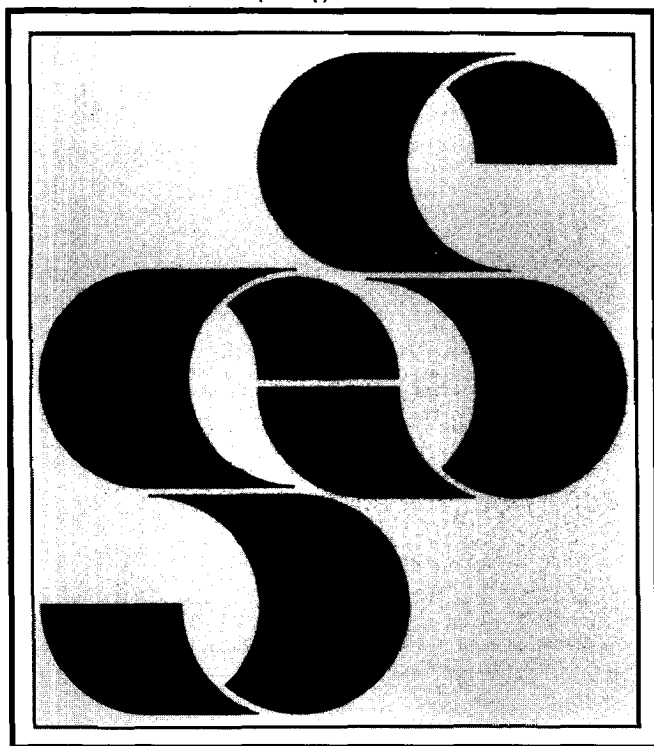


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THE SABBATH AND GENESIS 2:1-3

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The Creation account of Gen 1:1-2:3 climaxes with the description of events connected with the seventh day in Gen 2:1-3:¹

1. And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their hosts.
2. And on the seventh day God declared finished his work that he had done, and he ceased on the seventh day from all his work that he had made.²
3. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it he ceased from all his work that God created and made.

There is general agreement that the weekly Sabbath is at least partly in view in Gen 2:1-3.³ The more controverted point is whether it is presented as a Creation ordinance, i.e., as something commanded for human beings to keep from the beginning of human history. Nor is this question merely of academic interest, for it is a *crux interpretum* that has long tended to divide those who believe the Sabbath is of universal, permanent significance, from those who believe it is of only local

¹See Ian Hart, "Genesis 1:1-2:3 as Prologue," *TB* 46 (1995): 324, 325.

²The harder MT reading ביום השביעי ("on the seventh day") is preferable to the reading ביום הששי ("on the sixth day") in the Samaritan Pentateuch, which is reflected in the LXX and the Syriac. The consecutive verb ייכל is here taken to be a declarative Piel, although it is conceivable that it should be translated as a pluperfect (i.e., "he had finished"); see Niels-Erik Andreasen, *The Old Testament Sabbath: A Tradition-Historical Investigation*, SBLDS 7 (Missoula, MT: SBL, 1972), 63, n.2. On the primary meaning of the verb שבת as "to cease," see Victor P. Hamilton, "שָׁבַת (*shābat*) cease, desist, rest," *TWOT* (1980): 2:902.

³It has been suggested that "the seven-day scheme was attached to the creation account prior to the association between the seventh day and the creation Sabbath," and "that the creation account belongs to the cult liturgy of the Babylonian New Year Festival" (Andreasen, 187). However, Andreasen, 188, correctly notes the increasingly cautious nature of proposed reconstructions of this festival and the consequent realization that "the so-called cultic-ritualistic elements in Gen. 1:1-2:3 are far less prominent than was once thought."

It has been argued that Gen 2:1-3 is an attempt to justify the significance of the seventh day in a large number of the purification rites found in the rest of the so-called "P" corpus. For instance, see Samuel A. Meier, "The Sabbath and Purification Cycles," in *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi et al. (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 6. However, the seventh day in these cycles is never explicitly linked to the seventh day of Creation. On the other hand, just such a link is explicitly made between the seventh-day Sabbath and the seventh day of Creation in Exod 20:9-11 and 31:15-17. Accordingly, there can be little doubt that even on the assumption of the documentary hypothesis, any final redactor would have had this link in mind in the context of Gen 2:1-3.

temporary significance.⁴ The purpose of this article is to evaluate arguments used on both sides of the debate and to advance an exegetical argument in favor of seeing the Sabbath here as a Creation ordinance.

*Genesis 2:1-3 and the Case against the Sabbath
as a Creation Ordinance*

In the context of Gen 2:1-3, the case against the Sabbath as a Creation ordinance rests on three arguments from silence: the absence of the noun שבת ("Sabbath"), the absence of any reference to the seventh day consisting of an evening and a morning, and the absence of any explicit command to observe the Sabbath.⁵

The Absence of the Noun שבת

The noun שבת is absent from Gen 2:1-3, but the verb שבת in vss. 2-3 is clearly cognate to it.⁶ The noun שבת is also absent in Exod 23:12 and

⁴As argued by William Paley, who placed the origin of the Sabbath in the wilderness, "if the Divine command was actually delivered at the creation, it was addressed, no doubt, to the whole human species alike, and continues, unless repealed by some subsequent revelation, binding upon all who come to the knowledge of it. If the command was published for the first time in the wilderness, then it was immediately directed to the Jewish people alone, and something further, either in the subject or circumstances of the command, will be necessary to show that it was designed for any other. . . . The former opinion precludes all debate about the extent of the obligation; the latter admits, and prima facie induces a belief that the Sabbath ought to be considered as part of the peculiar law of the Jewish people" (*The Works of William Paley*, new ed. [Philadelphia: Crissy and Markley, n.d.], 103). Merrill F. Unger argues that the Sabbath was kept by Adam and Eve before the Fall, but was suspended when the Fall marred the perfect rest it symbolized, and in the time of Moses was reintroduced only for Israel ("The Significance of the Sabbath," *BSac* 123 [1966]: 53-59). However, this approach forgets that Creation themes continue to provide a model for human existence after the Fall (Gen 8:20-9:7).

The relevance of whether the Sabbath is pictured as a Creation ordinance has been challenged by some interpreters, who question the whole historicity of Gen 1-11. See, for instance, Kenneth Hein, "A Catholic Response to J. B. Doukhan," in *The Sabbath in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi et al. (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 169-175. However, this challenge is invalid if "the object of theological reflection is the canonical writing of the Old Testament" rather than "the events or experiences behind the text, or apart from the construal in scripture by a community of faith and practice" (Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985], 6).

⁵For instance, see Roger Douglas Congdon, "Sabbatic Theology" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1949), 127, 128, 134, 135; Richard James Griffith, "The Eschatological Significance of the Sabbath" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990), 32, 43-49.

⁶Hamilton, 902; E. Haag, "חַבַּת שַׁבָּת," *TWAT* (1993), 7:1047; for an extended discussion, see Andreasen, 100-104.

31:17,⁷ yet few interpreters would argue that “the seventh day” in these texts refers to anything other than the weekly Sabbath. There is no reason why the case should be any different with the interpretation of Gen 2:1-3.

The Absence of Any Reference to “Evening and Morning”

Genesis 1 refers to each of the first six days as consisting of an evening and a morning, but Gen 2:1-3 makes no reference to an evening or morning in connection with the seventh day. However, there is no reason to interpret this omission as evidence that the seventh day is different in length to each of the first six days. On the contrary, this variation is undoubtedly just an “example of the break up of a stereotypic pattern upon reaching the climactic crescendo conclusion.”⁸

It has been argued that “if God’s rest referred to cessation from creative activity for only twenty-four hours, it logically follows that this creative work resumed on the eighth day, . . . a deduction to which no one wants to ascribe.”⁹ However, this argument overlooks the fact that the difference between the seventh day and the subsequent days “consists in the novel character of the seventh day; after a series of six days on each of which some work of creation was wrought, came a day on which God did not work or add anything to his creation; hence the remembrance of this abstinence from labour remained linked with the day on which this situation first arose.”¹⁰

⁷Andreasen, 121.

⁸Shalom M. Paul, *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991), 76. Paul, 76, sees a parallel in the fact that the beginning of the oracle against Israel in Amos 2:6-16 “is fashioned in the standard stylistic pattern of the preceding seven. It then continues with a detailed catalogue of accusations, but unlike the others it does not conclude with the same formulaic pattern.” The reference to an evening and a morning in connection with each of the first three days of Creation is not surprising, since on the first day God is pictured as separating the light from the darkness (Gen 1:4). The next three days are parallel to the first three days, successively witnessing the Creation of a fullness parallel to the form called into being on each of the first three days (Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, TOTC, vol. 1 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1975), 45, 46. It is, thus, not surprising that reference to an evening and a morning is also made in connection with each of these three days of Creation since on the fourth day the luminaries are pictured as taking over the task of God himself in separating the light from the darkness (Gen 1:18). However, no reference to an evening and a morning would be expected in connection with the seventh day, since the account of this day stands outside the parallel structure of the first six days.

⁹Griffith, 48.

¹⁰Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989), 1:64. Griffith, 49, 50, argues from Heb 4 that God’s Creation “rest has a future aspect and thus cannot be limited solely to the twenty-four hour period following the creation.” However, “true as it is that the sabbath of God has no evening, and that the σαββατισμός, to which the creature is to attain at the end of his course, will be bounded

The Absence of Any Explicit Command to
Observe the Sabbath

Genesis 2:1-3 contains no explicit command for human beings to keep the Sabbath, although the reference to God resting on the seventh day would have provided an ideal opportunity for such a command to be given. Niels-Erik Andreasen explains this absence noting that the passage focuses on divine rather than human sabbath-keeping.¹¹ The common ancient Near Eastern concept was that the gods made human beings their slaves, then promptly entered a state of permanent retirement. However, the writer of Gen 2:1-3 demythologizes the concept by affirming that when God finished creating, he rested only for “a Sabbath, the first Sabbath,” nothing more.¹² The elaboration of the implications of this divine rest for human beings can then be safely left for another context.

Whatever the ultimate strength or weakness of Andreasen’s proposal, it is obviously no more interpretive than assuming that the Sabbath is not a Creation ordinance just because no explicit command to keep it is given in Gen 2:1-3.

*Genesis 2:1-3 and the Case for the Sabbath
as a Creation Ordinance*

There is important theological evidence that lends support to the idea of the Sabbath as a Creation ordinance. Genesis 2:1-3 lacks the vivid anthropomorphism of Exod 31:17, in which God not only stops on the seventh day, but catches his breath.¹³ Nevertheless, the prohibition of idolatry “forcibly reminded even the most earthy Jew of the non-material nature of the true God. But if God was so different from anything material, what could be the reason for the emphatic assertion that He ceased from His work of six days by taking a rest on the seventh? . . . Clearly, one is faced here with a divine role model set for man.”¹⁴ Indeed, it can be convincingly argued that

by no evening, but last for ever; we must not, without further ground, introduce this true and profound idea into the seventh creation-day”; see also, C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *The Pentateuch*, trans. James Martin, Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 1:69.

¹¹Niels-Erik Andreasen, *Rest and Redemption: A Study of the Biblical Sabbath*, Andrews University Monographs, Studies in Religion, vol. 11 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1978), 75, 76.

¹²Andreasen, *Old Testament Sabbath*, 186, 196. For examples of how Gen 1-2 polemicizes against other aspects of ancient Near Eastern mythology, see Gerhard F. Hasel, “Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” *AUSS* 10 (1972): 1-20; idem, “The Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” *EQ* 46 (1974): 81-102.

¹³So John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC, 3 (Waco: Word, 1987), 411.

¹⁴Stanley L. Jaki, “The Sabbath-Rest of the Maker of All,” *AsTJ* 50 (1995): 37, 38.

the call to human Sabbath-keeping is already implicit in the Gen 1:26-27 account of the Creation of human beings in the image of God.¹⁵ The last section of each successive genealogy in Genesis is always “the one which announces the following history,” so that in Gen 2:1-3 the divine Sabbath-keeping clearly introduces “the new history, the human one.”¹⁶

As helpful as such theological evidence is, one cannot help but wish for clear exegetical evidence to confirm whether or not Gen 2:1-3 presents the Sabbath as a Creation ordinance. From the perspective of literary structure, it is useful to note that Gen 2:1-3 is not only the climax of Gen 1:1-2:3, it is also a tightly knit unit in its own right, “a unified composition which does not let the reader bracket out any traditions within it with any degree of certainty.”¹⁷ The blessing and sanctification of the seventh day in Gen 2:3 thus constitute “the planned climax to which the earlier verses move.”¹⁸ Clearly, the narrator intends to picture the divine blessing and sanctification as happening at the end of Creation week, not millennia later. All the blessings in Gen 1 obviously have Creation and humanity in view and become operative from the time that they are pronounced. Accordingly, it is only to be expected that it would be “with respect to his creation, and with respect to man in particular that God blessed the Sabbath day,” and that the blessing would be operative from the first seventh day onward.¹⁹ However, the clearest evidence in favor of the Sabbath as a Creation ordinance comes from a close study of the statement וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ (“and he sanctified it [the seventh day]”) in Gen 2:3.

¹⁵The image of God is both an ontological and functional concept. Certainly, it can be interpreted in terms of the command to fill the earth and to subdue the creation in the very next verse, Gen 1:28. However, the work here commissioned “is a mirror image of the divine activity in Genesis 1” (Warren Austin Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* [Winona Lake, IN: Carpenter, 1984], 31). An essential feature of God’s work is its completion in a weekly cycle. Thus, one can only conclude that the writer probably “intended the reader to understand the account of the seventh day in light of the ‘Image of God’ theme of the sixth day” (John H. Sailhamer, “Genesis,” *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990], 2:39).

¹⁶Jacques Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story: Its Literary Structure*, Andrews University Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 5 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1978), 221, 222.

¹⁷Andreasen, *Old Testament Sabbath*, 191.

¹⁸Desmond Ford, *The Forgotten Day* (Newcastle, CA: Desmond Ford, 1981), 80.

¹⁹O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), 69; see also, Gerhard F. Hasel, “The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 25.

*The Significance of the Divine Sanctification
of the Seventh Day (Genesis 2:3)*

Some interpreters have attempted to separate the divine sanctification of the seventh day from the institution of the Sabbath. For example, R. J. Griffith has suggested that at Creation “God blessed and set apart the day for its future use as a day of rest and worship for Israel under the Law. . . . In like manner He set apart Jeremiah while in the womb (Jer 1:5), though his ministry as a prophet did not commence until years later.”²⁰

The difference between Jeremiah and the seventh day is that Jeremiah had to be born, grow, and mature before he could assume the prophetic office, whereas the seventh day is an impersonal abstract object that does not require growth or maturity. However, the most basic problem with this proposal is that it automatically equates the use of the Piel stem of קדש (“to sanctify”) in Gen 2:3 with the use of the Hiphil stem of the same verb in Jer 1:5.

Stative Qal verbs, such as קדש, form factitives in the Piel and causatives in the Hiphil.²¹ It is true that factitives and causatives lie so close together in meaning that often “the English tends to blur the distinction.”²² However, a good case has been made that there is a real distinction, consisting primarily in the notion that Piel factitives “direct attention to the results of the situation apart from the event,” while Hiphil causatives refer to “the process” involved.²³ The use of the Hiphil stem of קדש in Jer 1:5 would thus stress the *process* by which YHWH set Jeremiah apart as a prophet even before birth, irrespective of when he might actually assume the prophetic office. However, the use of the Piel stem of קדש in Gen 2:3 would stress that here is an action whose *results* are evident immediately, and the canonical picture of the Creation origin of the Sabbath would be clearly affirmed.

It is possible to specify the significance of the use of the Piel stem of קדש in Gen 2:3 even further. “The factitive Piel can be the result of a sensory causation, a ‘real’ result available to the physical senses, or of a psychological or linguistic causation, a mental change or a speech act that reflects a mental change.”²⁴ In cases of psychological causation, the Piel is

²⁰Griffith, 33.

²¹Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 400, 437.

²²Ibid., 438.

²³Ibid. Waltke and O’Connor cite as an example the contrast between the use of the Piel of קדש in 1 Sam 7:1 and the Hiphil of קדש in Lev 27:16; see also Ernst Jenni, *Das Hebraische Pi’el* (Zurich: EVZ, 1968), 20-52.

²⁴Waltke and O’Connor, 401.

designated as estimative, while in cases of linguistic causation, it is designated as declarative/delocutive.²⁵ Apart from Gen 2:3 and the parallel reference of Exod 20:11, the Piel stem of שָׁרַף is used, with a period of time as its object, a total of thirteen times in the OT.²⁶ There is no instance of a “real” factitive Piel in this list, as is to be expected, given the abstract nature of time. However, it is used as an estimative Piel eight times and as a declarative Piel five times.²⁷ In Gen 2:3 and Exod 20:11, the estimative use of the Piel can be ruled out since these texts do not state that God sanctified the seventh day by stopping all activity on it. Instead, they state that he sanctified it because he then ceased his work. Accordingly, the Piel in these instances must be declarative, with an emphasis on the public proclamation of the sanctity of the seventh day right at the time of Creation.²⁸ A grammatical analysis of the statement וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֱתֵּיּוֹם (‘‘and he sanctified it [the seventh day]’; Gen 2:3) thus provides persuasive evidence in favor of the Sabbath being presented here as a Creation ordinance.

Conclusion

The question of whether or not Gen 2:1-3 pictures the Sabbath as a Creation ordinance is of intense practical and academic interest, as it is a *crux interpretum* that has long tended to divide those who believe the Sabbath is of universal, permanent significance, from those who believe it is of only local temporary significance. The case that this passage does not present the Sabbath as a Creation ordinance rests on three arguments from silence: the absence of the noun שַׁבָּת (‘‘Sabbath’’), the absence of any reference to the seventh day consisting of an evening and a morning, and the absence of any explicit command to observe the Sabbath. None of these arguments is convincing. Theological evidence that Gen 2:1-3 does present the Sabbath as a Creation ordinance includes the anthropomorphic description of God working six days and stopping on

²⁵Ibid., 402.

²⁶Exod 20:8; Lev 25:10; Deut 5:12; 2 Kgs 10:20; Neh 13:22; Jer 6:4; 17:22, 24, 27; Ezek 20:20; 44:24; Joel 1:14; 2:15. For a listing of OT uses of שָׁרַף in its various grammatical forms, see George V. Wigram, *The New Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance: Coded to Strong’s Concordance Numbering System*, rev., ed. Jay P. Green (Peabody, MA: Henrickson, 1984), 1090.

²⁷The estimative Piel is used in Exod 20:8; Deut 5:12; Neh 13:22; Jer 17:22, 24, 27; Ezek 20:20; 44:24 and the declarative Piel is used in Lev 25:10; 2 Kgs 10:20; Jer 6:4; Joel 1:14; 2:15.

²⁸Compare the translation of Gen 2:3 offered in *Tanakh—The Holy Scriptures: The JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1988): ‘‘And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done.’’ William L. Holladay also cites Gen 2:3 as an instance of the Piel of שָׁרַף being used to pronounce something as holy (*A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988], 313).

the seventh to catch his breath, hints that the call to human Sabbath-keeping is implicit in the creation of human beings in the image of God, and evidence that the divine Sabbath-keeping introduces the human history that follows. At the exegetical level, literary structure suggests that the divine blessing and sanctification of the seventh day is pictured as occurring at Creation. The blessings of Gen 1 all have an immediate human focus, so there is a presumption that the blessing of the seventh day would be the same. However, the clearest evidence in favor of the Sabbath as a Creation ordinance comes from a close study of the statement ויקדש אחרו ("and he sanctified it [the seventh day]"; Gen 2:3).

It has been argued that in Gen 2:3 God sanctified the seventh day for its *future* use under the law, just as he sanctified Jeremiah as a future prophet in Jer 1:5. However, this argument fails to take into account the fact that while both verses use the verb קדש, Gen 2:3 uses the Piel stem and Jer 1:5 uses the Hiphil stem. While the factitive use of the Piel lies close in meaning to the causative use of the Hiphil, evidence suggests that the former emphasizes result and the latter emphasizes process. Whenever the Piel stem of קדש has a period of time as its object, it is never used as a "real" factitive, but always as an estimative or a declarative Piel. Context rules out the estimative use in Gen 2:3, suggesting that קדש is here used declaratively to picture the public proclamation of the sanctity of the seventh day at the time of Creation.

THE COMMAND, ACCORDING TO PHILO,
PSEUDO-PHILO, AND JOSEPHUS, TO
ANNIHILATE THE SEVEN
NATIONS OF CANAAN

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Introduction: The Biblical Command

An apparent parallel to the command to exterminate Amalek is the command given by Moses in his farewell to the Israelites before his death (Deut 7:1-2) to exterminate totally the seven nations of Canaan.¹ Moses' command clearly implies that this includes men, women, and children, though there is no mention of animals as there is in the command to eliminate the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:3). The Bible, moreover, goes so far as to command that the Israelites destroy the Canaanite altars, pillars, Asherim, and graven images. The reason given (Deut 7:6) for this extreme command was, "for you are a people holy to the L-rd your G-d; the L-rd your G-d has chosen you to be a people for His own possession, out of all the peoples that are on the face of the earth." This command to destroy the Canaanites unconditionally and to refuse to offer them terms of submission is repeated in Deut 7:16: "You shall destroy all the peoples that the L-rd your G-d will give over to you; your eye shall not pity them." The command to destroy all the religious objects of the Canaanites is repeated in Deut 12:2-3: "You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods, upon the high mountains and upon the hills and under every green tree; you shall tear down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and burn their Asherim with fire; you shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy their name out of that place." Yet again, Moses repeats this command and the reason for it in Deut 20:16-18: "In the cities of these peoples that the L-rd your G-d gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes, but you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites

¹In Deut 20:17, the list consists of six nations, the Girgashites being omitted. As Philip D. Stern remarks, this same list, with the variation noted here, appears twenty times in the Bible, from Genesis to Chronicles (*The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991], 90). Deut 7:1 states that these nations will be thrust away (נִשְׁלַח), which seems to imply that they will be expelled rather than exterminated, but in Deut 7:2 we read that they are to be utterly destroyed (הָרַחֵם חֲהָרִים).

and the Jebusites, as the L-rd your G-d has commanded; that they may not teach you to do according to all their abominable practices which they have done in the service of their gods, and so to sin against the L-rd your G-d.” From this statement, we can see that the objection is not to the beliefs of these tribes but rather to their practices, presumably practices such as child sacrifice (Deut 12:31), divination, soothsaying, augury, and sorcery (Deut 18:9-14).

The passage to eliminate the Canaanite nations specifically states that the Israelites were to make no agreement with them, to show them no favor, and that G-d would deliver them into their hands. The apparent purpose of this stern command is found in what follows (Deut 7:3), namely, that the Israelites are forbidden to intermarry with them. The reason for this command (Deut 7:4) is that “they would [i.e., if not destroyed] turn away your sons from following me, to serve other gods; then the anger of the L-rd would be kindled against you, and He would destroy you quickly.” Indeed, it is on the basis of the exegesis of this passage that the rabbis (*Qiddushin* 68b) deduce that it is the status of the mother that determines the status of the child, since the scriptural passage (Deut 7:4) asserts that the non-Jewish son-in-law who has married a Jewess will turn away your son [i.e., grandson] from following G-d; he is called “your son” because the mother of this child is Jewish. The problem on which this article focuses, however, is the reaction of Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus to the apparent cruelty of the essentially genocidal command.

Philo

Philo (*De Vita Mosis* 1.39.214), like the later Josephus (*Ant.* 3.43), paints a picture of the Israelites’ expectation of finding a life of peace and quiet as they were approaching the land in which they hoped to settle. Whereas Josephus (*Ant.* 3.40-41) mentions as the motive for going to war with Israel the Amalekites’ fear that the Israelites would gain strength if they were not opposed, the most remarkable thing about Philo’s account is that he does not refer to the Amalekites by name at all. This in spite of the fact that he is clearly referring to them, even though the command to eradicate Amalek is such an important commandment (the story of Amalek’s attack on the Israelites being found twice in the Pentateuch (Exod 17:8-16 and Deut 25:17-19), and even though Amalek’s name is connected in the rabbinic tradition with the festival of Purim. Rather, we are told (*De Vita Mosis* 1.39.214), that the country was occupied by Phoenicians, presumably a very general reference to the inhabitants of Canaan and certainly not especially to the Amalekites.

Philo (*De Vita Mosis* 1.39.218) justifies the wholesale slaughter that the

Israelites inflicted upon the Amalekites by stating that the latter justly suffered the punishment that they had sought to inflict upon the Israelites. Most significantly, Philo (*De Vita Mosis* 1.39.219) omits any mention that G-d told Moses that he would erase the memory of Amalek (Exod 17:14) or that the Israelites were to wipe out the memory of Amalek (Deut 25:19) or, as Josephus (*Ant.* 3.60) puts it, that Moses predicted that the Amalekites would be utterly annihilated. Instead, Philo, who is concerned not with political but with philosophical matters and who is not interested in the struggle to overcome the enemies of the Jews and to establish an independent Jewish state in Palestine, presents an allegorical interpretation of the struggle between the Amalekites and the Israelites (*Legum Allegoria* 3.66.186-187). He equates Israel with the mind and the army of the soul. Amalek, by way of contrast, is said to be a type of character (*De Migratione Abrahami* 26.144) who is equated with passion and who hungers after pleasure. Thus, Moses' lifting up his hands represents the victory of the mind over mortal things.

What is most remarkable in all this is that Philo has totally omitted the divine injunction to eradicate the Amalekites as a people and instead has equated them with passion or evil. He justifies the wholesale slaughter of the Amalekites in the desert, but he has avoided the problem of the justification of punishing innocent children for the sins of their ancestors. This should not surprise us in view of the long discussion (*De Specialibus Legibus* 3.29-30.153-168) in which he stresses the importance of the biblical statement that children should not suffer for the sins of their parents (Deut 24:16). This is not merely a theoretical matter for Philo, in view of his position as leader of the Jewish community of Alexandria; and he cites his outrage at an incident in which children, parents, and other relatives of debtors were beaten and tortured by a tax collector, while some spectators committed suicide in order to avoid such a plight (*De Specialibus Legibus* 3.30.159-162). He specifically stresses that "our legislator" (*De Specialibus Legibus* 3.30.167) insisted that children should not suffer for the sins of their parents and, "observing the errors current among other nations, regarded them with aversion as ruinous to the ideal commonwealth."

The Bible (Deut 2:34-35), in a passage reminiscent of the command to eliminate the Amalekites, and which reviews the history in the wilderness, mentions that the Israelites completely annihilated every populated city in the Amorite land of King Sihon after he had gone to war with the Israelites. The passage records the Israelites' extermination of his entire people, including women and children, and specifically declares that they left not a single survivor. In the first place, Philo makes no mention of women and children, presumably because he found it troublesome that the Israelites would have

annihilated utterly innocent people. In the second place, whereas the Bible speaks of the destruction of the entire population, Philo speaks of the annihilation of the army alone (*De Vita Mosis* 1.47.261) and says that the cities of Sihon were emptied of their inhabitants, but with no indication that the civilian inhabitants were killed.

The Bible (Num 21:33-35) states that King Og of Bashan likewise opposed the Israelites when they sought to go through his territory and that he led his entire people against them, but that G-d assured Moses that he would give Og's entire people and their land to the Israelites (Num 21:34), whereupon the Israelites similarly defeated him, left not a single survivor of his people, and took possession of his land. In the review of this episode (Deut 3:1-7), the Bible asserts that the Israelites destroyed all of his cities, all of which were fortified, and, as they had done with Sihon, killing the entire population, including women and children. As to Og, Philo does not mention him at all. This could be for several reasons. Perhaps the incident with Og is essentially a repetition of the incident with Sihon. Or perhaps Philo was appalled at the complete extermination of innocent women and children. He may not mention Og because the Bible portrays him as a giant (Deut 3:11).² Or if Philo was familiar with the tradition that said that Og was born before the Flood (*Niddah* 61a, *Zebahim* 113b) and that the stone that he wanted to throw at the Israelites was parasangs in length (i.e., approximately ten miles), perhaps he thought the inclusion of such details about Og might lead readers to doubt the authenticity of the whole affair.

It is striking that Philo, despite the fact that there is hardly a commandment that he does not refer to in one way or another in his numerous essays on passages of the Bible, nowhere paraphrases or refers at all to any of the several biblical passages noted above that mention the commandment to eradicate the seven nations of Canaan. Perhaps he found it inconsistent with his tolerance toward non-Jewish religions (*De Specialibus Legibus* 1.9.53). For him, rather, the supreme penalty of extermination is to be inflicted on Israelites who have abandoned religious observance (*De Specialibus Legibus* 1.9.54-55). In such cases, according to Philo, the offender is to receive no trial but is to be put to death immediately, in effect by lynching.³

²The rationalist Maimonides is likewise troubled by the biblical statement as to Og's size and emphasizes that the Bible (Deut 3:11) says that his bed was nine cubits in length "by the cubits of a man," and explains that this means by the measure of an ordinary man (*Guide for the Perplexed* 2.47).

³Erwin R. Goodenough, *The Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts: Legal Administration by the Jews Under the Early Roman Empire as Described by Philo Judaeus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929) cites twelve cases of what he considers lynching that Philo attempts

Pseudo-Philo

Pseudo-Philo (10.7) says nothing at all about Amalek's attack upon the Israelites as they were going through the wilderness, nor does he say anything in relation to this account about the divine command to eradicate the Amalekites. However, he does regard them as the embodiment of wickedness, because, according to Pseudo-Philo, it is with the Amalekites that the concubine (Judg 19:2) sinned during the period she strayed from her man. This, the author contends, justifies her terrible fate of being abused by the men of Gibeah, which G-d is said to have inflicted upon her (45.3). The author uses the illustration in his attack on intermarriage with non-Jews, and above all with the Amalekites.⁴

Pseudo-Philo, who elaborates at length about the period of the Judges and of Saul, mentions (58.1) G-d's instructions to Samuel, spoken, as he adds in an extrabiblical remark, with zeal (*sub zelo meo*), to tell Saul that he has been sent to destroy every one of the Amalekites in fulfillment of Moses' command⁵ (1 Sam 15:1-3); but he does not give any reason for this command

to justify (*De Specialibus Legibus* 1.54-57, 2.242-243, 2.252, 3.31, 3.37-39, 3.49, 3.51, 3.52, 3.96-97, 3.117, 3.137-143, and 4.19). He, 33, concludes that Philo is expressing not rhetoric but the actual Jewish procedure of the day. He argues that the execution of Stephen and the attempts to stone Paul (Acts 6-8, 9:23-24) show that Jews sometimes did inflict capital punishment without direct permission by the Roman government. But these are not cases of lynching, since Stephen was tried by the Sanhedrin; and there is no indication that the attempts to kill Paul were approved of and justified by the Jewish authorities. Francis H. Colson asserts that it seems almost impossible that Philo should be seriously encouraging his fellow Jews in Alexandria, where we know the Jews had independent jurisdiction, to put apostates to death without the benefit of a trial. He concludes that Philo's statement must be regarded as a rhetorical way of saying that apostasy is so hateful a crime that it is not pardonable, but one has a duty to avenge it immediately (*Philo*, trans. Francis H. Colson, Loeb Classical Library, vol. 7 [London: Heinemann, 1937], 616-618). Samuel Belkin argues that the instances adduced by Goodenough were cases not of lynching but where the death penalty was imposed as a preventive measure (*Philo and the Oral Law: The Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halachah* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940], 9); but Belkin appears to have read the rabbinic interpretation of the crimes in question into Philo's interpretation, as Torrey Seland insists (*Establishment Violence in Philo and Luke: A Study of Non-Conformity to the Torah and Jewish Vigilante Reactions* [Leiden: Brill, 1995], 26-29). Seland, in light of the model of conflict management which he applies, concludes that the actions intended or partly carried out against Paul are to be characterized as intended or actual cases of establishment violence. But, we may remark, this is not to say that the cases are justified by the Jewish legal system as instances that may legitimately bypass that system.

⁴See Charles Perron and Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques* (Paris: Cerf, 1976), 2:45.

⁵According to the manuscripts of Pseudo-Philo, G-d tells Samuel to instruct Saul to fulfill the words that Moses spoke saying, "I shall destroy the name of Amalek from the earth." In his monumental commentary, Howard Jacobson says that there is something wrong with the text, since it seems strange to say that Saul will fulfill Moses' words, as if it

(in the Bible, the Amalekites had beset the Israelites without provocation in the wilderness), nor does he specifically indicate, as does the Bible (1 Sam 15:3), that this command includes the elimination of men, women, and children, and that the animals are also to be destroyed. Hence, the divine command of genocide, according to Pseudo-Philo, is simply divine fiat. In addition, he (18.1) devotes only one sentence to Sihon and Og, omitting the statement that the Israelites utterly destroyed all the people of both Sihon and Og, including men, women, and children.

Pseudo-Philo is constantly striving to combat idolatry and the practices associated with it.⁶ Indeed, he is unique in stating that the reason why G-d did not allow Moses to enter the Promised Land was to keep him from seeing the idols by which the Israelites would be led astray (19.7, though such a statement may be inferred from Deut 31:16).⁷ This was surely an opportunity for Pseudo-Philo to state the biblical command to eradicate the seven nations because of their idolatry, and yet he does not say a word here or elsewhere about this commandment. Apparently, he realized that the commandment had not been fulfilled when the Israelites entered the Land. Moreover, apparently being a resident of the Land himself⁸ and realizing the practical impossibility of forcibly removing the non-Jewish inhabitants and, in fact, the importance of finding a *modus vivendi* with them, he omits all reference to the commandment.

Josephus

Though aware of the biblical prohibition of intermarriage (Deut 7:3) and its contemporary danger, Josephus realized that too strenuous an objection to intermarriage would play into the hands of those opponents of the Jews who had charged them with misanthropy. In an interpretation

is Moses who said that he would destroy the Amalekites (*A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum with Latin Text and English Translation* [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 2:1160-1161). Actually, according to Exod 17:14, it is G-d who said that he would erase the memory of Amalek. Nevertheless, we may remark, it is G-d who is speaking to Samuel; and the words that Moses spoke are a quotation of what Moses said in quoting G-d; hence, the text can be read as it is found in the manuscripts. Indeed, in Exod 17:14, G-d does say that he will erase the memory of Amalek.

⁶See Frederick J. Murphy, "Retelling the Bible: Idolatry in Pseudo-Philo," *JBL* 107 (1988): 275-287; idem, *Pseudo-Philo: Rewriting the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993): 252-254; Jacobson, 246.

⁷So my Prolegomenon to M. R. James, *The Biblical Antiquities of Philo* (New York: Ktav, 1971), ciii.

⁸Jacobson, 215-222, has shown convincingly that Hebrew was the original language of Pseudo-Philo's work; and we know of no work composed in Hebrew during this period outside the Land of Israel.

of Exod 22:27 [28], wherein he follows the LXX, Josephus declares that Jews are forbidden to speak ill of the religion of Gentiles out of respect for the very word “god” (*Ant.* 4.207 and *Ag. Ap.* 2.237).⁹

In the case of Esau, whereas the Bible (Gen 26:35) uses very strong language in stating that Esau’s Hittite wives were “a bitterness of spirit (*morat ruah*) unto Isaac and Rebekah,” Josephus (*Ant.* 1.265-266), while carefully avoiding condoning Esau’s marriages with Canaanite women, uses restrained language in doing so. He declares that Esau contracted the marriages on his own responsibility without consulting his father, “for Isaac would never have permitted them, had his advice been sought, having no desire to form ties of affinity with the indigenous population.” But then Josephus departs from the Hebrew text, as well as from the LXX version (which describes Esau’s wives as ἐρίζουσαι, i.e., “contending,” “quarreling,” “provoking”). Totally ignoring the extent in which they made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah (as noted in the Bible), he states that Isaac, not wishing to be at enmity with his son by ordering him to separate himself from these women, resolved to hold his peace, just as he did when he realized that Jacob had wrested the blessing from Esau. When Esau finally does reform and marries his relative Basemath (Heb. *Mahalath*), the Bible makes clear (Gen 28:9) that he does so because he realizes that the Canaanite women were evil in the eyes of his father and because he follows the example of Jacob in seeking a mate from his kin. Josephus (*Ant.* 1.277), on the contrary, specifically states that Esau had *already* married her prior to Jacob’s leaving to take a wife for himself from his kinsfolk in Mesopotamia. Whereas the Hebrew text (Gen 26:34-35) identifies Basemath as the daughter of Elon the Hittite and declares that Esau’s marriage to her caused bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah, Josephus describes her as the daughter of Ishmael, his kinsman, whom Esau, more sympathetically, married in order to gratify his parents. Josephus very diplomatically reminds the reader that Esau was the favorite of his father. But then he adds that Isaac, quite clearly the man who sincerely seeks to have peaceful relations with his neighbors as we see in his dealings with Abimelech (and in this respect the representative of the Jewish people of Josephus’s own day as well), did not wish to be at enmity with his son through opposing his marriage.

Again, in dealing with the request of Hamor for the hand of Dinah (Gen 34:6), Josephus carefully balances (*Ant.* 1.338) the fact that it is unlawful for Jacob to marry his daughter to a foreigner against the rank of the petitioner; and so, in an extrabiblical addition, he sagely asks

⁹See my *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, vol. 3: *Judean Antiquities 1-4* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 403-404, n. 623 on *Ant.* 4.207.

permission to hold a council on the matter.¹⁰

Moreover, Josephus has added an episode, which has no biblical basis, in which Moses (*Ant.* 2.253) marries the daughter of the king of the Ethiopians on condition of her surrendering the capital city of Ethiopia. He has no criticism of this intermarriage, nor of Moses' later marriage with the Midianite Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro. Furthermore, Josephus passes over in complete silence Moses' marriage with an Ethiopian woman (Num 12:1) and Aaron's and Miriam's criticism of Moses for doing so (Num 12:1-15).¹¹ In contrast to such peoples as the Spartans, who made a practice of expelling foreigners (*Against Apion* 2.259), Moses is said to have most liberally, most graciously, and ungrudgingly welcomed into the Jewish fold any who elected to share the ways of the Jews, basing himself on the principle that relationships should be based not only on family ties but on agreement in matters of conduct (*Against Apion* 2.209-210).

In the Bible, Joshua sternly warns the Israelites (Josh 23:12-23) that if they mix with the Canaanites "they shall be a snare and a trap for you, a scourge on your sides, and thorns in your eyes, till you are driven off this good land which the L-rd your G-d has given you." In Josephus (*Ant.* 5.98), however, the threat is much reduced in length and in intensity, Joshua stating merely that if the Israelites turn aside to imitate other nations G-d will turn away from them.

Furthermore, Josephus omits the passage in which Gideon, upon instructions from G-d, pulls down the altar of Baal and the Asherah tree that was worshiped beside it (Judg 6:25-32).

Moreover, Josephus notably modulates the severe objections of Samson's parents to his proposed intermarriage; and in place of the request, "is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?" (Judg 14:3), he has the mere declaration that "they were for

¹⁰Because he realized how unfavorably the whole circumcision incident, including the massacre of the Shechemites while they were weak and the taking of spoil from them by Simeon and Levi (Gen 34:13-29), would be viewed by his non-Jewish readers, Josephus (*Ant.* 1.338-340) omits it completely. Instead, just as Dinah had been ravished during a festival, so they are slaughtered, measure for measure, during a festival.

¹¹In particular, Aaron and Miriam would seem in this instance to be betraying their prejudice against the much-respected Ethiopians, who were renowned for their wisdom, piety, and bravery, who are termed blameless by Homer (*Iliad* 1.423), and from whom, according to one theory (Tacitus, *Histories* 5.2.2), the Jews themselves were said to be descended. See Diodorus 3.2; Pomponius Mela 3.85; Seneca, *Hercules Furens* 38-41; Lactantius Placidus on Statius, *Thebaid* 5.427). Cf. Frank M. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1970), 144-147; and idem, *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 46 and *passim*.

refusing because she was not of their race" (*Ant.* 5.286). He leaves without qualification the statement that G-d designed the marriage in the interests of the Hebrews and thus omits any castigation of Samson at that point because of this incident, realizing presumably that to criticize Samson would be to criticize G-d, since, after all, according to the Bible, Samson's marriage with the Timnite woman was part of a divine plan (Judg 14:4). In his final estimate of Samson, Josephus excuses his behavior in allowing himself to be ensnared by a woman by imputing this to human nature, "which succumbs to sins." He is quick to add that "testimony is due to him for his surpassing excellence (ἀρετῆς) in all the rest" (*Ant.* 5.317). Moreover, Josephus omits the biblical statement (Judg 14:10) that in making a wedding feast, Samson did as the young men of the Philistines did; he thus avoids the charge that Samson had succumbed to imitation of Philistine practice.¹²

Significantly, on a number of occasions when the Bible mentions that Ruth was a Moabitess, Josephus omits such references, just as he omits mention of Moabitesses in his reference to the foreign wives whom Solomon married (*Ant.* 8.191; cf. 1 Kgs 11:1). It is remarkable that Josephus does not mention marriage with Moabites in his list of prohibited marriages (*Ant.* 3.274-275, 4.244-245), presumably because he wanted to avoid the issue as to how Boaz could have married a Moabite when this is prohibited in the Pentateuch (Deut 23:4).¹³ In the last analysis, Josephus based his opposition to intermarriage, as in the cases of the Israelites with the Midianite women and of Samson, not so much on opposition to taking foreign wives as to yielding to passion.

Inasmuch as mystery cults were held in such high regard by many non-Jews, it is not surprising that Josephus altogether omits the statement in the LXX that King Asa ended the mystery cults (1 Kgs 15:12). Furthermore, he omits the statement that Jehoshaphat removed the pagan high places and Asherim (2 Chron 17:6 vs. *Ant.* 9:1).

In the case of Ezra, though his breaking up of intermarriages is central to his activities, in Josephus he does not take the lead in doing so. In an extrabiblical addition, Josephus stresses that the initiative to enforce the

¹²The Midrash often uses the Samson episode to reinforce religious lessons. Thus the lesson that one must fear an oath is stressed by citing (*Leviticus Rabbah* 20.1; *Midrash Psalms* 18.6) the case of Samson, who entrusted himself to the Judahites after he had received their oath (Judg 15:12), thus proving that he feared that oath. It is this incident that likewise leads the Midrash (*Genesis Rabbah* 98.14) to apply to Samson the verse, "Dan shall be a serpent in the way" (Gen 49:17); for just as a serpent is bound by an oath, i.e., the incantation of a charmer, so was Samson bound by an oath.

¹³See my "Reflections on John R. Levison's 'Josephus's Version of Ruth,'" *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 8 (1991): 49-50.

law regarding intermarriage came from others who, in turn, besought Ezra to take action (*Ant.* 11.141 vs. *1 Esd* 8:68-70). It is one of the Jews named Shecaniah (Jechonias) who boldly calls out and asks Ezra to take strong action to dissolve the intermarriages (*1 Esd* 8:92-95); but in Josephus this is watered down, so that Achonios (=Shecaniah) tried to persuade (πειθε) Ezra to adjure the Jews to put away their foreign wives and the children born of them (*Ant.* 11.145). The use of the imperfect tense of the verb "to persuade" indicates that he had to attempt repeatedly to convince Ezra. When the biblical Ezra is told about the intermarriages, he sits appalled, full of heaviness, unable to act, but we are not told why (*1 Esd* 8:72). Josephus is explicit in telling his readers that the reason why Ezra is immobilized is that he reasons that the intermarried Jews will not listen to him in any case if he commands them to put away their wives and children (*Ant.* 11.142). In the biblical text, when Ezra is approached by Jechonias he does take action and does assume responsibility, forcing all the Jews to swear that they will do as he dictates (*1 Esd* 8:96). Josephus's Ezra stresses that he does so because he has been persuaded (πεισθείς) by the counsel of Achonios (κατὰ τὴν Ἀχονίου συμβουλίαν) (*Ant.* 11.146).

