (31). Yet, even after a new beginning, old realities of sinful corruption still inhabited the heart. Noah would sin in a garden (Gen 9:20-21). Clearly, "the new family (Noah's) had all the same problems as the old family (Adam's)" (38).

Ungodliness continued until the life of Abraham (Gen 12), who was called out of idolatry and into covenant with God (Josh 24:2-3; cf. Rom 4:5). Schreiner's chapter on the covenant with Abraham expounds the threefold covenant promise: offspring, land, and universal blessing (53). Resembling Noah, "Abraham was a new kind of Adam, representing a new beginning" (42). The promised seed of the woman (Gen 3:15) would be the promised offspring of Abraham, Jesus Christ (Gal 3:16). As a new Adam, Abraham was promised a new Eden (Gen 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7, 16; 17:8; 22:17) fulfilled by Christ in the new creation (Rev 21:1-22:5). The covenant promise of universal blessing is also fulfilled in Christ, who "ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). Schreiner's Christocentric hermeneutic is a leading strength of the book. He sets each covenant in context while also giving due attention to how each covenant finds its *telos* in Christ.

The next major covenant in biblical history is God's covenant with Israel, often called the "Mosaic covenant" or the "Sinai covenant" because of the respective leader and location present when the covenant was initiated (59). The chapter is partially framed around the parallels between suzerain-vassal treaties of the ancient Near East (1400 to 1200 BC) and the Lord's covenant with Israel (61). In the Mosaic covenant, the covenant is entered after deliverance from Egypt (Ex 2:23-25; 20:2, 24), stipulated in blessings and curses (Ex 20; 24:7; Lev 26; Deut 26-28), deposited in the temple (Ex 25:16), sealed with a meal (Ex 24:9-11), and marked by the Sabbath (Ex 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-16).

In 2 Samuel 7, God establishes his covenant with David. A close reading of the Pentateuch (Num 24:17-19), particularly Genesis (17:6; 35:11), anticipates the fulfillment of a promised king from the line of Abraham. “The scepter shall not depart from Judah” (Gen 49:10), Moses writes. In Schreiner’s estimation, that promise-fulfillment lies at the heart of the Davidic covenant. Schreiner states, “The covenantal nature of what God pledged to David is clear: his dynasty and kingdom will never end...A Davidic king will be the means by which the promises of land, offspring, and worldwide blessing will be realized” (75). David is a new Adam, a fulfillment of Abrahamic promises, and a new Israel, who is to be eclipsed in the new covenant by Christ, “the true and perfect Adam, the true Israel, the true son of Abraham, and the true David” (83).

In the OT, “the prophets promised that a new day was coming, a new covenant would be realized, and thus there would be a new exodus, a new David, and a new creation” (72). The beauty of *Covenant and God’s Purpose for the World* is how simply and directly Schreiner showcases Christ as the fulfillment of whole Old Testament. Schreiner helps the reader understand the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34) through several themes: “(1) renewal of heart; (2) regeneration; (3) complete forgiveness of sin; (4) new exodus, forgiveness of sins, and a new David; and (5) reunification of the people of God” (90). Additionally, the volume concludes by examining how, covenant by covenant, “the new covenant is consummation and fulfillment of the previous covenants” (113).

This volume stands as an excellent introduction to the biblical covenants. I commend Schreiner for his clear prose, accessible insights, and most of all, for his presentation of Christ as the fulfillment of the OT, who purchased the new covenant and all its benefits for God’s people by his substitutionary sacrifice on the cross (Luke 22:20).

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Greek for Life. By Benjamin L. Merkle and Robert L. Plummer. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. 152 pp. \$19.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-0-8010-9320-3.

In *Greek for Life*, Benjamin Merkle, professor of New Testament and Greek at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Robert Plummer, professor of New Testament Interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, have teamed up to consolidate their years of Greek wisdom into one practical book. Merkle and Plummer have worked together before, along with Andreas Köstenberger, to produce the helpful textbook, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament*. Both scholars have taught New Testament Greek for over twenty years. They know the pitfalls of learning and retaining Greek, and they understand how to steer students to success.

Merkle and Plummer's stated goal is to prevent the all too common tragedy of a person receiving an education in Greek for the purpose of New Testament exegesis, only to see that knowledge slip away from memory (ix). They aim to prevent this problem by 1) issuing strong warnings about losing Greek proficiency, and 2) providing motivations and tools that help to keep one's Greek in his exegetical wheelhouse for a lifetime. These professors have crafted the art of inspiration during their years in the classroom and skillfully share motivations that are tried and true. Merkle's and Plummer's advice serves to point Greek students in the right direction—sharpening their focus on the most important things.

Greek for Life is set up as a series of exhortations that come in rapid fire succession with each new chapter. Chapter one sets a pastoral tone by reminding students that Greek is a means to an end, it is not the end in itself. Greek ought to be studied for the purpose of knowing the God who revealed himself in the pages of Scripture, and coming to see him through his language of choice (2). Chapter two is titled, "Go to the Ant, You Sluggard," and serves a fresh dose of admonition to be disciplined in one's pursuit of Greek (19). Various tips and resources are offered for maintaining diligence regarding pursuit of the Greek language (24-33). Chapter three articulates the importance of review and also issues direction for how students ought to go about using the tool of repetition (38).

Chapter four offers a peek into the human brain as it pertains to memory. After an exhortation to use one's memory effectively, Merkle and Plummer provide specific mnemonic devices for various paradigms and charts (54-61). Chapter five contains practical advice for how to use one's Greek daily through an established routine (68). In chapter six, Merkle and Plummer evaluate various resources and offer direction for using them well (91-100). Chapter seven may be mostly directed toward college or seminary students, but the principles apply beyond the classroom. Merkle and Plummer direct Greek students how to use their breaks well so as to avoid long periods of time with no exposure to the language (105). *Greek for Life* ends with a final chapter titled, "How to Get It Back." It presents not only a compelling case to revive lost or rusty Greek knowledge, but also the guide rails for how to get there (123).