Ezra's particular concern, in another addition to the Bible, is not with intermarriages generally but rather with mixture in the strain of priestly families such as his own (*1 Esd* 8:70 vs. *Ant.* 11.140). Moreover, a careful comparison of the language of the Bible with Josephus will show that whereas in the former (*1 Esd* 9:8-9) Ezra orders the Jews to send away their foreign wives, in the latter (*Ant.* 11.149) he diplomatically suggests merely that they will do what is pleasing to G-d and beneficial to themselves if they send away their wives. When the Jews finally do separate themselves from their foreign wives, it is not, as in the biblical text (*1 Esd* 9:16-17), Ezra who takes the initiative, but rather the other leaders (*Ant.* 11.151). Josephus omits the long list of names of sixteen priests, six Levites, four temple-singers and door-keepers, and seventy-five Israelites who had taken foreign wives, offering no excuse for this omission other than that he thought it unnecessary to give their names (*Ant.* 11.152). But aside from the embarrassment that this would have caused their descendants, the omission also serves to further diminish the emphasis on the vast number of intermarriages recorded in the Bible.

The closely connected theme, that one must not, as did Samson, submit to one's passionate instincts, is frequent in Josephus. Thus, Joseph tries to turn Potiphar's wife from passion (ὄρμη) to reason (λογισμόν) (*Ant.* 2.53). The Egyptians are attacked as a voluptuous (τρυφεροῖς) people and slack to labor, slaves to pleasures (ἡδονῶν) in general and to a love of

gain in particular (*Ant.* 2.201). Moses, in a speech to the people at the time of the seduction of the Israelite youths by the Midianite women, asserts, in a Josephan addition, that courage consists not in violating the laws but in resisting the passions (ἐπιθυμίας) (*Ant.* 4.143). The Israelites in time of peace became corrupt through abandoning the order of their constitution and living lives of luxury (τρυφή) and voluptuousness (ἡδονή) (*Ant.* 5.132). Josephus asserts that the degeneracy of the Israelites under the Canaanites was caused by their drifting from their ordered constitution into living in accordance with their own pleasure (ἡδονήν) and caprice (βούλησιν), and that they thus became contaminated with the vices current among the Canaanites (*Ant.* 5.179). Likewise, in his dying charge to Solomon, David exhorts him to yield neither to favor, flattery, lust (ἐπιθυμία), nor any other passion (πάθει) (*Ant.* 5.384). Amnon is described as goaded (μωπιζόμενος) by the spurs (κέντροις) of passion (πάθους) (*Ant.* 7.169); and Solomon's excesses of passion (ἄκρασία ἀφροδισίων, *Ant.* 8.191) and thoughtless pleasure (ἡδονή ἀλόγιστος, *Ant.* 8.193) are likewise condemned.

Thus, it would seem, Josephus's negative attitude to intermarriage is based on his opposition to yielding to passion—grounds that would appeal especially to the Stoics in his audience—and on his conviction that intermarriage violated the constitution (πολιτεῖαν) and broke the laws of the country; consequently, when the Jews do dismiss their foreign wives, he, in an extrabiblical comment, remarks that in doing so they had more regard for the observance of the laws than for the objects of their affection (φίλτρων, "love potions") (*1 Esd* 9:20 vs. *Ant.* 11.152). Here, too, we see the emphasis on obedience to law that was so important to the Persian government and that would be so impressive to his Roman readers. Ezra's achievement, in an addition to the biblical text, is viewed not so much as resolving the immediate matter of mixed marriages but rather as setting a standard of obedience to law "so that it remained fixed for the future" (*1 Esd* 9:36 vs. *Ant.* 11.153).¹⁴ Once the matter of mixed marriages is formulated, as it is by Josephus, in political terms, namely the necessity for the state to preserve the homogenous character of its population, the reader might well have thought of the parallel to the citizenship law of 451/450 attributed to the much-admired Pericles, which restricted citizenship to those who could prove that both their parents were citizens of Athens.¹⁵

¹⁴See my "Josephus' Portrait of Ezra," *VT* 43 (1993): 204-207.

¹⁵See Martin Ostwald, *From Popular Sovereignty to the Sovereignty of Law: Law, Society, and Politics in Fifth-Century Athens* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 182-183, and literature cited there. Ostwald, 507-508, notes that after the restoration of democracy upon the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War this restrictive provision of the citizenship law was revived.

Above all, this would defuse the charge that Jews hate strangers.

That Josephus, however, was well aware of the dangers of assimilation and intermarriage we may see from the fact that he dwells on the Israelites' sin with the Midianite women, expanding it from nine verses (Num 25:1-9) to twenty-five paragraphs (*Ant.* 4.131-155).¹⁶ Indeed, the speech of Zambrias (Zimri) seems to reflect the arguments of assimilated Jews of Josephus's own day (*Ant.* 4.145-149). According to the biblical account, as a result of the harlotry of the Israelites with the Moabite women, the Israelites were attracted to the worship of the Moabite god Baal-peor. G-d, consequently, became angry, and Moses instructed the Israelite judges to tell the Israelites that everyone should kill those who were attached to Baal-peor. We hear (Num 25:9) that a plague afflicted the Israelites, in which twenty-four thousand died. During this period a man named Zimri consorted with a Midianite woman, Cozbi, in the very sight of Moses and of the Israelite assembly. Thereupon Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron the priest, without asking for permission and without consulting anyone, took a spear in his hand, followed Zimri into his tent (the LXX reads κάμινον, which is the usual word for a furnace or oven), and pierced him and his consort, whereupon the plague was halted.

G-d then spoke to Moses saying (Num 25:10-13) that because Phinehas had turned away G-d's wrath from the Israelites, as a reward he was giving Phinehas his "covenant of peace," and that this was to be for him and his offspring a covenant of eternal priesthood. There is no word in the Bible expressing reservations as to the fact that Phinehas had not proceeded through judicial channels, but rather had taken the law into his own hands. On the contrary, Phinehas is rewarded with the greatest reward that a person may receive, that of peace, and, since he was a priest, with an eternal priesthood.

The same concern may also be seen in the moral which Josephus points out in his treatment of the Samson narrative, namely that one must not debase (παρεχάρασσειν, used of coins) one's rule of life (δίκαιαν) by imitating foreign ways (*Ant.* 5.306). There is a similar lesson drawn in his account of Anilaeus and Asinaeus, the two Jewish brothers who established an independent state in Mesopotamia in the first century only to lose it when, at the very peak of their success, Anilaeus had an affair with a Parthian general's wife (*Ant.* 18.340).

After the statement of the defeat of Amalek by Joshua, the Bible

¹⁶Willem C. Van Unnik, "Josephus' Account of the Story of Israel's Sin with Alien Women in the Country of Midian (Num. 25:1ff.)," in *Travels in the World of the Old Testament: Studies Presented to Professor M. A. Beek*, Studia Semitica Neerlandica, 16 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 241-261.

(Exod 17:14) continues with G-d's directive to Moses: "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out (מחה אמהוקה) the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." This clearly indicates that it is G-d, rather than the Israelites, who has undertaken the responsibility to wipe out Amalek and his descendants. The final statement of this in the narrative of Exod 17:16 is that "the L-rd will have war with Amalek from generation to generation," implying that the wars of the Israelites with the Amalekites will continue without end. In Deuteronomy (25:17-19), when Moses reviews the history of the Israelites during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, he recalls in particular what Amalek had done to them, and in particular to those who were faint and weary in the rear lines. He thereupon promulgates as a commandment, "You shall blot out (חמחה) the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; you shall not forget." Here it is the Israelites who have the responsibility to wipe out Amalek and his descendants. We might reconcile this apparent contradiction by saying that the command is G-d's, but that it is to be carried out by the Israelites, just as in the Utuhegal inscription the command is Enlil's, but it is to be carried out by Utuhegal.¹⁷ Josephus (*Ant.* 3.60) resolves the contradiction by speaking neither of G-d's nor of the Israelites' responsibility to wipe out Amalek. Rather (*ibid.*) he uses Moses' *prediction* that the Amalekites would perish with utter annihilation and that not one of them would be left hereafter. He gives as the reason for this dire judgment on the Amalekites the one cited in Deuteronomy (25:17-19), namely because the Amalekites had attacked the Israelites while they were in the desert and exhausted.

In Josephus (*Ant.* 6.132-133), as in the Hebrew (1 Sam 15:2-3), we read that the prophet Samuel reminded King Saul that in view of what Amalek had done to the Israelites in the wilderness, it was G-d's command that he now avenge this action in war by destroying everything that he had, "dealing death to all of every age"—men, women, and infants, and sparing neither beasts of burden nor any cattle, thus blotting out (ἐξαλείψαι) the name of Amalek. Surely, in our own age, even if one might understand a command to wipe out men of military age, one would almost surely wonder at a command to eliminate women and especially innocent children. Whereas the biblical statement commands killing men, women, infant, and suckling in that order, without indicating their age, Josephus goes further in specifically stating that the Israelites are to kill all of every age; moreover, the massacre is actually to begin with women and infants. Furthermore, whereas the biblical statement specifies that they are to kill

¹⁷See Samuel N. Kramer, *The Sumerians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 325; W. H. P. Römer, "Zur Siegesinschrift des Königs Utuhegal von Urug," *Orientalia* N. S. 54 (1985): 274-288; and Stern, 70-72.

oxen, sheep, camels, and donkeys, Josephus adds specifically that they are to spare neither beasts of burden nor any cattle at all for private possession or profit. In addition, whereas the passage in Samuel quotes G-d as giving the command without specifically recalling the passages in Exodus and Deuteronomy, Josephus has G-d remind Saul that this is to be done in compliance with the behests of Moses (cf. *Ant.* 4.304). Whereas the Hebrew commands that he strike down Amalek, Josephus goes even beyond the passages in Exodus and Deuteronomy, which declare that they are to wipe out the memory of Amalek, and states that they are to eliminate his very name.

Josephus adds one further element to this command, namely that he is to devote (ἀναθεῖναι) everything to G-d. We find a similar statement in connection with the sword of Goliath that David dedicated (ἀνέθηκε) to G-d (*Ant.* 6.192, 244) and in connection with the objects, including the gold and silver that he had taken from the conquered cities and nations, sent by David's ally, Thainos, and which David carried away and dedicated (ἀνατίθησι) to G-d (*Ant.* 7.108). Such a concept as devoting everything to G-d might have reminded Josephus's Roman readers of the tradition of a famous event in their history in which, beset by the Gauls (Livy 5.41), the pontifex maximus, Marcus Folius, led the curule magistrates in a recital of a vow by which they devoted (*devovisse*) themselves to death on behalf of their country. Similarly, in the tremendous battle against the Latins, when the Roman front line gave way, the consul Decius asked the pontifex maximus to dictate to him the words by which he could devote himself in the army's behalf. Then, donning his armor he leaped upon his horse and rode headlong into the midst of the enemy, thus throwing the front line of the Latins into disorder (Livy 8.9).¹⁸

In Josephus's version of Moses' exhortation of the Israelites before his death (*Ant.* 4.191), he says that they should leave not one of the enemy after conquering them, "but you should judge that it is advantageous to destroy them all," though he does not add the biblical statement that the Israelites are to refuse to negotiate a treaty with them, to show them any favor (Deut 7:2) or pity (Deut 7:16). He makes it clear (*Ant.* 4.300) that when the Israelites prevail in battle they are to kill only those who are ranged against them, but that they are to save the others and allow them to pay tribute, "except for the race of the Canaanites, for it is necessary to

¹⁸Cf. *se diis* or simply *se*, to devote one's self to death, Cicero *De Natura Deorum* 2.3, *De Finibus* 2.19.61, *Philippics* 11.6.13; *se pro patria Quiritibusque Romanis*, Livy 5.41.3, 9.4; Virgil, *Aeneid* 12.234; Livy 9.17, 10.39; Horace, *Odes* 4.14.18; Lucretius 4.533; Valerius Maximus 6.2.2 and often; to devote to the infernal gods, i.e., to curse, execrate; Nepos, *Alcibiades* 4.5; Ovid, *Fasti* 6.738; Quintilian 5.6.2; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.102, 8.234; Horace, *Odes* 3.4.27, *Epodes* 16.9 and often.

obliterate them utterly.” Again, immediately after reminding the Israelites (*Ant.* 4.304) that after conquering the land of Israel and settling there they are to avenge the wrong committed against them by the Amalekites, they should destroy all the populace in the land of the Canaanites (*Ant.* 4.305).

In view of Josephus’s close acquaintance with and admiration for Thucydides,¹⁹ we may assume that he was well acquainted with the famous Melian Dialogue in Thucydides (5.84-116), in which the Athenians, arguing that the strong do what they can and that the weak suffer what they must, took advantage of their superior power, and gave the Melians a choice of submission or annihilation. When the Melians refused to submit, the Athenians besieged them, put to death the grown men, and sold the women and children into slavery.

Josephus is clearly aware (*Ant.* 4.191) that the attitude of the Israelites to the seven nations seems to contradict his highlighting elsewhere of Moses’ mercy (*Ant.* 4.300); hence, it is not surprising that he mentions and attempts to justify this injunction, namely that it is necessary for the sheer survival of the Israelites as a people, since if they allowed the Canaanite tribes to survive, they might destroy their ancestral constitution, “having had a taste of their manner of life” (*Ant.* 4.191). The statement that if some Israelites undertake to abolish the constitution based upon the laws, the other Israelites should utterly destroy the rebellious city down to its very foundations, clearly shows that in Josephus’s eyes (*Ant.* 4.310) as in the Bible, the objection is not to the Canaanites as such but to their practices. Any admirer of the Spartan constitution or of Plato’s ideal in the *Republic* and of the care that these documents take to preserve the *status quo* would appreciate such counsel.

One concession that Josephus does make to those of his readers who might criticize the harshness of a command to destroy other people’s religious objects is that Moses says (*Ant.* 4.192) that he advises the Israelites to tear down as many altars and groves and temples as the Canaanites have and to consume with fire their race and their memory. Here again he gives a reason: “For only thus would the security of your own goods be assured.” It is significant that Josephus uses the word *παραιuvō* (“exhort,” “recommend,” “advise”) rather than the word *κελεύω* (“order”), this despite the definitive statement of the command in Deut 7:5, which is repeated in 12:2-3: “You shall surely destroy all the places where the nations whom you shall dispossess served their gods.” However, in answer to this charge of misanthropy, Josephus’s King Solomon, in dedicating the Temple in Jerusalem, asks that G-d grant the

¹⁹See my *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 177-178.

prayers not only of Hebrews, but also of foreigners, so that it may be realized that “we are not inhuman (ἀπάνθρωποι) by nature nor unfriendly to those who are not of our country but wish that all men equally should receive aid from Thee and enjoy Thy blessings” (*Ant.* 8.116-117).

Inasmuch as Josephus, as we have noted,²⁰ does omit from his rewriting of the Bible a number of embarrassing episodes, we may wonder why he chooses to include so many references to commands to wipe out whole peoples. Apparently, he felt that the reason that he has given, namely to maintain the integrity of the Jewish people and their constitution, was one that Roman readers would appreciate.²¹ Surely, this was also important to him personally, in view of the numerous accusations against him that had been made by Jews who envied him his good fortune (*Life* 424-428); and he consequently made every effort, it would seem, to prove his loyalty to the Jewish people. Moreover, as we suspect, he was concerned not only to avoid offending his Roman hosts, but he was also responsive to his Jewish readers, who were perhaps more numerous, at least in the Diaspora. This may explain the fact that he chooses, as we have noted, to include his ambiguous statement about Balaam’s prophecies, where Josephus speaks in the vaguest terms of the calamities that will befall cities of the highest celebrity, some of which (presumably the vague reference is to Rome) had not yet been founded (*Num* 24:17-18; *Ant.* 4.125).²² This is also perhaps the reason why he chooses to include the ambiguous reference to the stone (*Dan* 2:44-45; *Ant.* 10.210) that, in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, destroys the kingdom of iron and would imply the overthrow of Rome.²³

Conclusion

The biblical command to exterminate the seven nations of Canaan, which is, in effect, genocide, is based on the objection to their practices and is intended to prevent the Israelites from intermarrying with them. It is similar to the command to eliminate the Amalekites and the nations of Sihon and Og. Philo and Josephus were clearly troubled by what appears to be an unusually cruel command.

Philo was particularly concerned that innocent people should not pay for the sins of others. He omits mention of G-d’s statement that he would

²⁰Ibid., 37-38.

²¹On Josephus’s appeal to his Roman readers, see my *Studies in Josephus’ Rewritten Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 556-560.

²²See my “Josephus’ Portrait of Balaam,” *Studia Philonica Annual* 5 (1993): 59-61.

²³See my *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible*, 649-651.

erase the memory of Amalek or that the Israelites were to wipe out the memory of Amalek. Rather, he equates the Amalekites with passion and evil. As to Sihon, Philo restricts the annihilation to his army alone, and he totally omits mention of Og. Most significantly, despite the fact that he refers to so many passages of the Bible, he nowhere cites any of those concerning the eradication of the seven nations of Canaan.

Pseudo-Philo does not say anything about the Amalekite attack upon the Israelites in the wilderness, nor does he mention there the divine attack to eradicate the Amalekites. However, he does regard them as the height of wickedness and attacks, above all, intermarriage with them. He mentions G-d's instructions to Samuel to have Saul destroy every one of the Amalekites, but he gives no reason for this command, nor does he indicate precisely who is included in the eradication. He omits mention of the utter destruction of Sihon and Og. Though he is particularly concerned with the elimination of idolatry, he does not mention the biblical command to eradicate the seven nations because of their idolatry.

Josephus uses restrained language in discussing intermarriage in connection with Esau, Dinah, and the Israelites at the time of Joshua. He likewise is not critical of Moses' intermarriage with Zipporah nor of Moses' supposed marriages to an Ethiopian princess and an additional Ethiopian woman. Josephus omits mention of Moabites in his list of prohibited marriages. He lessens Ezra's role in combating intermarriage. His chief opposition is to yielding to passion. He is concerned that intermarriage violates the constitution of the country. On the other hand, Josephus is well aware of the danger of intermarriage, as we see in the attention that he gives to Zimri and to the Israelite youths who sinned with the Midianite women.

As to Amalek, Josephus mentions that Moses *predicted* that the Amalekites would utterly perish. To be sure, he does mention that Samuel reminded Saul to destroy the men, women, infants, and animals, devoting everything to G-d. This seems to contradict his emphasis on Moses' mercy. His explanation of the command to exterminate the seven nations is that this is necessary for the survival of the Israelites as a people, since the Canaanites would destroy the ancestral constitution. His Roman readers would appreciate this, and it would also show his loyalty to the Jewish people in his audience. However, he says that Moses advises rather than commands the destruction of the Canaanite idols.

RAHAB: THE WOMAN WHO FULFILLED THE WORD OF YHWH

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Most readers consider the book of Joshua to be a book about conquest, that is, the biblical writers' accounts of how the Israelites fought to regain their homeland.¹ Elsewhere I have argued that such an understanding misses the intent of the biblical writers.² Only four chapters (6, 8, 10, and 11) describe "conquest," while twenty chapters have other themes. War stories are part of the book of Joshua, but they make up only a small portion, and they have other purposes besides military ones. One of these stories involves a woman named Rahab. Some might see in her story a kind of auxiliary war account, because in it are mentioned two spies sent by Joshua to survey Cisjordan in preparation for war. I suggest that the story of Rahab has little to do with warfare or even spying. It remains focused on the same purposes as the rest of the book of Joshua.

The book was not written to provide a detailed or a complete explanation of what the Israelites did, but rather to describe what YHWH did. It was the biblical writers' plan to demonstrate that YHWH was the leading force that brought Israel into Canaan. The events, including the war stories and the story of Rahab, are confirmation of how YHWH acted on behalf of the Israelites, that is, the theme of the book of Joshua.

Rahab the Harlot

As far as nondivine characters are concerned, Rahab's place in the book is second only to that of Joshua himself.³ Caleb, a hero once paired with Joshua (Num 13-14), may be credited with more recorded speech than Rahab, but her role is pivotal to the larger Israelite effort and setting. Thus, Rahab's role in the Jericho story is one of the most significant events in which all Israel participated. Caleb has a role in the capture of Hebron, where he demonstrates his individual faith and effort in

¹I use the term "biblical writers" to mean whatever process brought the book of Joshua to its present Hebrew text.

²David Merling, "The Book of Joshua: Its Structure and Meaning," in *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea*, ed. David Merling (Berrien Springs: Horn Museum/Instituté of Archaeology, 1997), 7-28.

³Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 80, 81.

conquest.⁴ Rahab, however, speaks on behalf of all Canaanites. Caleb speaks for himself. No other individual in the book of Joshua comes close to having the distinct personality of Rahab.

If, as it was one time popular to suggest, this story is etiological in nature, the question is, What is there in this story that a later Israelite community would need to explain?⁵ The answer provided by the biblical writers is that Rahab was alive when this story was first recorded (Josh 6:25).⁶ Making this story etiological, then, suggests that it is historical and was written when Rahab was still living—a suggestion that may not please some.⁷

Rahab's story is found at the beginning of the Israelite saga in Canaan (Josh 2). While the Israelites were camped at Shittim, two nameless spies were sent by Joshua to reconnoiter Jericho and the surrounding territories. In my opinion, Shittim cannot now be confidently associated with any specific tell in Transjordan.⁸ Fortunately, we do not need to identify the site, because the name "Shittim" was intended by the biblical writers of the book of Joshua to be a general reference to a camping/staging area east of the Jordan, a synonym for the plains of Moab, and not a specific site. Wherever Shittim was located, it was far enough removed from Jericho and the travel lanes of Cisjordan for it to

⁴Caleb's story is found in Josh 14. Outside of this chapter, Caleb is not mentioned in the book of Joshua.

⁵Trent Butler provides a short summary of the etiological interpretation of this story, as first suggested by Wagner, but does not suggest this implication of such an interpretation (*Joshua*, WBC [Waco: Word, 1983], 28, 29), although Leonard J. Greenspoon does ("Rahab," in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992], 611).

⁶Butler, 152.

⁷Rahab (רַחַב) has the basic meaning of "wide" or "broad" (Francis Brown, *The New Brown, Driver, and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* [Lafayette, IN: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1981], 932). What is interesting about this name is that no other hexatual character shares the name of Rahab. Except for its use in poetic or apocalyptic passages, it is not found at all in the OT outside of the book of Joshua (cf. Job 9:13; 26:12; Pss 87:4; 89:10; Isa 30:7; 51:9). Greenspoon, 611, suggests that Rahab may be a shortened form of a "theophoric" name. While this is possible, I find it more likely that if Rahab had a longer theophoric name, it would have been used, as was Rahab's occupation, to heighten the suspense in the story. I think it more likely her unusual name denotes historicity.

⁸Some have argued for specific sites to be associated with Shittim; see, e.g., Robert G. Boling and G. Ernest Wright, *Joshua: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*, AB 6 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984), 143, 144; N. Glueck, "Some Ancient Towns in the Plains of Moab," *BASOR* (1943): 7-26; J. M. Miller, "Moab and the Moabites," in *Studies in the Mesha Inscription and Moab*, ed. A. Dearman (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 27; Joel C. Slayton, "Shittim," in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 5:1222-1223.

be necessary for Joshua to send the spies.⁹ In the hexateuch, Shittim is referred to only three times in two stories.¹⁰

The reason Shittim is mentioned in this story has nothing to do with its location and everything to do with the purposes of the biblical writers. It was at Shittim that the Israelites “played the harlot” with Moabite women, which eventually led to the death of 24,000 Israelites.¹¹ Once again the Israelites confront a harlot. Rahab is called a prostitute (זונה, Josh 2:2).¹² In what better way could the biblical writers create tension in this story than by first reminding the readers of the evil harlotries of Shittim through the use of this place name and then by introducing the main character as a *prostitute*, who interacts with two Israelite spies?¹³

The story is told as though the spies left the Israelite camp and went directly to Rahab’s house. There they sought lodging. Since the story demands that the two spies be strangers to Jericho and thus to Rahab, the connection between the spies and Rahab demands additional comment.

First, we must conclude that the spies stayed in her house precisely because she was a prostitute.¹⁴ There is nothing within Josh 2 that implies that

⁹This is an interesting anomaly in that the last time spies, one of whom was Joshua, were sent to see the promised land, they were sent because of the apparent faithlessness of the Israelites (Deut 1:21-22). So in this sense, the story is repeated. YHWH brings the Israelites to the borders of Canaan and once more spies enter the land (cf. Num 13 and 14 and the subsequent wilderness wanderings).

¹⁰Cf. Num 25:1; Josh 2:1; 3:1. Shittim is also mentioned in the apocalyptic passage of Joel 3:8 and in a recollection of the history at Peor in Mic 6:5. In this work, I use the term “hexateuch” in the restricted sense of literary continuity, since there should be no question that the books of Genesis through Joshua form a literary unit. For this reason I have placed the initial letter in the lowercase to make clear this distinction. The subjects of authorship and sources among and within these books are questions that fall outside the constraints of this paper.

¹¹Num 25:1, 9. All biblical quotations in this article are taken from the NASB.

¹²Cf. David J. A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. 3 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 122, 123.

¹³Tikva Frymer-Kensky, “Reading Rahab,” in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 66; Butler seems to dismiss this story as narrative because “it contains no dramatic tension within it.” He follows Wagner and classifies the story as a “spy story” and a “literary report.” In my opinion, neither of these classifications gives full credit to the tension created by the name of Shittim and its literary relationship to the harlot heroine. While the two spies do have a role in this account, they are secondary players to Rahab and her speech. It is Rahab and her words that are the keys to understanding the reason for recounting the stories. In my opinion, this story is a classic narrative account. Butler’s statements are confusing, since he also makes the obvious connection between the Shittim mentioned here and in Num 25, as well as the “narrative tension” in this story (Butler, 29, 33).

¹⁴Phyllis A. Bird, “The Harlot as Heroine: Narrative Art and Social Presupposition in Three Old Testament Texts,” *Semeia* 46 (1989): 120, 121.

Rahab was a cult prostitute.¹⁵ Neither is there any hint within the story that implies she was working on behalf of a cultic center.¹⁶ On the contrary, it is to her home that the two spies went and where she hid them (Josh 2:1-2, 6). Jericho's king did not seek her at a temple to question her about her new clients, but said to her: "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house" (Josh 2:3).¹⁷ In other words, there was nothing religious about her activities that earned her the title "harlot." Rahab was an ordinary prostitute, i.e., one who sold sex for money.

The title "prostitute" contrasts Rahab, as a low-living non-Israelite, with Israelite women, who were commanded not to be prostitutes (Lev 19:29; Deut 23:18).¹⁸ Her profession also highlights her as part of the lower strata of society. Even in Mesopotamian society, which considered sexual license to be the natural, expected condition, prostitutes were placed on the same social level as sorcerers, lunatics, eccentrics, and demoniacs.¹⁹

Attempts to distance Rahab from harlotry undermine the literary intentions of the biblical writers.²⁰ That she was a harlot provides the initial drama in the story. On the other hand, nothing in this story implies that Rahab sold herself to the two spies.²¹ On the contrary, she is shown to be a woman of virtue, who gives allegiance to YHWH.²² To suppose she engaged in sex acts with the spies undermines the intentional literary twist in the story: an immoral woman giving allegiance to YHWH and becoming part of his chosen people. No Israelite, hearing the confessional affirmation of Rahab, would have supposed she had involved herself in immoral acts in the short time-frame of the story.

¹⁵Athalya Brenner, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 78, 70; John D. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 42; Elaine Adler Goodfriend, "Prostitution (OT)," in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 505-510; Karel van der Toorn, "Prostitution (Cultic)," in *ABD*, ed. David Noel Freedman (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), 510-513.

¹⁶Van der Toorn, 510.

¹⁷Josh 2:3.

¹⁸Prostitution, however, was a part of biblical society (Gen 38; Lev 21:7, 14).

¹⁹Jean Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 197.

²⁰See, for instance, Chaim Herzog and Mordechai Gichon, *Battles of the Bible* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 1997), 45; D. J. Wiseman, "Rahab of Jericho," *TynBul* 14 (1964): 8-11.

²¹Contra Danna Nolan Fewell and David M. Gunn, *Gender, Power, and Promise: The Subject of the Bible's First Story* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 117-118.

²²Hess, 83, 84.

The location of her house is in itself interesting. The text records that Rahab's house was part of the city's exterior wall. More precisely, it notes her house was sitting on top of the wall (Josh 2:15). According to J. Bottéro, Mesopotamian prostitutes resided on the walls of the city.²³ If the gate of a city was the place where business and social meetings took place,²⁴ the walls of the city, away from the commercial center, can be seen to be removed from a city's life. As Bottéro comments about Mesopotamian prostitutes, they were "pushed into the fringes of the social space."²⁵ Bottéro also notes that while the homes of prostitutes were in the most remote (i.e., inferior) areas of the city, they plied their trade in the setting of public taverns, which also served as inns.²⁶ Since ancient city builders built their approach road to the city parallel to the city wall,²⁷ the proximity of wall and road would make a house on the wall an ideal vantage point for exhibiting wares to arriving sojourners.

If it is legitimate to make societal parallels between the Canaanites and Mesopotamians, one could suggest that Rahab's house in Jericho might have served similar multiple purposes (lodging, food, drink, and sexual favors), given the small size of the Jericho community.²⁸ This would then explain how the Israelite spies knew where to find lodging and why they went there. Rahab's house would have been the expected place of lodging (and comfort) for strangers.²⁹ In the interaction between Jericho's king and herself, Rahab implies that the spies came to her house for comfort, that is, for food and sexual favors. She tells the king that they stayed only until dark, then left the city (Josh 2:5). We are led to believe that the spies had only been in Jericho for the afternoon. The king said they have come here "tonight," and Rahab replied that the spies left the city at dark (cf. Josh 2:2, 5). In any case, they did leave the city that night, only over the wall with the help of Rahab (Josh 2:15). Rahab extracted the promise from the spies that she and her family would be saved because of her efforts to save them. She showed them "grace," and they were asked to give the same to her.³⁰ Rahab was instructed to tie a

²³Bottéro, 197.

²⁴Cf. Ruth 4.

²⁵Bottéro, 194.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷With the road paralleling city walls, the defenders on the walls had a clear view of and access to their enemies as they approached the city's gates.

²⁸Assuming that Tell es-Sultan's one acre represents ancient Jericho.

²⁹Bird, 128.

³⁰What I have translated "grace" is the Hebrew word חסד. Since חסד is not common in stories of the Israelite's journey from Egypt to Canaan, one wonders if there is not a hint of

scarlet cord on the window of her house at the place where she let them down from the wall as a reminder of this agreement (Josh 2:12-21).³¹

From the short time the spies were in the city, they could not have learned much more about Jericho's physical environs than what they knew before their visit. What they did learn, or at least what they reported to Joshua, was nothing about the city and everything about the citizens.

Rahab's Message

According to the biblical writer, the spies reported to Joshua that "surely the Lord has given all the land into our hands, and all the inhabitants of the land, moreover, have melted away before us" (Josh 2:24). This is all the text states. It says nothing about Jericho's defenses or any other matter. Their message is strange, since the spies are reported to have spent three days hiding from the very people that they say had melted away in fear of them (Josh 2:22). This suggests that we must look beyond the spies' words to the implications of their message.

What the spies actually reported to Joshua was an abbreviated version of "Rahab's acclamation."³² Rahab had said:

I know that the Lord has given you the land, and that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. For we have 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 utterly destroyed. And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath (Josh 2:9-11).

Rahab's words are stated twice: once directly by her and once by the spies. We can only assume by this repetition that Rahab's words are

divine forgiveness intended in the use of this word in this situation. Clearly reciprocity of *רחם* is made between Rahab and the spies; cf. H. J. Zobel, "רחם," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 47. A suggestion of forgiveness seems to provide, if not a rationale for her acceptance into the Israelite family, at least a connection with covenant, mercy, and forgiveness; cf. Exod 20:6; 34:6, 7; Num 14:14, 10; Deut 5:10. I question whether such a clear distinction can be made between "secular use" and "religious use" of *רחם*, as Zobel, 46, 54, makes, especially in this case, where the spies are in effect acting for Joshua and, thus, YHWH himself. This agreement affects all of Israel. These spies are speaking on behalf of YHWH.

³¹One wonders if this "scarlet cord," although only mentioned here in the OT—and I know of no parallel within the ancient Near East—was not a common advertisement for this type of dwelling (e.g., "red-light district"). The cord would be tied to the house so that visitors to the city would know where to find lodging, food, and comfort; cf. Hess, 94.

³²Hess, 88, notes that "this represents one of the longest uninterrupted statements by a woman in a biblical narrative."

central to her role in the Jericho story and the key to her place in the book of Joshua. As such, the role of Rahab in Josh 2 and 6 is more important to the aims of biblical writers than most commentators have realized. Many commentators have focused on her salvation of the spies and of her own family; however, her real usefulness to the biblical writers is elsewhere. Her words are important because they report the fulfillment of the promises and declaration of YHWH.³³ In the words of this prostitute, the biblical writers found evidence that what YHWH said had come true. As with Tikva Frymer-Kensky, I believe these words in Josh 2:9-11 are the focus of the Rahab story.³⁴

Based on her acclamation, Rahab serves as evidence that even those who were outside of the Israelite family were aware that the power of YHWH was with the Israelites and that the land had been given to them. In Chart 1, I have placed in parallel the words of Rahab from “Rahab’s acclamation” (Josh 2:9-11) with statements made by YHWH. In these parallels, the biblical writers appear to be showing how the word of YHWH was being fulfilled.

| Chart 1 The Words of Rahab and the Words of YHWH | |
|---|---|
| Rahab | 1a “I know God has given you this land” (Josh 2:9a) |
| YHWH | 1b “Arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel” (Josh 1:2) |
| Rahab | 2a “The terror (אימה) of you has fallen on us” (Josh 2:9b) |
| YHWH | 2b “I will send my terror (אימה) ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people” (Exod 23:27) |
| Rahab | 3a “All the inhabitants of the land have melted (מוג) away before you” (Josh 2:9c) |
| YHWH | 3b “All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted (מוג) away” (Exod 15:15c) |

³³Some of the parallels I have provided are spoken by Moses instead of directly by YHWH, but I have assumed that the biblical writers equated the pronouncements of Moses with those of YHWH (e.g., Exod 4:10-12, 15, 16). Joshua later took Moses’ place (Josh 1:5).

³⁴Frymer-Kensky, 61.

| | |
|-------|--|
| Rahab | 4a The Red Sea: "For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt" Sihon and Og: "And what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og whom you utterly destroyed" (Josh 2:10) |
| YHWH | 4b The Red Sea: "But the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. And when Israel saw the great power which the Lord had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses" (Exod 14:29, 31) Sihon and Og: "And the Lord will do to them (Canaanites) just as He did to Sihon and Og the kings of the Amorites, and to their land when He destroyed them" (Deut 31:4) |
| Rahab | 5a "And when we heard it, our hearts melted (מָלַח)" (Josh 2:11) |
| — | 5b "Our brethren have made our hearts melt (מָלַח), saying, 'The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven'" (Deut 1:28) |
| Rahab | 6a "YHWH is God in heaven above and earth beneath" (Josh 2:11) |
| YHWH | 6b "The Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below" (Deut 4:39) |

Rahab's initial phrase, "I know God has given you this land" (Josh 2:9a), can be seen as the fulfillment of what YHWH said to Joshua: "Arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to the sons of Israel (Josh 1:2).

Rahab also reported that the "terror" (אִימָה) of the Israelites had fallen on the Canaanites (2:9b). Her statement is written as though it were a direct fulfillment of Exod 23:27, where YHWH promised: "I will send my terror (אִימָה) ahead of you, and throw into confusion all the people." In the hexateuch, אִימָה ("terror") is used only five times, with Exod 23:27 and Rahab's use of the word accounting for two of those five times.³⁵ The rareness of the word supports the connection between these two passages, especially since Rahab not only uses the same word, but also repeats the

³⁵In the OT, this word is used only seventeen times: Gen 15:12; Exod 15:16; Exod 23:27; Deut 32:25; Josh 2:9; Ezra 3:3; Job 9:34; 13:21; 20:25; 33:7; 39:20; 41:6; Pss 55:5; 88:16; Prov 20:2; Isa 33:18; Jer 50:38.

entire message of Exod 23:27. The setting of the Exod 23:27 promise is a pericope describing YHWH's promise to conquer the promised land on behalf of the Israelites (Exod 23:20-31). Rahab, then, testifies that this promise has come to pass.

Rahab also says that the "inhabitants of the land have melted" (מָוַן; Josh 2:9c). The use of מָוַן ("melted") implies warfare.³⁶ Given the close context, the next verse concerning the Red Sea experience, the connection between Rahab's words and Exod 15:14-16a (which is part of the "Song of Moses and Israel") is evident (Exod 23:27). Exodus 15:14-16a reads: "The peoples have heard, they tremble; Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia, Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; the leaders of Moab, trembling grips them; *all the inhabitants of Canaan have melted* (מָוַן) *away*; terror and dread fall upon them" (emphasis supplied).

Exodus 15:15 shares with Josh 2:9 the Hebrew word מָוַן ("melted"). The Hebrew word used by Rahab in Josh 2:11, where she speaks of the inhabitants as "melted," is a different word (מָסַח) than is used in Exod 15:15 and Josh 2:9.³⁷ The word מָוַן ("melted") is used only three times in the hexateuch: Exod 15:15, and Josh 2:9 and 24. The connection between the words of Rahab and the promises of YHWH is again clearly implied.

The fourth parallel between Rahab's words and the Lord's has two main divisions: her reference to the Red Sea and the two defeated Transjordanian Amorite kings, Sihon and Og (Josh 2:10). Rahab's mention of Sihon and Og is an exact fulfillment of what was predicted. In Deut 31:3-4, Moses says that what happened to Sihon and Og is going to happen to those living in Canaan. Rahab's acknowledgment of these events highlights Moses' promise. Rahab's reference to the Red Sea (Josh 2:9c) foreshadows a statement of Joshua and one previously made by Moses, stating that the reason for the Red Sea and the Jordan River crossings was to instill in "all the peoples of the earth" knowledge that YHWH is with the Israelites (Josh 4:23-24; cf. Exod 15:14-18). The words of Rahab bridge those of Moses and Joshua, thus serving to demonstrate that what the leaders of YHWH predicted had come to pass.

Rahab's description of their hearts as "melted" (Josh 2:11; Heb. מָסַח) is a metaphor, literally fulfilled by the manna when it "melted" (Exod 16:21). In this case, what happened or could happen to the Israelites has now happened to the Canaanites (Deut 1:28; 20:8). The Canaanites are not able to stand before the Israelites because their hearts have melted (Deut 1:28; Josh 5:1; cf. 2: 25). Dennis J. McCarthy has seen the use of this word and those who

³⁶Dennis J. McCarthy, "Some Holy War Vocabulary in Joshua 2," *CBQ* 33 (1971): 230.

³⁷מָוַן will be discussed below.

“melt” as a kind of theophanic experience.³⁸ The presence and power of YHWH are just too much for the Canaanite inhabitants. Rahab’s description again fulfills the prophecy of earlier times (Deut 2:24, 25).

One of the more striking parallels between the words of YHWH and those of Rahab is her statement that “YHWH is God in heaven above and earth beneath” (Josh 2:11). This is a direct quotation of Deut 4:39 and a definite parallel with the words of Moses (Deut 4:39).³⁹ The context of Deut 4:39 includes a mention of the Exodus (Deut 4:37) and the nations (גוים), which were driven out of Canaan (Deut 4:38). The recognition of the supremacy of YHWH is spoken first by Moses, then repeated by Rahab.

Thus, Rahab serves to pronounce the fulfillment of earlier promises to the Israelites. What has been promised has begun to be fulfilled. Rahab’s speech is confirmation that YHWH’s promises are true.

Similarities between the books of Joshua and Deuteronomy have been catalogued many times. Yet when parallels are sought with Rahab’s words, it seems her words were the fulfillment of not only the Deuteronomist’s statements, but also those of the Exodus. The Rahab story seems to be more a completion of the Exodus-Wilderness-Wandering story than a Deuteronomistic one. Frymer-Kensky has written: “The Rahab story is a masterpiece of allusive writing. It is set in the first five chapters of the book of Joshua, which contain numerous pentateuchal allusions designed to have readers keep in mind the activities of Moses as they read Joshua.”⁴⁰ In Josh 1:8, YHWH says to Joshua: “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.” The “book of the law” is without doubt intended to especially signify the book of Deuteronomy, but giving Rahab’s words full weight should include the entire Pentateuch.⁴¹

Rahab does not simply repeat the words of YHWH. Rather, her acclamation serves as confirmation of YHWH’s promises. K. M. Campbell has suggested that Rahab’s words reflect covenant form.⁴² While some aspects of a covenant relationship are exhibited within the dialogue, I believe that Campbell has overdrawn the similarities.

³⁸McCarthy, 230.

³⁹“Know therefore today and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other” (Deut 4:39).

⁴⁰Frymer-Kensky, 58.

⁴¹This conclusion is contrary to Butler, 8-9, and Hess, 72-73, among others.

⁴²K. M. Campbell, “Rahab’s Covenant: A Short Note on Joshua 2:9-21,” *VT* 22 (1972): 243-244.

As far as her words are concerned, Rahab's speech to the spies is composed in a chiasmic structure (Chart 2).⁴³ In this chiasm, the first and last statements have the same meaning (1a and 1b). In other words, to say that "YHWH has given you the land" is to admit that it rightfully belongs to him.

Chart 2

Rahab's Speech: A Chiasmic Structure

- 1a "I know the Lord has given you the land" (Josh 2:9a)
- 2a "The terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you" (Josh 2:9b)
- 3 "We have 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 utterly destroyed" (Josh 2:10)
- 2b "And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you" (Josh 2:11a)
- 1b "For the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath" (Josh 2:11b)
-
-

I would identify this chiasm as a "mirror chiasmic order," where the first and the last, and the second and fourth phrases are paired.⁴⁴ Such a structure would suggest that the center of this speech (3) would be the most significant message or most important idea offered by Rahab. The second statement in this chiasm is also paralleled with the next-to-the-last sentence (2a and 2b). In both cases, Rahab says that the strength of the Canaanite heart has melted before the Israelites.

Rahab states: "We have 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 utterly destroyed" (Josh 2:10). These words foreshadow the two stories that follow Rahab's encounter with the spies—the crossing of the Jordan and the destruction of Jericho. When the Israelites are said to have crossed the Jordan, Josh 5:1 reports: "Now it came about when all the kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites who were by the sea, heard how the

⁴³Hess, 89-90, also notes the chiasmic nature of Rahab's speech, but he arranges the structure somewhat differently and does not emphasize the significance of the central section as I do.

⁴⁴M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980), 393.

Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan before the sons of Israel until they had crossed, that their hearts melted, and there was no spirit in them any longer, because of the sons of Israel.”

This statement is almost identical to Rahab’s statement to the spies, except she referred to the Red Sea crossing as causing their hearts to “melt.” In both cases, the same Hebrew word for “melt” (מָלָה) is used. I believe there is an intentional literary connection between these two events (the drying up of the Red Sea and the drying up of the Jordan River) and the statements of Rahab and Joshua.

Sihon and Og (Num 21) were absolutely defeated. No Israelite losses are mentioned in their stories, and their defeat became the watchword of the biblical writers. In this case, Rahab’s words about Sihon and Og became a foreshadowing of what would happen at Jericho. Rahab’s recollection of the Red Sea crossing and the defeat of Sihon and Og, then, is portentous of two coming events: the Jordan crossing and the defeat of Jericho. Thus, I believe Rahab’s words present a chiasmic structure, of which the role is both fulfillment and prediction. The predictive element is positioned in the most important place of her speech, at the center of the chiasm.

Rahab’s words, then, become diagnostic for all of Canaan. On one hand, from a literary point of view, it is her words that show her to be an insightful disciple of YHWH. She and her family are allowed to live, even though allowing her to live ignores the stipulations of Deut 20:10-20.⁴⁵

Rahab’s Fellow Confessors: The Gibeonites

While this article is focused on Rahab, the epic of the Gibeonites (Josh 9) serves a similar, albeit expanded, role of confirmation of YHWH’s words. The Gibeonites respond similarly to Rahab, assuming that their only hope was to make a treaty with the Israelites. This conclusion was based apparently on what happened to Ai and Jericho (Josh 9:3) and in Egypt and Transjordan (Josh 9:9,10). The Gibeonites approached the Israelites at Gilgal and sued for peace, falsely telling the Israelites that they were from a distant country (Josh 9; cf. Deut 20:10-15). The biblical writers assumed that the Gibeonites knew that the Israelites were not supposed to make peace treaties with the inhabitants of Canaan, thus the ruse. This account, like the story of Rahab, serves the biblical writers as evidence that the people of Canaan were terrified of the Israelites and knew their only hope was in surrender. The Gibeonites were so terrified that they pretended to be inhabitants of a distant land. When Joshua demanded that

⁴⁵Boling, 150-151, has noted the problem of trying to explain the exception of Rahab and her family to the traditional rules of *ḥtm*. On the other hand, Rahab provides evidence of the fear possessed by those opposed to the Israelites.

they explain why they had lied about their identity, they replied: "Because it was certainly told your servants the Lord your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you, therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing" (Josh 9:24).

The biblical writers assumed that the Canaanite inhabitants had access to, or at least an understanding of, the accounts recorded in Exodus and Deuteronomy. This may also be why the name "Gibeonite" is so prominent in this story. Deut 20:16-17 reads: "Only in the cities of these people that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the Lord your God has commanded you."

The absence of the name "Gibeonite" from this list is significant since nothing is said in the book of Joshua about conquering the Hittites, Perizzites, or the Hivites. In other words, the picture one might have gained by reading Deut 20:16-17 is that the Israelites would attack and conquer each of these groups in turn, which is not the way the biblical writers present the story. The Gibeonites are not mentioned in the Pentateuchal stories, being introduced to the reader in the book of Joshua, but they are more prominent than all other ethnic groups mentioned in the book.

In summary, the words of the Gibeonites, then, reflect the words uttered by YHWH in Josh 1:2, 5 and also mirror Rahab's words. The difference between Rahab and the Gibeonites is the time of reference. Rahab testifies before Jericho is conquered, while the Gibeonites confirm the point of the biblical writers after that event. Additionally, they differ in terms of where they place their faith and loyalty. Rahab's lie to the king of Jericho evinces her trust in and loyalty to the God of Israel. The Gibeonites' lie to the leaders of Israel shows their self-centered distrust of Israel's God.

Rahab's Elevation

The words and actions of Rahab move her from the ash heap, as it were, to sit with princes (Ps 113:7, 8). Rahab shows herself to be more than a fearful Canaanite, looking to find life in the face of death. In her words, she claims YHWH as her God. She is not a foreign city to be destroyed, but an alien who has treated the spies fairly and deserves just treatment (Deut 24:14, 17). Beyond that, her words mark her as a convert to YHWH, and she is allowed to live.⁴⁶ Rahab's story is memorably unique and worth repeating; or as Phillis Bird suggests, it is a story that depends on a "reversal of expectations." Who would expect a "shrewd and calculating operator" like a prostitute to save the

⁴⁶Fewell and Gunn, 119.

spies and declare her allegiance to YHWH? But she does. “The harlot understands what the king of the city does not—that Israelite victory is imminent and inevitable.”⁴⁷

This element of irony enhances the impact of the story.⁴⁸ Rahab was the opposite of the spiritual prostitute, for which Israel and Judah were eventually denounced.⁴⁹ The biblical writers call Rahab a prostitute, and she was. On the other hand, she is presented as wise and spiritually on a par with the Israelites, of whom she became a part.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Bird, 130, 131.

⁴⁸Brenner, 80.

⁴⁹Cf. Ezek 23.

⁵⁰Josh 6:25; cf. Matt 1:5.

THE ROLE OF ABIGAIL IN 1 SAMUEL 25

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Introduction

One of the most intriguing stories featured in the life of David is the drama of Abigail's role in 1 Sam 25, in which she prevents the death of her husband and teaches David a valuable lesson. The literary structure of this story reveals much more than the simple story suggests.

This study will focus on the literary importance of Abigail among the three principal characters of the story.¹ Her role, which epitomizes the literary quality of contrast, will be investigated by examining the narrator's characterization of Nabal and Abigail (1 Sam 25:3) and by contrasting her words and actions with Nabal and David. This account is not accidental or merely a "romantic idyll";² rather, Abigail is the wisdom by which folly is highlighted. Thus, she commands the spotlight, since all the cast members (including the servants) interact only with her, making her pivotal role unmistakable. Second, we will examine the placement of 1 Sam 25 between Saul's pursuit of David (1 Sam 24) and Saul's death (1 Sam 26-31).

The Narrator's Characterization of Abigail and Nabal (1 Sam 25:3)

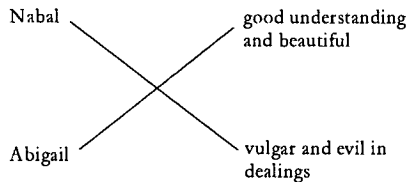
From the outset, the narrator regards Abigail positively and Nabal negatively. In the Hebrew Bible, it is unusual to find the wife depicted as being superior to her husband; thus this story serves as a striking example of feminine superiority.³ In 1 Samuel, only five other women are mentioned. Peninnah and Hannah are mentioned in light of their fertility and infertility (1 Sam 1-2). Phinehas's unnamed wife died in childbirth (1 Sam 4:19-22). Michal, Saul's daughter, was given to David for the purpose of providing Saul an opportunity

¹Adele Berlin describes three levels of characterization in the historical literature: the agent, about whom nothing is known except the bare necessities for the plot and who is part of the setting, a function of the plot; the type, which represents a class of people that share similar traits and characteristics with the agent; and the character, who displays a wider range of traits than the type, and about whom we know more than is necessary for the plot ("Characterization in Biblical Narrative: David's Wives," *JOT* 23 [1982]: 69-85, esp. 78).

²John C. Schroeder states that "this story has no connection with the main theme of David's rise to power and Saul's decline" (*I and II Samuel*, IB [Nashville: Abingdon, 1953], 1011).

³John H. Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed: The Story of Women in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 104-105.

to kill him (1 Sam 18:20-28).⁴ The witch of Endor is the last woman mentioned in the book (1 Sam 28). Except for the last, who is linked with evil, all are mentioned in light of their spouses' activities.⁵ Of this group, Abigail is unique. Though she is identified as Nabal's wife (1 Sam 25:3, 14, 19), Nabal is also defined or described in light of his wife: "The man's name was Nabal; and his wife's name Abigail. Now the woman had good understanding (*tobat šekel*); and she was beautiful. But the man was vulgar ("intractable"; *qašeb*) and evil in his dealings" (1 Sam 25:3). The chiasmic structure of the text emphasizes the contrast of their characters.



This contrast is also apparent in the meaning of their names, the identity of their ancestors, and their attitudes.

1. *Names.* Nabal means "fool." The Hebrew word *nabal* indicates more than a "harmless simpleton, but rather a vicious, materialistic, and egocentric misfit."⁶ It seems likely, as Jon D. Levenson has demonstrated, that the villain's "real name was changed for purposes of characterization. The story-teller wants us to know what this fellow is like from the start."⁷ Abigail speaks of Nabal's folly as that which cannot be denied because it is part of the fabric of who he is (1 Sam 25:25b). His character is precisely like his name, foolish. He was following the *kētib* ("like his heart"; 1 Sam 25:3a).

Abigail, on the other hand, means "my father is joy" or "father's joy." She is described as being of "good understanding" (*šekel*; 1 Sam 25:3), which is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where this term is used in relation to a woman. The noun connotes "prudence" and "insight," and "extends to the

⁴In analyzing the marriage of David and Michal, Berlin, 70-71, observes that this "is the only time in the Bible that a woman seems to have chosen a husband instead of the usual pattern of a husband choosing a wife" (1 Sam 18:20-21). She intimates further that David was more motivated by political gain than love, since "it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law" (1 Sam 18:26).

⁵In a later account (2 Sam 6:20-23), Michal lost her status as David's wife. See Nehama Aschkenasy, *Eve's Journey: Feminine Images in Hebraic Literary Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 143; cf. J. Cheryl Exum, *Fragmented Women: Feminist (Sub)versions of Biblical Narratives*, JSOTSupp 163 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 34.

⁶Jon D. Levenson, "1 Samuel as Literature and as History," *CBQ* 40 (1978): 13.

⁷*Ibid.*, 14.

whole idea of healthful well-being.⁸ She is, thus, illustrative of the ideal wife.⁹ Phyllis Bird describes her as “intelligent, beautiful, discreet and loyal to her husband (despite his stupidity and boorish character . . .). Prudent, quick-witted, and resourceful, she is capable of independent action.”¹⁰ While Nabal is the proverbial fool, Abigail epitomizes the *‘ēšet hayil* (“stalwart woman”; Prov 31:10).¹¹ It cannot be overlooked that Abigail’s description is “unambiguously laudatory,” while Nabal’s is undoubtedly derogatory.¹²

2. *Ancestry.* Abigail’s ancestry is not provided, although this lack of information is not unusual. The Hebrew wife was often characterized as being a part of her husband’s major possessions (Exod 20:17). Sometimes, as with money, wives were regarded as an index of a man’s wealth.

Nabal’s ancestry, on the other hand, is notable, hailing back to Caleb¹³ and the tremendous faith associated with him (Num 13-14; Deut 1:22-36; Josh 14:6-20). However, in spite of his good and noble ancestry, his character is ignoble and ignominious. By way of contrast, Abigail, in spite of her unstated ancestry, behaves in a noble and refined manner that invites commendation.

3. *Attitude.* The narrator’s introduction also contrasts wealth and avarice with good sense and beauty. Moshe Garsiel notes that “it surely is not accidental that the two personages are characterized by two antonyms, *ṭwbṭ* = ‘good’ and *ṣ* = ‘bad.’”¹⁴ Nabal is introduced in terms of his possessions, i.e., *what* he had (1 Sam 25:2). Abigail, however, is introduced

⁸Warren C. Trenchard contends that Ben Sira sees *skl* as referring to “the wife’s sensitivity to her husband’s health needs and her ability to provide for them. . . . The object and context of the positive assessment of the wife is in her husband” (*Ben Sira’s View of Women: A Literary Analysis* [Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], 15).

⁹Berlin, 78, sees her as a type: “She represents the perfect wife.”

¹⁰Phyllis Bird, “Images of Women in the Old Testament,” in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Reuther (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974), 65.

¹¹P. Kyle McCarter, *1 Samuel*, AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 401.

¹²Levenson, 18.

¹³The Kethib reads *kēlibbō* (“like his heart”); the Qere understands *kālibbi* (cf. Targ. and Vulgate), a Calebite. The LXX (*anthropos kunikos*) and Syriac denote *keleb* and relate it to the dog-like, shameless character of Nabal (Ralph W. Klein, *1 Samuel*, WBC 10 [Waco: Word, 1983], 243). Levenson, 14-15, believes that the Kethib is “an example of scribal sarcasm which alludes to the well-known verse, ‘The fool (*nābāl*) has said in his heart (*belibbō*), There is no God’ (Ps 14:1 = 53:1). If so, then the Kethib alludes to the prideful and ultimately stupid character of this man, who seems to have recognized no authority other than his own.”

¹⁴Moshe Garsiel, “Wit, Words, and a Woman: 1 Samuel 25,” in *On Humor and the Comic in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Yehuda T. Radday and Athalya Brenner, JSOTSupp 92 (Sheffield: Almond, 1990), 163.

in terms of her character, i.e., *who* she was. Her person preceded her possessions. The narrator subtly suggests that *who* you are is more important than *what* you have.

The Wisdom of Abigail with Nabal and David

Nabal was unruly and unkind in spite of David's kindness to him (1 Sam 25:15-16). A "scornful loudmouth" (1 Sam 25:10-11), he heaped scorn on David and offered disingenuity for generosity (1 Sam 25:10-11), unkindness for kindness (1 Sam 25:15), and ingratitude for gratitude (1 Sam 25:21). Nabal was shameless. David provided protection for his flocks at no expense, and it would be expected that Nabal would have happily rewarded this kindness. David's request was reasonable, legitimate, and in harmony with the custom of the times. But Nabal was a fool, who invited retaliation, revenge, and death. It is precisely this sin of refusing to provide for the needs of the unfortunate that characterizes the *nābāl* ("the fool"; cf. Isa 32:6). The servant who explained the situation and appealed to Abigail also serves to highlight the differences between Abigail and Nabal. He recognized the folly of his master's action, and his youthfulness further underscored Nabal's foolishness. He too places emphasis on Nabal's character by pointing out that Nabal is the "son of Belial," "a nasty fellow"¹⁵ (1 Sam 25:17). In addition, Nabal was also unapproachable, so there was no way to dialogue with him. However, Abigail was reasonable and approachable when the young man appealed directly to her guidance in averting David's anger.¹⁶ This direct and forceful appeal subtly suggests that this may not have been the first time that Nabal was guilty of such foolishness, nor was it the only time that Abigail had to intercede.

By contrast, Abigail's activity demonstrated wisdom and kindness (1 Sam 25:18-19), inviting forgiveness, peace, reconciliation, and life. Everything that her foolish husband brought upon himself, she was able to reverse by her wise action. Nabal's folly is unveiled in his speech (which also belies his action). His response was scornful and derisive: "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? These days there are many slaves who break away from their masters. Should I take my bread, my wine, and my meat which I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose place of origin I do not know?" (1 Sam 25:10-11).

This outburst is hardly surprising since it is characteristic of a fool, for "excellent speech does not come from a fool" (Prov 17:7). His questions were insults, demonstrating open disrespect mixed with indignation. His derision was of an extreme and malignant nature. In short, he dismissed David as contemptible and, hence, unworthy of his food. He outrightly rejected David's

¹⁵Ibid., 164.

¹⁶The force of the imperatives is strong: "Now know and see what you will do."

request and David himself, calling him a “worthless hooligan.”¹⁷ In addressing the emissaries, he speaks of “Jesse’s son,” an expression generally used of David in negative ways. When David’s delegation initially approached Nabal, they made their modest request in the name of David, “Nabal’s son,” a display of reverence and respect.¹⁸ By contrast, Nabal’s retort,¹⁹ labeling David “Jesse’s son,” demeaned David as though he was beneath Nabal’s dignity or person. Nabal was insolently abusive and humiliating. According to him, David had no self-worth. Instead of the blessing he expected, David received a curse (1 Sam 25:6, 10-12).²⁰

By contrast, Abigail spoke with wisdom (1 Sam 25:24-31), presenting herself to David with humility.²¹ Unlike her husband, who was contumelious, she was praiseworthy and pleasant, disarming David with her wit and charm. Before he could unleash his avowed angry response (1 Sam 25:21-22), Abigail divested him of his anger by her *actions* and *speech*. “She hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground, and fell at his feet” (1 Sam 25:23-24a, emphasis supplied). Her opening words were designed to blot out David’s intentions to retaliate: “Upon me, my lord, let this iniquity be upon me. . . . Accept this blessing which your maidservant brought for my lord” (1 Sam 25:24, 25, 27; cf. 1 Sam 25:28, 30). Alice Bach notes that

throughout her speech, Abigail continues to emphasize a power hierarchy, repeatedly calling David *‘adoni* and herself *‘amateka/sbiphateka*. While her actions show that she is accustomed to controlling situations, her words assure David that she is handing power over to him. . . . Her deference to the landless pauper underscores David’s position as prince in disguise.²²

Abigail does not define herself as Nabal’s wife (this is the work of the narrator); rather she dissociates herself from him. He is evil and foolish,

¹⁷McCarter, 389.

¹⁸Klein, 248.

¹⁹In describing Nabal’s verbal assault, the servant uses the verb *wy’t* (“he flew out”), thus comparing the attack to that of a bird of prey. Cf. Garsiel, 164.

²⁰The word *shālôm* is mentioned four times, emphasizing the delegation’s goodwill. Garsiel, 164-165, contends that Nabal’s answer denotes a midrashic play on names that is very insulting to David. He both denies David’s modest request and mocks his family.

²¹Gerald Hammond claims that “in contrast with the other women in David’s story, Abigail is presented comically in her encounters with him” (“Michal, Tamar, Abigail and What Bathsheba Said: Notes Towards a Really Inclusive Translation of the Bible,” in *Women in the Biblical Tradition*, ed. George J. Brooks [Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1992], 67).

²²Alice Bach, “The Pleasure of Her Text,” in *The Pleasure of Her Text: Feminist Readings of Biblical and Historical Texts*, ed. Alice Bach (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1990), 27.

base, a villain. But she is not (1 Sam 25:25).

Several appeals characterize Abigail's monologue. First, she appeals to David's conscience and moral aptitude. Her counsel was for him not to shed blood, especially innocent blood: "Yahweh has restrained you from getting involved in blood guilt and from getting victory from your own hand. . . . [M]ay there not be a cause for your stumbling for having poured out blood for no reason or for my lord's hand obtaining his own victory" (1 Sam 25:26, 30-31). Thus, Abigail cautioned David to consider his future reign and the citizens of that administration, who would be motivated either by fear of reprisal or true loyalty.

Her second appeal was to David's physical need of food and drink (1 Sam 25:27).²³ Called a "blessing," this appeal echoed the one David had sent to Nabal (1 Sam 25:6, 14) and contrasts with Nabal's harsh words. When David's request for provisions from Nabal was insolently denied, he angrily and hastily vowed to revenge Nabal and all his household by killing them (1 Sam 25:13, 21-22). This impulsive action was more in harmony with the character of Saul than with that of David. His seriousness may be gauged by the oath that he vehemently made: "So and more also do God" (1 Sam 25:22). Acting wisely, Abigail gathered enough food for David and his men, rode out to meet him, and bowed to show her respect.

Her third appeal was to David's manhood. Elements such as his integrity ("no evil has been found in you"; 1 Sam 25:28b) and God's plan to exalt him to rulership (1 Sam 25:29) were invoked.²⁴ She emphatically stated that she *believed* in his divine mission to fight the battles of God and that he would be king. Her expression of certainty that God had chosen David, and not another, to be king must have appealed to his manhood. By agreeing with David that Nabal had behaved with great disrespect, she was able to stem David's anger and avert bloodshed. She also indicated that David ought to continue fighting God's battles (1 Sam 25:28) rather than pursuing revenge for personal wrongs, even though he was ill-treated. Abigail persuaded David that judgment is a divine prerogative, which he must be careful not to usurp. In fact, God would act punitively against David's enemies—Nabal included—if David refused to assume God's responsibility of rendering judgment (1 Sam 25:29). He would, in time, be, in stark contrast to his present position, the *nagid 'al yisra'el* ("ruler over Israel"; v. 30) over a *bayit ne'eman* ("a secure dynasty").²⁵

²³There may be a pun intended in Hebrew between the word "skins" (*nible*) and "Nabal." Cf. Klein, 249.

²⁴Note her diplomacy in speaking of Saul's attempt to kill David. Instead of naming him, she states, "Yet a man pursues you" (1 Sam 25:29a).

²⁵Cf. Nathan's prophecy in 2 Sam 7:17, which uses the same language. No doubt the rabbis

Abigail concluded by pleading with David to refuse blood-guilt and to deal kindly with her when he became king. Her speech halted David's negative impulse. Thus, she acted the part of the perfect wife, who "opens her mouth to speak with wisdom; instruction in fidelity is on her tongue" (Prov 31:26). Levenson comments: "Abigail devises the perfect solution to the dilemma: she intercedes in behalf of Nabal (1 Sam 25:24), although conceding that he has no case and no hope of survival (1 Sam 25:25-26). In other words, while overtly defending him, she covertly dissociates herself from him."²⁶

As the story continues, the literary device of contrast is again employed. Nabal's gluttony after the sheep-shearing is in contrast to his denial of provision for David's starving men. He "feasted like a king, but rejected the legitimate request of the future king."²⁷ For such action, Nabal met with divine retribution. After hearing the news of what Abigail had done, he fell into shock and never recovered, dying ten days later. Ironically, his staunch refusal to give caused him to lose everything. The poignant point of 1 Sam 25:38 is that God killed him.

Contrary to Nabal, David accepted Abigail's counsel and thanked her generously (1 Sam 25:33-34). He understood that her wise dealings alone averted the foolish violence he had considered committing. "Her speech, seasoned with grace, and full of kindness and peace, shed a heavenly influence. Better impulses came to David, and he trembled as he thought of what might have been the consequences of his rash purpose."²⁸

After Nabal's death, Abigail married David²⁹ and later had a son called Kileab (2 Sam 3:3) or Daniel (1 Chron 3:1) with him. The blessing of motherhood was highly regarded in ancient Israel, so much so that childlessness was regarded as a curse (1 Sam 1). There is no record of children produced by Nabal and Abigail, but the narrator implies that Abigail was blessed in her relationship with David.

In the final analysis, it seems that Nabal and Abigail were remarkably mismatched: the shameless villain and the intelligent, beautiful wife. Nabal, who was introduced in terms of his possessions, perishes. Thus, he

regarded Abigail as one of the seven women who was endowed with the Spirit. See Levenson, 20.

²⁶Ibid., 19.

²⁷Klein, 251.

²⁸Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1958), 667. Cf. Prov 11:22, where a beautiful woman lacking in discretion is likened to gold in a swine's snout.

²⁹It is advanced by Fewell and Gunn, 193, that Abigail's earlier expression to "wash feet" is a subtle sexual offer of herself to David. In 2 Sam 11:8, David urged Uriah to go to his house to engage in sexual intercourse with Bathsheba, his wife. He says euphemistically "wash your feet." Further, the root *rgl* ("foot") is used as a euphemism for genitals in Ruth 3:4, 7; 2 Kgs 18:27 (Qere); Isa 7:20.

exits the story as all unwanted perishables do—he perishes. Abigail, who was introduced in terms of a lovely character and person, leaves the story with those qualities still intact, and with much more—a new marriage, a new life, and a child, the evidence of God’s blessing.

The Intertextuality of the Story

King Saul’s story is similar to both Nabal and David: he is foolish and impetuous. For example, he foolishly offered a burnt offering before the ill-fated battle with the Philistines (1 Sam 13:9-10). Further, he failed to carry out the divine mandate to destroy Agag king of the Amalekites and all of the Amalekites’ livestock (1 Sam 15:13-23). His revengeful attitude against David began because the women of Israel were chanting in favor of David more than for him (1 Sam 18:6-8).

Saul was great, but he was driven by folly. He was powerful, but unwise. Nabal was also rich and great, but not wise. He was driven by folly. Both ended ignominiously. Thus, the narratives associate evil and folly. David too, acting under revenge, almost did something regretful. If Abigail had not interceded, he would have committed a foolish act. It was her wisdom that protected him.

The Abigail story is placed between 1 Sam 24 and 26 to emphasize that wisdom is more powerful than greatness and riches, and is more to be desired. Abigail was not powerful, but she was wise. Not only did her wisdom save numerous lives and avert David’s malfesance; it also caught his affection, so that he provided her with his love and protection.

This story, contrary to the opinion of some writers, is one that highlights the connection between Saul’s demise and David’s rise to power. As Ralph W. Klein comments: “David’s marriage to Abigail . . . provides an important link to the Calebite clan of Judah and prepares the reader for David’s anointing in Hebron, the capital of the Calebite territory.”³⁰

Further, 1 Sam 25 is bracketed by the events of 1 Sam 24 and 26, which tell of David’s sparing of Saul’s life. In 1 Sam 24, he refused to act with vengeance and kill Saul. In 1 Sam 25, driven by revenge, he nearly did something foolish. With Abigail’s intervention, he came back to his senses by learning restraint, a quality needed for effective leadership.³¹ In 1 Sam 26, once more balanced, he refused again to kill Saul. Abigail became the balancing act between folly and evil, the quintessential epitome of wisdom.³²

³⁰Klein, 246, 247. Cf. Levenson, 25, 26.

³¹McCarter, 400-402.

³²1 Sam 25 also proleptically unveils an ominous side of David. His shedding of innocent

Summary and Conclusion

In this drama, Nabal and David represent Northrop Frye's description of the comic pair, who were operating from two poles: the *alazōn* ("the boaster or impostor") represented in the affluent but despicable Nabal and the *eirōn* ("self-deprecator") represented in the young, hot-headed David. Both were extreme and irrational in their behavior. The conduct of each could have had severe repercussions. However, between these two is the *alēthes* ("the truthful person"), played by Abigail. Nehama Aschkenasy notes that "this formula, too, seems to apply to the three actors in this small drama, with the men assuming the roles of the comic extremes . . . , while the woman represents the golden mean between these two antithetical forms of comic conduct."³³

Thus, Abigail is the moderating force, who "averts the clash of two extremes; and at the same time, she is also the wise teacher, who instructs and directs the man, and whose advice is taken."³⁴ The outstanding quality that Abigail exhibited was wisdom. Compared to Nabal, whose name "Fool" defined his character, she was wise and upright. Compared to David, who acted impetuously and was full of vengeful anger, she was composed, settled, and free of agitation. Unlike the host of unnamed women in Scripture,³⁵ Abigail was not a mere adjunct to her husband, understood only in the context of men's activities. As a wise and beautiful woman, she was the perfect foil for the harsh and foolish Nabal, who paralleled the foolish king Saul. Both died. Folly was extinguished; wisdom exalted. Abigail shone, while David and Nabal, both of whom acted rashly, receded to the background.³⁶ Abigail was the wise woman in a male-dominated, foolish world.

blood is his demise, as unmasked in his shameless murder of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11:1-12:25).

³³Aschkenasy, 175.

³⁴Ibid., 176.

³⁵Bird, 41.

³⁶Although she "helped in educating the young David and then managed to share in his faith by marrying him, Abigail now slips back to her feminine destiny of anonymity and marginal existence, and the biblical text, that has shifted momentarily from its main course, goes back to narrating the adventure of its central hero, David" (Aschkenasy, 177). In all subsequent passages, she is called Nabal's widow (27:3; 30:5; 2 Sam 2:2). Fewell and Gunn, 156, contend that "David's policy is to dissipate all power but his own. He will not have one wife but several. And no wife will be first in his house. He will keep his political options open and Abigail, whose options are now closing, will have to learn to live in their shadow."

MARTYRDOM AND RESURRECTION IN THE REVELATION TO JOHN¹

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Introduction

K. Wengst proposes that “in the book of Revelation, John does not speak about the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.”² Because his main goal is to discuss the political and historical background of the NT period rather than to give an interpretation of Revelation, Wengst interprets the suffering and death of the Lord as a triumphant resistance and opposition against the Roman emperors. He seems completely unaware of the resurrection metaphors in the book that could weaken his position.³ He is correct, however, when he points out that, according to Revelation, those who fought with violence and aggression are not the victors; they are the victims.

H. Giesen argues in a similar but less negative way: “The victory of the Lamb is not at first the resurrection but its death.”⁴ Thus, the primary goal of the Lamb metaphor is to encourage God’s people who are experiencing suffering and affliction by giving them a chance to identify with Christ,⁵ especially in his suffering, struggling, and resurrection. The

¹This article is derived from a paper presented during the third meeting of the “Department of Biblical Studies, Research Unit New Testament” at the Catholic University Leuven on January 18, 2001. I would like to thank the members of the department for their questions, and my colleagues Maria Duffy and Katrin Hauspie for reading my article for publication. A German version was published under the title “. . . und sie werden Priester Gottes und des Messias sein; und sie werden König sein mit ihm—tausend Jahre lang.” (Offb 20,6). *Martyrium und Auferstehung in der Offenbarung (SNTU Ser.A 26 [2001]: 139-163)*. Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from NRSV.

²K. Wengst, *Pax Romana. Anspruch und Wirklichkeit* (München: Kaiser, 1986), 159. Wengst notes: “Johannes redet nirgends davon, daß Jesus auferweckt oder erhöht worden, daß er auferstanden sei.”

³The different approaches and methods to the interpretation of Scripture are always incomplete. No one method can comprehend the whole message of a text.

⁴H. Giesen states: “Der Sieg des Lammes besteht somit nicht in erster Linie in der Auferstehung, sondern vor allem in seinem Tod” (“Erlösung im Horizont einer verfolgten Gemeinde. Das Verständnis von Erlösung in der Offenbarung des Johannes,” in *Glaube und Handeln*, hrg., H. Giesen, Bd. 2, Europäische Hochschulstudien. Theologie, 23/215 [Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1983], 43-56, esp. 50).

⁵Cf. N. Baumert, who emphasizes this main goal (*Ein Ruf zur Entscheidung. Aufbau und Botschaft der Offenbarung des Johannes*, in *Die Freude an Gott—unsere Kraft*, ed. J. J. Degenhard

slaughtered Lamb is more than a triumphant and miraculous metaphor; it is a sign of victory for those who suffer.

*Terminology of Resurrection and
Salvation in Revelation*

John addresses the topic of resurrection with different, unusual, and, at times, singular expressions. The first mention is found in a key theological passage in 1:4-8, with John returning to the topic several times.

Revelation 1:4-8: Christ, the
Firstborn of the Dead

The phrase ὁ πρωτότοκος τῶν νεκρῶν (“firstborn of the dead”),⁶ a hapaxlegomenal phrase, is derived from Ps 88:28 (LXX): “Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.” Furthermore, the first words spoken by Christ in the book of Revelation introduce him as the risen Lord (1:18). These passages underscore the importance of resurrection in Revelation.

There is in Rev 1:5 a close connection between the resurrection of Christ, his love for Christians, and their salvation from sins through his blood. Thus, the first time resurrection is mentioned in Revelation, it is combined with the idea of salvation, thereby providing the hermeneutical key for understanding the concept of salvation in the book.⁷ The typical NT combination of resurrection with promises of the kingdom and the priesthood of believers occurs prominently at the beginning of the book.

[Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991], 197-210). The identification of Christians with the suffering Lord is drawn by A. Satake, “Christologie in der Johannesapokalypse im Zusammenhang mit dem Problem des Leidens der Christen,” in *Anfänge der Christologie*, ed. C. Breytenbach and H. Paulsen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1991), 307-322.

⁶Cf. πρωτότοκος, Col 1:18, where there is a combining of ἀρχή and πρωτότοκος (ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή, πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν); and Heb 12:23.

⁷The hermeneutical key for the historical background of Revelation can be found in the seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor—therefore, the theological and soteriological key is 1:4-7, particularly v. 5, which consists of two parts: the christological basis and the soteriological consequence. Cf. E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott. Studien zum Herrschafts- und Priestermotiv in der Apokalypse*, NtAbh.NF, 7 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1972) 155-166. The love of Christ, his act of liberating believers from their sins, and their transformation into a kingdom and priesthood has its cause in Christ’s resurrection, which is a faithful sign of his witness and ruling position over the kings of the earth. Cf. J. Ramsey Michaels, who interprets Rev 1:10 as a key for the whole text (“Revelation 1.9 and the Narrative Voices of the Apocalypse,” *NTS* 37 [1991]: 604-620).

Revelation 1:9-20: "The Living One"
Who "Was Dead"

It is not surprising that resurrection is also combined with the vocation of John.⁸ The "encounter narrative" between John and the Lord, and John's calling as a prophet are expressed by John's double-take in response to meeting the risen Lord (1:12; "I turned to see . . . , on turning I saw"). The same verb, στρέφω, is used in the Gospel of John to describe Mary Magdalene's reaction to encountering Jesus after his resurrection (John 20:14, 16).⁹ D. Pezzoli-Olgiate interprets this double turning as a condition for attaining another viewpoint of the risen Lord.¹⁰

Thus, before John receives a prophetic message for the seven churches in Asia Minor, he encounters the risen Lord. His reaction of fear and falling before Christ and the Lord's response to him—"Do not be afraid" (e.g., Jer 1:8; Ezek 2:6; Ruth 3:11; Luke 1:13, 30)—are typical elements of a vocation narrative,¹¹ which is here combined with the experience of resurrection.

In these first words spoken by the Lord in Revelation, Christ is revealed as "the living one" who "was dead" but is now "alive forever" and who has "the keys of death and Hades" (1:18; cf. Isa 22:22).¹² Thus, Christ draws attention to his divinity by speaking of his resurrection.¹³

John's encounter with the risen Lord is closely connected to his situation as a prisoner on the island of Patmos. As he shares in "the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance" on account of "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (1:9), he can draw a correlation between his own experience as a persecuted servant of Christ, and that of the persecuted church of Asia Minor. He identifies himself

⁸The best example is that of the conversion of Paul in Acts 9:1-22; 22:5-16; 26:12-18; see also the narrative of Mary Magdalene at the tomb of Jesus (John 20:1-18).

⁹D. Pezzoli-Olgiate, *Täuschung und Klarheit. Zu Wechselwirkung zwischen Vision und Geschichte in der Johannesoffenbarung*, FRLANT, 175 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1997), 27-29.

¹⁰Ibid., 15.

¹¹For further discussion of scriptural vocation narratives, see G. Fischer and M. Hasitschka, *The Call of the Disciple: The Bible on Following Christ*, trans. M. J. O'Connell (New York: Paulist Press, 1999).

¹²G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 215.

¹³For further reference to the presence of Jesus Christ in Revelation, see J. L. Resseguie, *Revelation Unsealed: A Narrative Critical Approach to John's Apocalypse*, Biblical Interpretation Series, 32 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 111-116; see esp. reference to the Lamb, 113).

with these churches, calling himself a brother and companion.¹⁴ He lives in the same isolation as those Christians who made firm decisions against the Roman Emperor cult (cf. the church of Smyrna, Rev 2:8-11). Thus, John does not use the idea of resurrection as a means of escape from reality, but rather as a reason to rejoice in suffering as Christians follow the example of Christ.

Revelation 2:8: “The Words of the First and Last, Who Died and Came to Life”

The introduction in the letter to the church of Smyrna, “the words of the first and the last, who died and came to life” (2:8), is meant to show correspondence between the suffering and death of Christ and those believers who were also suffering affliction, poverty, slander, and a fear of imprisonment. The Christians in this city especially needed the support that this message of resurrection brought. John asks them to be faithful until death so that they will receive the crown of life (v.10)—another metaphor for resurrection in Revelation. Thus, life (ζωή) in the Johannine sense is closely linked to resurrection. It has an eternal aspect. Verse 11 makes this clear when it expresses hope in not being harmed by the second death. The combination of the motifs of suffering, death, resurrection, and life are typical of Revelation.¹⁵

Revelation 5:6, 9, 10, 12: A Lamb Standing As If It Had Been Slaughtered, Having Seven Horns and Seven Eyes

The Lamb (ἀρνίου) is one of the most remarkable christological titles in Revelation. It occurs 28 times, stressing the humanity of Christ and providing an example of nonviolent resistance and almighty power.¹⁶ In addition, these 28 quotations symbolically point toward the complete and worldwide victory of the Lamb.¹⁷ The OT background of exodus and delivery from slavery in Egypt is echoed in Revelation, where the Lamb is a symbol of deliverance from the evils of Satan and a sign of participation in God’s kingdom.

¹⁴Note the link to 6:11: οἱ σύνδουλοι αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτῶν.

¹⁵Cf. esp. Rev 2:8-11; 20:4-6.

¹⁶L. L. Johns emphasizes the stance of nonviolent resistance (*The Lamb in the Rhetorical Program of the Apocalypse of John*, in *SBLSPS* 37 [1998]: 762-784); and M. Carrez, who underlines the victory of the Lamb in the narrative development in Revelation (“Le déploiement de la christologie de l’Agneau dans l’Apocalypse,” *RPR* 79 [1999]: 5-17).

¹⁷Resseguie, 113, emphasizes only the humanity of the Lamb. But the metaphor in Rev 5:6-9 also contains the aspects of the Lamb who was slaughtered and resurrected.

This message is prefaced in the previous verse with the introduction of the “Lion of the tribe of Judah” and the King David metaphors (Rev 5:5), which are symbols of power and victory.¹⁸ Taken from the OT (Gen 49:9; Isa 11:1, 10), they serve as messianic metaphors in the targumic and other Jewish Scriptures as well,¹⁹ and underscore the christological title of the Lamb.

The opposite metaphor of the beast is important in this context. The beast is described as having “one of his heads as if it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed” (Rev 13:3, 12). In keeping with John’s dualistic thinking, it is not surprising that he also uses the characterization of the beast being slaughtered and healed to show the contrast between it and the Lamb—the mortal wound of the beast was healed (ἐθεραπεύθη). The verb θεραπεύω is never used in the NT for resurrection; generally it refers to healing from illness. Therefore, the difference between the risen Lamb and the healed beast is obvious—reconciliation, salvation, and resurrection are dependent on the death of the Lamb.

Thus, the concept of “resurrection,” which is further developed in the first vision of Revelation, is closely related to liturgy²⁰—kingdom and priesthood, liberation, and salvation. The fact that resurrection is not concealed in a less important pericope but is present in the opening vision of Revelation, provides a key hermeneutical function for the vision narratives.

Revelation 6:9-11: Under the Altar, the Souls of Those Who Had Been Slaughtered

Resurrection terminology is only alluded to in this pericope, where the souls beneath the altar ask how long they must endure until God’s judgment. The concept of resurrection is present in the verb κρίνει (“to judge, pass judgment on”). The verb κρίνω and its accompanying nouns occur in connection with God’s judgment and salvation in Revelation.²¹ The combination of this motif of suffering with the indictment of 18:24 makes clear the need for judgment: “and in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.” The same verb, σφάζω (“to slaughter, to put to death”), is used to describe Christians (6:9), the suffering Lamb of God (5:6, 9; 13:8), and the

¹⁸For reference to this paradoxical connection, see M. Hasitschka, “Überwunden hat der Löwe aus dem Stamm Juda” (Offb 5,5). Funktion und Herkunft des Bildes vom Lamm in der Offenbarung des Johannes,” *ZKT* 116 (1994): 487-493.

¹⁹Beale, 349, refers to Targ. Neof. and Targ. Ps.-J. of Gen 49:9-12 and Midr. Tanhuma Gen 12:12: Midr. Rag Gen 97:4.

²⁰For the hymns of the heavenly liturgy in Rev 4 and 5, see J.-P. Ruiz, “Revelation 4:8-11; 5:9-14: Hymns of the Heavenly Liturgy,” *SBLSP* 34 (1995): 216-220.

²¹Cf. 6:10; 14:7; 16:7; 17:1; 18:8, 10, 20; 19:2, 11; 20:4.

slaughtered beast (13:3, the opposite metaphor of the Lamb).

Resurrection is also mentioned in 6:11. First, it contains another symbol of salvation, the white robe (στολή λευκή) that covers Christians (cf. especially the wedding clothes, 19:7-9) as a sign of their righteous deeds. Second, the suffering Christians are advised to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and martyred brothers and sisters is complete. This time limit can be found elsewhere in Revelation and it is always a sign of hope (e.g., 2:10; 11:3, 9, 11; 12:6).

Revelation 20:4, 5, 6: Resurrection for Whom?

The two most important themes of Rev 20:1-6 are “rule” or “reign” (vv. 4, 6) and “life” (vv. 4-5). First, in regard to “rule,” Rev 20:1-6 is closely linked with Rev 12:7-11.²² The close connection between resurrection and judgment against Satan (20:1-3) on behalf of God’s people can be seen in 20:4 (κρίμα ἐδόθη).²³

Second, in regard to “life,” Rev 12:5 refers to God’s protection of his son, while 20:4-6 points to the resurrection of believers. Closely linked with Rev 20:4-6 is the imagery of resurrection as a giving back (ἔδωκεν) of the dead from the sea (ἡ θάλασσα), from death (ὁ θάνατος), and from Hades (ὁ ᾗδης).²⁴ The connection between resurrection and judgment (cf. 20:12, ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ; 20:13, ἐκρίθησαν) cannot be overlooked in this pericope.²⁵

Revelation 21:4: Death Will Be No More

The function of the final visions of the heavenly Jerusalem, prepared as a bride²⁶ for her bridegroom coming down from heaven, is to underline the main goal of Revelation—the exhortation and encouragement of God’s people to remain faithful in following the Lamb’s paradoxical

²²For a discussion of the genre of Rev 20:1-6, see V. Sheridan Poythress, “Genre and Hermeneutics in Rev 20:1-6,” *JETS* 36 (1993): 41-54.

²³It is not clear who those sitting on the throne are. The different interpretations that have been proposed include martyrs, God’s people, the angelic court, and exalted believers along with angels (Beale, 996).

²⁴The combination ὁ θάνατος . . . ὁ ᾗδης (20:13) also occurs in 1:18; 6:8; 20:14.

²⁵R. Bauckham, “Resurrection as Giving Back the Dead,” in *The Fate of the Dead: Studies on the Jewish and Christian Apocalypses*, ed. R. Bauckham (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 269-289.

²⁶Cf. U. Sim, who presents the idea of a city in ancient times (*Das himmlische Jerusalem in Apk 21,1-22,5 im Kontext biblisch-jüdischer Tradition und antiken Städtebaus*, Bochumer Altertumswissenschaftliches Colloquium, 25 [Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1996]); and P. Söllner, *Jerusalem, die hochgebaute Stadt. Eschatologisches und Himmlisches Jerusalem im Frühjudentum und im frühen Christentum*, TANZ, 25 (Tübingen: Francke, 1998).

example. The description of the city as holy points to the relationship between God and his people, while the symbolism of the city as a beautiful bride highlights an aspect of purity and love.²⁷

Wengst emphasizes the close comparison between the holy Jerusalem and the whore Babylon. The same metaphors are used to describe the heritage of violence associated with Babylon and the promises of salvation found in Scripture. From his political point of view, Wengst criticizes this use of common imagery, positing that salvation, if understood from such a perspective, would be only an exchange of victors and losers—both groups desiring to attain ultimate power.²⁸ Wengst's observation is correct—there are similarities between the visions of Babylon and Jerusalem. In addition, the limitation of human expectation of salvation is also noticeable in Revelation. However, Wengst denies the presence of resurrection terminology in the book.²⁹

The metaphor of the suffering and slaughtered Lamb especially draws attention to another reality of life and salvation: avoiding might, power, and hostility is the most significant Christian sign of salvation. Thus, while the vision of the holy Jerusalem is limited in regard to what it tells us of salvation, it does emphasize the message that finally there will be no more death, mourning, crying, or pain (cf. 7:17).³⁰ The end of death, which is not exclusive to a specific group, underlines the hope for resurrection.

Resurrection and Salvation: Christians as Priests and Kings

The most important text for Christians concerning the kingdom and priesthood is Rev 20:6. However, this verse must be interpreted in the context of 1:5-6 and 5:9-10. Additionally, the OT background for priesthood is found in Isa 61:6-10, which is also important for understanding the meaning of the wedding clothes in Rev 19:7-8 (cf. Isa 61:10, MT).³¹

²⁷Pezzoli-Oligati, 166f.

²⁸Wengst, 161f.

²⁹Ibid., 159.

³⁰The opposite reality is depicted by the whore Babylon (cf. 18:7-8), which is a symbol of infidelity, distrust, and disbelief, as well as the connection between the love of riches, power, and unauthentic communication. This is true not only of Babylon, but also of all those who are associated with her. Cf. J. Ellul, *Apocalypse: The Book of Revelation* (New York: Seabury, 1977), 190f.

³¹Beale, 938. F. J. Murphy refers to Exod 19:6 as OT background. According to his thesis, priests are the part of humanity that is fit to come into God's presence, and thus they are the locus of God's effective sovereignty in the world (*Fallen is Babylon: The Revelation to John*, The New Testament in Context [Harrisburg: Trinity, 1998], 399ff.).

E. Schüssler-Fiorenza³² notes that the priesthood according to Isa 61:6 does not contain a relation to JHWH and his ministry, although she underlines the cultic meaning of $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\upsilon\rho\gamma\omicron\iota\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$. Rather, she interprets the priesthood in Isa 61:6 in connection with the privileged position of Israel among the nations and the “pilgrimage of peoples towards Jerusalem.”³³

I cannot agree with this position. A contextual interpretation of Isa 61:6-10 clearly shows the ministry dimension of priesthood. Schüssler-Fiorenza does not account for the fact that the initiative of the bridegroom is described as that of a priest (יכהן) and that his response is due to his joy in God. Verse 10, which contains three parallelisms, demonstrates this. The first two parallels refer to joy in God (שוש אשיש ביהוה חגל נפשי באלהי), with the second giving two reasons for this (both introduced by כי): God clothes the recipient of liberation with garments of salvation and covers him with the robe of righteousness (הלבישני בנדרי־ישעמעיל צדקה ועטני). Thus, the priesthood according to Isaiah means, first, joy in God in response to his prearranged salvation from injustice and wickedness (cf. the primary commandment in Isa 56:1: שמרו משפט ועשו צדקה). The priesthood is developed from and has a primary function of the idea of relationship toward God. The clothes mentioned in this context are a visible symbolic expression of received salvation and the righteousness of God.³⁴ The last parallel (in 61:10) compares the joy found in God to being adorned with ornaments and jewels as a bride and bridegroom (וכבלה חתונה כליה). The action of the bridegroom, along with the ornamentation of the bride and bridegroom, are expressed in priestly terms (יכהן פאר; see also משרתי אלהינו [Isa 61:6] MT; $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\upsilon\rho\gamma\omicron\iota\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$, LXX).³⁵

³²Schüssler-Fiorenza, 158, states: “Das Priestertum Israels wird in der Verheißung Tritojesajas also nicht in bezug auf Jahwe und seinen Dienst gesehen, sondern hinsichtlich seiner privilegierten Stellung innerhalb der Völkerwelt herausgestellt.” There is an inconsistency in her interpretation. On the one hand, she underlines the use of cultic terminology, but, on the other hand, avoids the priestly motive for serving God.