Greek for Life has much to be commended. It is short and sweet, friendly yet firm, and filled with expert advice. In many ways, it gives the reader the sense of being back in his seminary classroom—allowing him a second chance to be inspired and equipped by the professor. This is one of the major features that distinguishes *Greek for Life* from other available Greek help books. People who have attempted to learn Greek have an appreciation for the essential role that motivation plays in the learning process. Technical acquisition and rote memorization are critical to learning Greek, but motivation to stay perseverant is equally important—and this is where *Greek for Life* contributes effectively.

Perhaps the strongest feature of the book is the uncovering of the hidden key to Greek mastery. Unfortunately, students are often discontented with it when it is presented to them as Merkle and Plummer do here. The key is discipline. Readers might be disappointed with this solution because they want the secret formula to bring *instant* mastery for Greek. Discipline is the key to mastery, but it is not instant. Honest readers will see that Merkle and Plummer offer something better than instant knowledge. They push for students of New Testament Greek to form habits that bring them, on a recurring basis, to the banquet table of the Scriptures in their original language (20-30). This is something that instant knowledge can never provide.

Two final strengths are worth mentioning. First, *Greek for Life* is peppered with a vast array of quotations and sidebars from scholars, pastors, historic figures, and seminary students. These quotes prove to be more than anecdotal; they shed light and generate urgency, bringing

unique perspectives and adding credence to the overall message of the book. For example, a pithy statement from Hayyim Nahman Bialik, Jewish Poet (1873-1934), says, "Reading the Bible in translation is like kissing your new bride through a veil" (4). Also, an extended quote from Daniel Wallace tells the story of how he lost his memory through an illness and then persevered to relearn Greek from his own textbook (128-129). Second, *Greek for Life* is written from a pair of authors who love the Greek language and who also happen to be God-fearing, and Christ-exalting men. This is a beautiful combination. There is not a worship of the Greek language, but a healthy love.

Two weakness will be highlighted here. First, there is an absence of instruction in the language itself. Merkle and Plummer motivate the reader to go learn Greek, but they don't teach the reader any Greek directly in this work. This may not be as much of a weakness as it is fair warning about what this book is not; it is not a textbook. It serves to motivate readers to pick up their textbooks and learn. Second, there is a scarcity of actual Greek text. Perhaps mercifully, and with the fledgling student in mind, *Greek for Life* contains very few Greek words and examples. The scope of the work seems to be more so limited to strategies and motivations.

There exists a vast contingent of *former* Greek students within the American church who wish they could get their Greek back. For students of Greek who need a coach to call them to action and chart out the proper course, *Greek for Life* is highly recommended. It not only has the potential to help reestablish proficiency, it might even help students achieve a working knowledge of Greek that truly becomes a skill for life.

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The Worship Pastor: A Call to Ministry for Worship Leaders and Teams. By Zac Hicks. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. 198 pp. \$17.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-0-310-52519-6.

In this short, deceptively dense volume, Pastor Zac Hicks shares his fifteen years of music ministry experience with fellow worship leaders. The burden of *The Worship Pastor* is clear: Hicks wants for worship leaders to think of themselves as pastors, and to filter everything they do through that pastoral lens. This overarching goal is accomplished through sixteen chapters which describe the different aspects of pastoral ministry for music leaders. Faithful worship pastors, argues Hicks, are not just “the music guys,” they are “Church Lovers,” “Corporate Mystics,” “Doxological Philosophers,” “Disciple Makers,” “Prayer Leaders,” and much more.

Because of the punchy, snap-shot structure of the book, summarizing the chapter content is no easy task. Hicks treats each chapter as its own individual unit of thought, which may or may not have anything to do with the preceding chapters (save the shared goal of pushing worship leaders to lead pastorally). *The Worship Pastor* is not a house built with a foundation first, then walls, then a roof, etc.; *The Worship Pastor* is instead a collage. So summarizing the chapter contents by clusters of similar themes is preferable to summarizing their information in chronological order.

Chapters one (“The Worship Pastor as *Church Lover*”), four (“The Worship Pastor as *Disciple Maker*”), five (“The Worship Pastor as *Prayer Leader*”), six (“The Worship Pastor as *Theological Dietician*”), and eleven (“The Worship Pastor as *Caregiver*”) deal with the tasks that are most intuitively associated with the role of the pastor. In these chapters, Hicks helpfully reorients his readers to things of first importance. As he labors to dislodge common, consumeristic assumptions about worship in these important chapters, Hicks argues that the question, “Does this build up the body?” is “the umbrella for everything we do in worship” (53). Thus, “the rest of this book is really just an expansion of this idea—how worship pastors make disciples through the ministry of worship in the church” (53). As Hicks makes clear, this guiding principle has massive implications on how the worship pastor feels about his congregation, how he prays in the service, the theological rubric he uses for song

selection, etc. Thus, these chapters are characterized by gospel-centrality and corporate-intentionality.

Chapters seven (“The Worship Pastor as *War General*”), eight (“The Worship Pastor as *Watchful Prophet*”), nine (“The Worship Pastor as *Missionary*”), twelve (“The Worship Pastor as *Mortician*”), and thirteen (“The Worship Pastor as *Emotional Shepherd*”) can all be described as subsets of the chapters listed above. They further elaborate on Hicks’ core ideas. Making disciples and building up the church, argues Hicks, involves (among other things) speaking prophetically about sin in the world and salvation in Christ, preparing the saints for spiritual warfare, practicing missional intentionality, and preparing the church to suffer and die well. The chapters that comprise this cluster explain how these crucial activities are uniquely fulfilled by worship pastors (as opposed to how they may be fulfilled by other shades of ecclesial leadership).