³³Ibid., 160-166.

³⁴Rev 5:10 provides an important argument for connecting the priesthood with joyous service to God. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders praise God with a new song in recognition that the Lamb has made them to be a kingdom and priests. Beale, 312f, refers to this vision as a “heavenly liturgy and pattern for the Church’s liturgy” because it incorporates significant elements from both Jewish and Christian backgrounds. Thus, in addition to Isa 61:6-10, these two pericopes help to provide the background for the interpretation of Rev 20:6.

³⁵Cf. U. Berges, who refers to יכהן פאר (*Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt*, HBS, 16 [Freiburg, Herder, 1998], 454). He states: “Hier ist die Vorstellung von einer ‘priesterlichen’ Zukunft (61,4-9) mit der zukünftigen Hochzeitsfreude (62,4-5) verbunden worden. [. . .] Es ist das Stichwort ‘Turban’, das sowohl den Gegensatz von Freude und Trauer (61,3; vgl. Jes 3,20; Ez 24,17.23) als auch die priesterliche Kleidung kennzeichnet (Ex 39,28; Ez 44,18), womit alle Belege

This ministry dimension of priesthood is also found in the quotation of ἱερείς (“priests”) in Rev 1:6.³⁶ The goal of the kingdom and priesthood is to reflect the glory and dominion of God (cf. Rev 1:6: αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων] ἀμήν).

According to Revelation, the idea of priesthood, in which those who are priests serve in God’s presence, is contrasted with those who suffer the second death and will, thus, be isolated from God forever (cf. 20:10, 14-15; 21:3, 7-8; 22:14-15). Priesthood also indicates a further participation on the part of believers (cf. 1:6: ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς; 5:9: ἠγόρασας τῷ θεῷ; 20:6: ὁ ἔχων μέρος) in Christ, in his love (1:5), slaughtering, and passion (5:9), and in his resurrection (20:6) in order to receive liberation from sin (1:5). Thus, the final goal of the priesthood is life in God (5:9: ἠγόρασας τῷ θεῷ), which is expressed by adoration and praise (5:9: ᾄδουσιν ᾠδὴν καινὴν).³⁷ Christians share in the life of the Lord through baptism (the theological key verse³⁸

in der hebräischen Bibel genannt sind. In 61,10 sind beide Verwendungsbereiche kombiniert: Zions Wandlung von Trauer zur Freude (61,1-3) drückt sich darin aus, daß sie ‘priestergleich’ (*M. Buber*) den Turban trägt und wie die Braut ihr Geschmeide anlegt.”

³⁶Schüssler-Fiorenza, 227, comes to the conclusion that “eine weitere, theologisch-inhaltliche Bestimmung des Begriffes ist jedoch vom Kontext der Apk her nicht möglich.” The term ἱερείς (“priests”) serves only as a title for Christians in Revelation. Thus, it is not defined in relation to the three relevant pericopes containing ἱερείς discussed above; nor does Revelation speak about the priestly function of Christians. “Doch sind diese [gottesdienstlichen Handlungen und Funktionen] immer himmlischer oder eschatologischer Art und können daher nicht von den irdischen Christen, den ἱερείς, vollzogen werden” (*ibid*, 228). An important argument against this eschatological interpretation of priesthood is the use of the past tense in 1:6 (ἐποίησεν) and in 5:10 (ἐποίησας). Only 20:6 has the future aspect in connection with priesthood (ἔσονται). Furthermore, the heavenly scenes reflect actions on earth—the battles between good and evil and the adoration of God.

³⁷See the hymns of Revelation, which interrupt the action on earth, i.e., the fight between good and evil. They have the capacity of being “show-stoppers” (cf. J. W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative*, JSOTSupp, 139 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1992], 187). For a discussion of the function of hymns in Revelation, see K.-P. Jörns, *Das hymnische Evangelium. Untersuchungen zu Aufbau, Funktion und Herkunft der hymnischen Stücke in der Johannesoffenbarung*, StNT, 5 (Gütersloh, Mohn 1971). Wengst, 166, comes to the conclusion that the prayer service is an exercise to celebrate resistance. For the political aspect of these hymns, see R. S. Smith, “Worthy is the Lamb” and Other Songs of Revelation,” *CibMi* 25 (1998): 500-506. R. P. Stevens finds that contemplation is a main goal in Revelation (“Poems for People in Distress: The Apocalypse of John and the Contemplative Life,” *Them* 18 [1993]: 11-14); also J. A. Du Rand, who points out that the hymns have the function of interpretative commentaries. Revelation is, thus, a good example for seeing the link between contemplation and politics (“Now the Salvation of Our God Has Come. . .” A Narrative Perspective on the Hymns in Revelation 12-15,” *Neotest* 27 [1993]: 313-350).

³⁸Giesen, 56. Salvation contains two aspects: the individual liberation from sins, and the universal aspect of ransom of all people and nations for God.

of Revelation [1:5-6] is a baptismal formula³⁹).

The second promise of salvation in this section is that of the realization of the kingdom and the reign of the saved for a thousand years. The meaning of king/reign/reigning has a positive meaning when it is combined with God, Christ (1:9; 11:15; 12:10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:16), and the eternal life of Christians (1:6; 5:10; 20:6; 22:5). By contrast, the earthly kings mentioned here are described with the same metaphor, but with negative aspects;⁴⁰ thus, their reign is limited. There is no indication that Christians will reign during their earthly life. Rather, reigning is closely linked with Christ (22:5). His kingdom does not include hypocrisy.⁴¹ Nowhere in Revelation is the reign of Christians connected with self-righteous judging.⁴² Justice is reserved for God alone (cf. 15:3; 16:5-7; 19:2.11). Salvation, the life of Christ, and redemption are what transform Christians into a kingdom and priesthood.

Conclusion

K. Wengst's thesis that there is an absence of resurrection language in Revelation has been found to be untrue. Rather, John spoke frequently about the resurrection of Jesus Christ, although he generally did not use traditional NT terminology. The typical word for resurrection in the NT, *ἀνάστασις*, appears only twice in Revelation in combination with *πρώτη* (Rev 20:5-6: *ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη*). John used other terms for this topic because in his communication with the seven churches he wanted to relate the concept of resurrection to the local (and often persecutory) situations of his addressees.

Further, the concept of resurrection in Revelation means participation in God's kingdom and priesthood. The OT background for priesthood is the book of Isaiah, which develops its general meaning—joy in God, which is a direct result of a close and bidirectional relationship not limited to a special group of persons, but available to all who will accept the invitation of Rev 22:17 (NIV): "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."

Finally, resurrection is a sign of God's justice for those who believe in him. God will also render justice upon those who have persecuted his chosen ones by giving them the second death and banishing them from his presence.

³⁹Schüssler-Fiorenza, 212-236.

⁴⁰Cf. 6:15; 9:11; 10:11; 16:10, 12, 14; 17:2, 9, 12, 17, 18; 18:3-9; 19:18-19 (21:24 has a positive aspect).

⁴¹Giesen, 55.

⁴²In Revelation, sitting on the throne points to an aspect of judgment also found in Matt 19:28 and Luke 22:30. In the Synoptics, judgment is related to service (cf. Luke 22:27) and following Jesus' example of poverty (Matt 19:23-26). The same connection can be found in Revelation—only the confessors sit on the throne as judges.

EVOLUTION, THEOLOGY, AND METHOD PART 1: OUTLINE AND LIMITS OF SCIENTIFIC METHODOLOGY

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Introduction

During the last 150 years, evolutionary theory has become the standard theoretical explanation for the origins of life and the center of a new cosmology that other sciences dogmatically assume when developing research methods and interpretations of reality. Christian theology, as a scientific enterprise, is no exception to this rule. Evolution dismisses divine creation as nonscientific myth. To avoid this charge, theologians have proposed various versions of theistic evolution and harmonization. Thus, the challenge theologians must contend with is whether the only choices available to them are mythological faith or scientific truth. Further, it is necessary to consider whether a belief in creation necessarily entails a sacrifice of the intellect.

The creation-evolution debate, including the theological attempt at harmonization, generally takes place at the level of conclusion without taking into account the nature of the processes through which theologians and scientists arrive at their respective beliefs. This indicates that the problem is not about faith (i.e., religious experience) and science, but about the differences between two scientific enterprises—Christian theology and the empirical sciences. The process through which science arrives at its conclusions is complex. This article will attempt to present a brief discussion of the main structures and characteristics of science and theology in order to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue and to help the church gain a realistic perspective of the present intellectual situation.

Therefore, this article will not be an analysis of the teachings of evolution and creation, but rather the rational processes that led to their formulations.¹ My goals in part 1 of this series are to examine how human beings arrive at conclusions and at truth and to examine in what way the Bible serves as the foundation of truth.² This will be done by providing

¹This approach belongs to philosophical research in the area of epistemology and hermeneutics.

²These questions were suggested to me by the organizing committee of the *International Faith and Science Conference* sponsored by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ogden, Utah, August 23-29, 2002.

an introduction to the complex matrix of human rationality and the scientific method involved in the conception and formulation of theological and scientific teachings.

I will assess the relationship between evolution and theology from a methodological perspective by outlining the rational basis and structure of the scientific method. This will be done in several steps. First, in part 1, we will examine the pattern through which knowledge is generated and the general structure of method. On this basis, we will reflect on the need to demythologize science. Next, we will analyze the basic outline of the empirical scientific method and consider its outcomes. Finally, we will examine some postmodern criticisms to scientific methodology. In part 2, I will explore the role that the scientific method plays in the construction of evolutionary theory. Part 3 will address the relationship between evolution and theology.

Relational Pattern in Knowledge Formation

We will begin by analyzing the process through which theological and scientific ideas are formed. Thus, we must examine how human reason functions.³ We are used to thinking about concrete objects that we see or imagine through constructive models. However, there is another element in the process of thought—what we do when we think, i.e., how we come to understand something. Scientific and theological methods are founded on particular approaches to and definitions of understanding. Thus, it is necessary to understand how scientists and theologians come to a particular methodological approach to knowledge (reason).

Reason as Subject-Object Relationship

All cognitive activities spring from the subject-object relationship, which functions as the foundational cognitive unit. Because knowledge always takes place as a subject-object relationship, this structural unit is at the heart of experience formation.⁴ Experience, then, takes place between a cognitive subject (human being) and a cognitive object (whatever falls within the intentional consciousness of human beings). Because both theological and scientific knowledge fall within the realm of experience, they take place within this unit. Further, these types of knowledge are formalized, i.e., carefully organized, which helps to differentiate these

³I use the term “reason” in a wide sense to include all human cognitive activities.

⁴Nicolai Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1941), 1.5.a.1; 5.1.1.a; see also Fernando Luis Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 10 (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1983), 27-34.

types of knowledge from common knowledge. The process of knowledge, then, takes place when the human mind directs itself to an object.

The Levels of Operation of Reason

In the generation of human knowledge, the subject-object pattern of reason operates in three distinct but interdependent levels: sensory perception, the intellect, and reasoning.⁵ Sensory perception allows for information to be received from realities outside the human mind. The intellect then forms from this information general concepts that allow humans to be able to communicate. Reasoning searches for unity and coherence among all information received and conceptualizations produced by the previous two operations. The scientific method builds on these basic rational operations, which are the basis of observation, testability (sensory perception), generalizations, hypothesis, law (intellect), and theory (reasoning).

Immanuel Kant described the organizing drive of human reason (third operation). He argued that notions and concepts are organized around three guiding centers or ideas. From lesser to greater reach, they are human nature, the world, and God.⁶ Kant describes the function of these ideas as “regulative.”⁷ These “regulative” ideas arrange cognitions “into a system, that is to say, to give them connection according to a principle. This unity presupposes an idea—the idea of the form of a whole (of cognition), preceding the determinate cognition of the parts, and containing the conditions which determine à priori to every part its place and relation to the other parts of the whole system.”⁸

What Kant called “regulative” ideas, i.e., the ideas of human being, world, and God, I designate macro-hermeneutical presuppositions.⁹ Kant

⁵Aristotle and Kant recognized these levels, but interpreted them in different ways. Aristotle’s views are known as intellectualism and were used by classical philosophers and theologians; see *Posterior Analytics*, II, 19; and *Metaphysics* I, 9. Kant’s views, known as transcendental idealism, became influential in modern times. He believed that “all our knowledge begins with sense, proceeds thence to understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which nothing higher can be discovered in the human mind for elaborating the matter of intuition and subjecting it to the highest unity of thought” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn [Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1990], 189).

⁶Kant, 209, states: “It follows that all transcendental ideas arrange themselves in three classes, the first of which contains the absolute (unconditioned) unity of the thinking subject, the second the absolute unity of the series of the conditions of a phenomenon, the third the absolute unity of the condition of all objects of thought in general.”

⁷*Ibid.*, 360.

⁸*Ibid.*, 361.

⁹Hans Küng divides the field of theological interpretation into three separate categories: macro- (the study and classification of philosophical issues”), meso- (issue or doctrinal

was correct in his identification of the ideas and their unifying and systematic roles in human reasoning. Due to his modern context, however, Kant was not able to perceive that these ideas can be interpreted in different ways and therefore can render different results when applied as regulative principles. In other words, different interpretations of these ideas will produce different rational arrangements of the systematic whole of human knowledge.

Modernity and Objective Reason

Throughout history, philosophers have debated about how the relative function of the subject and object should be understood. Classical and modern scientific thinking gave priority to the object by assuming that the subject passively receives input from its objects. This emphasis defined the notion of scientific objectivity as excluding all contributions from the cognitive subject.

Richard Rorty describes the classical and modern interpretations of the functioning of scientific knowledge as foundationalism, the notion that the truth of our propositions is determined by "privileged relations to objects those propositions are about." Thus, truth is solely determined by "compulsion from the object known."¹⁰ The myth of science, as rendering absolute certain knowledge, builds on the foundationalist understanding of knowledge.¹¹ On the other hand, German idealism went to the other side, giving maximum priority to the thinking subject, who is supposed to create its own objects of thinking.

However, postmodernity has brought significant changes in definition to the subject-object relation. During the twentieth century, developments in philosophical hermeneutics¹² and the philosophy of science showed that all

interpretation"), and micro- (textual interpretation) models (*Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View*, trans. Peter Heinegg [New York: Doubleday, 1988], 134).

¹⁰Richard Rorty, *The Mirror of Nature*, 2d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 159.

¹¹For the "myth" of science, see "Demythologizing Science" below.

¹²"Philosophical Hermeneutics" is the term for the philosophical discipline which studies the human phenomenon of interpretation. Hermeneutics is closely related to epistemology in that both study the way human knowledge (reason) functions. The disciplinary difference between the two seems to be related to their objects. The former studies how we understand historical phenomena. The latter studies how we understand natural phenomena. For an introduction to the historical development of philosophical hermeneutics, see Raúl Kerbs, "Sobre el desarrollo de la hermenéutica," *Analogía Filosófica*, 2 (1999): 3-33. For an introduction to the issues studied by philosophical hermeneutics, see Josef Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); and Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical*

knowledge results from contributions made by both the object and the subject,¹³ both of which perform active and passive roles.

The debate between classical-modern and hermeneutical approaches over the action of the subject and object is particularly notable in regard to the creation-evolution debate. Those who continue to assume the classical-modern notion of objectivity have been profoundly challenged by the development of postmodern philosophical hermeneutics.

Postmodernity and Hermeneutical Reason

Hermeneutical reason can be summarized as “to know is to interpret.”¹⁴ Contrary to common belief, this does not mean total relativism, but only the reinterpretation of the meaning of objectivity. Even though hermeneutical reason recognizes the input from the subject’s prior experience in the formation of knowledge, it also recognizes the decisive contribution of the real object to which the subject’s mind is addressed.

In correspondence with the subject-object relation discussed above, classical-modern objectivism assumes the existence of an “absolute universal truth” independent from the subject’s contribution. The hermeneutical approach, by way of contrast, allows for conflicting interpretations of knowledge. Therefore, because human reason produces conflicting interpretations, the hermeneutical approach is better able to deal with the problem of the subject-object pattern of knowledge formation than the classical-modern approach.

Conflict of Rational Interpretations

By making the rationality of conflicting interpretations possible, this epoch-making shift does not solve the creation-evolution debate, but

Hermeneutics, trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

¹³See, for instance, Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2d rev. ed. (New York: Continuum, 1989); and Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*, 3d ed. (London: Verso, 1993), 51.

¹⁴David Tracy explains the universality of interpretation in the following way: “Interpretation seems a minor matter, but it is not. Every time we act, deliberate, judge, understand, or even experience, we are interpreting. To understand at all is to interpret. To act well is to interpret a situation demanding some action and to interpret a correct strategy for that action. To experience in other than a purely passive sense (a sense less than human) is to interpret; and to be ‘experienced’ is to have become a good interpreter. Interpretation is thus a question as unavoidable, finally, as experience, understanding, deliberation, judgment, decision, and action. To be human is to act reflectively, to decide deliberately, to understand intelligently, to experience fully. Whether we know it or not, to be human is to be a skilled interpreter” (*Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987], 9).

places it on different footing. The classical-modern view of reason excludes the possibility of conflicting rational interpretations; only one rational explanation is possible. Classical and modern guidelines, which are generally assumed in the creation-evolution debate, force contenders to dismiss the opposing view as rationally impossible. This is because, as discussed above, the postmodern hermeneutical view of knowledge formation allows for the existence of more than one rational explanation of the same issue thereby creating a conflict of interpretations not preempted by rational demands. This does not, however, imply that both conclusions are "true." Thus, objectivity still reigns in postmodern hermeneutical reason. While conflicting interpretations are not ruled out as "irrational," the assumption is that only one can be true. Recognizing the limitations and historical dynamic of the process of knowledge formation, hermeneutical reason admits that it is not always possible to identify the "true" interpretation. Postmodern hermeneutics does not force contenders to dismiss opposing views as rationally impossible. Thus, theologians are not forced to seek harmonization between creation and evolution on rational grounds. Therefore, method might be able to achieve what cognitive capabilities cannot. It may be possible that the correct scientific approach will produce enough certitude to help theologians decide between creation and evolution.

What is Method?

Before turning to theological and scientific methodology, an acquaintance with the inner structure of method in general is needed.¹⁵ This will help to organize our thoughts on theological and scientific methodologies and to retrieve relevant information from studies in the fields of epistemology,¹⁶ the philosophy of science,¹⁷ and theological prolegomena relevant to the creation-evolution debate. These studies assume the existence of science and attempt to describe its function and to evaluate its grounds and claims.¹⁸

José Ferrater Mora suggests that method "follow[s] a certain 'way,'

¹⁵For a brief introduction to the notion of method, see my "Interdisciplinary Method in Christian Theology? In Search of a Working Proposal," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 43 (2001): 366-389.

¹⁶"Epistemology" is the name of the discipline that studies the foundations on which scientific knowledge builds. For an introduction to epistemology, see Rorty.

¹⁷"Philosophy of Science" is the name of the philosophical discipline that studies the disciplinary matrix of scientific activities. This discipline includes a general approach to science, as well as specific approaches to each discipline.

¹⁸This approach was pioneered by Immanuel Kant late in the eighteenth century. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he studied the claims of mathematics, physics, and metaphysics.

ὁδός, in order to reach a certain goal.”¹⁹ This general and simple description uncovers one of the most distinctive characteristics of method: action. If method is the path we follow in order to reach a goal, its essential characteristic is activity.²⁰ As activity, method is repetitive and has conditions. Thus, repetition is essential to the notion of method and repeated experimentation using the same method should render similar results. Less recognized, however, is the fact that conditions are also essential to the notion of method. Thus, methodic activity is conditioned by the concrete goal(s) it attempts to reach, the data it requires, and the ideas it assumes in processing the data and reaching its goals. The goals of method are its teleological condition, the data its material condition, and the ideas it assumes are its hermeneutical condition. The concrete profiles of theological and scientific methods become shaped by the interaction of all the conditions.

In this way, method includes in its essence the major epistemological issues that need to be considered when asking how theologians and scientists arrive at their conclusions. Familiarity with issues such as the origin of reliable information (from the perspective of the object), interpretation of the data (from the perspective of the subject), and the validity of conclusions and the truth of a belief (from both the perspective of the object and the subject), will help us to better understand and evaluate the debate between creation and evolution.

Any analysis of concrete philosophical, scientific, or theological methodologies should account for the conditions on which they build their conclusions. In the case of evolution, the reliability of its conclusions is specifically connected to the assumed trustworthiness of its method. The importance of method in theology is also paramount because it defines the overall direction, content, and teachings of particular theological schools and religious communities in a decisive manner.

Seventh-day Adventists, for instance, address the creation-evolution

¹⁹José Ferrater Mora, *Diccionario de Filosofía*, 5th ed., 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1965), s.v. “method.”

²⁰Bernard Lonergan correctly describes method as “a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results” (*Method in Theology* [New York: Crossroad, 1979], 5). “There is method, then,” explains Lonergan, 4, “where there are distinct operations, where each operation is related to the others, where the set of relations forms a pattern, where the pattern is described as the right way of doing the job, where operations in accord with the pattern may be repeated indefinitely, and where the fruits of such repetition are not repetitious, but cumulative and progressive.” Consequently, Lonergan, 6-25, organizes his discourse on method as an identification and explanation of the operations involved in the task of doing theology. John Macquarrie agrees with Lonergan’s definition of method, but goes on to apply it in a different way to the task of theology (*Principles of Christian Theology*, 2d ed. [New York: Scribner’s, 1966], 33).

debate from personal conclusions that in many ways are dependent on studies that other theologians and scientists have made. For this reason, it is very important to consider the epistemological basis on which others have built the views we come to share or reject. The focus of this article is on the process by which theological conclusions and scientific method serve as the basis for the construction of the theory of evolution. This analysis becomes indispensable when theologians are called to think as representatives of the community of faith. It may also help to clarify the theories involved, bring an assessment of personal views on creation and evolution, and lead to understanding the way in which these relate to the entire body of Christian beliefs.

The Legend

For at least two centuries, the empirical sciences have enjoyed the unlimited prestige and authority that previously belonged to the medieval church. Due to the need for answers to perennial questions and a dissatisfaction with traditional philosophical or theological explanations, theologians have turned to science for answers. Moreover, empirical science seems to be closer to the facts than philosophy and theology; thus modern and postmodern cultures confer to it a higher reliability and authority. Popular culture willingly and uncritically accepts as true the pronouncements of a small community. Scientists have become prophets; scientific methodology has become divine inspiration. For the common man to say that something is “scientific” means that it is “true.”²¹

What the general public seems to assume is that the achievements they read about in the educational pages of their newspapers and the threads they seem to perceive come from a single source and are produced by a uniform procedure. They know that biology is different from physics, which is different from geology. But these disciplines, it is assumed, arise when “the scientific way” is applied to different topics; the scientific way itself, however, remains the same.²²

The notion that science could be wrong, that it is not absolute, or that it provides alternative interpretations of the world escapes most, including many scientists and theologians.

According to Philip Kitcher, the most detailed articulation of the legend built around science has been provided “not by the practitioners but by their amanuenses in history of science, philosophy of science, and

²¹Philip Kitcher, *The Advancement of Science: Science without Legend, Objectivity without Illusions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3.

²²Feyerabend, 246-247.

sociology of science.”²³ However, things have radically changed in the last fifty years or so. “Since the late 1950’s [*sic*] the mists have begun to fall. Legend’s luster is dimmed. While it may continue to figure in textbooks and journalistic expositions, numerous intelligent critics now view Legend as smug, uninformed, unhistorical, and analytically shallow.”²⁴

The brief description of science provided in the previous section clearly dispels the myth of scientific method. According to Laudan, however, this description of science is foundationalist, in need of criticism, and is itself a part of the legend and myth of science. It affects not only the general public, pop culture, philosophers, and theologians, but scientists themselves.²⁵ Thus, it is necessary to probe further into the operation of scientific methodology not by way of a general description, but by looking at what scientists really do when constructing their theories.

Method in the Empirical Sciences

The way in which the so-called empirical sciences arrive at their conclusions and the discovery of truth is by way of the empirical or experimental method. To say that something is “scientific” means that results are achieved through the application of the scientific method. It is necessary, then, to gain a working knowledge of the “scientific” method through which evolutionary theory has been produced. The scientific method applied in the construction of evolutionary theory is a subclass or application of the general empirical method of scientific research. Consequently, the next three sections will address the structure, conditions, outcomes, and postmodern criticism produced by philosophers of science. On this basis, we will consider how the scientific method is applied in the construction of evolutionary theory.

In the area of empirical research, philosophers of science have done a remarkable and detailed job. Particularly enlightening is the analytical

²³Kitcher, 4. A staunch defender of evolution, he speaks of “legend” rather than “myth” (4-10).

²⁴*Ibid.*, 5.

²⁵Kitcher, 219, notes that “at the heart of Legend is an epistemology articulating the simple idea that scientific knowledge rests ultimately on observation and experiment. Much of twentieth-century philosophy, including the versions of logical empiricism that provide detailed articulations of Legend, adopts a static model of human knowledge. Abstracting from the complexities of human belief formation one conceives of an idealized knower, in possession of a body of evidence statements that represent the contribution of experience, and the project is to identify the relations that must hold among statements if some are to justify others, and thereby show how the evidential corpus warrants claims of theoretical science that may both be universal in scope and also purport to describe entities remote from sensory experience.”

and lengthy description of scientific research developed by Mario Bunge.²⁶ Because the purpose is not to describe the steps involved in scientific research but to outline the main epistemological structure on which scientific methodology operates, I will not follow Bunge's order of presentation. Instead, the analysis will be organized according to the formal conditions or components that all methodologies must include in their concrete undertakings. In so doing, I will only underline the main characteristics of empirical methodology as a preamble to understanding the "rational" status and scientific methodology of the theory of evolution. This will help to highlight the disciplinary differences that lead Christian theologians to propose the doctrine of creation and evolutionary scientists to propose the doctrine of evolution.

Both theology and science are rational scientific enterprises. The basic difference between them is not that one is rational and scientific while the other is not, but rather that both use rationality and scientific methodology from different data and both use different interpretations of the macro-hermeneutical presuppositions.

Brief Description of Scientific Methodology

As argued above, method, at its core, is an orderly activity aimed at reaching specific goals. Bunge sees method as "a procedure for handling a set of problems."²⁷ Specific sciences and problems may require different methods or procedures. When scientists speak of "scientific method" as a general designation, they usually refer not to specific disciplinary methods or procedures, but "to the whole cycle of investigation into every problem of knowledge."²⁸ Thus, the main pattern of scientific methodology may be summarized in the following activities: ask well-formulated and likely fruitful questions, devise hypotheses that are grounded and testable to answer the questions, derive logical consequences of the assumptions, design techniques to test assumptions, test the techniques for relevance and reliability, execute the tests and interpret their results, evaluate the truth claims of the assumptions and the fidelity of the techniques, determine the domains in which the assumptions and the techniques hold, and state the new problems raised by the research.²⁹

These steps take place within an established body of knowledge, from

²⁶Mario Bunge, *Scientific Research I: The Search for System* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1967); and idem, *Scientific Research II: The Search for Truth* (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1967).

²⁷Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 8.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., 9.

which scientists generate problems that require solutions. These solutions will eventually modify and/or enrich the established body of scientific knowledge, from which scientific research starts. This description points toward the need to demythologize popular notions of science, which revolve around the idea that science affirms only facts that are susceptible to the most rigorous experimentation. Although testability, e.g., experimentation, observation, remains a cornerstone of scientific methodology, it is only one of its steps. To better understand the complex nature of scientific research and the reliability and authority of its results, the conditions of research need to be briefly considered.

The Teleological Condition

The teleological condition involves the goal and subject-matter of science. The “goal” of science relates to the kind of knowledge scientific research seeks to achieve through its methodology. The “subject-matter” refers to the reality or realities scientists attempt to understand. The latter refers to content and scope; the former to form and method.

According to Bunge, “what factual science seeks is to map the patterns, i.e., laws, of various domains of fact.” In other words, scientists do not attempt to merely describe reality, but to discover its inner workings. This specific objective shows that empirical science is not a cosmography, i.e., detailed mapping of its events, but “a cosmology, i.e., a reconstruction of the objective patterns of events, both actual and possible, whereby their understanding and forecast—hence their technological control—is made possible.”³⁰ Kitcher explains that “scientific investigation aims to disclose the general principles that govern the workings of the universe. These principles are not intended just to summarize what select groups of humans have witnessed. Natural science is not just natural history. It is vastly more ambitious. Science offers us laws that are supposed to hold universally, and it advances claims about things that are beyond our power to observe.”³¹ Bunge summarizes: “In short, there is no science proper unless the scientific method is applied to the attainment of the goal of science: the building of theoretical images of reality, and essentially of its web of laws. Scientific research is, in short, the search for pattern.”³²

The beginnings of science can be traced back to Greek philosophy. In modern times, with the advent of empiricism and modernity, the empirical

³⁰Ibid., 28.

³¹Philip Kitcher, *Abusing Science: The Case against Creationism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), 33.

³²Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 28.

sciences began a steady process of independence from philosophy. However, independence has never been complete. Science still depends on philosophical ideas and produces philosophical constructions. This becomes clearer when we consider the hermeneutical condition of method and when we reflect on the teleological condition or aim of science. As discussed earlier, the ultimate end of empirical science is to build a cosmology (or worldview). This was exactly the way in which Greek philosophy began and what still forms the goal of metaphysics and ontology. The difference between philosophy and science, then, is one of method rather than aim. This is important to bear in mind as we deal with the conflict of interpretations between creation and evolution.

By way of its method, science attempts to “reconstruct” reality. Through the influence of the Enlightenment, the myth of scientific rationality developed. Scientific method was supposed to produce what traditional philosophy could not, i.e., the absolute universal truth about reality. What becomes evident in a study of scientific methodology is that even modern philosophers of science who defend its rationality and are staunch defenders of the theory of evolution concede that scientific method does not produce absolute, infallible truth, but rather partial approximations.

Through its method, science proceeds to build progressively truer (albeit partial, problematic, and improvable) reconstructions of reality.³³ “Hence, science cannot have an ultimate goal, such as building a complete and flawless cosmology. The goal of science is rather the ceaseless perfecting of its chief products (theories) and means (techniques), as well as the subjection of more and more territory to its sway.”³⁴

What empirical science seeks to understand by way of its rigorous research methodology, and the identification of the specific areas of knowledge in which scientific methodology is applied, brings the need to consider the content and scope of science. Empirical science can be applied to any theory that can be tested empirically. As with Greek classicism, ontological investigation began with the study of nature and *expanded later* to the humanities. This remains true among the branches of the empirical sciences—the sciences of nature, e.g., physics, chemistry, biology, and individual psychology, and of the spirit, e.g., sociological psychology, sociology, economics, political science, material history, and history of ideas.³⁵

³³Ibid., 29.

³⁴Ibid., 30.

³⁵I am using Bunge’s preliminary suggestion as an illustration of the general reach of scientific methodology (ibid., 23-24). The modern application of scientific methodology in the humanities has been seriously challenged by, for instance, Hans-Georg Gadamer (*Truth and Method*). Gadamer’s challenge, 4-5, to the application of scientific methodology in the humanities came from the teleological condition of method. Because this challenge uncovered ideas that led to postmodernity, it also affected the understanding of reason, and through it, the

In this study, we are concerned with the application of scientific methodology in the natural sciences, particularly in geology, paleontology, and biology. We will consider the “products” of science below. But first, we turn our attention to the material condition of science.

The Material Condition

The question of where scientists obtain their information may be the most publicized feature of scientific methodology. Scientists arrive at “truth” because they build their conclusions on data they receive through sensory perception. This empirical (Greek *empeiria*, “experience”) condition is so important that it is used to label the method and the sciences that employ it.

The selection of sensory perception as the source of scientific knowledge is required by the teleological and hermeneutical conditions of method. We have already considered the teleological condition that the empirical sciences use to study the whole of natural phenomena. Consequently, the choice of sensory perception or experience as a source of data is necessary in order to access reality, i.e., what is real. It is through sensory perception that natural and historical entities are revealed to human reason.

Scientists, therefore, believe that their information originates from “real” rather than “imaginary” things. They take for granted that real things are only those that can be accessed through sensory perception and/or technological enhancement. As will be seen in the next section, scientists implicitly presuppose an understanding of what “real” means, i.e., they assume ontological ideas.³⁶ In other words, ideas come into science from the side of the hermeneutical conditions of scientific methodology.

The material condition of scientific methodology takes place in two modes: tradition and testing, i.e., observation. Thus, scientists obtain information from two sources of empirical data. Our brief description of scientific methodology made clear that scientific research starts by identifying a problem, which has been suggested from the results of previous studies. This is an “empirical” source of data because scientists access it through sensory perception; but it is not experience or the material condition that grounds the truth scientific methodology is supposed to grant. The empirical source of information that grounds scientific truth comes toward the end of the method when scientists test

scientific method in the natural sciences.

³⁶The ontological assumption of realism is general, without many philosophical subtleties. Karl Popper’s positivist account of scientific thought extends to realism’s overcoming the modern turn to the subject (*The Logic of Scientific Discovery* [London: Hutchinson, 1968], 93-94).

their hypotheses.³⁷ This order is required by the goal of science, as discussed in the previous section.

The realization that the conception, formulation, and advancement of hypotheses take place before, i.e., a priori, empirical testing helps us to discover the pivotal role that tradition plays in scientific methodology. After all, scientists construct their hypotheses from questions arising from previous scientific teachings. In so doing, they work not from “facts” produced by nature, but from “facts” produced by the human spirit, i.e., reason. From the viewpoint of content, this characteristic of the scientific method appears as the progressive accumulation of scientific knowledge; from the perspective of formal communication of content, it appears as tradition. Thus, science takes place within an “orthodox” tradition. Tradition subsumes all that the researcher brings to the scientific method and reveals the existence and operation of the hermeneutical condition.

Before considering the hermeneutical condition, I would like to underline that the basic difference between theological and scientific methodologies takes place at the level of the material condition. Undoubtedly, it is here that the greatest discrepancy between the theological and empirical sciences occurs. Following a tradition initiated in modern times by Descartes, Locke, and Hume, scientists dismiss supernatural revelation as a source of information on which to build their views. This conviction directly flows from the macro-hermeneutical notion that only things or events that present themselves to us in space and time exist and can be taken as evidence on which to build scientific knowledge. Consequently, the existence of God and his revelation in Scripture are dismissed as fantasy.³⁸ This summary dismissal flows from the foundationalist³⁹ role scientists confer to empirical testing. In other words, science confers “revelatory” status primarily to natural phenomena and to historical phenomena only in a subordinate sense.⁴⁰ This is due to the fact that testing hypotheses—the ultimate ground of scientific truth—renders its best results when applied to the repetitive cycles of nature.⁴¹ Coupled to the empiricist foundationalism of science, we have the “spiritual” foundationalism of Christian theology. Following Plato’s

³⁷Testing includes, for instance, observations, measurements, experiments (Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 222).

³⁸*Ibid.*, 29.

³⁹For an introduction to the notion of “Foundationalism,” see Rorty, 155-164.

⁴⁰As we will see below, the subordinate position of historical data affects the scientific nature and reliability of evolutionary science when compared with the scientific nature and reliability of the physical sciences.

⁴¹Popper, 252.

cosmology, Christian theology has conceived its area of study—God and the realm of supernature—as a timeless and spaceless reality, i.e., spiritual realm. Modern theology and the empirical sciences agree that religion belongs to the realm of timelessness, and science to the realm of space and time. By their very nature, the methods of theology and empirical science do not conflict because they are mutually exclusive of one another. We should not be surprised, then, when scientists dismiss religious experience from the realm of empirical science or when theologians see no contradiction between the theory of evolution and Christianity. Platonic dualistic cosmology continues to survive today because it is able to subsume evolutionary cosmology as a valid explanation in the spatiotemporal realm. And it does so while retaining a deeper parallel timeless-spaceless level for spiritual, i.e., supernatural, realities. Theistic evolutionary schemes flourish in this soil.⁴² Of course, as we will see later, Scripture directly opposes Platonic cosmology by not accepting the generalized notion that God and religion belong to a timeless, spaceless realm. Conflict between evolution and creation can only take place if both theories are understood to refer to the same field of reality, i.e., to the temporal-spatial realm of creation.⁴³ In short, acceptance of the Platonic cosmological framework defuses the conflict between creation and evolution. We will come back to this issue later when studying the way in which Christian theologies relate to evolutionary theory.

The Hermeneutical Condition

The hermeneutical condition refers to all the presuppositions required for the proper operation of the scientific method. Bunge explains that “in general, every problem is posed against a certain *background* constituted by the antecedent knowledge and, in particular, by the specific presuppositions of the problem” (emphasis original).⁴⁴ These presuppositions constitute the a priori, i.e., the preontological state, of scientific methodology.

Presuppositions may be thought to include the sum total of life experience. Under the influence of classical philosophy, the modern age understood scientific knowledge to be “objective” because it was thought

⁴²See for instance, Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (New York: Macmillan, 1929); and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959).

⁴³On this, see arguments against conventional thinking on science, presented by Larry Laudan, *Beyond Positivism and Relativism: Theory, Method, and Evidence* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 223-230.

⁴⁴Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 171.

to be totally determined by the object. To ensure objectivity, modern scientists were supposed to divest or purify themselves from all previous experience. Personal experience was considered to be subjective bias or prejudice. However, when human beings use scientific methodology, they make concrete contributions which decidedly shape the outcome of both reason and scientific method. This does not mean that science should include personal biases or prejudices. It only indicates, as we shall see, that not all prejudices that are brought to science are negative. The scientific method requires the use of hermeneutical presuppositions. For this reason, we need to recognize and identify them as a condition of method.

In speaking of scientific paradigms, Thomas Kuhn brings the condition of method to the attention of the scientific community. In so doing, Kuhn does not create a new condition of scientific methodology. On the contrary, he only identifies and explains the role that the scientific a priori has always played in scientific method. We should not forget that the scientific a priori is required to get the method started. It is only from the a priori that a problem can be defined and a hypothesis may be advanced. The scientific a priori does not originate, as Kant suggested, in the cognitive structure of humanity. Rather, scientists acquire these presuppositions by belonging to the scientific tradition.⁴⁵

The only way to become a scientist is by engaging in formal scientific education. According to Kuhn, the part that education plays in developing an "ordinary" citizen into a scientist is that it inculcates in students a scientific paradigm or disciplinary matrix. Kuhn suggests that takes place by ways of "exemplars," i.e., "concrete problem-solutions that students encounter from the start of their scientific education, whether in laboratories, on examinations, or at the ends of chapters in science texts."⁴⁶ Through the study of exemplars, the student is taught to view "the situations that confront him as a scientist in the same gestalt as other members of his specialists' [*sic*] group. For him they are no longer the same situations he had encountered when his training began. He has meanwhile assimilated a time-tested and group-licensed way of seeing."⁴⁷ Thus, "by doing science rather than by acquiring rules for doing it" students learn "tacit knowledge."⁴⁸

⁴⁵Thomas Kuhn explains that science is "research firmly based upon one or more past scientific achievements, achievements that some particular scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice" (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2d ed. [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970], 10). It is through tradition, then, that scientists get their a priori hermeneutical presuppositions.

⁴⁶Ibid., 187.

⁴⁷Ibid., 189.

⁴⁸Ibid., 191.

Among the contents implicit in the “tacit knowledge” students incorporate into their scientific a priori as a disciplinary matrix are an “entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community.”⁴⁹ This constellation of beliefs includes, for instance, symbolic generalizations,⁵⁰ particular models,⁵¹ values,⁵² law, theory, application, and instrumentation.⁵³

This tacit, implicit knowledge that scientists bring to method includes various levels of inclusiveness. Because tacit knowledge contributes in the generation of the meaning of scientific problems, hypotheses, laws, and theories, i.e., the outcomes of science, we can detect macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of hermeneutical presuppositions working in empirical science. The macro-hermeneutical presuppositions in empirical science include the philosophical presuppositions discussed in this subsection. Meso-hermeneutical presuppositions might include the disciplinary matrix or paradigm of which Kuhn speaks. Micro-hermeneutical presuppositions are the specific theories, laws, and problems that generate concrete hypotheses in concrete scientific disciplines.⁵⁴

In regard to philosophical presuppositions in the method of empirical sciences,⁵⁵ Bunge correctly remarks that “philosophy may not be found in the finished scientific buildings (although this is controversial) but it is part of the scaffolding employed in their construction.”⁵⁶ Earlier, I argued that Christian theology includes in its formation an interconnected ensemble of macro-hermeneutical presuppositions. Among other things,

⁴⁹Ibid., 175.

⁵⁰Ibid., 182-184.

⁵¹Ibid., 184.

⁵²Values, such as accuracy, simplicity, consistency, plausibility, or preference of quantitative over qualitative procedures, are used to judge theories (ibid., 184-186).

⁵³Ibid., 10.

⁵⁴This categorization in progressive levels of specificity is only an incomplete suggestion. In “Paradigm, System and Theological Pluralism,” I refer to what I call “system,” which I identify here as macro-hermeneutical presuppositions. The “system” designation properly describes the inner coherence between the various macro-hermeneutical presuppositions operating respectively in theology and empirical science (*Evangelical Quarterly* 70 [1998]: 195-218).

⁵⁵Due to their generality and inclusiveness, these are macro-hermeneutical presuppositions that correspond to the macro-hermeneutical presupposition level operative in Christian theology. Since I am not a scientist, I leave others to distinguish between what Kuhn calls paradigm or disciplinary matrix and the levels of meso- and micro-hermeneutical presuppositions.

⁵⁶Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 291.

they deal with God, human beings, the world, the one and the many (the whole), and reason. Scientists assume interpretations on these issues as well. Many of the “scientific” interpretations of these issues are drawn from philosophy or are created by the philosophical reach of an overarching scientific theory. For instance, the evolutionary theory becomes the cosmological macro-hermeneutical presupposition of empirical scientific methodology.

Perhaps the broadest philosophical presupposition of science is that the entities it studies are real, i.e., have existence outside of the human mind (empirical realism). Their reality is presupposed in the grounding notion of fact, which is the referent of scientific teaching and especially the source of its testing procedures.⁵⁷ Moreover, empirical realism presupposes a spatiotemporal understanding of reality. In this, empirical realism radically departs from classical Aristotelian realism.⁵⁸ Not surprisingly, this macro-hermeneutical presupposition requires the rejection of classical ontology, including the notions of God and the soul. The macro-hermeneutical role that God played in classical philosophy and theology is now to be played by nature and history. Thus, the immutability grounded by the classical notion of timeless realities, e.g., God, soul, essence, ideas, is replaced by ontological determinism.

Ontological determinism must be presupposed because the aim of science is to discover the recurrent patterns of nature in order to predict events. For scientific laws to be predictable, natural phenomena must be themselves ordered by law. This is assumed on philosophical rather than scientific ground. Popper refers to the nonscientific ground of science by saying that the belief in the ontological lawfulness of nature is “a question which obviously cannot be answered by any falsifiable theory and which is therefore ‘metaphysical’: how is it that we are so often lucky in the theories we construct—how is it that there are ‘natural laws?’”⁵⁹ Popper answers his question by noting that “regularities which are directly testable by experiment do not change. Admittedly, it is conceivable, or logically possible, that they might change; but this possibility is disregarded by empirical science and does not affect its methods. On the contrary, scientific method presupposes the immutability of natural process, or the ‘principle of the uniformity of nature.’”⁶⁰

⁵⁷Ibid., 291-292.