Hicks ventures into the nuanced weeds of musical style, philosophy of music ministry, liturgical structures and the like in chapters two (“The Worship Pastor as *Corporate Mystic*”), three (“The Worship Pastor as *Doxological Philosopher*”), ten (“The Worship Pastor as *Artist Chaplain*”), fourteen (“The Worship Pastor as *Liturgical Architect*”), fifteen (“The Worship Pastor as *Curator*”), and sixteen (“The Worship Pastor as *Tour Guide*”). Where other chapters contain large portions of information that are applicable to all Christians, these chapters move deeper into the worship pastor’s role to plumb the “tricks of the trade.” The reader finds her technical discussions that concern worship leaders and only worship leaders.

There is much to commend Hicks for in this little volume. Hicks brings to the forefront many issues that are neglected by modern evangelical music leaders. His chapters “The Worship Pastor as *Disciple Maker*,” “The Worship Pastor as *Theological Dietitian*,” and “The Worship Pastor as *Caregiver*” particularly stand out as shining stars. The best thing Hicks has going for him in this book is his awareness of the incredible influence that the music leader has, intrinsic to the role. The general burden of this book for music leaders to wake up to this reality and to steward that influence intentionally and faithfully is a needed, and most welcomed proposal. In this respect, *The Worship Pastor* is a breath of fresh air.

Aside from relatively insignificant, stylistic issues (like a hectic order of content and the redundancy of certain chapters), *The Worship Pastor’s*

biggest problem is the bombshell that should be vigorously argued for, but is instead simply stated axiomatically in the introduction: the notion that fulfilling a role that performs “pastoral” tasks equates to “being a pastor.” Right out of the gate, without reference to the biblical qualifications of—or the formal ordination unto—the church’s office of pastor, Hicks announces to his worship-leading readers, “Ready or not, you’re a pastor” (13). Hicks conflates function and ontology, and essentially says that since the music leader does things in his role that resemble what a pastor does in his role, he *ought* to take ownership of the “pastor” designation. In this way, Hicks shifts the historic, biblical, ecclesial term “pastor” from a formal designation—with specific instructions, specific charges, and specific qualifications (which are not even examined in *The Worship Pastor*, save a passing mention of them in the conclusion [94])—to a self-designated title for those who happen to perform certain duties in the local church. Granted, this oversight is owing to the fact that Hicks attempts to instruct a broad audience from different historic backgrounds with different ecclesial terminology, but the definitional shift is too drastic to make without some justification.

Furthermore, the conflation of function and ontology also leads to serious practical issues. Because of his fast and loose designation of “pastor,” Hicks effectively creates an ecclesial office that is foreign to the New Testament, the qualifications of which are *strictly* functional. This newly created office brings with it expectations that are extra-biblical. For example, in his chapter, “The Pastor as *Artist Chaplain*,” Hicks argues that, strictly because of what a music leader does (i.e., music), regardless of whether or not he has been ordained into a pastoral office and charged to shepherd members of a flock, he is uniquely responsible for caring for *one demographic* of that flock: artists. In other words, Hicks’ definition of “pastor” both falls short of, and goes beyond, Scripture’s definition of “pastor.”

Therefore, Hicks undermines his genuinely strong points in *The Worship Pastor* with this central notion. The “ready or not, you’re a pastor” concept, stated so axiomatically (which is surprising, given Hicks’ careful nuance on a number of topics throughout the rest of the book), proves to be a nagging distraction, which unfortunately threatens to draw the reader’s eye from the bounty of treasures Hicks has placed in *The Worship Pastor*. However, the music leader who can turn a blind eye

this persistent issue will be instructed and encouraged greatly by Pastor Hicks' heart, passion, and experience in this book.

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Anyone Can Be Saved: A Defense of Southern Baptist Soteriology. Edited by David L. Allen, Eric Hankins, and Adam Harwood. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2016. 206 pp. \$24.00, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-1498285155.

During the summer of 2012, Eric Hankins, then pastor of the First Baptist Church in Oxford Mississippi, released a statement outlining a "Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation" (18). The statement consists of ten articles of affirmation and denial that distinguish Southern Baptist soteriology from Calvinistic soteriology (and to a much lesser degree, Arminian soteriology). The release of the *Traditional Statement* (TS) has proved a major contribution to the ongoing soteriological conversation among Southern Baptists.

Anyone Can be Saved: A Defense of "Traditional" Southern Baptist Soteriology, furthers this ongoing conversation by providing a commentary on the TS. Edited by David L. Allen, dean of the School of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Adam Harwood, associate professor of theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Eric Hankins, *Anyone Can be Saved* is a collection of essays from pastors, professors, and denominational leaders that defend the TS and the soteriological framework the statement articulates.

The first two chapters of the book offer context which situate the chapters concerning the TS. Adam Harwood begins the book by introducing the reader to the TS, and outlines the organization of the book. In chapter one, David Allen provides observations and suggestions regarding the convention-wide soteriological debate, offering a helpful word of unity while charting a course by which the two soteriological camps can both fellowship and engage in healthy debate. In chapter two, Eric Hankins attempts to articulate the uniqueness of Southern Baptist

soteriology, which he argues is not properly defined by Calvinist or Arminian theological systems. The next ten chapters, written by various authors, offer commentaries on the ten articles of the TS. These ten articles are: The Gospel, The Sinfulness of Man, The Atonement of Christ, The Grace of God, The Regeneration of the Sinner, The Election to Salvation, The Sovereignty of God, the Free Will of Man, The Security of the Believer, and The Great Commission. The last two chapters offer supplementary material to the “Traditional” soteriological framework. In chapter 14, Harwood defends the TS against the charge of semi-Pelagianism. The book ends with Steve Lemke describing various theological models relating divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

There are several commendable aspects of *Anyone Can Be Saved*. First, this book is the only in-print defense and commentary on the TS. Indeed, considering the authors contend that Southern Baptists occupy their own, unique “brand” of soteriology (10-13) there is precious little ink dedicated to the matter. Given the importance of the TS within the denominational conversations, a commentary on the statement’s theological positions is needed.

Second, from the outset, the authors acknowledge that the ultimate goal of these ongoing Southern Baptist soteriological conversations is the unity of the convention (xi, 3). David Allen’s chapter on the convention-wide debate is encouraging to this end. While maintaining that navigating the issue of Calvinism and non-Calvinism in the SBC will be both difficult and an ongoing issue (1), he argues, “Being a Calvinist should not be a Convention crime,” and that, “When it comes to Calvinism in the SBC, a fair amount of misinformation, misinterpretation, misunderstanding, and misrepresentation characterizes the current climate” (2). In this chapter, Allen is able to speak clearly and carefully into a conversation dominated by passionate and often hurtful rhetoric.

Despite these few bright spots, *Anyone Can Be Saved* ultimately struggles to be a helpful voice in the SBC soteriological conversations. While Allen sets the expectation that the book will strive to be a fair and unifying discussion, some of the contributors to *Anyone Can Be Saved* may not have read Allen’s chapter, or else have not taken his message to heart. Ronnie Rogers, in his chapter on Article 5, claims that the Calvinist understanding of regeneration prior to faith denies the “clear teaching” that John wrote his gospel so that “...all people, by the Grace of God,

could see who Jesus really is and what he did for them, believe and be saved" (78). Later in his chapter, Rogers accuses the Calvinist of employing "double-talk," a way of speaking that covers up the "disquieting realities of Calvinism." Additionally, in the preamble of the TS, Hankins seems to indicate that Calvinism, without modification, leads to "unacceptable conclusions (e.g., anti-missionism, hyper-Calvinism, double predestination, limited atonement, etc.)" (16). In other words, "unmodified" or "pure" Calvinism is borderline unorthodox. Unfortunately, these statements, and others like them, leave Allen's helpful word of fairness and unity looking disingenuous.

Another shortcoming of the book is that it falls victim to the same traps into which many multi-author books stumble. For example, while the book occupies a theologically sparse niche, it cannot decide if it wants to occupy that space as an academic work or as a popular-level work. Chapters by Harwood and Allen (both professors) have a noted academic tone, while chapters by Eric and David Hankins (a pastor and denominational leader) read more like sermons than academic defenses of a theological position. These disjointed tones lead the book into a squishy middle - too academic for the layman, and too broad, general, and unnuanced for the academic.

However, even in the "academic" chapters, there are several instances where nuance and fairness seem to be sacrificed in the name of "making a point." The book's discussion of compatibilism demonstrates this well. In his chapter on Article 2, Harwood defines "compatibilism" as, "...the Calvinist view that a lost person's will is irresistibly changed through regeneration so they now desire Christ" (39). This is not the definition of compatibilism - at least, not the definition one would find in a theological or philosophical dictionary. Compatibilism is a well-known theological/philosophical concept, yet, Harwood presents his stipulative definition without any qualification. Compatibilism continues to show up several times throughout the book, including chapter 5 (56), chapter 8 (93), chapter 10 (120), and chapter 14 (170), and its presentation constantly shifts between the *Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy* definition and the stipulative definition as a Calvinist way to reconcile (but ultimately supersede) human freedom with divine sovereignty. It would be understandable if a reader with no preconceived notion of compatibilism came away from the book with whiplash, and not a great deal further along in their understanding of the concept.

Anyone Can Be Saved is helpful insofar as it is currently the only book explicitly dedicated to defending “traditional” SBC soteriology via the Traditional Statement. However, despite this unique contribution, this volume is sure to be championed only by those who already subscribe to the Traditional Statement.

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The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More Than Our “Correct” Beliefs. By Peter Enns. New York: HarperCollins, 2016. 230 pp. \$15.99, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0062272096.

Peter Enns is an Old Testament scholar and author perhaps best known for his controversial tenure and eventual departure from Westminster Theological Seminary. While at Westminster, the flashpoint of controversy had been Enns’ advocacy of a modified form of Biblical inerrancy, known as “progressive inerrancy,” reflected in his 2005 book *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*. By 2008 Enns had unceremoniously departed from Westminster. His teaching and writing, however, have continued to make waves, especially with regard to his attempts to reconcile Biblical teaching with scientific evolution and related challenges to the historicity of Adam (see his 2012 book *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Does Not Say About Human Origins*). In this new work, *The Sin of Certainty*, Enns provides personal insights into how those bumpy days at Westminster and beyond affected him and his family. It also reflects how Enns’ theological views have continued to tack toward the left. Indeed, Enns now suggests that the search for absolute religious certainty is, in fact, sinful.

Enns’ main point is to communicate how, in his movement away from the world of conservative Protestant evangelicalism, his mind has changed with regard to the need for precision in doctrinal beliefs. According to Enns, the problem with conservative evangelicals is that they become preoccupied with “correct thinking,” which “reduces the life of faith to sentry duty, a 24/7 task of pacing the ramparts and scanning

the horizon to fend off incorrect thinking, in ourselves or others" (18). For Enns, such a preoccupation leads to a form of idolatry, as "the problem is trusting our beliefs rather than trusting God" (21). He suggests shifting the focus of faith from beliefs about God to belief in God.

According to Enns, evangelicals have entered an intellectually unhealthy and reactive mode in the face of modern challenges like Darwinian evolution and German higher criticism of the Bible. Drawing on the Psalms, he suggests that the Bible is "less an instructional manual and more of an internal dialogue, even debate, among people of faith about just who this God is that they are dealing with" (70). He also sees this "dialogue" in the Genesis account of Abraham, as well as in the books of Ecclesiastes and Job. For Enns, faith in God "is more than the thoughts we keep in our heads, the belief systems we hold on to, the doctrines we recite, or the statements of faith we adhere to, no matter how fervently and genuinely we do so, and how important they may be" (102).

Enns seems to revel at times in pushing up against traditional theology and piety, asking whether believers have "mistakenly" described man as made in the image of God just because he is "an evolved species with particular adaptive functions," or suggesting that some have been helped more by "therapy and Lexapro" than prayer, Bible Study, and pastoral counseling (128). In the end, Enns suggests that the emphasis on certainty has had "disastrous spiritual consequences" for himself and others as it leads to endless conflict and controversy (140).