⁵⁸Aristotelian realism centers around the notion of first substance, which is a composite of spatiotemporal (matter) and timeless (form) realities.

⁵⁹Popper, 107.

⁶⁰Ibid., 252. Bunge notes that ontological determinism has been seriously challenged by the quantum theory “which acknowledges objective chance not only as a trait of complex

The articulation of the whole as a complex of many parts is ordered in a multilayered pyramid in which the “higher levels are rooted in the lower ones both historically and contemporaneously.”⁶¹ The main levels from bottom to top are the physical, biological, psychological, and sociocultural. This presupposition, for instance, requires that evolution should be extended from its original biological level to the higher levels that it supports, i.e., culture and history.

The macro-hermeneutical presupposition regarding the nature of scientific knowledge has changed through the years and is presently under serious scrutiny. This is due to philosophical changes in the interpretation of reason, which were brought about during the twentieth century by the rise of hermeneutical philosophy and which were popularized by the advent of postmodernity. According to Bunge, until the second part of the nineteenth century scientists assumed that in principle it was possible “to exhaustively know the present, past and future states of any object in such a way that no uncertainty about it remains.”⁶² This mythical assumption was replaced by a limited knowability, according to which “science presupposes that its objects are knowable to some extent, and it acknowledges that some of the limits to knowledge are set by the objects themselves, whereas others are temporary.”⁶³ Until the end of the twentieth century, scientists were theoretical objectivists following the modern interpretation of objective knowledge. That is to say, they assumed their knowledge was generated only by the objects they studied. In practice, however, their use of philosophical and scientific presuppositions in the operation of the scientific method anticipated postmodernity.

Postmodernity revolves around the philosophical-hermeneutical discovery that human reason works from historically generated principles of interpretation. Because they are historically generated they may change. Change in the principles of interpretation, especially at the macro-hermeneutical level, may result in a change of paradigm that subsequently generates a scientific revolution.⁶⁴ The notion that scientific teachings depend on changing rules has caused great upheaval in scientific circles. Larry Laudan characterizes the current situation in scientific epistemology

systems but even at the level of ‘elementary’ particles, which obey stochastic laws. Whether such a randomness is final or will eventually be analyzed as the outcome of lower level fields, it is premature to decide” (*Scientific Research I*, 295).

⁶¹Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 293.

⁶²Ibid., 296.

⁶³Ibid., 298.

⁶⁴Thomas Kuhn deals in detail with these issues in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.

as a conflict between traditional positivism and relativism.⁶⁵ The fact remains that scientific method uses hermeneutical presuppositions to generate its problems, formulate its hypotheses, and test their consequences. Even when interpretation, i.e., contribution from the subject, is present in every step of scientific methodology, scientists have not yet incorporated the hermeneutical turn in their methodology and adjusted to its epistemological consequences.

Outcomes of the Scientific Method

Following the brief description of the main steps involved in the scientific method and a description of the conditions involved in its operation, we now turn to the outcomes of method. Scientists produce hypotheses, laws, and theories. This consideration is important because it helps us to understand the epistemological status of the evolutionary "theory." The conditions of method work as presuppositions that directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly, shape the concrete contents and epistemological status of scientific outcomes. Let us consider them briefly.

Hypotheses

After defining a problem, scientists attempt to solve it by constructing and testing hypotheses. An empirical hypothesis may be described as a conjecture about certain unexperienced or unexperientiable facts which are "corrigible in view of fresh knowledge."⁶⁶ Thus, hypotheses are assumptions about reality we construct in order to explain it. Therefore, we may see them as interpretive schemes. Scientists construct their hypotheses by drawing, implicitly or explicitly, from the interpretive guidance of macro- (philosophical), meso- (disciplinary matrix), and micro- (concrete disciplinary context) hermeneutical presuppositions. Thus, hypothesis formation is a complex interpretive act because it builds on three antecedent levels of interpretive acts and constructions.

A hypothesis is not a datum; but it should not be equated with fiction either. Data and hypotheses share similarities: both result from interpretation and are corrigible. Their basic difference is that data are actual empirical experiences, while hypotheses are propositions about nonexperienced realities. Bunge provides a useful example that may help us to visualize the difference between data and hypotheses.

The information that the needle of a given meter is pointing to the 110 volt mark is a singular empirical datum: it may be tested by mere ocular

⁶⁵Laudan, 3-25.

⁶⁶Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 222.

inspection. (In general[,] experiences, either single or in bundles, are necessary to corroborate singular empirical data. They are not sufficient, though: some theoretical element will always be needed.) That this datum refers to an electric current in the meter is no longer a datum but a hypothesis. In fact (i) electric currents are inferable but not observable and (ii) the hypothesis may turn out to be false, as the meter may be out of order, so that its indications may be wrong.

Finally, hypotheses always say more than the data they attempt to explain. This “plus” value of hypothetical thinking tends to build as scientific constructions become more complex and involved, particularly in the case of such all-embracing theories as evolution.

Once formulated, scientific hypotheses play a hermeneutical role in guiding the researcher in the design of testing approaches and techniques that will corroborate or falsify a particular hypothesis. These techniques also result from the interpretive constructions of scientists. (At this point, the reader should bear in mind that in this section I am drawing mainly from Bunge, who is not a postmodern relativist.) If interpretative construction is present in the reception of data, the formulation of hypotheses, the construction of testing techniques, and their evaluation, one wonders why some scientists are so opposed to the postmodern conviction that to know is to interpret.

Laws

A scientific law is a confirmed hypothesis that is supposed to depict an objective pattern. According to Bunge, “laws summarize our knowledge of actuals and possibles.”⁶⁷ It would be incorrect, however, to assume that scientists arrive at laws by simply testing hypotheses. The process through which scientists arrive at laws is more complex. To understand this process we need to bear in mind that the search for scientific law is the search for sameness in an ever-changing reality.⁶⁸

But how do we arrive at a universal law from changing realities in which no two individuals are exactly alike? Plato invented a timeless, ontological realm that supposedly grounded knowledge in a changing reality.⁶⁹ With the advent of modern empiricism, Plato’s ontological foundation of knowledge was rejected. According to the macro-hermeneutical presuppositions operating in empirical scientific methodology, only concrete, changing, diverse,

⁶⁷Ibid., 23.

⁶⁸Empirical science is the last link in a long scientific tradition that originated with the Greek philosophers. While Heraclitus understood the real to be in constant flux as an ever-changing river, Parmenides conceived it to be an immutable sphere.

⁶⁹In this way Plato became a very influential foundationalist.

spatiotemporal entities are recognized as objects and referents of scientific knowledge. Popper concludes that there are insurmountable difficulties in inducing or inferring universal statements from singular ones.⁷⁰ If induction has problems, perhaps definite techniques for summarizing and generalizing data would lead to universal laws. Unfortunately, laws are not the result of simple generalization and summary. In the conception and formulation of laws, scientists follow a hypothetico-deductive procedure. In other words, they progressively invent, imagine, and construct new hypothetical generalizations until, through a process of trial and error, they arrive at a universal law.⁷¹ We should bear in mind that the invention of universal, all-inclusive hypotheses are attempts to explain and understand a multitude of lower-level hypotheses that scientific research produces over time. These attempts are motivated and made possible by the organizing drive of human reason described by Kant. Bunge characterizes this drive of human reason behind the formulation of universal laws and theories as the “nervous system of science.”⁷² It is important to bear in mind that in *inventing* a universal hypothesis, human reason selects only a *few traces* of a multifarious and complex reality.⁷³

To say that a law is a confirmed hypothesis does not mean that any or all hypotheses become laws after they are tested and confirmed. Only confirmed universal hypotheses can become laws. In order to confirm a law we must descend from its “high” level of abstraction and universality and through deduction “specify the circumstances under which” its “use or test takes place.”⁷⁴

Theories

“The work of the scientist consists in putting forward and testing theories.”⁷⁵ In this subsection, we will consider briefly the nature, need, formation, and limits of theory. In the next subsection, we will deal with the testability of theory. According to Popper, “theories are nets cast to

⁷⁰Popper, 21-29. Bunge is of the opinion that such techniques produce “low level” laws because they render only empirical generalizations (*Scientific Research I*, 323).

⁷¹Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 323, explains that “there are no known rules for inventing either high level concepts or the law statements that tie them up: unlike the finding of empirical generalizations, the creation of theoretical concepts and laws is not a rule-directed activity” (see also 346).

⁷²Ibid., 380-382.

⁷³Ibid., 347-348.

⁷⁴Ibid., 351.

⁷⁵Popper, 31.

catch what we call ‘the world’: *to rationalize, to explain, and to master it*” (emphasis supplied).⁷⁶ Bunge describes the process through which scientists arrive at theories in the following way:

As research develops, relations among the previously isolated hypotheses are discovered or invented and entirely new, stronger hypotheses are introduced which not only include the old hypotheses but yield unexpected generalizations: as a result one or more *systems of hypotheses* are constituted. These systems are syntheses encompassing what is known, what is suspected, and what can be predicted concerning a given subject matter. Such syntheses, characterized by the relations of deducibility holding among some of its formulas, are called hypothetico-deductive systems, models, or simply theories (emphasis original).⁷⁷

One can argue that the difference between laws and theories resides in their referents. Laws are hypotheses about an objective, recurrent pattern in nature, while theories are hypotheses about broader chunks of reality. Theories are not about recurrent patterns, but about complex portions of reality whose explanation requires the putting together of existing laws and theories.⁷⁸

Scientists go beyond the discovery of natural laws to construct theories about large portions of reality. This is because reason compels them to do so. Reason understands the need to connect isolated parts into progressively more inclusive wholes. Bunge explains that in science “a factual proposition can acquire full meaning only within a context and by virtue of its logical relations with other items.”⁷⁹ It is not surprising, then, that scientists build theories.

Theories should not be thought of as only the end result of scientific reasoning, but also as presuppositions required for the proper operation of the scientific method. “One cannot know whether a datum is significant until one is able to interpret it, and data interpretation requires theories.”⁸⁰ Besides, the formulation of a problem (the first step in the application of the scientific method) requires the application of theories.⁸¹

⁷⁶Ibid., 59.

⁷⁷Ibid., 381.

⁷⁸Ibid. He states: “‘Theory’ designates a system of hypotheses, among which law formulas are conspicuous—so much so that the core of a theory is a system of law formulas.”

⁷⁹Ibid., 382. Bunge, 382, explains further that these logical connections involve the systematization or interconnectivity of hypotheses. “In short, systematization renders the meaning of hypotheses more precise and enhances their testability. In addition, it explains most of the hypotheses by subsuming them under stronger assumptions (axioms) and intermediate level theories.”

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹As presuppositions, theories guide research and suggest new lines of investigation.

Scientists arrive at theories by constructing explanations and by putting things together. To say that theories are “constructions” means that they do not portray “literally a real thing, event, or process.”⁸² They are not snapshots or summaries of things. Instead, they are sketchy and symbolic reconstructions of real systems.⁸³ Theories are creations beyond reality which are necessary to explain reality.⁸⁴ That theories are explanations means that they are the result of invention and interpretation. “Invention is the kernel of theory construction”⁸⁵ and means that there are no preset rules for theory construction. Theories are original creations⁸⁶ that proceed by interpreting, rather than describing or summarizing observed realities.⁸⁷ That theory construction results from interpretation means that it “does not proceed in a vacuum but in a preexistent matrix.”⁸⁸

Finally, theory construction necessarily involves idealization, simplification, selectivity, hypothesizing, and the search for discrepancies and deliberate departures from truth. Bunge describes the limitations of scientific theories in the following words:

Every scientific theory is built, from the start, as an idealization of real systems or situations. That is, the very building of a scientific theory involves *simplifications* both in the selection of relevant variables and in the hypothesizing of relations (e. g., law statements) among them. Such simplifications are made whether or not we realize that they amount to errors—not mistakes but just discrepancies with actual fact. Moreover, this is not a mere descriptive statement concerning actual habits of theory construction: it is a rule of theory construction that as many simplifications as needed are to be made at the start, relaxing them gradually and only according as they are shown to constitute too brutal amputations. Such simplifications are, of course, deliberate departures from truth.⁸⁹

It is important to notice that theory construction is a speculative enterprise that searches for understanding, coherence, and explanation at the level of ideas rather than at the level of concrete facts.⁹⁰ This applies

⁸²Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 385.

⁸³Ibid., 386.

⁸⁴Ibid., 455.

⁸⁵Ibid., 459.

⁸⁶Ibid., 455.

⁸⁷Popper, 280.

⁸⁸Bunge, *Scientific Research I*, 449.

⁸⁹Ibid., 388.

⁹⁰Ibid., 455, where he states: “In the processing of experience and in the invention of

particularly to far-reaching theories like evolution. Theories are grand hypotheses because they include and connect other lower-level theories, hypotheses, and laws. In this process, the search for understanding necessarily involves distortion and the possibility of wrong representations of the world. Thus, scientific theories, as scientific laws, exist at a high level of generalization that is far removed from the realities and processes they attempt to explain.

According to Bunge, “we should know a priori, from an analysis of the very process of theory construction, that every factual theory is at best approximately true, just because it involves too many simplifications and some inventions that are bound to be inadequate to some extent because they cannot be fully controlled either by experience or by logic.”⁹¹

The way in which theories connect with reality requires a move from the process through which scientists arrive at conclusions to the process through which they arrive at truth. Let us consider, then, the testing and corroboration of scientific theories.

Testing, Corroboration, and Scientific Truth

Scientific theories are not a summary of what scientists discover and prove through experimentation. The pathway of scientific method “is not from data to theory but data to problem, from problem to hypotheses, from hypotheses to theory, and back from theory and evidence to a projection that can be checked by another piece of evidence—with the help of further theories.”⁹² Through the process of theory construction, scientists create a coherent explanation of the data available to them, which is invented with the help of a particular perspective or heuristic idea.⁹³ Scientists, however, want more than merely coherent explanations. Metaphysics provides coherent explanations. What distinguishes a metaphysical from a scientific explanation of the world is that the former cannot be tested, while the latter can. By testing through experiment or observation, scientists attempt to falsify or corroborate their hunches, i.e., hypotheses

ideas, most particulars are *discarded* and the rest are *disfigured* rather than carefully collected and packaged. Precepts, which anyhow are products of analysis rather than raw experiences, are mostly discarded in the process of selecting relevant items. And those that are picked out become transmuted into ideas, which are in turn anything but faithful reproduction of the given. A posteriori we discriminate and sort out the ideas and come to realize that some of their component unites—concepts—have no experiential counterpart, this being why they have a chance of participating in the explanation of experience.”

⁹¹Ibid., 549.

⁹²Ibid., 455.

⁹³Ibid., 450.

and theories. Scientific methodology, then, finds its distinctive foundation through empirical testing.

Scientists test their hypotheses and theories, which are abstract generalizations far removed from concrete existing realities in space and time and that can be neither verified or falsified directly, by deducing from the theory a consequence that can be tested by observation and experiment. In other words, scientists apply their theoretical construction to reality in search of a recurrent reality (event) that can be tested through experimentation. Testing, then, is applied to "statements asserting that an observable event is occurring in a certain individual region of space and time."⁹⁴ The results of testing determine whether a theory is falsified or corroborated.⁹⁵

For a theory to be falsified, it must first be falsifiable. According to Popper, a theory is falsifiable when it rules out at least one typical recurrent event in space and time.⁹⁶ Actual testing, then, takes place by observation of a spatiotemporal body.⁹⁷ If a theory is falsified, it must either be modified or rejected and replaced by a better one. However, according to Popper, theories cannot be verified, but only corroborated in various degrees.⁹⁸ The degree to which theories may be corroborated is not determined by the number of corroborations, but by the severity of tests to which hypotheses have been subjected.⁹⁹ Testing, however, is not beyond interpretation. On the contrary, not only the construction of problems, hypotheses, laws, and theories, but also testing, experimentation, and the instruments used in them are conditioned by theory and the teleological, material, and hermeneutical conditions of method.¹⁰⁰

The result of this conditionality is significant. It shows, for instance, that corroboration of theories should not be confused with truth.¹⁰¹ This is so because one expects scientists to explain why their theories are supposed to be held as truth. Truth is not claimed for corroborated scientific theories. The epistemological analysis of scientific methodology, however, reveals that the myth of science as objective, absolute truth does not match the reality of what scientists and human reason are able to

⁹⁴Popper, 103.

⁹⁵Ibid., 109.

⁹⁶Ibid., 86, 88, 90.

⁹⁷Ibid., 102-103.

⁹⁸Ibid., 267-268.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 107.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 275-276.

perform. On the contrary, it shows that “no theory is unambiguously determined by experience.”¹⁰² Popper helps us to see how limited is the corroboration of scientific theories by comparing testability and experimentation to structural piles that sustain the edifice of scientific theories over the swamp of everyday opinion:

The empirical basis of objective science has thus nothing “absolute” about it. Science does not rest upon solid bedrock. The bold structure of its theories rises, as it were, above a swamp. It is like a building erected on piles [testing]. The piles are driven down from above into the swamp, but not down to any natural or “given” base; and if we stop driving the piles deeper, it is not because we have reached firm ground. We simply stop when we are satisfied that the piles are firm enough to carry the structure, at least for the time being.¹⁰³

The piles in Popper’s metaphor relate to the empirical base or the testing on which hypothesis, laws, and, especially, theories rest. What Popper seems to indicate is that empirical testing and corroboration of a theory is never final or absolute. Moreover, testing is pursued only until the researcher or the community is satisfied.

Postmodern Criticism of Scientific Method

By the end of the twentieth century, a select group of philosophers of science became increasingly dissatisfied with the general description of science (see discussion above). “Prominent among their ranks are Kuhn, Feyerabend, the later Quine, the later Goodman, Rorty, and dozens of lesser lights.”¹⁰⁴ They submitted the generally accepted view of science to criticism, which is not kindly received by many in the scientific community.¹⁰⁵ The following quotation will give us the general idea of the notion of science these philosophers of science are criticizing:

According to Legend, science has been very successful in attaining these goals [attainment of truth about the world]. Successive generations of scientists have filled in more and more parts of the COMPLETE TRUE STORY OF THE WORLD (or, perhaps, of the COMPLETE TRUE STORY OF THE OBSERVABLE PART OF THE WORLD). Champions of Legend acknowledged that there have been mistakes and false steps here and there, but they saw an overall trend toward accumulation of truth, or, at the very least, of better and better approximations to truth. Moreover, they offered

¹⁰² Ibid., 144.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 111.

¹⁰⁴ Laudan, 4.

¹⁰⁵ For instance, Laudan, 5, sees them as “postpositivists” endorsing “a thoroughgoing epistemological relativism about science.”

an explanation both for the occasional mistakes and for the dominant progressive trend: scientists have achieved so much through the use of SCIENTIFIC METHOD (emphasis original).¹⁰⁶

Thus universal, unrestricted, sole authority is given to science over all other human approaches to truth about the universe. Not surprisingly, the big bang and evolutionary theories have become dogmatically affirmed by scientists and accepted by theologians without much discussion.

The criticism produced by this new line of philosophers is far-reaching and goes beyond the limits of this paper. Their criticism of science, however, challenges the universality of scientific results.

Not Playing by the Rules

Feyerabend contends that when one takes time to review all that is involved in the actual methodological procedures used by scientists in arriving at their interpretive constructions, one discovers that these constructions are not built by playing “by the book,” i.e., by generally accepted rules of scientific investigation. The “perfect” narrative enunciation of a scientific theory hides a lot of cut-corners, pushes problems between theory and fact, and makes ad hoc approximations¹⁰⁷ that “conceal, and even eliminate, qualitative difficulties. They create a false impression of the excellence of our science.”¹⁰⁸ Moreover, in their drive to find explanations for the astonishing complexity and variety in nature, scientists never follow the rules for evaluating proposed theories and even use falsified theories.¹⁰⁹ It would seem that what guides them to accept theories is the feeling of power they receive when attempting to

¹⁰⁶Kitcher, *The Advancement of Science*, 3.

¹⁰⁷Feyerabend, 49, states: “Wherever we look, whenever we have a little patience and select our evidence in an unprejudiced manner, we find that theories fail adequately to reproduce certain *quantitative results*, and that they are *qualitatively incompetent* to a surprising degree. Science gives us theories of great beauty and sophistication. Modern science has developed mathematical structures which exceed anything that has existed so far in coherence generality and empirical success. But in order to achieve this miracle all the existing troubles had to be pushed into the *relation* between theory and fact, and had to be concealed by *ad hoc* hypotheses, *ad hoc* approximations and other procedures.”

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹In our description of scientific methodology we saw that, according to Popper, theories must be either falsified or corroborated. However, Feyerabend, 50, remarks that “methodologists may point to the importance of falsifications—but they blithely use falsified theories, they may sermonize how important it is to consider all the relevant evidence, and never mention those big and drastic facts which show that the theories they admire and accept may be as badly off as the older theories which they reject. In practice they slavishly repeat the most recent pronouncements of the top dogs in physics, though in doing so they must violate some very basic rules of their trade.”

explain the facts of nature. However, Feyerabend also reports that “according to our present results, hardly any theory is *consistent with* the facts. The demand to admit only those theories which are consistent with the available and accepted facts again leaves us without any theory. (I repeat: *without any theory*, for there is not a single theory that is not in some trouble or other)” (emphasis original).¹¹⁰

Creating Our Own Rules

In practice, the circular nature of scientific methodology discourages critical thinking and fosters dogmatism. Feyerabend denounces the existence of scientific dogmatism that prevents challenges to the reigning theory. “In cosmology a firm belief in the Big Bang now tends to devalue observations that clash with it.”¹¹¹ Scientific journals give the round-about to those who want to publish ideas contrary to the accepted theory, including evolution.¹¹² The reason for this dogmatism is a built-in circularity of reason and scientific methodology. Scientific research starts by defining a problem, and problems assume the existence of theories. Conversely, when a theory is formulated and accepted it generates and influences research.

The scientific method is a hermeneutically and theoretically guided process. Challenges to wide-reaching theories are not welcome because they not only disturb the theory, but the entire constellation of other theories, laws, and hypotheses that depend on it for their existence. It is much easier to accept challenges to less inclusive or influential theories. This shows how difficult it is to maintain the critical nature of scientific research. Unfortunately, “there is no alternative to the project of using what we think we know to appraise the methods which we take to be reliable.”¹¹³

As Kuhn explains, we become scientists by belonging to a scientific tradition that passes the rules of the game from one generation to another.¹¹⁴ There is no alternative because reason’s operation, the heart and engine of the scientific method, requires the application of a priori

¹¹⁰Ibid., 50. Feyerabend, 39, states: “Considering how the invention, elaboration and the use of theories which are inconsistent, not just with other theories, but even with *experiments, facts, observations*, we may start by pointing out that *no single theory ever agrees with all the known facts in its domain*. And the trouble is not created by rumors, or by the result of sloppy procedure. It is created by experiments and measurements of the highest precision and reliability” (emphasis original).

¹¹¹Ibid., 241.

¹¹²Verne Grant, *The Evolutionary Process: A Critical Review of Evolutionary Process* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 14.

¹¹³Ibid., 299.

¹¹⁴Kuhn, 11-22; see also Feyerabend, 214-237.

ideas to the objects it attempts to understand and explain. The term “a priori” may be interpreted in various ways. Kant defines it as forms, categories, and regulative ideas. Others define it to be hermeneutical presuppositions, categories, schemata, patterns, theories, rules of the game. Change in the interpretation of the a priori leads to paradigm changes both in reason and science. This brings us to the impact of postmodernity on the understanding of scientific methodology.

Universal Rules?

Scientific results depend on the application of a priori rules, which include macro- (philosophical assumptions), meso- (methodological matrices involving an entire constellation of scientific rules and procedures), and micro- (theories, laws, and procedures that apply to specific fields of research) hermeneutical presuppositions. These hermeneutical presuppositions involve complex sets of theories and procedures of various kinds that are not derived from data or facts, but which are variously interpreted by philosophers and scientists.

Scientific rationality is about using the “right” criteria, rules, or categories to process the data, information, reasoning, and experiments required in the operation of scientific research. In classical and modern times, it was generally assumed on metaphysical grounds that all human beings, especially scientific researchers, worked under the same universal rules. Various metaphysical and epistemological theories told “us why our criteria of successful inquiry are not just our criteria but also the right criteria, nature’s criteria, the criteria which will lead us to the truth.”¹¹⁵ Thus, modern science was born when philosophers still assumed that the a priori rules of reason (epistemology) were universally given to all human beings (foundationalism).

The demise of classical ontology precipitated by empiricist criticism made the modern sciences possible, but, unfortunately, left them without the foundations on which claims for universal truth had been grounded. Postmodernity is the recognition of this fact.¹¹⁶ The myth of science, briefly put, consists in the illusion that empirical data is a foundation that produces the “true,” absolute, universal, and totally certain results that the old classical metaphysics claimed to reach, but never did because it was too speculative and removed from reality. That many scientists still think along these general lines

¹¹⁵Rorty, 299.

¹¹⁶Jean-Francois Lyotard explains that postmodernity has an “incredulity toward metanarratives” (*The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979], xxiv). He, xxiv, states: “The obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably, to the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it.”

becomes apparent in the controversy about the underdetermination of scientific theories. In simple terms, can a body of empirical evidence render only one rationally acceptable and valid explanation or many? Positivists (modernists) argue in the affirmative; postpositivists (postmodernists or relativists) argue in the negative. The controversy started by Hume continues unabated into the twenty-first century.¹¹⁷

From scientific practice, as described by Feyerabend, and from philosophical reflection, as developed by Heidegger and Gadamer, postmodernity has made clear that there are no universal principles on which the rational search for truth can be grounded. The principles and rules of science are themselves the product of involved and complex rational interpretations that change with the passage of time.¹¹⁸ Thus, absolute reason was replaced by hermeneutical reason.¹¹⁹ Scientists can no longer assume a rational approach and or that the application of the “right” rules of the game will render one single, possible explanation of reality, especially when the issue is so complex and inclusive as in the question of origins. The more complex the facts are the more likely various possible rational explanations will emerge.¹²⁰

Conflict of Interpretations or Universal Truth?

Can we decide between conflicting theories? Modernist positivist philosophers of science say, yes, by a correct application of scientific methodology, rationality, and with the progress and accumulation of scientific knowledge. Postmodernist (postpositivist) philosophers of science say no. This debate takes place under the label “commensurability of scientific discourses or theories.” Thus, this is not a debate about scientific method, but about reason in general. Rorty describes commensurability as the ability “to be brought under a set of rules which will tell us how rational agreement can be reached on what would settle the issue on every point where statements seem to conflict. These rules tell us how to construct an ideal situation, in

¹¹⁷For an introduction to the debate on underdetermination, see Laudan, 29-54.

¹¹⁸Feyerabend, 51, states: “The material which a scientist *actually* has at his disposal, his laws, his experimental results, his mathematical techniques, his epistemological prejudices, his attitude towards the absurd consequences of the theories which he accepts, is indeterminate in many ways, ambiguous, *and never fully separated from the historical background*. It is contaminated by principles which he does not know and which, if known, would be extremely hard to test. Questionable views on cognition, such as the view that our senses, used in normal circumstances, give reliable information about the world, may invade the observation language itself, constituting the observational terms as well as the distinction between veridical and illusory appearance” (emphasis original).

¹¹⁹This seems to be suggested by Rorty, 315-356.

¹²⁰For an introduction to the notion of simplicity and its role in science, see Popper, 136-145.

which all residual disagreements will be seen to be 'noncognitive' or merely verbal, or else merely temporary—capable of being resolved by doing something further."¹²¹

Those who believe in the commensurability of theories assume that the rules to bring about rational agreement exist and are accepted by all merely because humans are rational beings. In this scenario, only one theory is rational. The rest are "irrational," or as Rorty says, "noncognitive." To agree is to be rational; to disagree with the consensus is to be "irrational." I think most scientists and theologians believe that there is only one rational explanation for every problem. It is from this meso-hermeneutical presupposition that the relation between evolution and creation is addressed. Since there can be only one possible rational explanation, any possible answer must, therefore, be false or true. Scientific methodology, being rational, is able to decide whether an explanation is true or false. The decision is made on the basis of universal, rational rules of the rational-scientific game. In our case, scientists advancing evolutionary theory dismiss creation as nonrational.¹²² Since creation is based on supernatural revelation, it infringes upon the material condition of method and, therefore, cannot be rational. If it is not rational, then it is not true either.

Those who believe in the incommensurability of theories assume as evident that there are no general rules of rationality binding all human nature.¹²³ They are convinced that rational rules are determined by conventional consensus among human beings and are transmitted through tradition and education. Since there are no general rules that bind all human beings together, there is no rational agreement between traditions that work under different sets of rational rules. So neither creation nor evolution can be considered irrational; both are rational, but work under different rules of rationality and method. Neither can be dismissed as "irrational" or "unscientific." In the case of conflict between theories, postmodern philosophy asserts that reason cannot help us to decide between them. This is because reason has no parameters or rules that may serve as guides in the decision-making process. Reason can only help us to

¹²¹Rorty, 316.

¹²²In contrast to the methods of science, "the methods and claims of creationists are not subject to experimentation, prediction, revision, or falsification. To them, these pursuits are irrelevant, because they believe they possess the 'truth' as set forth in the Bible" (Berra, 4).

¹²³Laudan, 6-14, deals with incommensurability at a linguistic level which challenges the translation and comparison of contents of rival theories. He correctly argues in favor of translation and comparison. The ultimate problem, however, is how to decide between conflicting theories once we have compared them. The problem between creationism and evolutionism is not about translation or comparison, but about truth. Can the truth be decided on the basis of reasoning and interpretation?

interpret reality, but it may not decide between the interpretations it helped us to produce.

In many cases, theories are incommensurable. However, this does not mean that we cannot decide which theory is true. It means only that we cannot decide on a rational basis. There are other ways besides reason that we can take to decide between theories. Postmodernity only reveals rational incommensurability. We cannot decide the truth about theory from a set of scientific rules of interpretation and make decisions about what is truth. Yet, scientific method has more than merely rational rules of interpretation. Rules of interpretation are, simply, the contributions from the side of the subject in the subject-object relationship. But knowledge and scientific method also have contributions from the side of the object. So, scientific theories are *incommensurable* from the side of the subject (rational rules), but *commensurable* from the side of the object, which reason attempts to interpret. Thus, creation and evolution are incommensurable from the side of the rules of the game they operate under (the conditions of method), but are commensurable from the perspective of the reality they attempt to interpret, e.g., the origin of the universe and life on earth. The decision to adopt one theory over another, then, does not flow from the rational rules of the game, but from the relation of theory and reality. In this way, we come back to the complex issues of verifiability, corroboration, and the testing of scientific theories.¹²⁴

Reason and science can only produce conflicting interpretations, not universal truths that all human beings are bound to accept merely because humans are rational beings. Moreover, reason cannot help us to decide between conflicting interpretations. But a choice must be made, otherwise theory-oriented scientific method cannot operate. Use of a theory implicitly implies a belief in its truthfulness. Since we do not choose on the basis of universal, rational truth, choices always involve faith. With the passage of time, choices become immovable scientific dogmas, especially when used to understand other aspects of reality. This happens in science, particularly in the case of the interpretation of the origins of the universe and life. Changes in all-inclusive issues impact the entire field of scientific studies.

The general description of scientific methodology provided above clearly dispels the popular myth of science as an infallible instrument for

¹²⁴This is a very complex issue. Since scientific testing does not take place outside of theory but from theory and reason, it is not clear whether an "impartial" decision can be consistently reached, especially in macro-hermeneutical issues. According to Kuhn, one of the "bad boys" in the philosophy of science, changes in macro-hermeneutical issues are possible, but take long periods of time and occur within the dynamics of hermeneutics and history. They do not result from the unprejudiced use of reason or scientific methodology (Kuhn, 10-11).

discovering absolute truth. Postmodernism has brought down the myth of reason as the absolute arbiter of what truth is. Recent criticism of scientific methodology has shown the historical-hermeneutical component of scientific methodology and its dependence on tradition and authority. In Feyerabend's words, "science is not sacrosanct."¹²⁵ However in Western society, the myth persists, probably due to the need to find answers to perennial questions and the willingness to accept as final the theories of science rather than traditional philosophical or theological explanations. Because empirical science seems to be closer to the facts than philosophy and theology, our culture confers to it a higher reliability and authority.

For theology, these philosophical developments mean that a theology based on the principle of *sola Scriptura* is not irrational. The counterpart to what scientists call speculation or guess in creating and building a comprehensive evolutionary worldview, is what Scripture calls divine inspiration. Evolution stands as the rational explanation produced by the scientific community in the Western world, while biblical inspiration stands as the rational explanation of the community of faith received from God by way of divine revelation and inspiration. Certainly, from a rational perspective, these two theories are incommensurable. From the perspective of the reality they explain, however, they are commensurable. Because they explain the same reality in opposite ways, they stand in conflict. And we are compelled to choose between them because the functioning of reason and scientific methodology requires we assume a specific cosmology. Yet, because reason has no universal rules, choices of cosmology stand on faith, not only in theology, but also in empirical science. Thus, reason does not force Adventism, for instance, to adapt the biblical account of creation to an evolutionary explanation in order to safeguard its rationality.

Conclusion

We have so far described the major components involved in the method on which the prestige of science and the authority of the evolutionary theory is built. As the church considers how to relate to evolution, it is important to have in mind a general picture of science. The description presented in this article has been based primarily on Bunge's description and Popper's focused analysis. I would like to conclude this discussion of the scientific method with Popper's conclusions.

The analysis of scientific methodology as a general research model reveals some important characteristics that should be considered when approaching the science-theology relation and the question of origins.

(1) *Science does not produce absolute truth.* The application of the

¹²⁵Feyerabend, 214.

scientific method does not produce absolute final discovery of truth, but helps us to wrestle with the constant task of interpreting reality. "Science is not a system of certain, or well-established, statements; nor is it a system which steadily advances towards a state of finality. Our science is not knowledge (*episteme*): it can never claim to have attained truth, or even to be a substitute for it, such as probability. . . . *We do not know: we can only guess.* And our guesses are guided by the unscientific, the metaphysical (though biologically explicable) faith in laws, in regularities which we can uncover—discover" (emphasis original).¹²⁶

(2) *Science is not dogmatic.* The dogmatic use of scientific conclusions, therefore, goes against the method and spirit of science.

Once put forward, none of our "anticipations" are dogmatically upheld. Our method of research is not to defend them, in order to prove how right we were. On the contrary, we try to overthrow them. Using all the weapons of our logical, mathematical, and technical armory, we try to prove that our anticipations were false—in order to put forward, in their stead, new unjustified and unjustifiable anticipations, new "rash and premature prejudices", as Bacon derisively called them.¹²⁷

(3) *To do science is to interpret.* Scientific method does not proceed by way of discovering absolute truth in empirical facts, but by way of interpretation, construction of explanations, bold ideas, and speculation. "Out of uninterpreted sense-experiences science cannot be distilled, no matter how industriously we gather and sort them. Bold ideas, unjustified anticipations, and speculative thought, are our only means for interpreting nature: our only organon, our only instrument for grasping her."¹²⁸

(4) *Science as interpretation requires scientific a priories.* This becomes apparent when we deal with the hermeneutical condition of method. "Even the careful and sober testing of our ideas by experience is in its turn inspired by ideas: experiment is planned action in which every step is guided by theory."¹²⁹

(5) *Science cannot produce absolutely certain, only tentative, results.* This is a most important characteristic of science because it anticipates postmodernity. "The old scientific idea of *episteme*—of absolutely certain, demonstrable knowledge—has proved to be an idol. The demand for scientific objectivity makes it inevitable that every scientific statement must remain *tentative forever*. It may indeed be corroborated, but every corroboration is relative to other statements which, again, are tentative.

¹²⁶ Popper, 278.

¹²⁷Ibid., 279.

¹²⁸Ibid., 280.

¹²⁹Ibid.

Only in our subjective experience of conviction in our subjective faith, can we be ‘absolutely certain’” (emphasis original).¹³⁰ “The wrong view of science betrays itself in the craving to be right; for it is not his possession of knowledge, of irrefutable truth, that makes the man of science, but his persistent and recklessly critical quest for truth.”¹³¹

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid., 281.

TOWARD A SCRIPTURAL AESTHETIC

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Introduction

Theologians and philosophers grapple with the meaning of Truth and Goodness. However, theology, unlike philosophy, has neglected a serious study of Beauty or Aesthetics within Scripture. Frank Gaebelein comments that most of the work done on Aesthetics in Christianity is accomplished within Roman and Anglo-Catholic thought. However, the roots of this discipline are found to be largely extrabiblical. Therefore, he notes, there is a pressing need for not only a scriptural “foundation for an authentic Christian aesthetic but also the corrective for artistic theory derived from other sources, however, excellent these may be.”¹

There are, however, reasons why Aesthetics has been neglected, especially within the Protestant/evangelical tradition. First, a concern for those in poverty leads some to view the concept of Aesthetics as objectionable. The luxury of Beauty is not appropriate when many are in desperate need of food, shelter, and justice. Others suggest that the urgency of Christian eschatology does not allow for unnecessary or peripheral aesthetic considerations, because “neither the old Testament nor the New Testament has any theory of the beautiful.”² Peter Forsyth argues that the second commandment simultaneously killed both idolatry and “plastic imagination,” or “at least it placed it under such a disadvantage that it could hardly live and certainly could not grow.”³ Additionally, aesthetics is sometimes regarded as part of Greek philosophy, and thus, is not a theological concern. Finally, with the dominance of critical theological studies and the development of postmodernity in contemporary society, seeking for *any* fundamentals, e.g., Truth, Goodness, Beauty, becomes impossible for some theologians.

In spite of objections to the contrary, there remains, however, a need to develop an Aesthetic of Scripture. Gerhard von Rad insightfully remarks that “no aesthetic of the Old Testament has yet been written.”⁴

¹Frank E. Gaebelein, *The Arts and Truth: Regaining the Vision of Greatness* (Portland: OR: Multnomah, 1985), 56.

²George A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1962), s.v. “Beauty.”

³Peter Taylor Forsyth, *Christ on Parnassus* (London: Independent Press, 1959), 43.

⁴Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper

The same observation can also be made for the NT and theological studies.⁵ Yet, a survey of Scripture demonstrates the importance of aesthetic detail. For instance, nearly 40 percent of the OT uses poetic language. Furthermore, Israel's artistic genius was expended in religious architecture and decorations. Nearly 50 chapters in the Pentateuch alone detail God's directions for the construction of a lavish sanctuary, while several more chapters in the historical books describe the architectural design of Solomon's temple. In addition, Ezekiel devotes several chapters to the glories of a "third" temple. In the NT, the Apocalypse also contains much language that is highly aesthetic.

God's Aesthetic Nature

God is described in Scripture as having various attributes including Father (Matt 6:9; 1 Chron 20:10f.; Isa 9:6; Mal 1:6; 2:10), Judge (Gen 18:25; 1 Sam 2:10; Ps 51:6; Isa 11:3-5; Dan 12:2; 2 Tim 4:1, 8; Heb 12:23), and Warrior (Gen 3:15; Exod 15:3; Col 2:13-15; Rev 12; 19:6-11).

However, God also has an aesthetical nature. For example, he is portrayed as a potter: "But now, O Lord . . . [.] we are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand" (Isa 64:8; see also Jer 18:6; Rom 9:20-24). Furthermore, God is also involved in the creation of human artworks. He commissions lavish works of art, such as the sanctuary, providing both the architectural blueprints and the instructions for its furnishings (1 Chron 28:10-13; 29:1). Even the garments of the officiating priests were specifically designed for aesthetic appeal. Besides manifesting glory, the priestly vestments were to be made "for beauty" (Exod 28:2, 40), suggesting that beauty is perceived as an end in itself.⁶

& Row, 1962), 1:364.

⁵For example, Millard J. Erikson's massive 1,247-page *Christian Theology* includes only one paragraph regarding the aesthetics of Scripture. He writes: "Beyond the logical or rational character of theology, there is also its aesthetic character," which may be found in "the great compass and interrelatedness of the doctrines," in "the organic character of theology," in its "form of symmetry, comprehensiveness, and coherence" ([Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989], 1245-1246). However, Erikson makes no mention of the extensive display of finely crafted poetry and narratives nor of literary structures, all of which von Rad, 1:364, is sensitive to: "[Israel's] most intensive encounter with beauty was in the religious sphere, in the contemplation of Jahweh's revelation and action; and because of this concentration of the experience of beauty upon the *credenda*, Israel occupies a special place in the history of aesthetics."

⁶Francis A. Schaeffer notes that "the temple was covered with precious stones for beauty. There was no pragmatic reason for the precious stones. They had no utilitarian purpose. God simply wanted beauty in the temple. God is interested in beauty. . . . And beauty has a place in the worship of God" (*Art and the Bible* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1976], 15).

God-inspired Architectural Design

Constructing the divinely commissioned sanctuary required advanced artistic techniques. The book of Exodus (35:30-35) records God's commission of Bezalel "to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship." Bezalel was able to accomplish this task because God "put in his heart the ability to teach . . . [and] filled [him] with skill to do all manner of work." Gene Edward Veith Jr. outlines several important principles concerning the divine perspective on aesthetic value in this passage:⁷

1. *Art is within God's will.* The tabernacle contained artistic designs. God was not to be worshiped in a bare, unfurnished tent. Rather, the Israelites were instructed by God to "make [a] Tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim worked into them by a skilled craftsman" (Exod 26:1). The furnishings were to be constructed of pure gold, delicately carved wood, elegant tapestries, bronze, and precious stones (Exod 25). God not only provided precise instructions to the Israelites concerning sacred architecture and furnishings, but he also gave instructions to record these details.

2. *Artistry as vocation.* Exodus 35:30 states that God "called" Bezalel for the work of constructing and furnishing the tabernacle; thus Bezalel was specifically called by God to be an artist.

3. *Artistic ability is God's gift.* Not only did God call Bezalel to be an artist, but he gave him the ability to accomplish this task (Exod 36:2). Artistic talent is not merely innate human skill nor the accomplishment of individual genius, but rather it is a gift of God.⁸

The first gift given to Bezalel was that of the Spirit of God (Exod 35:31). The ministry of the Holy Spirit is not generally linked to artistic talent. But here it was the *initial* gift given to him. Bezalel is the first person recorded in Scripture to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. He is neither a priest nor a prophet, but an artist.⁹ The implication is that the works of Bezalel expressed the will of God through the medium and language of art.

4. *God inspired Bezalel to teach.* Not only was he given the gifts necessary to construct and adorn the tabernacle, but he was further empowered to instruct others.

⁷The following material on Bezalel is adapted from Gene Edward Veith Jr., *State of the Arts: From Bezalel to Mapplethorpe* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 103-116.

⁸The NT echoes the same sentiment: "Every good and perfect gift is from above" (Jas 1:17).

⁹It could be argued that artistic skill is a "spiritual gift."

God-inspired Liturgy

Just as Israel's sacred architecture and decoration were inspired by God, so also was its liturgy given by divine inspiration.

The book of Psalms played an important role in Israelite worship and liturgy. Phrases such as "sing praises unto the Lord" or "I will sing unto the Lord" occur multiple times. Elsewhere in the OT, whenever Israelite worship is recounted, music is evident and impressive. For example, 1 Chron 23:1-5 records that "four thousand praised the Lord with musical instruments." Later, when Hezekiah restored temple worship, he "stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, . . . for thus was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets." While it may be argued that aesthetic dimensions are found in the sacred worship of nations throughout history, Israel insists that its God designed every detail of his worship, including architecture, furnishings, priestly attire, and liturgy.

Aesthetic Elements in Scripture

God's involvement in Israel's architecture and liturgy is not the only evidence of his aesthetic nature. Nor was Israel's artistry restricted to the representational arts. There is also recognition that "the supreme expression of Israel's capacity for beauty is in her gift of language."¹⁰

1. *Hebrew poetry.* The poetry of the OT is highly extolled in both biblical and secular studies.

a. *Psalms.* The Psalms are generally classified as hymns and prayers to God, and simultaneously, God's word to humanity: "the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was on my tongue" (2 Sam 23:1-2). The Psalter is divided into five books. Some have suggested a correspondence between the books of the Psalms and the Pentateuch.¹¹ Thus, it is not a random collection of songs and prayers, but a carefully ordered structure of key words and themes.

b. *Prophets.* The prophets also spoke in poetic language. Alice L. Laffey observes that "literary considerations are indispensable to any adequate study of the prophets. . . . The messages were intended not to inform minds but to change hearts. It is therefore necessary to pay attention to the ways the poets spoke, the forms and techniques they used in their efforts to make their word as effective as possible."¹²

¹⁰Buttrick, 1:372.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Alice L. Laffey, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: A Feminist Perspective* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 149.