Several of the book's brief chapters are devoted to describing his experiences during the controversy at Westminster and the impact this had on him and his family. Sadly enough, Enns describes how those circumstances coincided with a period of time in which his daughter also suffered from an anxiety disorder. This led to her eventual enrollment in a therapeutic school. Whatever one's disagreements with or assessments of Enns, one should feel compassion for what he and his family endured during this stressful time.

In the end, Enns suggests that he has emerged from those difficulties with a transformed and superior spiritual outlook. The alternative to the old rational religious certainty to which he once strived, he now claims to have found in a faith that is "transrational (not antirational) and mystical" (152). Like many liberals before him, Enns makes doubt a veritable spiritual discipline: "Doubt is sacred" (164). Striving for

certainty, on the other hand, is “at best a spiritual distraction, and at worst, simply destructive” (190).

After the Westminster disruption, life has apparently gotten back on track for Enns and his family but in a decidedly new and progressive direction. His daughter thrived at her new school. He now holds an endowed chair in Biblical Studies at Eastern University, a school with American Baptist roots. He has moved from a context of confessional and Reformed evangelicalism to mainline Protestant liberalism.

How are we to assess Enns’ thesis in this book? Is striving for certainty in spiritual beliefs necessarily a sin? What about Paul’s admonition in 1 Timothy 4:16a: “Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine”? Or Jude’s exhortation “that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3)? Does not the Bible teach the importance of doctrinal precision as part of Christian maturity, lest the believer be “tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine” (Eph 4:14)? It is far from evident that the Bible promotes the search for doubt rather than the search for truth.

Enns’ thesis is also flawed in that it assumes that the desire for certainty in doctrine necessarily leads to lack of vibrant faith in God. Can one not have both? Can one not seek to honor God through orthodoxy while also enjoying him through orthopraxy? And where exactly would Enns draw the line on the piety of uncertainty? Is it overly precise to say that the God the Bible is the one true God? That there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, equal in essence, power, and glory? That the Word became flesh? That Christ came into the world to save sinners through his death on the cross? That Christ has risen from the dead, ascended, and will come again to judge the living and the dead?

Back in the late nineteenth century there was an Old Testament scholar name Crawford H. Toy (1836-1919) who taught at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Toy was an able scholar who had completed studies at the University of Berlin where he had embraced the German higher criticism of Wellhausen. Upon his appointment as a professor at Southern, he attempted to accommodate his higher critical views to the theologically conservative Baptist context. Using the historical-critical method he wrote several commentaries on Old Testament books which were well respected in the academy of his time and which are still consulted by scholars today. However, in 1879

controversy erupted over some of his writings which led, within a year, to his dismissal from the seminary. By 1880 Toy had become a professor of Biblical studies at Harvard. Within a few more years, he had abandoned traditional, orthodox Christianity altogether and become a Unitarian.

The Sin of Certainty might cause one to wonder if Enns could be tacking on a similar trajectory as that of Toy. Surely, it is sinful to hold wrong beliefs with certainty, but it is not sinful to hold right beliefs with certainty. This is a distinction Enns fails to make in this book, which means his argument rests on a faulty thesis.

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The Extent of the Atonement: A Historical and Critical Review. By David L. Allen. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016. 820 pp. \$59.99, Hardback. ISBN 9781433643927.

In the book, *The Extent of the Atonement*, David Allen, Dean of the School of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, seeks to primarily give a historical overview of the doctrine of the atonement's extent. In the preface, Allen writes, "I have attempted to identify and clarify the significant matters in the history of the discussion and to present them in historical context for consideration" (ix). To accomplish his goal, the book is divided into three major sections with nine chapters.

Part one focuses on the extent of the atonement in church history. This section in four chapters is a historical survey of non-Baptistic theologians from the early church up to the current century. Part two, in three chapters, homes in on Baptist history. The final chapter in this section effectively covers the wide tent of Southern Baptist Convention theologians. In the final section, Allen deviates from a historical survey to offer his readers a chapter-by-chapter critique of the tome *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her*. Allen concludes his massive discussion by giving readers an argument for believing in unlimited atonement.

Within *The Extent of the Atonement*, there is much from which to glean. Allen's historical survey of the early church is helpful. He examines

the atonement doctrines of men such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Basil, Jerome, and Augustine, among others. With careful scholarship, Allen demonstrates that the believers of the early church did not hold to a limited atonement view (24). He says, "What one finds in the patristics is a limitation in the application of redemption, not in its accomplishment" (24). The above point is important. One must distinguish application from accomplishment in a discussion of the atonement's extent. This distinction is a motif throughout the book. Additionally, extra space is given to Augustine since many Calvinists like to claim him as being "a Calvinist before Calvin." Allen shows readers that Augustine held strongly to an unlimited atonement (21).

In chapter five, Allen surveys the notable Victorian English Baptist, Charles Spurgeon. Unfortunately, Allen has the incorrect date for Spurgeon's birth. He was born in 1834 not 1836 (503). However, he also charges Spurgeon with inconsistency on his limited atonement conviction. He writes, "Clearly Spurgeon believed in limited atonement. But it is equally clear he was not always consistent with that belief in his own preaching" (506). To this reviewer, it appears that Allen is basing his charges of "inconsistency" on Spurgeon's use of the phrase "Christ dying for your sins towards unbelievers" (504). He also charges Spurgeon with "inconsistency" for using general phrases such as "mankind" and "ungodly" (504-505). What Allen fails to recognize is that a five-point Calvinist can use a "broad" term such as "ungodly" and remain consistent. The reason for this is because "ungodly" is a biblical term. Using Allen's logic, for a five-point Calvinist to use the terminology of 1 John 2:2 in a sermon, the five-point Calvinist would then be inconsistent. The five-point Calvinist must only use the terminology of Hebrews 9:28 and many other verses to stay consistent. This cannot be the case.