2. *Music.* There are close ties between prophecy and music. In 1 Sam 10:5, the prophet informs Saul after anointing him: “[When] you come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is . . . you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying.” In 2 Kgs 3:14-15, Jehoshaphat inquires of Elisha for counsel from God. Elisha’s response is “Bring me a musician.” “When the musician played, then the hand of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied.”

3. *Nature.* Though God appointed the great beauty of both the desert sanctuary and the Jerusalem temple, he also insisted that the exquisite lily from his own hand is still more beautiful than the greatest artworks commissioned for Solomon’s temple (Luke 12:27). The Psalter, especially, is filled with praise for the Creator and his created world. Therefore, the study of the natural world is an aid to lift the mind to the Master Artist (Job 38:47). The Scriptures play an important role in the proper interpretation of the natural order. “Utility is not the reason behind creation: not everything that exists was made to be useful to human beings, and therefore their true meaning can never be fathomed within an anthropocentric world-view.”¹³

4. *Biblical narrative.* Meir Sternberg suggests that the literary nature of the biblical narratives can help to substantiate the validity of Scripture: “The empirical evidence, historical and sociocultural as well as compositional, leaves no doubt about his [the biblical narrator’s] inspired standing.”¹⁴ Moreover, the narratives seem to have been carefully woven together in a calculated sequence. Literary scholars have begun to appreciate why, for example, the narrative of Judah and Tamar is placed within the narratives of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis.¹⁵ Through such careful placement and structuring, the narrative linkages themselves reveal theological content.¹⁶

5. *Parables.* The Messiah often employed the literary genre of parables. Calvin M. Johansson notes that the parable “is a literary form akin to the fable but taken from the familiar areas of common life. To understand properly what Jesus has to say through this literary genre, the parable must be seen as

¹³Vinoth Ramachandra, *Gods That Fail: Modern Idolatry and Christian Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 12; see also Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 110. Paul also draws attention to the power of nature (though fallen) to instruct about God (Rom 1:20).

¹⁴Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 77.

¹⁵Cf. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 3.

¹⁶Ibid.

a genuine art form and, as such, creative imagination is necessary in getting to the parable's intent."¹⁷ For example, when asked to define "who is my neighbor," Jesus, rather than providing an abstract definition, recounted the parable of the Good Samaritan.

6. *Theological Discourse.* The Pauline materials contain profound theological discourse and doxology. Paul's Epistle to the Romans works through several chapters of "analysis and argument" that "give way to adoration. Like a traveller who has reached the summit of a high mountain, the apostle views the vast panorama of salvation history and bursts into praise. . . . Before Paul goes on to outline the practical implications of the gospel, he falls down before God in worship, chanting his doxology in poetic strains."¹⁸

7. *Apocalypse.* Stark warnings and curses underscore the profound importance of the Apocalypse. The entire book displays an imposing mosaic of drama, architecture, and vivid panoramas in which God displays his perspective on salvation history. The book of Revelation is a complex tapestry of language and images borrowed from the OT and woven together into a carefully sequenced aesthetic display.

The literary manifestation of Scripture also includes the artful construction of sentences, verses, chapters, and entire books with extensive usage of inclusios, chiasms, panels, and parallel writing. G. C. Caird, contra Rudolf Bultmann's position that the Bible writers were "mythopoeic" and "prescientific," believes that "there is, then, an accumulation of evidence that the biblical writers were not only skillful handlers of words (which is obvious) but were also well aware of the nature of their tools." Thus, "unitary perception is, to be sure, a well-attested phenomenon, but it is characteristic not of the primitive but of the creative mind in all ages."¹⁹

Implications

The nature of God's revelation is regularly expressed through artistic manifestation as opposed to analytical treatises and logical discourse.²⁰ Hans

¹⁷Calvin M. Johansson, *Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988), 79.

¹⁸John Stott, *Romans: God's Good News For the World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 309; see also James Bailey and Lyle Vander Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament: A Handbook* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 75.

¹⁹G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), 193, 197; see also Rudolph Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: SPCK, 1953), 1:3ff.

²⁰James I. Packer, "An Introduction to Systematic Spirituality," *Crux* 26 (1990): 6; see

Urs von Balthasar opines that theology should abandon “the extra-theological categories of a worldly philosophical aesthetics (above all poetry)” and develop its own “theory of beauty from the data of revelation itself.”²¹ T. R. Wright comments cogently that “it sometimes seems that there are two different ways of thinking: one that assumes literary forms, whether narrative, poetic, or dramatic, and another that argues ‘systematically’ in terms of concepts. Many theologians certainly have fallen into this second category but my thesis is that theology need not be confined to this; it is possible and even necessary to talk about God in the form of stories, poems and plays.”²² Laurence W. Wood notes the negative results of this type of thinking: “Especially since the rise of modern philosophy and modern science, we have been largely inattentive to the realities of the unseen, the intuitive, the affective, and the feeling depths of reality. Consequently the intuitive mode of consciousness has been denigrated and subordinated to the rational mode of consciousness.”²³

Aesthetics as a Means of Experiential Intensification

It has been suggested that for a person sensitive to artistic dimensions, aesthetic expression can intensify experience. Harold Hannum writes: “Aesthetic pleasure and a sensitiveness to beauty does [*sic*] not contradict religion, nor is it [*sic*] a frill or unnecessary adornment. A true appreciation of beauty is a deeper experience which will enhance all spiritual values.”²⁴ This aesthetic intensification could arguably be an important facet of the divine intent. But beyond this, literary devices may be the superior medium to express theological truth, as Wright hints: “The whole point of reading literature, its importance as a human discipline, beyond that of giving pleasure (which is by no means unimportant), is that it says something about life which cannot be said in any other way. . . . They have the capacity to generate new meaning by

also Alister McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Conference of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 107.

²¹Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Seeing the Form*, vol. 1, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1983), 9. However, in spite of his intentions to do otherwise, von Balthasar is not entirely successful in extricating himself from philosophical discussion.

²²Wright, 2.

²³Laurence W. Wood, “Recent Brain Research and the Mind-Body Dilemma,” *AsTJ* 41 (1986): 50.

²⁴Harold Byron Hannum, *The Christian Search For Beauty* (Nashville: Southern Publishing, 1975), 39.

stretching language beyond its ordinary uses."²⁵

T. R. Marland agrees that there is more involved in the aesthetic expression of theology than intensification: "Art and religion do not so much express fundamental feelings common to mankind as determine these feelings. . . . Art and religion provide the patterns of meaning, the frames of perception, by which society interprets its experiences and from which it makes conclusions about the nature of its world. They tell us what is; they do not respond to what is."²⁶

However, the Christian church rarely acknowledges the extensive aesthetic manifestation of God in Scripture when constructing theological argument. Instead, it persistently orders its theological thinking along philosophical lines, relegating aesthetic value, even if only implicitly, to the emotional needs of the believer. However, this is in noticeable contrast to God's means of scriptural revelation, where he affirms the wholistic nature of each human being by communicating through aesthetic manifestations. While the mind is an important aspect of human nature, God does not limit his communication to abstract reasoning or systematic discourse. Larry Crabb notes that "biblical metaphors—*panting* after God, *tasting* God, *drinking* living water, *eating* bread from heaven—make it clear that finding God is not merely academic. We are to do more than understand truth about God; we are to encounter him, as a bride encounters her husband on their wedding night. Finding God is a sensual experience" (emphasis original).²⁷

There is in Scripture no emphasis on the mental cognitive powers as the sole receptor of truth. Indeed, aesthetic value appears to be a primary avenue for truth-teaching. Neither is there any instruction to escape a "bodily prison" in order to gain a closer proximity to the mind of God. Rather in both the OT and NT, divine truth is regularly conveyed to the human being through primarily aesthetic value,²⁸ through the wholistic use of mind and body.

Potential Dangers of Emphasizing Aesthetic Values

God established an elaborate system of corporate worship. However, the internal condition of the participant is explicitly targeted, rather than an

²⁵T. R. Wright, *Theology and Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 4.

²⁶T. R. Marland, *Religion As Art: An Interpretation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 12. Van Meter Ames suggests a similar idea: "Art remains itself a timeless present of realization amid the incompleteness of existence" ("Expression and Aesthetic Expression," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 6 [1974]: 175).

²⁷Larry Crabb Jr., *Finding God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 181; see also Robin Skelton, *Poetic Truth* (London: Heinemann, 1978), 120.

²⁸It can be argued, contra the Greek philosophical position, that the human body is capable of, indeed necessary for, the reception of divine truth and is not merely a "prison" to be escaped.

outward, aesthetically perfect worship that may camouflage inner motivation. This position is noticeably different from that of Greek philosophy and some modern thinking, in which aesthetic beauty is viewed as salvific in itself. God repeatedly warns against a glorious worship that is used to disguise a degenerate life (Amos 5:23-24; Prov 28:9; Jer 6:20; Ezek 7:20; 30:30-33). Aesthetic values, though extensive and prominent in Scripture, are never salvific.

Another inherent danger is that an emphasis on aesthetic appeal can promote a superficial religion, supplanting the true faith it is supposed to convey. Calvin Johansson notes that

idolatry, whether it be a homemade religion of positive thinking or a comfortable aestheticism, can thus offer a sort of domesticated spirituality. Our human need for transcendence, for meaning, for value, can be met to a degree, in, for example, a majestic symphony without the pain of repentance and the cost of discipleship. . . . Properly, the sense of transcendence in a symphony . . . can and should make us mindful of the transcendent realm of the infinite Lord. Yet it need not. Many people are satisfied with the "richness of life" offered by aesthetic stimulation, which by its nature can make few self-consuming demands.²⁹

Thus, "art, like religion, expresses the spiritual capacities of our human nature; we judge them as similar in their intent since they constitute our most salutary refuges from transient and contingent, from the practical and the pedestrian."³⁰

Evaluation and Judgment of Aesthetic Expression

There are indicators in Scripture that aesthetic expression can be evaluated and judged, e.g., the Golden Calf experience, following the giving of the law at Sinai. Having both experienced for himself the effects of idolatrous ceremony as the son of the king's daughter, and having been warned by God about what was currently taking place, Moses was able to assess the situation immediately.

Paul, speaking in the NT, also suggests that aesthetic expression can be evaluated and judged. In his epistle to the Philippian church, he gives an "aesthetic mandate": "Finally, brethren, whatever things are *true*, whatever things are *noble*, whatever things are *just*, whatever things are *pure*, whatever things are *lovely*, whatever things are of *good report*, if there is any *virtue*, and if there is anything *praiseworthy*—meditate on these things (Phil 4:8, emphasis supplied). It is important to evaluate and

²⁹Johansson, 139.

³⁰Harry B. Lee, "The Cultural Lag in Aesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 6 (1947): 120-121.

discriminate between worthy and less worthy aspects of any culture.³¹

Further, there remains the need for a wholistic approach to the understanding of human nature. Eddy Zemach argues for this position, suggesting that it is the aesthetic qualities that verify scientific theory, rather than empirical data. Thus, aesthetic function is foundational for establishing truth—for evaluation and judgment. He writes: “What I wish to do is prove that *if* you subscribe to any kind of realism, scientific or metaphysical, aesthetic features are a part of it. That is, if *any* predicates correctly describe objective reality, aesthetic predicates are among them” (emphasis original).³² Accordingly, as Zemach insists, science itself “is a pursuit of beauty, not of truth.”³³

Therefore, aesthetic value, though rightly studied extensively within philosophy, has been restricted and reduced wrongly to appealing only to the human’s emotional needs, unable to bear the weight of propositional truth.³⁴ This assumption was based on the idea that aesthetic values are grounded on experience, located only in the affective side of human nature.³⁵ However, in the perspective observed in Scripture, and further argued by Zemach, this is not adequate. The relationship of beauty to that of truth and goodness is foundational, not peripheral.

From such a perspective, then, one can understand why God employs almost exclusively aesthetic media to communicate truth to humanity. Perhaps the poet Keats was correct after all: “Beauty is truth, truth,

³¹Johansson, 43, 44.

³²Eddy M. Zemach, *Real Beauty* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 56, 199.

³³*Ibid.*, 36. Martin Heidegger also suggests that aesthetic value is the superior revealer of truth: “Truth is the truth of being. Beauty does not occur alongside this truth. When truth sets itself into the work, it appears. Appearance—as this being of truth in the work as work—is beauty” (“The Origin of a Work of Art,” in *Philosophies of Art and Beauty: Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger*, ed. Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns [New York: Modern Library Giant, n.d.], 700).

³⁴For example, Susanne K. Langer claims that works of art are expressions of human *feeling* in a sensuous form presented for perception and contemplation. Her broad assumptions are similar to theories presented by Croce, Collingwood, and Dewey. Aesthetics is generally related to emotive values. Kenneth Dorter summarizes: “There are at least four levels of experience at which art seems to express a certain kind of truth: those of (1) our emotions, (2) cultural values, (3) sensory experience, and (4) the elusive *significance* of our experience” (“Conceptual Truth and Aesthetic Truth,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48 [1990], 37, emphasis original).

³⁵This view prevailed among the British eighteenth-century Empiricists (including Hume) and the German Rationalists (including Leibniz and Baumgarten) (Harold Osborne, “Some Theories of Aesthetic Judgment,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 38 [1979], 135-144).

beauty: that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."³⁶

Conclusion

The biblical aesthetic is a holistic discipline, affirming the whole being of a person. The senses, rather than being a peripheral aspect of human nature that is secondary to the mind, are the foundational means for grasping truth and knowledge. The mind and human reason are not extolled as the primary avenue for receiving divine revelation in Scripture. Indeed, this revelation is diffused and filtered through the human being's aesthetic awareness which thereby undergirds and substantiates the identification of truth. Aesthetic pleasure is even offered as one of the rewards of salvation.³⁷

Accordingly, of the three main values—Truth, Goodness, and Beauty—it can be argued that Beauty (Aesthetics), though not salvific and though susceptible to misuse, is a fundamentally critical value in the biblical aesthetic.

³⁶From John Keats, "Ode to a Grecian Urn," *Lamia, Isabella, The Even of St. Agnes, and Other Poems* (London: Taylor and Hessey, 1820).

³⁷Cf. Isa 65:17-25 and Rev 21 and 22.

THE ADVENTIST TRINITY DEBATE PART 1: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

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Forty years have passed since Erwin R. Gane established that most of the leaders among the earliest Seventh-day Adventists held to an antitrinitarian theology. He also adduced strong evidence for a second hypothesis: that cofounder Ellen G. White was an exception to the majority view. She was, he averred, “a trinitarian monotheist.”¹ Gane did not attempt to reconstruct the history of the change from rejection to acceptance of trinitarianism, nor did he address extensively the question of Ellen White’s role in that theological shift. But by documenting two major starting points, he set the stage for other investigators to further his work.

Several authors have since taken up aspects of those two major issues. Russell Holt in 1969 built on Gane’s thesis, adding further significant evidence regarding James White, J. N. Andrews, A. C. Bourdeau, D. T. Bourdeau, R. F. Cottrell, A. T. Jones, W. W. Prescott, J. Edson White, and M. L. Andreasen. In conclusion, Holt argued that until 1890, the “field was dominated by” antitrinitarians; from 1890 to 1900, “the course of the denomination was decided by statements from Ellen G. White,” and during the period from 1900 to 1930, most of the leading antitrinitarians died, so that by 1931 trinitarianism “had triumphed and become the standard denominational position.” Thus Holt approximated the historical trajectory of the present research, though the size of his paper did not permit in-depth treatment.²

Two years later, L. E. Froom in *Movement of Destiny* argued for an earlier inception of trinitarianism, maintaining that E. J. Waggoner had become essentially trinitarian, or at least “anti-Arian,” as early as 1888, but only by “special pleading” could he sustain that aspect of his hypothesis.³ Nevertheless, *Movement of Destiny* offers a more detailed examination of the

¹Erwin R. Gane, “The Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer” (M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1963).

²Russell Holt, “The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance” (Term paper, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1969), 25.

³Le Roy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 279. A contemporary review calls Froom’s argument at this point an instance of “special pleading” (C. Mervyn Maxwell, review of *Movement of Destiny* by Le Roy Edwin Froom, in *AUSS* 10 [January 1972]: 121).

primary sources on trinitarianism and antitrinitarianism in Adventism than can be found in any other place. For sheer bulk, his work makes a major contribution to the history of the Adventist theology of the Godhead.

Merlin Burt, in 1996, contributed much-needed depth and detail to the understanding of the doctrine in the first half of the twentieth century.⁴ Woodrow Whidden broadened the systematic theological discussion by linking the advances in soteriology and the new openness to trinitarianism during the decade of 1888-1898.⁵

All these contributions are basically supportive of Gane's original thesis. As a result, his contention that most of the leading SDA pioneers were antitrinitarian in their theology has become accepted Adventist history. In 2003, however, the meaning of that history for belief and practice is more hotly debated than ever. On one hand, some Adventists have wrapped the pioneers' antitrinitarianism in an ecumenical conspiracy theory, claiming that Adventist leaders sold out the original "truth" for the sake of public relations, as a means of shedding the denomination's sectarian image.⁶ On the other hand, the question of whether belief in God as a Trinity is really biblical receives additional force from the fact that some contemporary theologians in the wider Protestant community are taking up anew the historic questioning of traditional trinitarianism.⁷

The purpose of this article is to examine the process of change in the Adventist view of the Trinity in order to discover what motivated the changes, and also whether they resulted from a growing biblical understanding or were driven by a desire to be seen as orthodox by the wider Christian community.

The development of the doctrine of the Godhead in Seventh-day Adventism may be divided into six periods: (1) Antitrinitarian Dominance, 1846-1888; (2) Dissatisfaction with Antitrinitarianism, 1888-1898; (3) Paradigm Shift, 1898-1913; (4) Decline of Antitrinitarianism, 1913-1946; (5) Trinitarian Dominance, 1946-1980; and (6) Renewed Tensions, 1980 to the Present. The first three periods have been treated by Gane, Holt, and Froom, and the 1888-

⁴Merlin Burt, "Demise of Semi-Arianism and Anti-Trinitarianism in Adventist Theology, 1888-1957" (term paper, Andrews University, 1996). Ellen G. White Research Center, Andrews University. Burt's paper extends some elements of the history through 1968.

⁵Woodrow W. Whidden, "Salvation Pilgrimage: The Adventist Journey into Justification by Faith and Trinitarianism," *Ministry*, April 1998, 5-7.

⁶David Clayton, "The Omega of Deadly Heresies," n.p., n.d. [ca. 2000], in the files of the author. Cf. idem, "Some Facts Concerning the Omega Heresy," www.restorationministry.com/Open_Face/html/2000/open_face_oct_2000.htm; accessed Mar. 10, 2003. See also Bob Deiner and others in nn. 75-77 below.

⁷See, e.g., Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Christianity's Self-Inflicted Wound* (Bethesda, MD: Christian Universities Press, 1998).

1957 era by Merlin Burt, but none of these deal extensively with trinitarian issues during the Kellogg crisis⁸ or the period since 1980.⁹

Antitrinitarian Dominance, 1846-1888

From about 1846 to 1888, the majority of Adventists rejected the concept of the Trinity—at least as they understood it. All the leading writers were antitrinitarian, although the literature contains occasional references to members who held trinitarian views. Ambrose C. Spicer, the father of General Conference President William Ambrose Spicer, had been a Seventh Day Baptist minister before his conversion to Adventism in 1874. He evidently remained trinitarian, because W. A. Spicer recounted to A. W. Spalding that his father “grew so offended at the anti-trinitarian atmosphere in Battle Creek that he ceased preaching.”¹⁰ S. B. Whitney had been trinitarian, but in the course of his indoctrination as an Adventist in 1861, became a convinced antitrinitarian. His experience gives evidence that at least some ministers taught antitrinitarianism as an essential element of the instruction of new converts.¹¹ R. F. Cottrell, on the other hand, wrote in the *Review* that while he disbelieved in the Trinity, he had never “preached against it” or previously written about it.¹² A third bit of evidence that not all were agreed on antitrinitarianism was the remark of D. T. Bourdeau in 1890: “Although we claim to be believers in, and worshipers of, only one God, I have thought that there are as many gods among us as there are conceptions of the Deity.”¹³

Those who rejected the traditional Trinity doctrine of the Christian creeds were devout believers in the biblical testimony regarding the eternity of God the Father, the deity of Jesus Christ “as Creator, Redeemer and Mediator,” and the “importance of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁴

⁸See Froom, 349-356. J. H. Kellogg’s espousal of trinitarianism will be explored in Part 2 of this series.

⁹See Fernando L. Canale, “Doctrine of God,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen, Commentary Reference Series, vol. 12 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 117-118, 126, 128-129, 132, 138-140, 145, 148-150.

¹⁰A. W. Spalding to H. C. Lacey, June 2, 1947, Adventist Heritage Center, Andrews University.

¹¹Seymour B. Whitney, “Both Sides,” *Review and Herald*, Feb. 25 and Mar. 4, 1862, 101-103, 109-111.

¹²R. F. Cottrell, “The Doctrine of the Trinity,” *Review and Herald*, June 1, 1869.

¹³D. T. Bourdeau, “We May Partake of the Fullness of the Father and the Son,” *Review and Herald*, Nov 18, 1890, 707.

¹⁴Gane, 109.

While some, very early in Adventist history, held that Christ had been created,¹⁵ by 1888 it was widely accepted that he had preexisted from “so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension” he was “practically without beginning.” Whatever that beginning may have involved, it was not by “creation.”¹⁶ Moreover, they weren’t initially convinced that the Holy Spirit was an individual divine Person and not merely an expression for the divine presence, power, or influence.

“Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was an impossible for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being,” wrote Joseph Bates regarding his conversion in 1827. He told his father, “If you can convince me that we are one in this sense, that you are my father, and I your son; and also that I am your father, and you my son, then I can believe in the trinity.” Because of this difference, he chose to join the Christian Connection rather than the Congregational church of his parents.¹⁷ One might be tempted to dismiss Bates’s assessment as simple ignorance of the meaning of Trinity, but there were then and remain today a variety of views claiming the term “Trinity.” Cottrell observed in 1869 that there were “a multitude of views” on the Trinity, “all of them orthodox, I suppose, as long as they nominally assent to the doctrine.”¹⁸

The early Adventists set forth at least six reasons for their rejection of the term “Trinity.” The first was that they did not see biblical evidence for three persons in one Godhead. This was not a new objection.¹⁹ In its

¹⁵E.g., Uriah Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1865), 59. He later repudiated this view (idem, *Looking Unto Jesus* [Battle Creek: Review and Herald, 1898], 12, 17).

¹⁶E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1890), 21-22; cf. Uriah Smith, *Looking Unto Jesus*, 12, 17.

¹⁷Joseph Bates, *The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates* (Battle Creek, MI: SDA Publishing, 1868), 205.

¹⁸Cottrell, “The Doctrine of the Trinity.”

¹⁹The names of Arius, Servetus, and Socinus come to mind. Deut 6:4 clearly teaches that God is one, but while the writer could have used the term *yahid* to denote a solitary “one,” the term chosen was the Hebrew *’ehad*, which denotes a composite “one” or one of a group, in contrast to a solitary or emphatic “one.” The same word, *’ehad*, is used in Gen 2:24 for the unity of husband and wife, who become “one,” but within that oneness, still retain their individuality (Woodrow Whidden, “The Strongest Bible Evidence for the Trinity,” in *The Trinity: Understanding God’s Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships*, Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002], 33-34). An extended discussion of the biblical evidence is beyond the scope of this article, but suffice it to say that both the OT and NT contain indications that the One God is not merely solitary, and the NT explicitly refers to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (see, e.g., Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14) (ibid., 21-117).

simplest form, the concept of Trinity is the result of affirming, on the authority of Scripture, both the “oneness” and the “threeness” of God, despite human inability to fully understand the personal, divine Reality those terms point to. How this can be explained has been the subject of much thought and speculation over the centuries. The influence of Greek philosophy on the doctrinal developments of early and medieval Christian history is well known.²⁰

A second reason the early Adventists gave for rejecting the Trinity was the misconception that it made the Father and the Son identical. We have already noted Bates’s testimony, “Respecting the trinity, I concluded that it was impossible for me to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being.”²¹ D. W. Hull, J. N. Loughborough, S. B. Whitney, and D. M. Canright shared this view.²² The concept that the Father and Son are identical approximates an ancient heresy called Modalist Monarchianism, or Sabellianism (after Sabellius, one of its third-century proponents). Modalists “held that in the Godhead the only differentiation was a mere succession of modes or operations.” Modalists denied the *threeness* of God and asserted that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not separate personalities.²³

A third and opposite objection to the Trinity doctrine was based on the misconception that it teaches the existence of three Gods. “If Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each God, it would be three Gods,” wrote Loughborough in 1861.²⁴

A fourth view was that belief in the Trinity would diminish the value of the atonement.²⁵ Since the “everliving, self-existent God” cannot die, then if Christ had self-existence as God, he couldn’t have died on Calvary, they reasoned. If only his humanity died, then his sacrifice was only a human one, inadequate for redemption.²⁶ Thus, in order to protect the

²⁰See Jerry Moon, “The Trinity in the Reformation Era: Four Viewpoints,” in *The Trinity: Understanding God’s Love, His Plan of Salvation, and Christian Relationships*, Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 166-181.

²¹Bates, 205.

²²Gane, 104.

²³F. L. Cross, ed., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), s.v. “Monarchianism” (see also s.v. “Modalism” and “Sabellianism”).

²⁴J. N. Loughborough, “Questions for Bro. Loughborough,” *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* 18 (Nov. 5, 1861), 184.

²⁵Gane, 105.

²⁶J. H. Waggoner, *The Atonement* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1884), 173. Smith makes a similar argument in *Looking Unto Jesus*, 23.

reality of his death on the cross, the early Adventists felt they had to deny that Christ in his preexistence possessed divine immortality. However logical that reasoning may have seemed to some, its basic premises were flatly rejected by Ellen White in 1897. She averred that when Jesus died on the cross, "Deity did not die. Humanity died."²⁷ Her influence on Adventist readers, and their confidence in the source of her information was such that the implications of such a pronouncement could not be ignored, giving Adventist scholars one more reason to reassess their basic paradigm regarding the Godhead.

Fifth, the fact that Christ is called "Son of God" and "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev 3:14) was thought to prove that he must be of more recent origin than God the Father.²⁸ Sixth, it was argued that "there are various expressions concerning the Holy Spirit which would indicate that it [*sic*] couldn't properly be considered as a person, such as its being 'shed abroad' in the heart [Rom. 5:5], and 'poured out upon all flesh' [Joel 2:28]."²⁹ These arguments, however, depended on giving a very literal interpretation to expressions that could also be seen as figures of speech. These arguments made sense within an overall antitrinitarian paradigm, but when that paradigm was called into question, these points were recognized as being capable of fitting either interpretation.

None of these is a valid objection to the basic trinitarian concept of one God in three Persons.³⁰ Yet all of them were based on biblical texts. Adventists eventually changed their view of the Godhead because they came to a different understanding of the biblical texts.

Dissatisfaction with Antitrinitarianism, 1888-1898

The focus of the 1888 General Conference session on "Christ our righteousness" and the consequent exaltation of the cross of Christ called into serious question whether a subordinate, derived divinity could adequately account for the saving power of Christ. E. J. Waggoner urged

²⁷E. G. White, Manuscript 131, 1897, quoted in *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954), 5:1113. Later she wrote again, "Humanity died: divinity did not die" (idem., "The Risen Savior," *Youth's Instructor*, August 4, 1898, paragraph 1).

²⁸Uriah Smith, *Thoughts on the Book of Daniel and the Revelation* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1882), 487; idem, *Looking Unto Jesus*, 10.

²⁹Uriah Smith, "In the Question Chair," *Review and Herald*, March 23, 1897, 188.

³⁰The term "person" as applied to God indicates a being with personality, intellect, and will. Unlike the multiple gods of polytheism, the three persons of the biblical Godhead are profoundly "one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person." Thus, despite their individuality, they are never divided, never in conflict, and thus constitute not three gods, but one God.

the necessity of “set[ting] forth Christ’s rightful position of equality with the Father, in order that His power to redeem may be the better appreciated.”³¹ While by 1890 Waggoner had not yet fully grasped Christ’s infinitely eternal preexistence,³² he argued convincingly that Christ was not created, that “He has ‘life in Himself’ [John 10:17]; He possesses immortality in His own right.” Waggoner insisted on “the Divine unity of the Father and the Son” and averred that Christ is “by nature of the very substance of God, and having life in Himself, He is properly called Jehovah, the self-existent One” (Jer 23:56), “who is on an equality with God” (Phil 2:6, ARV), “having all the attributes of God.”³³ Waggoner was not yet fully trinitarian, but he saw clearly that a more exalted conception of Christ’s work of redemption demanded a higher conception of his being as Deity. “The fact that Christ is a part of the Godhead, possessing all the attributes of Divinity, being the equal of the Father in all respects, as Creator and Lawgiver, is the only force there is in the atonement. . . . Christ died ‘that He might bring us to God’ (1 Peter 3:18); but if He lacked one iota of being equal to God, He could not bring us to Him.”³⁴ The force of this logic leads inevitably to the recognition of Christ’s full equality in preexistence as well.

Thus, the dynamic of righteousness by faith and its consequences for the doctrine of God provides the historical context for the provocative comment of D. T. Bourdeau that “although we claim to be believers in, and worshipers of, only one God, I have thought that there are as many gods among us as there are conceptions of the Deity.”³⁵ Such a comment from a highly respected evangelist and missionary seems to indicate that the collective confidence in the antitrinitarian paradigm was showing some cracks. Further evidence that this was so appeared two years later in 1892, when Pacific Press published a pamphlet titled “The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity,” by Samuel T. Spear. The pamphlet corrected two prevailing misconceptions of the Trinity doctrine, showing that it “is not a system of tri-theism, or the doctrine of three Gods, but it is the doctrine of one God subsisting and acting in three persons, with the qualification that the term ‘person’ . . . is not, when used in this relation, to be understood in any sense that

³¹Waggoner, 19.

³²Ibid., 21-22.

³³Ibid., 22-23, 25.

³⁴Ibid., 44.

³⁵Bourdeau, 707.

would make it inconsistent with the unity of the Godhead.”³⁶

In 1898, Uriah Smith prepared *Looking Unto Jesus*, the most comprehensive and carefully nuanced exposition of the nontrinitarian view among Adventists. Smith emphatically repudiated his earlier view that Christ had been created, but still held that “God [the Father] alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be,—a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity,—appeared the Word.” Through some means not clearly revealed in Scripture, Christ had been “brought forth,” “begotten,” or “by some divine impulse or process, not creation,” Christ had been given existence by the Father. In one paragraph Smith comes surprisingly close to a trinitarian statement: “This union between the Father and the Son does not detract from either, but strengthens both. Through it, in connection with the Holy Spirit, we have all of Deity.”³⁷ But this slow struggle toward a fuller understanding was eclipsed by the bold declarations of *The Desire of Ages*, published in the same year. *Desire of Ages* produced a paradigm shift in Adventists’ perceptions of the Godhead.

Paradigm Shift, 1898-1913

The period from 1898 to 1913 saw an almost complete reversal of Adventist thinking about the Trinity. I say “almost” because this paradigm shift did not lead to unanimity on the topic. As Merlin Burt has documented, a few thought leaders who tended toward the “old view” remained vocal, but with declining influence, for many years.³⁸

Nevertheless, the publication of Ellen White’s *Desire of Ages* in 1898 became the continental divide for the Adventist understanding of the Trinity. Beginning with the first paragraph of the book, she called into question the dominant view of early Adventists regarding the relationship of Christ to the Father. Her third sentence in chapter 1 declared, “*From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father*” (emphasis supplied). Yet even this was not sufficiently unequivocal to clarify her position regarding the deity of Jesus, for as we have seen, others had used similar language without believing in Christ’s infinitely eternal preexistence. Later in the book, writing on the resurrection of Lazarus, she quoted the words of Christ, “I am the resurrection and the life,” and followed them with a seven-word comment that would begin to turn the

³⁶Samuel T. Spear, *The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity*, Bible Students’ Library, no. 90 (March 1892), 3-14, reprinted from *New York Independent*, November 14, 1889.

³⁷Smith, *Looking Unto Jesus*, 3, 10, 17, esp. 13.

³⁸According to Burt, 54, the last of the “old-time” Adventist antitrinitarians died in 1968. A new generation of neo-antitrinitarians would emerge in the 1980s (see below).

tide of antitrinitarian theology among Adventists: “*In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived*” (emphasis supplied).³⁹ Christ didn’t ultimately derive his divine life from the Father. As a man on earth, he subordinated his will to the will of the Father (John 5:19, 30), but as self-existent God, he had power to lay down his life and take it up again. Thus in commenting on Christ’s resurrection, Ellen White again asserted his full deity and equality with the Father, declaring “The Saviour came forth from the grave by the life that was in Himself.”⁴⁰

These statements came as a shock to the theological leadership of the church. M. L. Andreasen, who had become an Adventist just four years earlier at the age of eighteen, and who would eventually teach at the church’s North American seminary, claimed that the new concept was so different from the previous understanding that some prominent leaders doubted whether Ellen White had really written it. After Andreasen entered the ministry in 1902, he made a special trip to Ellen White’s California home to investigate the issue for himself. Ellen White welcomed him and gave him “access to the manuscripts.” He had brought with him “a number of quotations,” to “see if they were in the original in her own handwriting.” He recalled: “I was sure Sister White had never written, ‘In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived.’ But now I found it in her own handwriting just as it had been published. It was so with other statements. As I checked up, I found that they were Sister White’s own expressions.”⁴¹

Desire of Ages contained equally uncompromising statements regarding the deity of the Holy Spirit. Repeatedly it employed the personal pronoun “he” in referring to the Holy Spirit, climaxing with the impressive statement, “The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this, the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail. . . . Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the *Third Person of the Godhead*, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power” (emphasis supplied).⁴²

These and similar statements drove some to a fresh examination of the biblical evidence about the Godhead. Others, disbelieving that they could have been wrong for so many years, studied to bolster the old arguments. Ellen White’s testimony, however, by calling attention to Scriptures whose

³⁹E. G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1964), 530.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 785; see also the next two paragraphs.

⁴¹M. L. Andreasen, “The Spirit of Prophecy,” chapel address at Loma Linda, California, November 30, 1948, Adventist Heritage Center, Andrews University, 3-4.

⁴²White, *Desire of Ages*, 669-671.

significance had been overlooked,⁴³ created a paradigm shift that could not be reversed. As Adventists returned to the Scriptures to see “whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11), they eventually came to a growing consensus that the basic concept of the Trinity was a biblical truth to be accepted and embraced.

While *Desire of Ages* set in motion a paradigm shift regarding the Adventist understanding of the Godhead, it was not Ellen White’s last word on the subject. Later, during the Kellogg crisis of 1902-1907, she repeatedly used expressions such as “three living persons of the heavenly trio,” while continuing to maintain the essential unity of the Godhead. Thus she affirmed the plurality and the unity, the *threeness* and the oneness, the foundational elements of a simple, biblical understanding of the Trinity.⁴⁴

Evidence that at least a portion of church leadership recognized the *Desire of Ages* statements as removing the objections to a biblical doctrine of the Trinity is a summary of Adventist beliefs published by F. M. Wilcox in the *Review and Herald* in 1913. Wilcox, editor of the denomination’s most influential periodical, wrote that “Seventh-day Adventists believe,— 1. In the divine Trinity. This Trinity consists of the eternal Father, . . . the Lord Jesus Christ, . . . [and] the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead.”⁴⁵

Decline of Antitrinitarianism, 1913-1946

Despite Wilcox’s declaration in the *Review*, (or perhaps because of it), the debate over the Trinity intensified in the early decades of the twentieth century. At the 1919 Bible Conference, Christ’s eternity and his relation to the Father were major and unresolved subjects of debate. Curiously, in view of Ellen White’s *Desire of Ages* statement that Christ’s life was “underived,” even W. W. Prescott, the foremost proponent of a trinitarian view at the conference, held that Christ’s existence was in some way “derived” from the Father.⁴⁶ This may constitute evidence that the leadership were not content to simply accept White’s pronouncement

⁴³Bible texts that Ellen White cited as supporting various aspects of a trinitarian view included Rom 8:16 (*Evangelism* [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1946], 617); 1 Cor 2:10-14 (*ibid.*); John 16:7-14 (*ibid.*, 616); John 14:16-18, 26; 16:8, 12-14 (*Desire of Ages*, 669-671); and Col. 2:9 (*Evangelism*, 614).

⁴⁴These statements and their context in the Kellogg crisis will be treated in more detail in Part 2 of this study.

⁴⁵[F. M. Wilcox], “The Message for Today,” *Review and Herald*, October 9, 1913, 21. I am indebted to Bill Fagal of the White Estate Research Center at Andrews University for calling my attention to this source.

⁴⁶W. W. Prescott, “The Person of Christ,” July 2, 1919 presentation in “Bible Conference Papers 1-8, July 1-19, 1919” [continuous pagination, p. 69; July 2, afternoon session, p. 20], Adventist Heritage Center, Andrews University; see also Burt, 25-27.

without seeing it for themselves in Scripture. Or perhaps, it shows Prescott's conscious or unconscious reflection of classical trinitarian sources.⁴⁷

The polarization of American Christianity between modernism and fundamentalism in the first two decades of the twentieth century tended to push Adventists closer to a trinitarian position, since in so many other areas—such as evolution, belief in the supernatural, Christ's virgin birth, miracles, literal resurrection—Adventists were in opposition to modernists and in sympathy with fundamentalists.⁴⁸

In 1930, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists received a request from its African Division that "a statement of what Adventists believe be printed in the *Year Book*" to "help government officials and others to a better understanding of our work." In response, the General Conference Committee appointed a subcommittee (comprised of M. E. Kern, associate secretary of the General Conference; F. M. Wilcox, editor of the *Review and Herald*; E. R. Palmer, manager of the *Review and Herald*; and C. H. Watson, General Conference president) to prepare a statement of Adventist beliefs.⁴⁹ Wilcox, as the leading writer among them, drafted a 22-point statement that was subsequently published in the SDA *Year Book* of 1931.⁵⁰ The second point spoke of the "Godhead, or Trinity," and the third affirmed "that Jesus Christ is very God," an echo of the Nicene creed. Lest anyone think that Adventists intended to make a creed, "no formal or official approval" was sought for the statement. Fifteen years later, when the statement had gained general acceptance, the General Conference session of 1946 made it official, voting that "no revision of this Statement of Fundamental Beliefs, as it now appears in the [*Church*] *Manual*, shall be made at any time except at a General Conference session."⁵¹ This marked the first official endorsement of a trinitarian view by the church, although "the last of the well known

⁴⁷The generation of the Son by the Father is an Augustinian formulation (*Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "Trinity, Doctrine of the." Cf. W. W. Prescott, *The Doctrine of Christ: A Series of Bible Studies for Use in Colleges and Seminaries* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1920), 3, 20-21; see also Burt, 30-33.

⁴⁸Prescott, 33.

⁴⁹General Conference Committee Minutes, Dec. 29, 1930, 195, Adventist Heritage Center, Andrews University.

⁵⁰Froom, 413-414.

⁵¹"Fifteenth Meeting," General Conference Report No. 8, *Review and Herald*, June 14, 1946, 197. Froom, 419, attributes this action to the 1950 session. He evidently read his source too hastily; the 1950 session only reiterated the action of the 1946 session ("Fifteenth Meeting," General Conference Report No. 10, *Review and Herald*, July 23, 1950, 230).

expositors” continued to “uphold the ‘old’ view” until his death in 1968.⁵²

Trinitarian Dominance, 1946 to 1980

From the retirement of F. M. Wilcox in 1944⁵³ to the publication of *Movement of Destiny* in 1971,⁵⁴ L. E. Froom was the most visible champion of trinitarianism among Seventh-day Adventists. His book, *The Coming of the Comforter* was unprecedented among Adventists (except for a few passages in Ellen White) in its systematic exposition of the personhood of the Holy Spirit and the trinitarian nature of the Godhead.⁵⁵ Froom’s leading role in the preparation of the 1957 work, *Questions on Doctrine*, has been amply documented elsewhere.⁵⁶ *Questions on Doctrine* evoked a storm of controversy for certain statements on christology and the atonement, but its clear affirmation of “the heavenly Trinity”⁵⁷ went virtually unchallenged—perhaps because M. L. Andreasen, the book’s chief critic in other areas, was a convinced trinitarian.⁵⁸ Froom’s final word was his 700-page *Movement of Destiny*, published in 1971. Despite “instances of special pleading” and problems of bias that “somewhat diminish the work as dependable history,”⁵⁹ it nevertheless thoroughly documents the movement of Adventist theology toward a biblical trinitarian consensus.

The climax of this phase of doctrinal development was a new statement of fundamental beliefs, voted by the 1980 General Conference session in Dallas. The new statement of twenty-seven “Fundamental Beliefs,” like the 1931 statement, explicitly affirmed belief in the Trinity. The affirmation came in the second article of the statement (following a preamble and a first article

⁵²Burt, 54.

⁵³Wilcox was editor of the *Review and Herald* (now *Adventist Review*), the general church paper of Seventh-day Adventists, from 1911 to 1944 (*SDA Encyclopedia* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996], s.v. “Wilcox, Francis McClellan”).

⁵⁴See note 3, above.

⁵⁵Le Roy Edwin Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1949), 37-57. Cf. E. G. White, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, no. 7 (1905), 62-63.

⁵⁶[L. E. Froom, W. E. Read, and R. A. Anderson,] *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957); cf. T. E. Unruh, “The Seventh-day Adventist Evangelical Conferences of 1955-1956,” *Adventist Heritage* 4 (Fourth Quarter 1977), 35-46; and Jerry Moon, “M. L. Andreasen, L. E. Froom, and the Controversy over *Questions on Doctrine* (research paper, Andrews University, 1988).

⁵⁷Froom, Read, and Anderson, 36-37, 645-646.

⁵⁸M. L. Andreasen, “Christ the Express Image of God,” *Review and Herald*, Oct. 17, 1946, 8; see also Burt, 43.

⁵⁹Maxwell, 119-122.

on the inspiration and authority of Scripture). “2. *The Trinity*[.] There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of three co-eternal Persons.”⁶⁰ Article 4 affirms that “God the eternal Son became incarnate in Christ Jesus. . . . Forever truly God, He became also truly man.”⁶¹ Article 5 declares that “God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption,” and was “sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children.”⁶² At several points, the statement echoes the terminology of the classical trinitarian creeds, even including the Filioque clause with reference to the Holy Spirit.⁶³

A brief recapitulation of Adventist belief statements may clarify the significance of the 1980 action. The first *Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by Seventh-day Adventists* (1872) was the work of Uriah Smith.⁶⁴ Its first two articles deal with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

— I —

That there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal, infinite in wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and mercy; unchangeable, and everywhere present by his representative, the Holy Spirit. Ps. 139.7.

— II —

That there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist; that he took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham for the redemption of our fallen race; that he dwelt among men full of grace and truth, lived our example, died our sacrifice, was raised for our justification, ascended on high to be our only mediator in the sanctuary in heaven, where, with his own blood he makes atonement for our sins.⁶⁵

It is notable that while there is no reference to the term Trinity, neither is there any overt polemic against a trinitarian position. Smith was clearly striving to adhere as closely as possible to biblical language. The statement represented a consensus at the time, but in harmony with its

⁶⁰*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1981), 32.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 33.

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³See *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. “Filioque.”

⁶⁴Uriah Smith, *A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventists* (Battle Creek, MI: SDA Publishing Association, 1872), 1.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 2-3.

preamble's explicit disclaimer of any creedal statement⁶⁶ it was never given the status of official approval.