Also of interest to this reviewer is chapter six on North American Baptists. It teaches about many Baptist men with which the reviewer was unfamiliar. This is one of the book's greatest strengths. Regardless of one's view on the topic, one must appreciate the extensive historical research done by Allen. For example, there is good information on men such as J. Ramsey Michaels, David Nettleton, Leroy Forlines, Robert Picirilli, and Earl Radmacher, among others.

Allen's critique of James R. White is extensive. He claims that White is a "modern-day high Calvinist" because of his view of the atonement (546-547). This reviewer would attribute high Calvinism to one's view of

lapsarianism, not the atonement. Among other items, Allen's tone in critiquing White seems more harsh than previous limited atonement theologians (with the exception of perhaps Owen and Gill).

In the final historical chapter, Allen provides readers with a survey of Southern Baptists, past and present. As with the previous chapters, Allen takes care to survey many theologians in each respective category. Interestingly, Allen conjectures that since the Abstract of Principles lacks a statement on limited atonement, James P. Boyce, the founder of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, may not have affirmed limited atonement (569). The above is worthy of one's consideration. Allen does a superb job representing most of the SBC's theologians on this matter.

Finally, Allen offers his critique of *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her*, and he also provides his own argument for unlimited atonement. Brief attention to Allen's argument is appropriate here. His issue is that high Calvinism does not actually teach a sufficient atonement as high Calvinists think (772-773). He puts forth that one of the consequences of high Calvinism is that the non-elect has nothing to reject if Christ did not die for them (774). However, contra Allen, it should be noted that it is not ultimately the atonement they reject but God Himself. God commands all (regardless of their election status) to repent and believe.

David Allen's book is worth reading by all theologians, regardless of theological persuasion, if only for the very fact that this brief review cannot do this large book complete justice. The value of the book is in the historical surveys, rather than the ending argument. That material is well worth the price of the book.

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Rediscovering the Holy Spirit: God's Perfecting Presence in Creation, Redemption, and Everyday Life. By Michael Horton. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. 334 pp. \$22.99, Paperback. ISBN: 978-0-310-53406-8

Whatever one thinks of Pentecostalism and the broader Charismatic movement, there is no doubt that they have greatly influenced the development and practice of Christianity around the world. One of the chief ways we can see this influence is through the renewed interest in the person and work of the Holy Spirit, beginning in the twentieth century and extending into the present. This interest has extended across all Christian traditions as they have grappled with understanding and responding to the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. As Michael Horton notes in the introduction to *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit*, it used to be commonplace to lament the Spirit's neglect within theology, but that is certainly no longer the case (14). Which raises the questions of why another book on the theology of the Holy Spirit is necessary, and why this book should be read instead of others.

Horton recognizes the importance of these questions. While his ultimate goal is to help us understand and experience the Holy Spirit in a more biblical way, his work explicitly challenges three distortions in the church and in the academy that he believes have resulted from this renewed interest in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. First is the association of the Holy Spirit primarily with the extraordinary, or a tendency for many to think about the Spirit mainly in terms of his baptism, his gifts, and his power instead of the full range of his activity in the world and in our lives as believers. Second is the way this focus on the extraordinary tends to depersonalize the Spirit by leading people to think of him as "power" or as a "force" instead of the "The Lord and Giver of Life" along with the Father and the Son, as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed puts it. Modern academic theology only exacerbates this depersonalization of the Holy Spirit by immanentizing him, assimilating him to the human spirit or the world spirit. This depersonalization of the Spirit then leads to the third distortion, particularly for those who reject Pentecostal or Charismatic theology: marginalizing the Spirit, or taking his presence for granted, relegating him to a minor or even ignored role in the drama of redemption.

Therefore, Horton's central concerns are to explore the Spirit's distinctive role in every work of the triune Godhead, to demonstrate how the Spirit's work is intimately connected to the work of the Father and the Son, and to emphasize the Spirit's continual work in the world and in believers. He begins with an exploration of Trinitarian doctrine and the distinctive role of the Holy Spirit in God's economy as the one who moves the creation toward its intended goal. Next come chapters on the Spirit's work in creation, providence, and redemptive history. The Holy Spirit is the person of God who now brings life from death, salvation from sin, purpose from chaos. The central part of the book examines the Spirit's work in light of Christ's incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension. Horton includes chapters on the Spirit's transforming, judicial power, his work of continuing Jesus' ministry in the present age, and what it means to be baptized in the Spirit. He continually demonstrates how we can only understand these works biblically when we understand them in light of the Spirit's relationship to the Son. The latter part of the book focuses on the present and future work of the Spirit, including chapters on the gift of salvation, spiritual gifts, glorification, and the life of the Spirit in the church. Again, Horton emphasizes how these salvific works only take place in Christ, according to the plan of the Father.

Horton, who currently serves as J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics at Westminster Seminary California, writes from within the Reformed tradition, and draws liberally from theologians such as John Calvin, John Owen, Abraham Kuyper, and Herman Bavinck. One never gets the impression that his goal is simply to reiterate the historic, Reformed understanding of the Spirit, however, but to be biblical. The book is clearly structured along the lines of redemptive history, moving from who the Spirit is in and of himself as God before creation all the way to the work of the Spirit into eternity. At the same time, it is appropriately systematic, as the particulars of how the Spirit works in a certain or at a certain time are always applied to and understood in light of what the entire Bible teaches us about the Spirit. Horton interacts with all major Christian traditions, especially when comparing or contrasting different interpretations of Scripture, and consistently does so in a gracious way.