The second statement of "Fundamental Principles" (1889), also by Uriah Smith,⁶⁷ is likewise a consensus statement that avoids pressing any points of disagreement. As with the 1872 statement, the preamble maintains "no creed but the Bible," and further claims that "the following propositions may be taken as a summary of the principal features of their [Seventh-day Adventists'] religious faith, upon which there is, so far as we know, *entire unanimity* throughout the body" (emphasis supplied).⁶⁸ Apparently, Smith did not consider the fine points of the doctrine of the Godhead as ranking among the "principal features" of the SDA faith at that time, because he could hardly have been unaware that there were certain minor disagreements related to the Trinity.⁶⁹ Article I from 1872 (quoted above), was reproduced without change in the 1889 statement. Article II in the 1889 statement has some modifications in the language about the work of Christ, but no material change in its reference to the person of Christ.⁷⁰ Because these articles adhere closely to biblical terminology, they were capable of being interpreted favorably by either nontrinitarians or trinitarians.

The third statement of "Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists"⁷¹ was prepared under the direction of a committee, but it was actually written by F. M. Wilcox, editor of the *Review and Herald*.⁷² Fifteen years later, in 1946, it became the first such statement to be

⁶⁶Smith's initial paragraph declares: "In presenting to the public this synopsis of our faith, we wish to have it distinctly understood that we have no articles of faith, creed, or discipline, aside from the Bible. We do not put forth this as having any authority with our people, nor is it designed to secure uniformity among them, as a system of faith, but is a brief statement of what is and has been, with great unanimity, held by them. We often find it necessary to meet inquiries on this subject. . . . Our only object is to meet this necessity" (*ibid.*, 1).

⁶⁷"Fundamental Principles," *SDA Year Book*, (Battle Creek, MI: SDA Publishing Association, 1889), 147-151.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 147.

⁶⁹The statement of D. T. Bourdeau, attesting that there were among SDAs "many . . . conceptions of the Deity," appeared in the *Review and Herald*, of which Smith was the editor, only one year later.

⁷⁰The only change in the portion referring to the person of Christ was the substitution of the pronoun "he" [*sic*] for the personal name "God" in the first sentence. The 1889 statement reads: "There is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom *he* created all things" ("Fundamental Principles," *Seventh-day Adventist Year Book*, [1889], 147).

⁷¹"Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists," *Seventh-day Adventist Year Book*, (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1931), 377-380.

⁷²For details of the process, see Froom, 413-415.

officially endorsed by a General Conference session.⁷³ Article 2 declares,

That the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, through whom all things were created and through whom the salvation of the redeemed hosts will be accomplished; the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, the great regenerating power in the work of redemption. Matt. 28:19.⁷⁴

Thus, the statement voted at Dallas in 1980 was the fourth fundamental beliefs statement of Seventh-day Adventists, but only the second to be officially voted by a General Conference session. The official adoption of the explicitly trinitarian Dallas statement might have been expected to bring closure to the century-old debate, but it proved to be a precursor of renewed tensions.

Renewed Tensions and Continuing Debate, 1980 to the Present

The period from 1980 to the present has been characterized by renewed debate along a spectrum of ideas from the reactionary to the contemporary. Soon after the Dallas statement—and perhaps in reaction to it—voices from the “edges” of the church began to advocate that the pioneers earliest views were correct, that Ellen White’s apparently trinitarian statements had been misinterpreted, and that the Dallas statement represented apostasy from the biblical beliefs of the pioneers.⁷⁵ Some, in apparent ignorance of the 1946 action, believed that the Dallas statement was the first ever officially voted statement of Adventist belief, and hence, that its very existence was an aberration from the historical pattern.⁷⁶ Citations from the primary sources, extracted from their historical context and repackaged in plausible conspiracy theories, proved quite convincing to many.⁷⁷

A more substantial development was the continued quest to articulate a biblical doctrine of the Trinity, clearly differentiated from the Greek

⁷³“Fifteenth Meeting,” General Conference Report No. 8, *Review and Herald*, June 14, 1946, 197.

⁷⁴“Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists,” *Seventh-day Adventist Year Book*, (1931), 377.

⁷⁵“The Doctrine of the Trinity in Adventist History,” *Liberty Review* [5250 Johnstown Road, Mt. Vernon, Ohio], October 1989, 4-5, 7-8. Cf. Lynnford Beachy, “Adventist Review Perpetuates the Omega,” *Old Paths* [Smyrna Gospel Ministries, HC64, Box 128-B, Welch, WV; website www.smyrna.org], vol. 8, no. 7, July 1999, 1-14.

⁷⁶“The Doctrine of the Trinity in Adventist History,” *Liberty Review*, October 1989, 7.

⁷⁷See esp. Clayton, n. 6 above; and Bob Diener, *The Alpha and the Omega* (Creal Springs, IL: Bible Truth Productions, n.d. [ca. 1998]), videocassette.

philosophical presuppositions that undergirded the traditional creedal statements. Raoul Dederen had set forth in 1972 a brief exposition of the Godhead from the OT and NT.⁷⁸ He rejected the “Trinity of speculative thought” that created philosophical “distinctions within the Deity for which there is no definable basis within the revealed knowledge of God.” Instead, he advocated the example of the apostles: “Rejecting the terms of Greek mythology or metaphysics, they expressed their convictions in an unpretending trinitarian confession of faith, the doctrine of one God subsisting and acting in three persons.”⁷⁹

Building on this line of thought, Fernando Canale, Dederen’s student, set forth in 1983 a radical critique of the Greek philosophical presuppositions underlying what Dederen had referred to as “speculative thought.” Canale’s dissertation, *A Criticism of Theological Reason*, argued that Roman Catholic and classical Protestant theology took its most basic presuppositions about the nature of God, time, and existence, from a “framework” provided by Aristotelian philosophy. Canale maintained that for Christian theology to become truly biblical, it must derive its “primordial presupposition” from Scripture, not from Greek philosophy.⁸⁰

In the more recent *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (2000), edited by Dederen, Canale authored a magisterial article on the findings from his continuing work on the doctrine of God. Again, Canale explicitly differentiates between a doctrine of God based on Greek philosophical presuppositions and one based on biblical presuppositions,⁸¹ making a strong case for his view that only through a willingness to “depart from the philosophical conception of God as timeless” and to “embrace the historical conception of God as presented in the Bible,” can one discover a truly biblical view of the Trinity.⁸²

A third line of thought seeks to locate Adventist trinitarianism in the context of contemporary systematic theology. Seconding Canale’s discontent with classical theology, but taking the critique in a different direction, was Richard Rice’s *Reign of God* (1985). Rice argued that the

⁷⁸Raoul Dederen, “Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity,” *AUSS* 8 (1970): 1-22.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 13, 21.

⁸⁰Fernando Luis Canale, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 10 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983), 359; 402, n. 1.

⁸¹Canale, “Doctrine of God,” 105-159; see esp. 117-118, 126, 128-129, 132, 138-140, 145, 148-150.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 150.

Trinity was implied, though not explicit, in Scripture.⁸³ Fritz Guy, in *Thinking Theologically* (1999), agrees that “the traditional formulations” of the Trinity doctrine “are not entirely satisfactory.”⁸⁴ He decries a perceived tendency toward tritheism⁸⁵ and favors updating the language to make it more “functional and gender-neutral.”⁸⁶ Guy’s book, however, is not a systematic exposition of the doctrine of God or of the Trinity, and readers should beware of reading too much into brief illustrative references. How his suggestions will ultimately affect the discussion remains to be seen.

Conclusion

The long process of change from early Adventists’ initial rejection of creedal trinitarianism to their eventual acceptance of a doctrine of the Trinity could rightly be called a search for a biblical Trinity. They were not so much prejudiced against traditional formulas as they were determined to hew their doctrine as closely as possible to the line of Scripture. In order to base their beliefs on Scripture alone, and to disenfranchise tradition from exercising any theological authority, they found it methodologically essential to reject every doctrine not clearly grounded in Scripture alone. Since the traditional doctrine of the Trinity clearly contained unscriptural elements, they rejected it. Eventually, however, they became convinced that the basic concept of *one God in three persons* was indeed found in Scripture. Part 2 of this study will consider in more detail the role of Ellen White in that process.

⁸³Richard Rice, *The Reign of God*, 2d ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1985), 60-61.

⁸⁴Fritz Guy, *Thinking Theologically: Adventist Christianity and the Interpretation of Faith* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1999), 130; see also 70, 88, 151, and their notes.

⁸⁵Ibid., 70.

⁸⁶Ibid., 151.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, INTERCONNECTED DEVELOPMENT, AND INTEGRATION OF THE DOCTRINES OF THE SANCTUARY, THE SABBATH, AND ELLEN G. WHITE'S ROLE IN SABBATARIAN ADVENTISM FROM 1844 TO 1849

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The Topic

The doctrines of the sanctuary and the Sabbath, along with Ellen White's prophetic role, progressively evolved and were integrated during the five years following the October 1844 Millerite time expectation. These doctrines were the fundamental elements in the formation of the Sabbatarian Adventist movement and ultimately the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The Purpose

The purpose of the study was to situate the interconnected development of the sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen White's prophetic ministry within the ferment of Adventist ideas and events, show the immediate theological climate, and give a connected progression of Bridegroom (or Shut Door) Adventism and Sabbatarian Adventism from October 1844 to July 1849. In order to accomplish the primary purpose of this dissertation, it was necessary to chronologically reconstruct and analyze the interconnected historical development of the selected Adventist doctrines against the backdrop of Adventist interactions, ideas, and experience by showing their stage-by-stage integrated progression.

The Sources

This was a documentary study based primarily on published and unpublished primary sources produced by Millerite and post-Millerite Adventists between 1844 and 1849. Both primary and secondary sources were used for background, historical context, and perspective. The most heavily used primary sources were periodicals, the correspondence collections of the Ellen G. White Estate, and other archives containing Adventist resources.

Conclusions

The theological development of the sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White's prophetic influence within the Bridegroom and Sabbatarian Adventist branches of Millerite Adventism demonstrates a connected progression with apparent

chronological stages between October 1844 and the formation of the new religious entity in 1849. The three elements studied developed somewhat independently during the Bridegroom phase of 1845 and 1846. Then they integrated in a new Sabbatarian Adventist movement from the fall of 1846 to the summer of 1849.

A THEORETICAL PROPOSAL FOR REACHING IRRELIGIOUS CZECH PEOPLE THROUGH A MISSION REVITALIZATION MOVEMENT

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The main goal of this study was to develop a biblically informed and culturally relevant theory of missionary outreach to unchurched people of the Czech Republic. The theoretical proposal for a plausible model of churching in the Czech Republic builds on basic theological, philosophical, and conceptual assumptions (chap. 2), a societal analysis of the problem of Czech churching (chap. 3), and a review of the issues relating to the situation of existing churches and religious movements.

Based on the Wallace theory of revitalization movements, a model was developed for starting a missionary movement that aims at reaching today's unchurched and seemingly irreligious segments of the Czech population. This model allows for flexible ways of communicating the gospel and envisions multiple forms for developing a community of believers.

The field research underlying the theoretical proposal included ethnographic- and assessment-oriented research. The ethnographic research combined qualitative and quantitative methods. A newspaper-content analysis searched for dominant themes and prevalent cultural values in the newspaper media and analyzed newspaper articles related to religion and/or church. The ethnographic field research, measuring the religiosity of the Czech people, consisted of a survey of religiosity and six in-depth interviews of unchurched people. By clarifying some aspects of the religiosity of unchurched people, the study contributed a depth dimension to the proposal revitalization movement model.

In order to test emerging conclusions, a number of brief interviews with unchurched believers, active churchgoers, and church leaders, as well as a survey measuring the health of congregations were done. The multivariate methodology generated the findings that provided the building blocks for my theory of a context-sensitive model of churching.

BOOK REVIEWS

McDonald, Lee Martin, and James A. Sanders, eds. *The Canon Debate*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002. 700 pp. Hardcover, \$39.95.

The editors, Lee M. McDonald and James A. Sanders, are well-known NT scholars whose publications include many works on the canon. They each contributed one chapter and coauthored the Introduction. The book is divided into four parts: Introduction, OT topics, NT topics, and four appendices provided by McDonald.

The purpose of *The Canon Debate* is to advance the study of canon without the need for advocating any one position. The authors' varying positions regarding canon are intended to lead to further dialogue and understanding of the process by which the Bible was produced (17). The introduction clearly identifies the major areas where disagreements remain. Many of the chapters overlap, creating some redundancy, but this is inevitable.

The book is an indirect tribute to Albert C. Sundberg Jr. in that many of the 32 chapters reflect his ground-breaking work that began in the 1960s. Even when credit is given to an author who wrote after Sundberg, Sundberg's influence is nevertheless evident. Sundberg believed that all orthodox writings in the early church were inspired, considered scripture, and were authoritative. Out of this body of literature certain books attained an elevated authority, were considered *more* inspired, took on the same meaning of "scripture" ascribed to the OT, and eventually became canonized.

Authors influenced by the Sundberg terminology (primarily in the interchange of various combinations of "scripture," "authority" and "canon") are Ulrich, McDonald, Gamble, VanderKam, Kalin, Hahneman, and Dunn. Those who have not used Sundberg's terminology (generally by not referring to noncanonical writings as having "authority") are Davis, Berrera, Harrington, Ferguson, Perkins (where she cites Berrera), and Balla. The other authors do not deal specifically with these terms. Thus, the complexity of the canon debate lies in the way scholars define terms, evident throughout the book and discussed in the critique at the end.

Section 1, on the Old/First Testament, contains fifteen chapters on three themes. First, in regard to the content and nature of the canon(s), the place of the LXX and the DSS offer new insights, particularly about the MT, as well as dialogue on the Josephus comments. The second theme addresses the dates for the closing of the three sections of the OT canon (Law, Prophets, and Writings) and the minor impact now accorded to Jamnia on the dates for closure of the third section of the Old/First Testament. The third theme is the issue of terminology, which overlaps with discussions in the second section on the New/Second Testament.

The content of canon varies with different communities of faith (Ulrich 23, Sanders 479). For instance, within Judaism there were several canons, e.g., Mosaic and Prophetic (Davis, 48). Blenkinsopp notes: "Canonicity is generally taken to imply normativity . . . [but] normativity is not at all a straightforward concept" (67). Sundberg, who is supportive of the foregoing views, underscores the complexity of the process of canon formation by drawing attention to the fact that Greek was used in Palestine before Jesus' day and some of the books found at

Qumran were written in Greek (88-89). After stating that Judaism had no canon list before 70 A.D. (91), VanderKam discusses the textual fluidity in the DSS (94-96; cf. 197) and writes that the usage of the term "torah" at Qumran does not have a precise meaning (108-109). Thus, an understanding of canon should be informed by evidence rather than by imposing later views on the Qumran literature (108).

Mason contends that Josephus cannot be used as a source for either the open or closed canon (125-126), while Barrera notes that the earliest use of the terms "tripartite/bipartite" do not reveal which books were included (128). A number of authors are convinced that the fixed list was not finalized at Jamnia (Lewis, 146-162). As Lighthouse observes, there is no evidence for when and how the rabbis' Bible was fixed (164) and Evans adds that the canon of Jesus was open (185-195).

Harrington observes that while late first-century Judaism moved toward a tripartite canon, it was not until the late fourth and early fifth centuries that Christianity moved toward a more inclusive OT canon (203). Early Christians in the East were inclined to follow the Judaic custom of 22 or 24 OT books, whereas the Western church, with the exception of Jerome (whose sojourn in Bethlehem no doubt impacted his thinking) included the Apocryphal books (200). Harrington writes that many of the older positions, such as the influence of Jamnia, Marcion's role, and the Alexandrian canon hypothesis are regarded today as "myths" (204). Sanders and Tov advocate that the terms "stabilization" and "canonical process" should be used rather than "canonization" (254) and that the MT should be seen as "an advanced stage in the stabilization process which began in the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E." (256). Sanders believes that Judaism probably closed the Writings section after the Bar Kochba debacle (258).

Tov asserts that the MT should be known as "Biblia Masoretica," not "Biblia Hebraica" (235). He posits that "our emphasis on the Masoretic Text in modern critical study of the Bible causes problems" (239). "Since the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls, it has become clear that a unified text tradition before the turn of the eras never existed" (239), and "*the Greek Septuagint . . . represents the best complete text of the Hebrew Bible*" (242, emphasis supplied). Therefore, Tov advocates for a critical edition using the MT, LXX, Qumran texts, and Samaritan Pentateuch (250). He argues that "the text of the Bible is represented by the totality of its textual witnesses, not primarily by one of them" (251).

Section 2, on the New/Second Testament, addresses the following areas: external pressures for determining a "fixed" list; dates for the processes; determining *how* or *why* a given list resulted; and dynamics, i.e., What does this all mean? How shall we proceed?

Gamble begins with recent NT research (267-294) and provides a summary of the differences between Zahn and Harnack (267-268). He also evaluates the value of late twentieth-century scholars' contributions to NT canon research (268-273). He, along with Hahneman (405), offers positive assessments of Sundberg's definitions of key terms, as well as his challenge to the second-century dating of the Muratorian Fragment (269). Barton also agrees with Sundberg on its dating (343). An entire chapter by Hahneman on the dating of the Fragment offers strong support for the fourth-century date along with new arguments (405-415).

Further, Gamble concurs with Barton that if there were agreement on the

canon terminology, the canon would be “grasped clearly and coherently as a process comprising these somewhat overlapping steps” (272). He notes “that no Ecumenical council in the ancient church ever ruled for the church as a whole on the question of the contents of the canon” (291). A result of such problems is that NT canon scholars often talk past one another (322).

Barton believes that the NT canon process began as a response to Marcion: “Marcion’s concern was to *exclude* books that he disapproved of from his ‘canon’” (342). “He was not assembling a collection of Christian books, but was *making a [very restricted] selection from the corpus of texts which already existed and which must already have been recognized as sacred by many in the church—otherwise he would not have insisted in abolishing them*” (342-343, emphasis supplied). Bovon, however, argues that the twofold canon of the second century is due to the power of “Gospel” and “Apostle,” rather than the need for a response to Marcion’s canon (516-526).

Balla discusses the use of books by the early Christians that did not get into the canon, and refers to these books as having a “lesser” authority (385). Perkins’s chapter on “Gnosticism and the Christian Bible” gives excellent tables showing which Nag Hammadi codices contain references (and how often) to the Bible books (366-369).

Kalin traces the outlines of canon from the old school to Eusebius (386-404), concluding that Eusebius had a smaller number of books in his NT (22 or 24) due to his belief that apostolic authorship was *the criterion* for evaluating other writings (403). Apostolic authorship is one of several factors that McDonald mentions in his chapter on the criteria for canonization. Other criteria included orthodoxy, antiquity, and use (423-434), as well as the social context, the manner in which scripture is identified, e.g., how it is cited, its claim to holiness, and other features, such as adaptability and inspiration (417, 420-439).

Clarke’s chapter on pseudonymity includes reasons why terminology is problematic (441-442). He lists twelve motives for writing pseudonymously, in which only the first two are obviously negative (448-449). Examples include pseudonymity and its function in antiquity” and modern scholarship’s split on the issue (465); pseudonymity as a common literary device in Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian antiquity (466); and the community, not the prophetically inspired individual, as the focus of canon formation (467).

Schmidt provides two tables on the Greek NT as a Codex (469-484). He chronologically lists all the minuscule manuscripts that contain the entire NT and then provides a similar table for the uncials (479-484).

Epp discusses the interrelationship between textual criticism and canon (485-515), noting that with the discovery of papyri manuscripts the connection between these two areas is much more viable (515). He includes a discussion on the presence of canon content, in which “unexpected” books are found in some instances (491-495) and expected books are absent in other cases (495-505).

Wall expresses the need to go beyond the desire to “hold scripture captive to an academic rather than religious end” (530). “The literal sense of scripture must have contemporary meaning for its current readers before it can function as their scripture” (533). Further, “the whole of scripture, Old Testament and New Testament, when received and read as a textual deposit of the church’s canonical heritage, aims at Christian formation rather than historical reconstruction” (535).

The most radical chapter in the *The Canon Debate* is written by Funk, who wants the scholarly community to consider producing three NT editions: one smaller than the current twenty-seven books to indicate that the quest is always searching for a canon within the canon, and one larger than the current canon because the church fathers unduly narrowed the scope of the founding documents in order to preserve their own definition of the faith and to secure the foundation of their power (555). This larger version should contain the current twenty-seven books plus others such as the Sayings, Gospel Q, and the Gospel of Thomas (557). He suggests that we require a new NT, indeed, a new Bible, that will find its way into bookstores and onto the Internet in a section clearly marked "Bibles" (555). A historical Jesus and a historical faith necessarily give rise to a multiplicity of traditions and interpretations (556). Therefore, no body of tradition can be the final and complete expression. In recognition of that limitation, the canon of scripture should be given a plurality of forms (556).

In the final chapter, Dunn asks: "To sum up then, how meaningful is the concept of a New Testament canon, and has the New Testament canon a continuing function? I have not tried to explain or defend the canon in the traditional terms of apostolicity, for I do not think it can be done" (577). "Nor have I said—or would I want to say—that the New Testament writings are canonical because they were more inspired than other and later Christian writings. Almost every Christian who wrote in an authoritative way during the first two centuries of Christianity claimed the same sort of inspiration for their writing as Paul had for his" (578).

The Canon Debate concludes with several helpful appendices: "Primary Sources for Study of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible Canon," "Primary Sources for Study of the New Testament Canon," "Lists and Catalogues of Old Testament Collections," and "Lists and Catalogues of New Testament Collections." Even a cursory glance at these appendices yields remarkable insights into canon history.

We now turn our attention to some responses. This volume contains valuable discussions on a topic that was, for decades, stuck in the same mold. The editors express interest that the work might elicit further helpful studies. This will indeed occur on a number of fronts, but the most important area, it seems to me, is the need to establish common understandings about such key terms as "canon," "authority," "scripture," and "inspiration." I believe Sundberg has already done this, but until there is consensus, "scholars will continue to talk past one another."

The following are examples of how easy it is to mix the older definitions with the new. First, two illustrations come from the editors themselves in the Introduction. The terms "scripture" and "canon" employed by McDonald and Sanders point to the continuing problem of term definition. They first state: "Most definitions available can be employed to show that there were more *writings acknowledged as scripture* in antiquity than those that were eventually included in the current *canon*" (4, emphasis supplied). At this point, McDonald and Sanders make a distinction between scripture and canon, stating that everything that was considered scripture was not included in the final canon. But then, they note that "some ancient literature functioned in a scripture-like manner, that is, similar to other long-accepted *scriptures* that were normative for a believing

community, long before it was ever called *scripture* and placed in the *canon*" (4, emphasis supplied). In the second statement, *scripture* is equated with *canon*. Why not say: ". . . long before it was ever called *canon*," and end the sentence there?

Another example is found in the criteria for canonicity used by the early church. McDonald and Sanders observe that "there is little doubt among canon scholars that authorship by an apostle was the most important factor considered by the church leaders of the fourth and following centuries" (7). This view is pervasive throughout current canon scholarship. However, they also state that something written by an apostle was considered "scripture." While true, such a statement is ambiguous because according to their definitions of scripture and canon given above in point 1, nonapostolic writings could also be "scripture."

Thus, these two examples demonstrate that even McDonald's and Sanders's own definitions of "scripture" are much broader than the term "canon." Therefore, it would be more precise for them to state that the authority given to an apostle is the criterion that made it possible for their "scripture" to be elevated to "canon."

In a third example, Berrera writes that the Qumran community seems to have granted at least a degree of canonical value to other books of which multiple copies have been found, such as *I Enoch* and *Jubilees* (143). He cites VanderKam for support. However, VanderKam was making the point that the DSS were "authoritative" and was not stating what Berrera inferred about "canonical value."

One further example of how easily confusion can arise over definitions is found in Balla's chapter: "We have seen that books not in our canon today were widely read by early Christians. However, this does not necessarily mean that they too were regarded as authoritative" (385). Later he uses the words "lesser authority" for the Shepherd of Hermas (385). He notes: "The early church possessed literature edifying as reading matter as well as writings with a *higher* authority" (385, emphasis supplied.). Thus, it appears that Balla prefers the use of "lesser" and "higher" authorities, rather than simply denying authority outright to those books that never became canon.

The book contains some controversial points, e.g., the consistently argued position (with which I agree) that the Old Testament canon was not closed in the days of Jesus. And some readers will find a number of Funk's sentences distasteful. For example, he contends that "we no longer believe that Jesus was born of Mary without the benefit of male sperm" (548).

Finally, there are three small matters. First, it seems that Schmidt should include Vaticanus in his list of uncial manuscripts that contain the NT, even though the codex ends in Hebrews; or a footnote could be given to account for its omission in his table. Second, on page 407, fn. 4, the word "Century" is missing in the article title: "Canon Muratori: A Fourth-Century List." Third, I agree with the designations "First" and "Second" Testaments.

I highly recommend this volume. While many of the concepts have been in print, some for many years, they have been sharpened, developed, and provide new insights into the canon debate. All future canonical work will be in serious dialogue with this landmark publication and no serious student of the topic should be without it.

Allen, James P. *Middle Egyptian: An Introduction to the Language and Culture of Hieroglyphs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 524 pp. Paper, \$30.00.

James Allen, Curator of Egyptian Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, has also been a Research Associate and Lecturer in Egyptology at Yale University since 1986. He is the author of *The Inflection of the Verb in the Pyramid Texts* (1984) and *Genesis in Egypt: The Philosophy of Ancient Egyptian Creation Accounts* (1989). In addition, he has published several articles on the Egyptian language, religion, and history and has been a consultant for programs about Ancient Egypt for the BBC, the Discovery Channel, the Learning Channel, and A&E.

Middle Egyptian is an introductory textbook aimed at the beginning student of ancient Egyptian, as well as the interested amateur. The book provides the foundation needed to understand texts on monuments and to read the great works of ancient Egyptian literature in the original form. It is ostensibly written for nonspecialists and designed to be usable for readers who are not familiar with foreign languages or grammatical terms. Because Egyptian is inherently difficult to learn, Allen attempts to offer a solid foundation in Middle Egyptian through 26 lessons and exercises covering grammatical structures and syntax as well as 25 short essays on various aspects of Egyptian life and thought. This combination of grammar lessons and cultural essays allows users not only to read hieroglyphic texts, but understand the contexts in which they were written.

Allen focuses on the mechanics of syntax in order to help students understand grammatical terms and how syntactic constructions influence the meaning of sentences. The book is divided into two major parts: Lessons 1-12 include background information, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and nonverbal clauses. Lessons 13-25 include the verb and its various forms. Lesson 26 outlines the exceptions to all of the rules of Egyptian grammar and discusses the various theories related to the function of the verbal forms. Most chapters begin with definitions, a systematic outline of the grammar associated with the definitions, an essay discussing aspects of ancient Egyptian culture, and exercises ranging anywhere from 15-40 sentences. Allen has also included references, located at the end of the book, for the examples used in grammatical discussions, historical essays, and exercises. A detailed index, sign list, and dictionary are provided, and more importantly an answer key to the exercises, thereby overcoming one of the limitations of Alan Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar: Being An Introduction to the Study of Hieroglyphs*, 3d ed. [Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1994].

Allen does not claim to have any particular bias nor subscribe to any particular school of grammatical theory. He rejects the traditional theory found in Gardiner's *Egyptian Grammar* because it failed to recognize the subjunctive and the passive and active forms of the prospective *smd.f* identified in more recent literature. Allen also rejects Polotsky's "adverbial verb forms" (*Collected Works* [Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Magnes, 1971]) which Hoch adopted as the standard theory in *Middle Egyptian Grammar* (Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities, 15 [Mississauga, Canada: Benben, 1997]). Though Allen recognizes that Polotsky's verbal system works in some sentences with emphasized adverbs, he does not believe it works in

every case: "Middle Egyptian texts contain numerous examples of the stative, perfect, and *smd.f* without introductory words in clauses that cannot be analyzed as adverb clauses or emphatic sentences" (407). Allen, like other Egyptologists, has reconsidered the "nominal" and "circumstantial" forms in favor of the current theory that sees verb forms as expressing primary differences in meaning rather than syntactic function. This method can also be found in Collier and Manley's *How to Read Egyptian Hieroglyphs: A Step-By-Step Guide to Teach Yourself* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1998).

Allen makes several contributions toward his goal of simplifying the learning of hieroglyphs and providing a more accessible Egyptian grammar to interested nonspecialists as well as students beginning their course work in Egyptology. The chapter formats are well-organized and relatively short. The essays that accompany most of the chapters help the student understand the connection between the language and the culture in which it was written. The seamless blend of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs and English text makes the content very easy to follow. Achieving this is largely made possible by the software and font package of the Centre for Computer-aided Egyptological Research.

Though Allen attempts to make Egyptian grammar more user-friendly, he unnecessarily complicates the process by choosing the European method of transliteration over the traditional method. As the book points out, transliteration is the "set of alphabetic symbols that represent each of the uniliterals of hieroglyphics (13)." The European method used throughout the book in every example, exercise, and dictionary entry was chosen by Allen because "it requires fewer special signs" (13). Yet the only special sign that differentiates the European from the traditional is the "˙" placed over an "s" (š), which was simplified by Gardiner to simply "s." Special signs should no longer be an issue since Egyptian transliteration fonts are widely available as free downloads from the Internet or come prepackaged with Egyptian fonts, including the one in which the book is published.

The most significant difference between the two methods of transliteration is that the European method uses the "j" to represent 𓂏 rather than the "i" of the traditional method. In the European method the transliteration "j" looks unnatural to an English speaker. The letter 𓂏 is one of the most frequently used hieroglyphs. When vowels are added to the European Egyptian transliteration to create an approximate English pronunciation, words with the letter 𓂏 seem awkward. Thus, the phonetic pronunciation of 𓂏𓂏𓂏 *wjn* appears to be *wejen* because the transliterated "j" looks like an English consonant "j". Unfortunately Allen's use of the European transliteration compels students to remember to pronounce the 𓂏 transliterated as "j" with a sound like *ee* in *meet*. In his example 𓂏𓂏𓂏 *bjt*, which looks like it would be pronounced *bejet*, but the word should be pronounced *beet* (18). The traditional method would render the same examples as 𓂏𓂏𓂏 *win* and 𓂏𓂏𓂏 *bit*, leading to a less ambiguous pronunciation of *ween* and *beet*, respectively. The confusion is further compounded because 𓂏 *d* has the same phonetic value as the English consonant "j". For the beginning student and the interested amateur, pronunciation is important for memorizing new words. The fewer mental gymnastics required to recognize that pronunciation, the

better. This awkward use of transliteration only hinders Allen's goal of making Middle Egyptian accessible to nonspecialists.

In addition to its detailed index, *Middle Egyptian* could use a glossary of the grammatical terms used in the textbook. This would help students locate terms without searching through the chapters for their meaning. The table on pp. 24-25 introduces a good overview of biliterals, but a list of biliterals and triliterals should be included with the sign list near the dictionary to make searching for words easier. Although Allen's examples and exercises mostly come from actual Egyptian texts, there are few vertical texts or diagrams (244) and no photographs of monumental or other inscriptions. Some actual inscriptions in diagrammatic or photographic form like those used in Collier and Manley, *How to Read Egyptian Hieroglyphs* (1998), should be included toward the end of the book. Such examples or exercises could place special emphasis on monumental offertory and funerary texts that frequently appear in museums and would give students practice with actual inscriptions. The summary pronoun chart on p. 50 and the *smd.f* forms in the table on p. 295 should be expanded, enlarged, and include hieroglyphic examples for each. These would make great reference tools like the pronoun and verbal charts that appear at the back of most Near-Eastern grammars. A bibliography with complete references, particularly for Lesson 26, would be helpful. A reference to Polotsky's (1971) *Collected Works* should be included.

Allen's book is a good Middle Egyptian grammar for those who are leaning away from the traditional and standard grammatical theories of Gardiner and Polotsky. This book has the potential for becoming the new standard for Middle Egyptian textbooks based upon the current Egyptological theory, but its use of the European transliteration, but its lack of diagrammatic or photographic reproductions of actual monuments limits its appeal to beginning students and interested nonspecialists.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

ROBERT D. BATES

Carson, D. A., Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds. *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 1, *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. 2 Reihe. 140. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001. xii+619 pp. Paper, \$44.99.

This collection of sixteen essays (including Carson's introduction and conclusion) is the first of two volumes seeking to clarify the discussion of Paul's perspective on the law and justification. The specific purposes of this volume are to reexamine the idea of "covenantal nomism" as presented in E. P. Sander's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) and to call "for a new understanding of the complexities of the Judaism of Jesus' (and Paul's) day" (back cover).

The main strength of this book is that it tries to build a bridge between two disciplines that have engaged each other only superficially, namely, study of the Second Temple period and Pauline studies. In most cases, the contributors are top-notch intertestamental-period scholars, and their mastery of the primary and secondary literature is extensive, up to date, and impressive. Moreover, the book is

comprehensive, covering nearly every piece of Jewish literature that has anything to do with the period. The comprehensive indices provided with the book are particularly helpful. The editors are to be congratulated for this groundbreaking effort.

Perhaps precisely because of these strengths, however, the book comes with several weaknesses. One drawback is that it may be too technical, particularly for those who are unfamiliar with study of the Second Temple period. The literature covered is vast, and there are few who are versed in every piece. Aside from this issue of accessibility, there are two main problems that plague the book: internal contradictions and conflicting goals.

Carson admits that “these scholars are not all in perfect agreement” (543), but the contradictions within the book are too serious to be overlooked as diversity. Perhaps many of them could have been avoided if the contributors of the volume had read each other’s essays and engaged one another in discussion. Explicit evidence for such discussion is lacking in the book, although it is conceivable that some interaction may have occurred in some other forum. In a volume that is intended as a symposium, the near complete lack of engagement between the participants is unfortunate, by contrast with Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed., *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

The essays by Roland Deines and Martin McNamara exemplify such contradiction. After a rather involved discussion about 4QMMT (460-474), Deines opines that all of the major writings of the period need to be classified as belonging to the Pharisees, the Sadducees, or the Essenes (477). By contrast, McNamara contends that the Aramaic paraphrases of Targums, which he dates to the Second Temple period, cannot be associated either with the Sadducees or the Pharisees, and he mentions nothing of the Essenes (352). If Deines is correct, the credibility not only of McNamara, but of many of the other contributors is undermined. In a book meant as a fresh review of E. P. Sander’s concept of “covenantal nomism,” the contributors should have engaged Deines on this crucial point.

The collection of essays also suffers from conflicting goals. On one hand, the scholars had to do justice to their specialized fields of study. On the other hand, they had to determine whether Sanders’s idea of “covenantal nomism” fairly represents the religious pattern of Second Temple Judaism. It is not easy to do justice to both of these concerns in a single piece. From a reading of the essays, it quickly becomes evident that although Sanders’s concept of “covenantal nomism” has been important to Pauline research, it seems to have had virtually no impact on intertestamental scholarship. Consequently, the authors’ comments concerning Sanders’s views, which range from cordial to disparaging, are almost always peripheral. It is as though they had to break away from their discussions to say something about Sanders.

David M. Hay’s essay on Philo of Alexandria is a good example of this. In this encyclopedic piece, the discussion on Sanders’s concept of “covenantal nomism” is isolated to one paragraph on p. 370 and Hay’s evaluation of Sanders rests on three points that are not specifically argued in the essay: Philo says little about God’s covenants with Israel, Philo’s framework of religious thought is not soteriological, and Philo is not a good “representative of ‘covenantal nomism.’” It is difficult to escape the impression that Hay has relegated Sanders to the sidelines. Furthermore, if these three points were all that was going to be said about Sanders,

one wonders whether such an extensive discussion of Philo's works was necessary. For instance, what do the merits of Naomi Cohen's views on Philo's relationship to rabbinic literature (376) have to do with "covenantal nomism"?

To some extent, it is understandable that the contributors chose to spend more time dialoguing with peers in their own specialized fields than with Sanders because scholarship on Second Temple Judaism has been developing by and large without reference to NT scholarship, let alone Sanders. This book is a reminder that scholarship on Second Temple Judaism is a discipline in its own right and not simply a background discipline for NT scholarship. Even so, the failure of this volume to deal with the major question of salvation and the human plight, the issue at the heart of Sanders's paradigm of "covenantal nomism," is difficult to understand. Certainly, the collection has provided ample evidence that Sanders's paradigm of "covenantal nomism" is inadequate to cover all facets of Second Temple Judaism. In fact, it has done much to underscore the present scholarly consensus that there is no single paradigm that can cover every facet of Second Temple Judaism. But what, then, is the alternative? The essays are often too preoccupied with technical and atomistic detail to address such a broad question. It remains to be seen on what basis the second volume will proceed.

His contribution remains. Even if Sanders's concept of "covenantal nomism" eventually proves to be flawed because he persuaded NT scholarship to discard the age-old classical notion that Judaism is a lifeless and legalistic religion. Indeed, Carson himself agrees to this monumental contribution of Sanders (v). However, in a volume ostensibly dedicated to a fresh and comprehensive look at Sanders's "covenantal nomism," the other elegant and erudite discussions of the contributors often look like an escapade in the realm of esoteric intertestamental scholastics.

Andrews University

P. RICHARD CHOI

Catholic University of America. *New Catholic Encyclopedia: Jubilee Volume, The Wojtyla Years*. Detroit: Gale Group, 2001. xiii + 681 pp. Hardcover, \$95.00.

Publication of the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, coinciding with the beginning of a new century and millennium, provides more than a supplement to the well-known encyclopedia and is announced as a preamble to a revised edition of the *NCE* that should follow in due course. This Jubilee volume covers, as its subtitle indicates, the pontificate of Karol Wojtyla from 1978 to 2000, but more specifically it is a registry of events, issues, and people that shaped the Roman Catholic church in the period after Vatican II.

The volume has two distinctive parts. The first is a series of insightful interpretative essays that survey the development and analyze the principles that have caused changes in the church during the pontificate of John Paul II. These twelve essays describe a man whose spiritual and intellectual life, and whose sensitivity to political and social forces, prepared him well for his role of pope. The essays cover such diverse topics as the history of Poland during Wojtyla's lifetime and his personal love for poetry and the arts. A number of essays discuss his contributions to philosophy, theology, economics, and human rights, and his interest in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. One essay addresses the church's

dialogue with science and its struggles to keep faith and reason in tension. The last essay is a reflection on the pope's universal call to holiness and his concept of martyrdom, as witnessed through his beatification and canonization of hundreds of people. These essays make it clear that although history may have shaped this pope, he has left his own stamp on history and the papacy.

The second part of the volume consists of elements that one expects to find in an encyclopedia: information about dates, people, places, and events. The first section (119-142) is a short biography of John Paul II's life before he became pope and a year-by-year chronicle of events since the beginning of his pontificate. This unit not only describes highlights of the pope's travels abroad and meetings with world leaders, but also includes short descriptions of important celebrations at the Vatican and relates his personal health difficulties. The second section (143-179) describes and analyzes each of the fifteen synodal assemblies convened by the pope between 1980 and 1999. The unit begins with an introductory explanation of what a synod is and its purpose within Catholicism. The third section (181-246) deals with the more important magisterial documents issued during this pontificate. Of particular interest is the taxonomy and classification of papal and curial documents issued by the Vatican (181-182). The next section, "People and Places, Institutions and Events" (247-427), contains the typical entries found in an encyclopedia. These entries have been selected for their timeliness and current interest, and consider the people and events that figure prominently in the pontificate of John Paul II. Many are new and do not appear in earlier volumes of the *NCE*. The fourth section (429-637) is dedicated to the 324 saints canonized and 993 individuals beatified by John Paul II. This highlights the pope's dedication to the veneration of saints and the cult of martyrs as "a hallmark of the Catholic tradition" and "sees these canonizations and beatifications as an instrument for the evangelization of local churches and as a sign of the universal call to salvation and holiness" (429-430). The last section (639-643) is a list of patron saints. The volume ends with a list of contributors (all essays, articles, and entries are signed) and a subject index.

Understandably, this volume is friendly toward the church, its people, and particularly the pope. The articles and entries are largely descriptive, with occasional congenial analysis and critique. The same pattern goes for the interpretative essays, where authors sometimes raise important issues that are still challenging the church. Such is the case with the Roman curia, which is periodically criticized for impeding the exercise of collegiality among bishops (68) but, unfortunately, no possible solutions to this situation are offered. Some discussions lack objectivity and present only the positive side of issues, as in the discussion of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* cosigned by the World Lutheran Federation and the Catholic church on October 31, 1999 (78). No mention is made of divergent points of view regarding this document from either Roman Catholic or Lutheran scholars. Perhaps the most candid discussion occurs in the essay on science in conjunction with Galileo's condemnation in 1633 and the relationship between faith and science (102-104). The author highlights the difficulties with which the church still wrestles as it admits that churchmen at the time were wrong in their judgment. Yet it seems that the struggles the church still faces with this and similar issues will not be fully resolved as long as church leaders

cannot admit that the church itself made mistakes. At the root of all this is the Catholic theological concept of the church and whether or not the church can exist as an entity apart from its people and clergy. As Galileo's condemnation illustrates, it seems that throughout the volume an image is given of a church in the midst of great changes, genuinely cognizant of the times in which it lives and of the challenges it faces, yet unable to break with the past, somehow a prisoner of centuries of traditions. Exemplifying this is the ironic fact that in 1983, Pope John Paul II invited preparation of a common historical study of the sixteenth-century Reformation, written by Catholics and Protestants, in an effort to heal memories of a troubled past (75), but in 1998 he proclaimed the year 2000 as a jubilee year and explained how the faithful could obtain indulgences (141).

The Jubilee volume of the *NCE* is certainly a valuable encyclopedic work on current people, events, and documents of the Roman Catholic church. This volume is much more than an encyclopedia, it is an inside look at contemporary Catholicism. Although part of a larger multivolume encyclopedia, it is unique and can easily stand alone. Its contributions to an understanding of contemporary Roman Catholic life and thought are significant and it will be a valuable asset to anyone interested in Catholicism.

Andrews University

DENIS FORTIN

Edwards, Calvin W., and Gary Land. *Seeker After Light: A. F. Ballenger, Adventism, and American Christianity*. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2000. 240 pp. Paperback, \$16.99.

This book is the result of a joint effort by Calvin W. Edwards and Gary Land. Edwards began his study of Albion Fox Ballenger in 1980 for his Master of Divinity thesis at Andrews University. Although he collected a vast amount of material and wrote drafts of the first few chapters, Edwards never finished the project. Instead, he converted the thesis to an independent study and graduated in 1985.

Several years ago, Edwards contacted Gary Land, Professor of History at Andrews University and author and editor of several books related to Adventist history (*Teaching History: A Seventh-day Adventist Approach* [2000]; *Adventism in America: A History* [1986]), to see if he would be interested in finishing the project and "turning it into a book" (vii). Land agreed and wrote the manuscript in consultation with Edwards.

Seeker After Light is primarily the life story of Albion Fox Ballenger. Ballenger, a prominent Seventh-day Adventist minister and administrator from 1885 to 1905, rejected the traditional Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of the sanctuary doctrine based on his own study of the Bible. Consequently he was dismissed from the ministry and the Seventh-day Adventist church. The book, however, is not only a biography. The reader will find "insights into Seventh-day Adventism's early religious liberty work, its foray into the Holiness movement and faith healing, the beginnings of Adventism in Wales and Ireland, and the procedures of an 'apostasy trial'" (xiii). As Land explains, the Ballenger story is depicted "as part of the larger story of religion in America" (vii). Thus, the reader can better understand Ballenger and his experiences.

The book consists of ten chapters. The first four chapters deal with Ballenger's life and ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist church from 1885 to 1905. Ballenger was born to a Sabbatarian Adventist family in 1861. After entering the ministry in 1885, he became involved in the religious liberty work of the Adventist church and was soon appointed as the assistant secretary of the newly formed National Religious Liberty Association (NRLA). By the summer of 1897, Ballenger's work shifted from religious liberty to preaching, and he became one of the leading revivalists in the church. He started the so-called "Receive Ye the Holy Ghost" movement, bringing "experiential religion to the forefront of Adventist thought and practice" (36).

Although initially the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists used Ballenger as a speaker at many camp meetings, toward the end of the nineteenth century his work was limited to the Chesapeake Conference because of fear that he was going to extremes. In 1901, Ballenger was sent to work in England, Wales, and Ireland. Although engaged in more administrative work, he continued his revivalistic preaching there. During that time, Ballenger started to question the Seventh-day Adventist interpretation of the sanctuary. This period of Ballenger's quest is covered in chapters 5 and 6.