What ultimately makes Horton's book stand out is the helpful, Scriptural balance it brings to our understanding of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is involved in what we call the natural and the supernatural, the

extraordinary and the ordinary. As God, he is transcendent and immanent, working to sustain creation and give life, but never to be confused with the creation or life itself. He works individually, corporately, and cosmically, saving individuals who become part of the people of God who will dwell in the kingdom of God. He has a distinctive, unique role in working out God's purposes and is a distinct person of the Godhead, but his work and person should never be considered apart from the work and person of both the Father and the Son. Despite the renewed emphasis upon the Holy Spirit in recent years, much confusion about him still persists. *Rediscovering the Holy Spirit* reminds us that he is actively involved in our lives and in our world at all times, and for that it's worth reading.

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Sons in the Son: The Riches and Reach of Adoption in Christ. By David B. Garner. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2016. 366 pp. \$24.99, Paperback. ISBN 978-1-62995-072-3.

David Garner (Th.M. Dallas Theological Seminary; Ph.D. Westminster Theological Seminary) is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. He has written and lectured extensively on the doctrine of adoption. In *Sons in the Son*, he takes up some of the questions that remained unanswered in his dissertation and other writings on adoption, providing readers with an excellent, accessible survey of the doctrine of adoption that touches union with Christ, justification, and sanctification.

Garner provides a poignant introduction to *Sons in the Son* in which he exposes how using the modern, human understanding of adoption to explain or illustrate theological adoption distorts the biblical teaching of the believer's adoption in Christ. A distinctive of theological adoption is that it exposes and celebrates the benefits that believers receive because of their union with Christ. Adoption in Christ provides riches that far exceed human adoption. As the title of the book suggests, adoption can only be properly understood if it is understood to be adoption *in Christ*.

The believer is adopted because Christ was adopted by the Father. This understanding is the foundation for Garner's presentation of the doctrine of adoption. In the introduction, Garner also provides an outline of his goals for the work: (1) to bring renewed reflection on and prominence to the doctrine of adoption, (2) to deconstruct misunderstandings regarding theological adoption, and (3) to "construct a biblically faithful theology of adoption in Christ" that is both forensic and filial (xxvi). He admirably accomplishes each of these goals in the chapters that follow.

Sons in the Son is divided into three sections. The first section provides a helpful foundation for the rest of the study. Chapter one argues that Paul uses the concept of adoption both comprehensively and paradigmatically, even though the term for adoption is used infrequently in the Pauline corpus. In this chapter, Garner also briefly surveys the key biblical texts for adoption (Romans 8-9, Galatians 4, and Ephesians 1) and determines that Ephesians 1 is the most appropriate starting place from among them. Chapter two provides a historical survey of the church's understanding of the doctrine of adoption. While adoption has been a well-loved and pastorally relevant doctrine to many throughout the centuries, Garner concludes that, despite its integrative treatment by Calvin and its inclusion in the Westminster Standards, the doctrine of adoption has often been largely mistreated. Sometimes it has been overshadowed by or subsumed under other doctrines and rarely has it been given the full treatment that it deserves. Calvin's *Institutes* provides possibly the fullest treatment of the doctrine, considering adoption to be "synonymous with salvation" (28). Chapter three explains the "biblical, cultural, etymological-lexical" background of Paul's concept of adoption (35).

While admitting that the Graeco-Roman culture certainly informed Paul's understanding of adoption, Garner argues that Paul's primary understanding of adoption is theological. It is built on redemptive-historical and covenantal concepts to explain how people become sons of God. Garner's argument is convincing because it is built on the understanding that "covenant history is gospel history" (45) and that the redemptive-historical and covenantal contours of Scripture can more appropriately determine the meaning of the gospel than can Graeco-Roman legal practices.

The second section of *Sons in the Son* provides exegesis of the key Pauline adoption texts. These key texts follow the outline of adoption purposed (Ephesians 1), adoption accomplished (Galatians 4), and adoption applied (Romans 8-9). Working progressively through these passages in this order fits well with Garner's redemptive-historical approach, but more importantly, it fits well with the biblical narrative. One of Garner's recurring themes throughout these three chapters is that redemption involves more than simply a change in legal status by justification and placement into a family. Garner insists that adoption must be understood to involve moral transformation as well. "In the beloved, adopted sons become holy sons; by the Holy Spirit of adoption (Rom. 8:15), they conform fully to the image of their elder brother (Rom. 8:23-30; 1 Cor. 15:12-49). Election and predestination deliver filial transformation—legal and renovative—by filial grace" (75). He continues this emphasis throughout much of the remainder of the book, and his corrective emphasis on the necessity of both justification *and* transformation in redemption is welcome. It is certain that those who have been adopted by the Father *in the Son* will be progressively transformed by the indwelling Holy Spirit and will one day be glorified, completing this transformation.

Garner truly shines in the final section of the book that explains adoption's place in biblical and systematic theology. In the first chapter of this section, he deals with the issue of Christ's adoption as Son. He places the adoption of Christ as Son at the resurrection and successfully avoids both the errors of adoptionism and "static sonship" (184). He clearly makes the point that Christ's adoption is a new kind of sonship for the eternal Son. Those who are redeemed take part in Christ's adoptive sonship rather than His ontological, eternal sonship. In the next chapter, Garner addresses the confusion regarding the *ordo salutis*. He points out the overemphasis on justification that is common in Protestant circles. He helpfully explains that Reformed soteriology is not only compatible with but in fact teaches that righteousness is both imputed (justification) *and* infused (sanctification) (248). Chapter nine outlines the covenantal parallels between the first Adam and the last Adam. The resurrection of the second Adam marks His fulfilment of the Covenant "on behalf of the sons" (260). The final chapter brings the topics of the previous three chapters together by explaining that adoption is the "inclusive benefit" (308) that the adopted sons receive by

nature of their union with the adopted Son. All those who are united in Christ are adopted by the Father. Justification and sanctification are the result of union with the adopted Son, and justification and sanctification are the evidence of that union. Arguments concerning the order (whether logical or chronological) of these benefits are unnecessary since these benefits are the result of union with the Adopted Son. Adoption is "the supreme benefit [because of] its Christological substance" (310).