According to the authors' research, it is not possible to establish "with certainty" when Ballenger began to have doubts regarding the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the sanctuary doctrine. Although one could speculate that he might have been influenced by several people and events, the authors are almost certain that Ballenger came to his new understanding of the sanctuary independently.

The last four chapters deal with Ballenger's separation from Seventh-day Adventism. He presented his new views in May 1905 during a General Conference Session. Ballenger explained that he could not harmonize the Seventh-day Adventist teaching of the sanctuary, investigative judgment, and atonement with the Bible. Furthermore, his views led to an inescapable disagreement regarding the role of Ellen G. White and her writings. Ballenger "clearly rejected her authoritative role in Seventh-day Adventism" (189). Although the book mentions Ellen White's role in the sanctuary controversy, it does not discuss in detail Ballenger's theological differences, which eventually led to his being disfellowshipped from the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The strength of the study lies in the fact that it offers a comprehensive examination of the life of a controversial and influential figure within the Seventh-day Adventist church. The book has rich endnotes after each chapter, and at the end, the authors provide a "Note on Sources" for further study. There is also an appendix, where two hymns written by Ballenger are presented. Second, the volume offers a useful historical background of one of the major doctrinal controversies that the Adventist church has experienced. The authors explain the major themes in the sanctuary debate on both sides: Ballenger's ideas and the Seventh-day Adventist response to him. However, as Land points out, the authors "make no attempt to determine the biblical or theological validity of those arguments, emphasizing instead their meaning for the church at the time" (viii). Although some may see this as a minor weakness of the book, the data show that the Adventist church was unable to respond adequately to Ballenger's critiques at

that time. In fact, the complexity of the subject led to “quite a difference of opinion” among leading Seventh-day Adventist ministers (175).

The book can be of interest not only to Adventist historians, but to theologians. We must note that the Ballenger controversy did not die out with him. Later, two other Seventh-day ministers, W. W. Fletcher and Desmond Ford, also opposed the sanctuary teaching of the Seventh-day Adventists, primarily using Ballenger’s arguments. Although the general reader may find some of the details tedious, the book is a good source for those who want to learn more about Seventh-day Adventist history and its internal challenges at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

THEODORE N. LEVTEROV

Glassé, Cyril. *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*. New York: Altamira, 2001. 582 pp. Hardcover, \$89.95.

Islam is not only the world’s fastest growing religion, but it and its adherents, the Muslims, have come into the focus of many non-Muslim people due to several developments and incidents. First, Islam is no longer confined within its historic geographical context. In many Western nations, the Muslim population is continually growing. In Germany, for example, out of a population of approximately 80-million people, 3.5 million are Muslims. Other focal points are the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the tragic terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Due to these developments, many people in the Western world want to know more about Islam.

There is currently no better book for this purpose than Glassé’s *New Encyclopedia of Islam*. It is a practical, one-volume comprehensive resource that encompasses the beliefs, practices, history, and culture of the Islamic world and is written by a Western scholar who is a believing Muslim. Thus, it combines an insider point of view with scholarly precision. All aspects of religious belief, ritual and other practices, prayer, significant political movements, spiritual and political leaders, art, architecture, sects, law, social institutions, history, ethnography, nations and states, languages, science, major cities, and centers of learning are covered. The approximately 1,300 entries are written for the general reader and require no previous knowledge about Islam. Photographs, time lines, genealogical tables, and other graphic illustrations are also provided.

This encyclopedia is valuable not only for the casual reader, but for serious students of religion. Because the author does not want to be at variance with orthodox Islamic beliefs in his presentations and interpretations, the reader can naturally detect a certain bias. While this has the negative effect of precluding interpretation, on the positive side it provides for a perspective that can counter many popular misconceptions of Islam. Thus, this encyclopedia is useful for building a base of understanding to enhance Christian-Muslim relations, making informed dialogue and meaningful communication possible. Too often the lack of genuine knowledge and appreciation have hindered positive relations between Christians and Muslims throughout their shared history. This encyclopedia can be a useful tool in building bridges between Muslims and Christians.

Abtwil, Aargau, Switzerland

WOLFGANG LEPKE

Grenz, Stanley J. *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. 366 pp. Hardcover, \$23.99.

With the publication of *Renewing the Center* and a supporting study *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (with John R. Franke), Stanley Grenz, Professor of Theology and Ethics at Carey/Regent College, British Columbia, and author of more than twenty other books, must be regarded as a major evangelical thinker. This is a landmark study that surveys the trajectory of evangelical theology in historical perspective and brings it face-to-face with the challenges of postmodernism.

In spite of the fact that at least half a dozen systematic theologies by evangelical thinkers have been published since Millard Erickson's three-volume *Christian Theology* appeared in the mid-1980s, there is ongoing debate regarding the essence and parameters of evangelicalism. A pressing question is whether the challenges of postmodern thought have been given adequate attention, and if so, what the implications are. In the midst of all of this, the significance of *Renewing* lies in the clarity with which Grenz traces the trajectory and development of evangelical thought during the latter half of the twentieth century, in the delineation of the theological issues occasioned by the demise of epistemological foundationalism and realism, and in pointers toward alternate evangelical theological approaches. Grenz is convinced that evangelicalism cannot simply remain satisfied with the *status quo* of neo-evangelical thought and must come to grips with postmodern sensitivities.

The first two chapters are foundational, describing the theological matrix in which evangelicalism developed. Emphasis on the centrality of the gospel is traced from Luther through Calvin, the Puritans, Pietism, Wesleyan Arminianism, and the great awakenings to classical evangelicalism. This is followed by an analysis of the nature and uses of Scripture from Luther's *sola* and Calvin's "accommodation," via the Puritans, Turretin, and Princeton inerrantism to the centrality of scriptural authority in evangelical thought.

In the following three chapters, the trajectory of evangelical thought from the mid-1940s to the present is dramatically explicated by three pairs of opposing thinkers. First, the presuppositionalist apologetics of founding father Carl F. H. Henry is compared and contrasted with the evidentialist accommodation of theology and science by Bernard Ramm. Next, the views of the establishment theologian Millard Erickson are compared to those of the "theological pilgrim" Clark Pinnock in his turn toward pietism and the Spirit. The following chapter, "Evangelical Theology in Transition," employs terms like "ferment," "crossroads," and the "demise of evangelicalism" in contrasting the work of Wayne Grudem on the right and John Sanders on the left. These five chapters constitute the clearest exposition of the trajectory and contemporary shape of evangelical theology of which I am aware.

The second half of the book amounts to a call for a critical appropriation of postmodern insights in the evangelical theological task. Grenz seeks to maintain the primacy of Scripture as the norm of theology and to uphold evangelicalism's theological heritage, while going beyond to outline the highlights of a theology that accepts the demise of foundationalism and the transition from critical realism to the social construction of reality. He builds a case for a nonfoundationalist

theology that is internally and externally coherent on the basis of eschatologically defined realist metaphysics that bears similarity to the theology of Pannenberg. He draws together the various avenues of thought into a widely functioning ecclesiology in which the confessing community, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, experiences the depth and meaning of Scripture with a directness going beyond that of an earlier metanarrative approach. The focal point of truth for this community is historical in nature and looks forward to eschatological confirmation in the fulfillment of God's purposes. In this he moves beyond epistemological foundationalism and hard realism in the direction of a "chastened and softer" rationality that borrows selectively from postmodern epistemology.

Grenz does not go far beyond sketching what this emergent theology might look like, and it remains to be seen what shape these initiatives will take in a more fully developed theology. In the meantime, this reader feels constrained to ask whether Grenz perhaps follows the sensitivities of postmodern philosophers too closely. For instance, are the implications of a hard nonfoundationalist methodology for the functions of Scripture in theology dealt with seriously enough? How far should the demise of realism and the linguistic construction of reality be pushed in light of the undeniable givenness of created reality? Is there a danger that following postmodern sensitivities too closely may result in a theology that does not do justice to divine revelation and is too thin to satisfy the human need for assurance?

Notwithstanding, this book stands as a significant signpost between the evangelical theologies of two different eras. It looks backwards with unparalleled clarity, identifies key issues on the contemporary horizon, and indicates some possible avenues of approach. It may very well come to be regarded as a landmark study of the trajectory and crisis of evangelical theology, and it cannot be ignored by anyone seeking to understand the history, present shape, and current challenges faced by contemporary evangelical theologians.

Andrews University

RUSSELL STAPLES

Guder, Darrell L. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church, Gospel and Our Culture* Series, vol. 6. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. xvi, 222 pp. Paperback, \$20.00.

In this book, Guder calls upon the North American church to throw off its cultural captivity, to rethink its theology and practice of evangelism, and to allow the gospel to continue its work of conversion both within the church and outside it.

Part I, "Foundations: The Church's Calling to Evangelistic Ministry," argues for a renewed focus on mission as witness. But when Guder and others speak of mission they mean much more than cross-cultural outreach, for mission is really the *missio Dei* involving the very nature and heart of God in all that he has done throughout salvation history to bring people into relationship with himself. The church is an instrument of that mission, but too often it has viewed mission and witness in a reduced form, seeing salvation in terms of personal benefits rather than as a corporate responsibility.

Guder suggests the use of the word "evangelization" instead of "evangelism" since evangelism for many has come to mean merely methods and programs. Evangelization suggests a process of witness in which the church not only fulfills

its God-assigned task of witness to others, but also continues to allow the gospel to do its work within the body of Christ. Part II, "Challenges: The Church's Need for Conversion," deals with the challenges of translating the gospel from one culture to another and the historical pattern of the gospel's reduction as each new group desires to control the gospel and calls its version orthodox or normative. In addressing the problem of reductionism, Guder uses some of his strongest words for the American church's tendency to reduce the gospel to personal benefit, seeing salvation in largely personal terms and separated from God's call on the lives of his followers to be his witnesses. This is the greatest reduction and must be rejected. Being called must always be connected with fulfilling the purpose of that call: witness and the evangelization of the world. Salvation as personal benefit trivializes God and is just another indication of the human tendency to try shaping and molding God into human likeness.

In Part III, "Implications: The Conversion of the Church," Guder stresses that evangelism, witness, and mission must all be accomplished in and through the local congregation, not by smaller groups acting as "evangelism committees." All the believers in the local body of Christ must participate in incarnational witness within the community. Guder's is a workable model as long as such witness is targeted toward people in the same culture. However, as the North American church evangelizes an increasingly multicultural society, Guder's model of the whole church involved in witness and evangelization is lacking in concrete, positive case studies. Local congregations have rarely been effective in crossing cultural or linguistic barriers. In reaching out to other ethnic groups in the local community, evangelizing teams may be the answer.

Guder's warning that culture is always at work to capture the church and its mission, that the gospel stands in danger of reductionistic satisfaction with less than God wants or intends, is extremely valid. Only as the church is willing to subject itself to a continuing conversion process will it be able to be truly incarnational.

Andrews University

BRUCE L. BAUER

Hastings, Adrian, ed. *A World History of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. x + 608 pp. Hardcover, \$35.00.

Most church history texts are primarily Eurocentric and North American in their focus. This is natural, for the history of Europe and Christianity is so intimately intertwined that Christianity has come to be seen mainly as a Western religion. It is no wonder that when Western imperialists set out to subjugate the world, Christianity was perceived as a tool of colonialism and imperialism by many non-Europeans. Many people wrongly assume that there is hardly any noteworthy history of Christianity outside of the West. *A History of World Christianity* sets out to dispel this notion. It is obviously a monumental task.

This book is a welcome change from the traditional church history texts. It is a multiauthored book edited by Adrian Hastings, who himself contributed the chapters on Latin America and the history of Christianity in the Roman world from 150-550 A.D. It is a plural history that looks at the story of Christianity from the viewpoint of different ages and continents, with little effort to impose a

dominant theme. Thirteen chapters, each of which is structured differently, seek to reflect the various spiritual, intellectual, political, and social trends. An attempt is made to include the diversity of the world culture as it is expressed in Asia, Africa, North America, Australasia, and the Pacific.

In his Introduction, Hastings suggests that the nature and history of Christianity is hard to understand because of the variety of its manifestations (1). Misunderstanding arises when people impose upon the whole of Christianity, past and present, their limited experience of it or their observation or opposition. Christianity shows incredible contrasts. For example, among the Quakers it is a rather unritualistic religion. In Eastern Orthodox and monastic traditions, it is ceaselessly ritualistic. In some areas and certain periods of the world, it was and is an apolitical and minority religion; in other places and times it has been an imperial and persecuting religion. In some forms, it is activist, evangelistic, and missionary, while in others it is purely contemplative. It has lauded celibacy, but has also glorified marriage. It has pursued poverty as an ideal, but has been linked to the growth and triumph of capitalism.

As Christianity was carried to areas of traditional and animistic traditions, it tended to convince people not because they became converted, but because of the superior technology of missionaries who sought not only to convert but also to civilize. This is evident in many parts of Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific. In places such as China, Japan, and India, countries with long traditions of advanced civilization and entrenched religious tradition that was sometimes part of state bureaucracy, Christianity made little headway and progress was only possible with the permission of the ruling class.

The strength of this book lies more in its intention rather than its outcome. The authors have sought to present Christianity as a global religion and have succeeded in giving voice to areas of the Christian world that have been severely neglected. However, it has still devoted 220 of its 533 pages to North America and Europe, showing its Western bias. The book seeks to keep a balanced perspective regarding the role of Catholic and Protestant streams within Christianity without tilting toward either of these traditions. The annotated bibliography of church history texts from the various regions of the world is valuable. The chapters on India and China provide information on the history of Christianity in that part of the world that is seldom known by students in the West. Inclusion of places such as Australia and the Pacific, which are rarely considered in any text concerning the history of Christianity, is helpful.

One weakness of this work is the omission of the sixteenth-century radical Reformers and their subsequent impact upon modern Protestantism. Another is that the Caribbean region is not mentioned, even though it was the first place in the New World to be Christianized, and many of the mistakes and tragedies that would be repeated all over the Americas had their genesis there.

This volume is worth reading because it has expanded the horizon of Christianity beyond the narrow confines of Europe and America. It has brought into focus the repeated mistakes of Western missionaries in their misguided attempt not only to convert, but also to civilize non-Christians. The book fills a tremendous void in the literature of Christian history and I hope it will spur

others to research and write on the history of Christianity with a broader global prospective.

Andrews University

TREVOR O'REGGIO

Milgrom, Jacob. *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 3A. New York: Doubleday, 2000. xviii + 625 pp. Hardcover, \$50.00.

Milgrom, Jacob. *Leviticus 23-27: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 3B. New York: Doubleday, 2001. xxi + 819 pp. Hardcover, \$50.00.

There are a few moments in scholarship when one should stop, step back, and just look on in wonderment. The completion of Milgrom's monumental Leviticus commentary in the Anchor Bible series is one of those moments. While I will comment predominantly upon the final two volumes of the set (3A and 3B), the larger picture needs to be kept in mind. Milgrom, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Studies at the University of California at Berkeley, has worked for nearly two decades on the publication of this commentary. Ten years passed between the publication of the first volume (1991) and that of the third volume (2001). Leviticus, as the third book in the canonical sequence, was originally designated as volume 3. Now it has become three books, with volume numbers 3, 3A, and 3B. The total commentary includes 2,714 pages. In breadth, scope, and erudition, there is nothing comparable in Leviticus studies.

Obviously the division into three books, whose later sections had not yet been written when volume 3 was published in 1991, has some drawbacks. First, opinions or positions change. Second, large quantities of new, important studies are being published and need to be taken into consideration, which either strengthen or challenge the position adopted earlier. Third, indices and a final bibliography are not available until the last volume. This is especially trying in the case of volume 3A, which does not contain either a bibliography or an index. In order to get a workable index and complete bibliography, one has to buy the entire set, coming to \$160.00.

On the other hand, there are some definite advantages to publishing as one advances. Long-term publication has allowed Milgrom to interact with his reviewers and correct misprinted, misformulated, or simply incorrect information. Milgrom does this in numerous appendices in volume 3B (2437-2468), where he responds to criticism and issues raised by Henry Sun, Baruch Levine, Israel Knohl, Adrian Schenker, Victor Hurowitz, Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, and Hyam Maccoby.

Milgrom follows the standard layout of the Anchor Bible commentaries, including his translation of the entire text of Leviticus MT. In volume 3A (Lev 17-22), after the translation of Leviticus as a whole there follows a section concerning the structure, vocabulary, extent, and date of Holiness ("H") material (1319-1367) and discussion of H's theology (1368-1443). This serves as an introduction to the second part of Leviticus (17-27). Milgrom argues for a pre-exilic date of "H as well as Pentateuch" ("P"), which was "supplemented and redacted by H" (1362; cf. I.

Knohl). This is a major step forward in Pentateuchal studies (although some may regard it as a step “backward”), as it shakes up and overturns to a certain degree the quietly accepted consensus (if one can speak of *any* consensus in Pentateuchal studies!) of traditional historical-critical dating paradigms. Recently, Wilfried Warning (*Literary Artistry in Leviticus*, Interpretation Series 35 [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 167-180) has suggested, based upon the macro- and micro-structure of Leviticus, that the distinction between P and H is “seemingly irrelevant.” Milgrom is aware of Warning’s work, but does not really interact with him on a content level (1367, 2082, 2337). Perhaps this is due to the fact that Milgrom finished work on the final volumes in April 1999 (see preface to vols. 3A and 3B). Milgrom’s contribution to the theological study of Leviticus is much appreciated, since it is based upon philology and the literary structure of the text itself. For him, theology is not simply a collection of high and dry ethical principles or statements about God, but rather is rooted in the reality of ancient Israel and can be made visible to the modern student of Leviticus (1375-1391). Law is theologically significant as a means to focus upon holiness.

Discussions of individual chapters or passages follow a predictable layout. First, comes a translation, which is then followed by a short note on composition and structure of the unit. Milgrom does not spend an unwarranted amount of time on the issue of composition, as is customary in most continental commentaries. Sometimes he does not even mention the composition question (1516, on Lev 18). In my earlier evaluation of Milgrom’s treatment of Lev 8 in his first book (Gerald A. Klingbeil, *A Comparative Study of the Ritual of Ordination as Found in Leviticus 8 and Emar 369* [Lewiston: Mellen, 1998], 70-73, 80-82, 87-89), I noted that Milgrom wants to work with the text, not with supposed sources or compositional layers. His focus is clearly philological, comparative (including a generous amount of ANE material), and theological. The same approach can be seen in volumes 3A and 3B of the Leviticus commentary.

The next section, entitled “Notes,” should be considered the most important because here he presents his rich discussion of the usage of terms, phrases, and structures; rabbinic and comparative ANE material (where applicable); and relevant archaeological data. Following conventions of the AB series, Milgrom utilizes in-text references rather than footnotes, which makes reading slightly tedious. The amount of data included in this section is amazing and promises to be a gold mine for future generations of scholars. Following “Notes” are the “Comments,” which deal with larger issues at stake in a given unit. His reasoning and language are logical and clear. Often he presents his arguments in list form, which makes following his train of thought much easier.

Volume 3B does not include a separate introduction because Lev 23-27 is regarded as belonging to H, which was introduced in the second book (3A). This book contains an impressive bibliography of volumes 3A and 3B that lists commentaries from medieval and precritical periods, critical commentaries, and other works. Then come four indices covering all three books (subjects, foreign language terms, authors cited, and sources cited), including rabbinic and extrabiblical sources. These indices provide magnificent access to Milgrom’s encyclopedic work, and Doubleday should be applauded for its faithful production.

Milgrom's contribution to the study of Leviticus cannot be overestimated. His hundreds of individual studies have finally been brought together in this *magnum opus* of one of Old Testament Studies' greatest contemporary scholars. While not everyone will agree with every conclusion Milgrom puts forth in his commentary, Milgram's fascination with and passion for the text is manifest and contagious. Students of Leviticus will need to consult this work carefully or risk being considered superfluous or careless. May Milgrom continue to produce and contribute to ongoing research of the fascinating conceptual world of ritual, law, and narrative in Leviticus and the rest of the Torah.

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GERALD A. KLINGBEIL

Taylor, Mark Lewis. *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001. 208 pp. Paper, \$16.00.

Christianity's challenge, according to Søren Kierkegaard, is to forge a balance between being a religion of "cognitive revelation" and being a religion of "concrete revelation." The work of Mark Taylor, who teaches Theology and Culture at Princeton Theological Seminary, may be read as a contemporary theologian's response to that challenge. Like his earlier projects, *Remembering Esperanza* and *Beyond Explanation*, which combined sober analysis of classical theological symbols with a sophisticated grasp of current anthropological theory, *The Executed God* is a journey into the soul of America.

According to Taylor, Christ was killed because he opposed the terror-ridden logic of an empire that brought social and spiritual death to its victims. With regard to contemporary American culture, Taylor highlights the ways in which idolatrous lifestyles, the search for respectability, rigid nationalism, uncritical patriotism, and empire consolidation subtly conspire to produce a society in which certain identities are routinely and systematically blamed, victimized, imprisoned, and even executed. These repressed identities constitute a sacrificial population within a culture that views the scapegoating of this group as justified and its punishment as warranted. This approach is reproduced by xenophobic attitudes and reinforced by uneven social and juridical codes that often legitimate the tendency to view dark skin color as an index of evil.

The Executed God is divided into two parts. In the first part, Taylor argues that contemporary American culture is pervaded by a lockdown mentality, in which the security of its individuals and institutions is defined less in terms of social responsibility and trust and more by a festering anxiety toward difference and otherness. The inevitable social consequence is a culture of terror buttressed by a fortress mentality that typically masks its fears by projecting them onto an unwanted population. For Taylor, "Lockdown America" is a society perpetually imprisoned by its own creation, a reptilian culture of fear constantly biting off its own tail in order to survive.

According to Taylor, as an economy of domination based upon gender, racial, and economic hierarchies, those who benefit from prevailing arrangements legitimize the perpetuity of the system and thus their own prosperity by utilizing the sanitized language of freedom and security (the rhetoric of law and order),

while concealing the ritualized violence upon which the system is based and through which it “re-presents” and “re-faces” its own legitimacy. This ritual violence is legalized within the framework of religious and cultural representations that confer legitimacy upon the dominant economies, values, and practices utilizing Christian logic and language to justify and disguise systemic violence, thus undergirding the predatory character of the system. In this way, religion functions as a handmaid for cultural repression.

In the second part of the book, Taylor skillfully poses the theatrics of counter-terror, a specta-critical campaign that creatively and strategically enacts dramatic presentations designed to transgress the theatrics of terror and pave the way to freedom and wholeness. Thus, Taylor’s theatrics of counter-terror is prophetic in content and oppositional in character. It has three crucial dimensions: “adversarial,” “mimetic,” “kinetic.”

First, it affirms a theology of the cross in which the “adversarial” and antityrannical dimension of the crucifixion (which Taylor reads as execution) event is revealed and utilized as a means to mobilize victims of society.

Second, theatrics of counter-terror is also “mimetic,” i.e. artistic and symbolic. As such it develops and defends actions and activities that arrest social psychologies in order to mobilize public prophetic consciousness *en route* to purge institutional logics of terror. Its chief importance rests in its capacity to link liberating public spectacles with the creative and courageous practices of subaltern peoples. In this way, excluded identities are empowered to “steal the show.” Taylor calls a crucial third element of theatrics of counter-terror “kinetic,” i.e., the dynamic quality of a people on the move toward freedom.

Taylor’s stress on the critical agency and emancipatory possibilities of popular movements is to be affirmed. Yet in real terms, what such a movement of resistance will amount to remains unclear. The central issue confronting American popular movements—Labor, Feminist, Eco-feminist, African-American, and Spanish-speaking American struggles—has been how to mold divergent interests, multiple agendas, and highly irreconcilable symbolic orientations into a cohesive counter-force without sacrificing or diluting the profound moral claims of each movement. However, due to the taming of progressive and prophetic practices (most often through a combined process of militarization and commercialization) under the present circumstances of North America’s heightened policy of global surveillance, options seem narrow. With regard to this precarious though hopeful situation, progressive social movements will most likely move in one of three directions: be co-opted by the market powers that over-determine the nature of cultural and knowledge production; undergo pacification—owing to the fear of cultural backlash, governmental surveillance, and deepening xenophobia—thus severely circumscribing criticism of injustices; or become critically and strategically transformed through the creation of global institutional space, the building of forums of critical exchange, and the launching of informed boycotts, struggles, and protest marches as in Seattle, Washington DC, and Rome. Such visionary movements will become multifaceted, international, and cosmopolitan in outlook. This may often mean the surrender of controversial or confusing religious (or ideological) dogmatism for the sake of ecumenical coalition building.

Perhaps the major limitation of Taylor's remarkable text is where and how he locates the source of evil in today's world. One must ask whether in an increasingly volatile and conflict-ridden globe with previously subordinated and/or colonized groups vying for ideological space the struggle is solely against the logic of empire. Recent texts such as Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*, Benjamin Barber's *Jihad versus McWorld*, Mark Jürgensmeyer's *Terror in the Mind of God*, Robert Jay Lipton's *Destroying the World to Save It*, Lee Griffiths' *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God*, and the recent events circa September 11, point to a broad and variegated stream of corporate and systemic evils around the world, most of them tied to religious systems. As the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr and the history of the twentieth century reveal, no cultural, ethnic, or political identity is exempt from expressions of will-to-power that so easily contravene the insecurity and estrangement that so readily pervade group consciousness. The best we can hope for is the creation of context and problem-specific public discursive and dialogic spaces across the new global landscape.

What is refreshing about Taylor's work is not simply his potent critique of interlocking systems of global domination, his exposure of the moral pretentiousness of mainstream Christians, his strident observations of the grinding inertia within Christendom, and his disdain for the obscurantist politics of revolutionaries. Rather, it is his perceptiveness in accenting the movement of God on the margins of society within the forgotten interstices of "civilization." Such work reflects a growing willingness among North American religious scholars to highlight the active spirituality of religious identities and not simply their creedal postulates. By developing a praxis-oriented theology *within* history and *through* culture, Taylor develops a mode of discourse that critically affirms and appreciates the cultural and spiritual capital of subaltern identities as they form communities of reform and resistance. This makes his work a healthy example of the attempt to forge a balance for Christianity between its cognitive ideals and its myriad concrete expressions, a worthy response to Kierkegaard.

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TOKUNBO ADELEKAN

Vyhmeister, Nancy Jean. *Quality Research Papers: For Students of Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001. x+228 pp. Paper, \$14.00.

While teaching students how to write from an academic perspective in any field is never easy, it can be especially difficult in the field of Religious Studies because the neophyte must learn to write from a nonconfessional perspective. This has been an almost annual challenge at the University of North Carolina with freshmen who enroll in the Religious Studies Link through the Writing Across the Curriculum Program—a dual enrollment in English Composition 12 and Introduction to New Testament Literature. The goal of the composition section of the link is to help students take what they have learned in their NT course and write specifically for religious studies. Fortunately, this year's pedagogical task was made much easier with the publication of Vyhmeister's book *Quality Research Papers*, which was the required text for the twenty-three freshmen enrolled in my

Spring 2002 section. While my comments in this review will be based on my classroom experience with *Quality Research Papers*, it should be noted that the majority of my students were not Religious Studies majors.

Unlike many authors on religious writing, Vyhmeister, a former editor and seminary professor at Andrews University, does not concentrate on bibliography and sources. Rather, she deals with the fundamental aspects of research, organization, and form that are the crux of writing. The 21 chapters are divided into three sections. The first 12 comprise the main part of the book. This section begins with a definition of what research is and is not, and then presents the various steps of how research is done. *Quality Research Papers* covers everything from how to find sources, choose a topic, plan research, take notes, and prepare bibliographies. It even includes detailed information on how to organize and properly format a paper. With the exception of the bibliographical examples taken from the field of religious studies, these opening chapters contain helpful information for any undergraduate or graduate student, regardless of his or her academic area.

The second section, chapters 13 through 17, focuses on the steps for more specialized types of research: how to do biblical exegesis, descriptive research, program development, and case studies. The final section is even more specialized for graduate students in that it provides valuable information about the use of statistics, tables, and graphs, and how to write theses, dissertations, and D.Min. projects. In addition, *Quality Research Papers* has a select bibliography, a subject index, and four appendices that deal with APA Citation Style, Transliteration of Biblical Languages, Common Abbreviations, and Tips for the Typist.

While the primary strength of *Quality Research Papers* is its treasure trove of information on the how-to's of research and writing, its value is augmented by clarity of presentation. In addition to being well-written, the book is laid out in a fashion that makes its information easily accessible. Clear, visible levels of headings allow the reader to quickly see how each chapter topic is divided and subdivided, in order to locate the information most needed. Also, while each of the first twelve chapters are related, their material is presented in such a way that the chapters do not have to be followed sequentially. This, along with references to other helpful materials for writers, allows the book to function as a reference tool. Clarity is further strengthened by an abundance of helpful examples distributed throughout the book. My students found the numerous samples of bibliographical entries and the eight-page example of a properly formatted research paper to be particularly helpful.

While *Quality Research Papers* has no major weaknesses, it could be improved if the following areas were enhanced. First, the list of abbreviations on p. 67 would be more useful to departments of religion and divinity schools if it were not limited to the Protestant biblical canon, but also included the deuterocanonical books and other sources such as the Apostolic Fathers, Philo, Josephus, and the Nag Hammadi texts. Instead of being listed at the end of the chapter on footnotes, this expanded list of abbreviations would be more useful if it were included as an additional appendix. The bibliographical examples could also be strengthened if they included similar diversity of religious material. Second, while the section on library resources was helpful, I was surprised at the cursory explanation of the

ATLA Index. Since ATLA is a "veritable gold mine of information" (12) for the student of religion, I would have liked to see this section more fully elaborated, perhaps even with examples from ATLA's new Windows-based interface. The book has a few typographical errors, of which the most serious is the abbreviation "Zac" instead of "Zech" for Zechariah (67). The main chapter on formatting correctly describes a block quotation as "usually two sentences of eight lines or more" (105), but Appendix D, "Tips for the Typist," given an older rule ("one sentence and four lines") that should be updated (220). Of more minor significance are the typos "exudes" for "exodus" (46), "hear" instead of "heart," and "basies" instead of "biases" (95).

These minor points, however, should not detract from the fact that *Quality Research Papers* fills a void, providing a much-needed research and writing resource for both undergraduate and graduate students of religion and theology. Therefore, I would recommend that it become a required text for any seminary or religion department research/writing course. The clear information on the research process in the first twelve chapters also makes *Quality Research Papers* a valuable resource for students in other fields. The vast majority of my students planned to retain it for use with other classes. *Quality Research Papers* has become an indispensable text that I plan to continue using for my composition course in the future.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

CARL P. COSAERT

Williams, Michael James. *Deception in Genesis: An Investigation into the Morality of a Unique Biblical Phenomenon*, Studies in Biblical Literature, vol. 32. New York: Peter Lang, 2001. xviii + 252 pp. Hardcover, \$60.95.

This insightful study deals with a controversial topic that has not formerly been thoroughly analyzed. It is a comprehensive treatment of the phenomenon of deception in the book of Genesis, where this factor occurs surprisingly often. The writer handles with profound skill and erudition the unusual feature that in this Hebrew book deception is sometimes treated positively.

Williams's book is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter presents an exhaustive catalogue of deception events in Genesis, where this phenomenon occurs in fifteen passages. In chapter 2, each incident is carefully analyzed and characterized, and three of these events are positively evaluated (Gen 38:1-26; 42:7-28; and 44:1-34). Chapter 3 introduces comparative biblical data (Prophetic Literature and Writings) into the picture. William's brings biblical material about deception into dialogue with later Jewish tradition (chap. 4), ancient Near Eastern parallels (chap. 5), and world folklore literature (chap. 6). The author stresses that all extrabiblical stories about deception are always negative (173), and admits that the folklore material in particular is not specific enough to make mature comparative evaluations (212). In chapter 7, Williams draws his final conclusions. The book ends with an 18-page bibliography and a subject index.

Crucial for the present study is a definition of deception. Williams offers the following description, which governs his treatment of the topic: "Deception takes place when an agent intentionally distorts, withholds, or otherwise manipulates information reaching some person(s) in order to stimulate in the person(s) a belief

that the agent does not believe in order to serve the agent's purpose" (3). Intentionality is essential, which is why the author deals only with biblical passages where this factor is present. He seeks to discover the rationale behind the positive view of some deception in Genesis.

Williams concludes that Genesis positively describes only those events of deception in which the perpetrator was previously wronged and uses deception "against the one who has done the wrong in order to restore shalom" (55). In such cases, deception functions "to restore their own situation to what they would have been had they not been disrupted" (221). Thus deception is justified when it functions to restore the well-being of the person, family, or faith community. When deception distorts shalom, it is viewed negatively.

The book of Genesis, with its particular view of deception, is set apart from the rest of the biblical narratives where deception is present because the social structure is different, e.g., the nation of Israel was not yet formed (75). While the biblical material clearly condemns deception, in some instances even God deceives (62-66). It is interesting that in the later Jewish literature, a deception event is viewed positively when it includes divine involvement, a positive motivation on the part of the deceiver, and a negative evaluation of the character of the deceived party (136).

Interestingly, an Egyptian proverb from *The Instruction of Ankhsheshong* states that "there is none who deceives who is not deceived." This fits the pattern that Williams has discovered in Genesis. It is comforting that prophets speak about the splendid future where there will be no deceit (66).

Not all scholars will agree with assessments of deception passages, but the author should be commended for his diligent categorization and thorough analysis. Nevertheless, one wonders why he omitted the Dan 6 narrative about Daniel and his deceitful enemies in his discussion of deception in the book of Daniel (70).

In theological ethics, one has difficulty accepting the view that the end justifies the means because such a "principle" can excuse or justify almost any kind of behavior. It is true that our author is careful in his description of the deception process, but I wish that he would provide more penetrating insight into the question of whether the end justifies the means. Williams correctly warns not to judge Genesis deception phenomena from our modern cultural standpoint (223). Nevertheless, we could raise the following questions, which go beyond the scope of the present study: What is the border and safeguard for accomplishing lasting shalom? Social norms change, therefore, what are the implications for modern ethics? Perhaps, he is planning to do this in a future publication. In any case, Williams's research deserves to be taken seriously by those interested in ethics and new directions in biblical studies.

Andrews University

JIRÍ MOSKALA

Zevit, Ziony. *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallaxic Approaches*. New York: Continuum, 2001. xx+821 pp. Hardcover, \$150.00.

Zevit's *magnum opus* is the most comprehensive discussion of Israelite religion to date, involving systematic integration of textual, epigraphic, iconographic, and archaeological data, and seeking to apply a balanced methodological approach to

an area of study that has often been beset by controversy and methodological extremism (see also more recently Ziony Zevit, "Three Debates about Bible and Archaeology," *Biblica* 83 [2002]: 1-27). Since not everyone will agree with Zevit's conclusions or even his premises, his work will undoubtedly provoke reaction, but hopefully it will move the discussion beyond pitting one discipline against another, as has often been the case (as in the debate between "minimalists" and "maximalists"). He issues a call to a multidisciplinary approach that is open to hearing the biblical text, looking at the extrabiblical literary data, and paying adequate attention to the material culture (cf. my comments in "Methods and Daily Life: Understanding the Use of Animals in Daily Life in a Multi-Disciplinary Framework," in *Daily Life in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Richard Averbeck et al. [Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2002], 401-433). This approach involves risk because an interdisciplinary focus is necessarily less than the total of the specialized disciplines that it brings into mutual intellectual relationship (cf. Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion Up and Down, Out and In," in *Sacred Time, Sacred Space: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, ed. Barry M. Gittlen [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002], 4). However, this risk is worth taking if we want to understand and integrate.

The book is divided into ten chapters of various lengths. It also includes an appendix regarding the Khirbet Beit Lei inscriptions, which provides a good photograph and drawing by Zevit; an extensive bibliography; and several helpful indices covering subjects, authors, and transliterated foreign words. A scriptural index also includes references from apocryphal literature, DSS, classical authors, and rabbinical sources. Zevit states in his preface that the book is intended for a wide audience, including undergraduate and graduate students of disciplines such as Bible, archaeology, and history, as well as seminary graduate students, pastors, rabbis, and scholars (xiii).

In terms of methodology, chapter 1 is the most significant. The author acknowledges the methodological disparity and (often) disengagement between philological, historical, and archaeological research and describes the distinct reigning paradigms in these disciplines. Zevit then provides his definition of Israelite religion, emphasizing the worldview of the ancients, which he views as necessary in order to understand religious expressions (15). He also refers to "Israelite religions" (plural), acknowledging the existence of different, often competing, religious expressions in Israel. The historical time frame embraces the Iron Age (1200-587 B.C.). To review recent scholarship concerning methodology, Zevit describes several distinct approaches (30-73), ranging from a modernist paradigm, presupposing an original historical reality, to a postmodernist paradigm, which questions historical reality in view of the supposed dominant ideological traces and strands. Zevit opts for a modernist approach, which acknowledges "coexistent competing worldviews and allows for some sort of structured pluralism" (75). He eschews "theological" or "antitheological" biblical texts as historically irrelevant (79), although one wonders upon what criteria such texts are assigned to these categories.

In the following chapters, Zevit examines specific religious expressions as evidenced in the material culture and texts. First, he investigates cult places (81-121), supplying a helpful catalogue of criteria for defining the presence of a cult

place in the archaeological record (81-83). He concludes that there is clear evidence for cultural and religious discontinuity between LBA and IA I (113ff.), but allows for non-Israelite influence on Israelite religious thought and ritual practices (119).

Chapter 3 focuses upon the architecture of cult places (123-266). This is one of the largest individual chapters and provides some helpful definitions and classifications (see also Garth Gilmour, "The Archaeology of Cult in the Ancient Near East: Methodology and Practice," *Old Testament Essays* 13 [2000]: 283-292). Zevit discusses possible cult sites outside of Israel, including Tell Qasile, Tell Miqne, Edomite Horvat Qitmit, and Bethsaida-Geshur (‘Et-Tell). Following is a study of Israelite sites, such as Ai, Arad, Beer-Sheba, the Bull Site, Tell Dan, Mt. Ebal, Ein Gev, Hazor, Jerusalem, Lachish, Mikdash and Tell Michal, Megiddo, Ta’anach, Tell el-Far‘ah (North), and Tell ‘Eton. It seems that a socially sensitive interpretation is warranted, recognizing that religion was practiced differently at home, village, sanctuary, urban temple, and extraurban sanctuary (265). It is fascinating that Zevit’s (rather convincing) argument is partially based upon the distinctions found in Deut 13:2-16. Interestingly, while referring to region (difficult to define), family, and city, he seems to overlook Deut 13:12 (Eng. 13:11), which refers to Israel as a whole. Could it be that this reference to the nation does not fit the overall evolutionary reconstruction of Israelite religion, or has it just been overlooked?

Chapter 4 discusses the material and textual aspects of cultic artifacts (267-349), including figurines, altars, ceramic stands, model shrines, scarabs, and seals. While recent studies of figurines focus more upon family religion and the function of women in Israelite religion (cf. Elizabeth Ann R. Willett, "Infant Mortality and Family Religion in the Biblical Periods," *DavarLogos* 1 [2002]: 27-42), Zevit does not sufficiently emphasize this angle. Although the author rightfully maintains that the function of horns on Israelite altars is not explicitly explained in the biblical text, he has missed the important work of Margit Linné Süring, *Horn-Motifs in the Hebrew Bible and Related Ancient Near Eastern Literature and Iconography* (Andrews University Seminary Dissertation Series, 4 [Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1982]).

Chapter 5 focuses on cultic sites involving inscriptions, including the Judean Desert cave adjacent to Ein Gedi, a tomb at Khirbet ElQôm near Lachish, a building atop Kuntillet ‘Arjud in the eastern Sinai, and a tomb at Khirbet Beit Led. This chapter contains a detailed discussion of the paleography and content of these inscriptions, which share cultic function and written reference (at least in three cases) to YHWH, Ba‘al, ‘El, and Asherah.

Chapter 6 deals with Israelite religions in Israelian and Judahite historiography and historiosophy, concentrating on the so-called Deuteronomic historian. Concerning Israel, Zevit concludes that religion was only nominally dependent on the king (457), as in New Kingdom Egypt. Concerning Judah, the author proposes a distinct model, where the king exercised almost complete control over the temple and often also attempted to govern aspects of the cultic/religious life of Judahites beyond the confines of the temple (479).

In chapter 7, Zevit considers Israelite mantic religions in distinct literary, social, and historical contexts, concluding that prophetic religion involved an immanent god, and was highly individualistic and dynamic (510). Chapter 8 comes at Israelite religion from an interesting angle, portraying it through enemy eyes.

Zevit understands the "enemy" in this context to be the critical prophet. He discusses sixty-five prophet oracles that address religious practice, i.e., ritual, mostly from a negative perspective, and presents a handy list of possible religious activities, deities, and objects that were criticized (583-584).

Chapter 9 discusses the names of Israelite deities as found in biblical and epigraphic sources. In particular, he focuses upon the theophoric elements present in personal and topographical names. Through examination of non-Yahwistic names, he reaches two interesting conclusions: the spread of Yahwism in Israel is pre-Davidic (607), and the plurality of distinct cult places and forms indicates lack of a strictly conventional way of celebrating YHWH. Thus, Zevit argues for a minimal Yahwism (or perhaps "surface Yahwism"), which had not replaced older (or newer) loyalties to other deities. Clearly, the biblical evidence concerning constant rebellion and apostasy could be interpreted along these lines.

The final chapter represents a synthesis of evidence culled from the earlier sections and should be prescribed reading for all graduate classes on Israelite religion. It is basically a historical reconstruction of the different strands of Israelite religions as understood by Zevit. Of course, as a reconstruction, it is susceptible to reductionism.

Zevit's work is characterized by careful scholarship, relevant documentation, and didactic presentation that includes two maps and more than one hundred superb figures. The two-column layout of the wider than usual volume also makes for easy reading. The author generally has a good grasp of the involved fields, although once or twice I would have wished for a stronger methodological basis when he utilizes data from an adjacent discipline, e.g., in his use of iconography. Zevit generally follows the traditional dating schemes that have become credo in biblical scholarship, e.g., Deutero-Isaiah, Trito-Isaiah, J-E-D-P. But it is clear that he is not overly concerned about these dating issues. In a sense, this makes his work susceptible to circular reasoning as specific phenomena are correlated to specific biblical writings. This tendency has been checked in some chapters with a marked focus upon datable extrabiblical materials (both archaeological and textual).

I have profited tremendously from Zevit's monumental work. It provides a welcome collection of important threads concerning Israelite religion and ritual. The high price of \$150.00 will limit its market penetration, but hopefully Continuum will soon publish a paperback edition that will be more accessible to cash-strapped scholars. We can wish for more studies focusing on Israelite religion and utilizing Zevit's multidisciplinary approach to integrate the different data sets without excluding any. In any case, congratulations to the author on his great achievement!

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GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS AND REVIEWERS

“Guidelines for Authors and Reviewers” and frequently used abbreviations may be found on our website at www.auss.info, or in *AUSS* 40 (Autumn 2002): 303-306 and back covers, or copies may be requested from the *AUSS* office.

For general English style, see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed., rev. John Grossman and Alice Bennett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

For exhaustive abbreviation lists, see Patrick H. Alexander and others, eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 68-152, 176-233. For capitalization and spelling examples, see *ibid.*, 153-164.

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TRANSLITERATION OF HEBREW AND ARAMAIC

CONSONANTS

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|--------|
| א = ' (aleph) | ה = h | ט = t | מ = m | פ = p | ש = š |
| ב = b | ו = w | י = y | נ = n | צ = s | שׁ = ś |
| ג = g | ז = z | כ = k | ס = s | ק = q | ת = t |
| ד = d | ח = h | ל = l | ע = ' (ayin) | ר = r | |

MASORETIC VOWEL POINTINGS

| | | | | |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| ַ = a | ֵ = e | ֶ = ê | ֹ = ô | וּ = ô |
| ָ = ā | ֶ̄ = ē | ִ = î | וּ = o | וּ = û |
| ְ = a (vocal shewa) | ֵ = e | ֶ̄ = î | וּ = o | וּ = u |

No distinction is made between soft and hard begad-kepat letters; dāgēš forte is indicated by doubling the consonant.

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