Garner has written an excellent study of the doctrine of adoption in which he interacts thoroughly with current and past scholarship. He weaves together the key threads of biblical studies, systematic theology, and historical theology to present a strong case for adoption that displays the glories and benefits of union with the adopted Christ through both justification and sanctification. He interacts very well with the relevant works in the field, often navigating a solid middle ground between very nuanced positions. He is also not afraid to challenge traditional Reformed understandings of adoption and the *ordo salutis*. *Sons in the Sons* should be read by professors, seminary students, pastors, and informed lay people. It would fit well as a supplemental text for any class on soteriology and should be required reading for any study on the doctrine of adoption.

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***First Freedom: The Beginning and End of Religious Liberty*. 2nd ed. Edited by Duesing, Jason G, Thomas White, and Malcolm B Yarnell III. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016. 288 pp. \$24.99, Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-1433644375.**

First Freedom is a collection of essays aiming to help Christians appreciate and protect the gift of religious freedom. Thinking about the relationship between our faith in Christ and our engagement in American culture is often fraught with complexities. Numerous questions are raised and simplistic answers will not suffice. J. G. Duesing, provost and associate professor of historical theology at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, along with Thomas White, president of Cedarville

University, and Malcolm Yarnell III, professor of systematic theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, have assembled a number of essays in order to point readers in the right direction.

Most respectable Baptist sermons begin with an introduction that grabs attention and sets a trajectory for what lies ahead. Often, these sermons have three points and a conclusion. *First Freedom* reads like a well-written sermon in the same tradition. Duesing gives a brief overview of how the idea of a “wall of separation between church and state” found a home in American religious and political philosophy. Though not explicitly found in the American Constitution, a separation of church and state nonetheless existed in the mind of at least some of the founding fathers and most Baptist believers. Yet, the promotion and defense of religious liberty is not restricted to early American thought. Edward Bean Underhill, a British citizen and Baptist, promoted religious liberty in England even as similar ideas were developed across the ocean. The authors of the present book continue in the tradition of early Baptists on both sides of the Atlantic in defending and promoting religious liberty.

Like a well-rounded sermon, the book is divided into three sections. In section one, biblical and historical foundations of religious liberty are outlined. Paige Patterson, Thomas White, and Malcolm Yarnell combine to offer a respectable introduction to religious liberty in New Testament, Anabaptist, and Baptist history. Yarnell helpfully introduces the reader to two prominent streams of early American political theology. Particularly important in this section is how our Baptist forebears, in continuity with Jesus and his disciples, held both to the exclusivity of Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation and to religious liberty for all.

The second section narrows in on the particulars of religious liberty from a biblical perspective. Barrett Duke argues for religious liberty as a fundamental human right. Evan Lenow shows how religious liberty connects to the gospel, including how religious freedom should lead to gospel proclamation. Finally, Andrew T. Walker helps the reader think carefully about faithful engagement in the public square, especially in light of recent challenges to such engagement. The third and final section takes a closer look at the application of biblical ideals in light of present challenges to religious liberty. Russell Moore reminds us that we must engage culture first as Christians and not merely as conservatives. Albert Mohler offers stunning insight into how the present sexual revolution challenges our gospel-driven efforts in the public square. Thomas White

and Travis Wussow close the third section by explaining the unique challenges facing religious institutions and international communities.

Duesing brings the sermonic presentation to a close. Though we argue for and defend the idea of religious liberty for all persons in the present, we must remember that this present age is soon to pass away. In the near future, when Christ returns, all persons will, willingly or unwilling, bow their knee to the kingship of Jesus and religious freedom will be no more. This eschatological reality should inform how we live in the present day.

The historical portions of the book remind the reader of the diversity of thought about the church and its relationship to the state. Any belief that Baptists have approached politics and the Christian faith in monolithic ways is deconstructed. Malcolm Yarnell does a particularly fine job in describing the “major tradition” and the “minor tradition” in historic Baptist political theology. The “Virginian tradition” (the major tradition) “tends toward the Quaker position, while the second tends toward the Puritan tradition” (51). As Yarnell shows in his chapter, there are negatives and positives within each and we are wise to learn what we can from both.

This is tremendously important for us today as we engage with other Christians. There are and always will be (until Christ returns) those in our churches who formulate different positions than we do. In such cases, there must be grace and understanding. We must guard the unity of the body, making sure not to elevate second and third tier issues to places of unnecessary importance. Noting the diversity of early Baptist thought helps us appreciate the diversity of opinions today while seeking to live faithfully tomorrow.

Another important aspect of the book is how religious liberty connects to the mission of the church. In a number of the essays, various authors remind the reader of how our freedoms serve rather than hinder our gospel-driven efforts. Evan Lenow writes, “It is easy to see how legal guarantees of religious liberty provide a context in which the gospel can move about unhindered by threat of bodily or social reprisal” (115). Lenow continues, “May we exercise [our religious freedom] first and foremost by bringing the message of the gospel to a lost and dying world” (126). Andrew Walker states, “religious liberty is like a lineman who clears the way for a running back” (154) “so that the gospel might advance” (155).

The advance of the gospel of Jesus Christ is the Spirit-empowered work of Jesus' people. Religious freedom clears the pathway for us to take the gospel forward. The path may become cluttered in our cultural situation, and armed guards might stand in our way, but we do not put the mission on hold. We march on regardless, confident that Jesus is building his church. Yet, we do not have naïve and romantic ideas of persecution that keep us from seeing the tremendous advantages religious liberty provides as we work to see the gospel flourish.

Duesing, White, and Yarnell have assembled a stellar cloud of Baptist witnesses to offer a thorough introduction to religious liberty. The essays in *First Freedom* should serve pastors, students, and lay persons in thinking historically, biblically, and theologically about the proper separation and interaction between individual faith and the public square. The book helps us all appreciate and defend our first freedom, while taking advantage of our opportunity to advance the good news of Jesus for the good of all peoples and the glory of our God.

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