Canadian-American Theological Review

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Foreword
Guest Editorial

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We are delighted to publish in this issue N. T. Wright's inaugural lecture for the Logos Institute for Exegetical and Analytical Theology at the University of St. Andrews. In this lecture, focused on themes of the *imago Dei*, the cosmos as temple, and the new creation in the Fourth Gospel (where we find a discussion of Logos), Wright challenged systematic and analytic theologians to take seriously the exegesis of Scripture proposed by biblical scholars.

Not long after this lecture, analytic theologian J. T. Turner took up the challenge in an essay published in *Theologica: An International Journal for Philosophy of Religion and Philosophical Theology* 2, no. 1 (2018) 95–114. That essay is reprinted here with permission.

The next essay, by David Miller, is related to these two, in that it addresses the current disagreement among those writing on eschatology concerning the prominence given to the beatific vision versus a new creation. Will we be caught up in a perpetual vision of the eternal glory of God or will ordinary mundane cultural activities continue in the new age? Predictably, this disagreement tends to fall between biblical scholars and systematic theologians.

The next three essays branch out into other topics. First, we have an essay from John Byron, who has written extensively on the Cain and Abel narrative in Genesis 4. Here Byron turns to the reception of this story in pop and rock music, exploring the connections between biblical text, song lyrics, and the lives of the musicians and songwriters.

Next is an exploratory essay by Dale Harris on whether the injunctions about welcoming the stranger or alien (Hebrew *gēr*) in the Torah can help us in thinking of the place of homosexual persons in the church today. Harris clarifies the referent of the term *gēr* and the sort of welcome that the Torah envisions, while tackling the tension between such welcome and the Torah's emphasis on sexual impurity as polluting the temple and the land.

The final essay, by Gordon Oeste, was the keynote lecture at the 2018 Fall conference of the Canadian-American Theological Association held at Wycliffe College, Toronto. This essay, which addresses a redemptive reading of biblical war texts, is based on material in William Webb and Gordon Oeste, *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric? Wrestling with Troubling War Texts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019). We are grateful to InterVarsity Press for permission to publish this essay just as the book is appearing in print.

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History, Eschatology, and New Creation in the Fourth Gospel: Early Christian Perspectives on God's Action in Jesus, with Special Reference to the Prologue of John[1]

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University of St. Andrews

Abstract

The challenge of historical exegesis of Scripture remains at the heart of all Christian theology, especially given the tendency of much theology to bypass reading texts in their historical context. As a case in point, the Prologue to John's Gospel, when read in the context of the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism, strongly implies that with Jesus the Creator God has accomplished the "new Genesis," with Jesus as the "image," and, with that, a new Exodus, with Jesus as the divine glory dwelling among people, unveiling the Creator's covenant love. The temple theme urgently needs to be re-integrated into systematic and analytic theology (particularly with regard to categories such as "humanity" and "divinity," or "natural" and "supernatural") from which it has usually been absent.

En archē ēn ho logos. John's opening line must be one of the most famous initial sentences in all literature, ranking with Virgil's *Arma virumque cano* or Shakespeare's "If music be the food of love, play on"; or even Melville's dark and haunting "Call me Ishmael." And it is obvious even at first glance why John's simple opening is so profound: it echoes the first line of Genesis, *bĕrēšît bārā' 'ĕlohîm 'ēt hašāmayim w'ēt hā'āreṣ; en archē epoiēsen ho theos ton ouranon kai tēn gēn*. Curiously, I decided to begin with John 1:1 before I even reflected on how appropriate it is as a starting point for this, our first Logos conference! So be it.

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[1] Lecture for the inaugural Logos Conference, June 2017, given at the Logos Institute for Exegetical and Analytical Theology, St. Mary's College, University of St. Andrews, UK. This lecture was a foretaste of Wright's 2018 Gifford lectures, entitled "Discerning the Dawn: History, Eschatology, and New Creation," published as *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press; London: SPCK, 2019).

Different Ways of Construing History, Eschtology, and Theology

John's opening move is, of course, bold. It borders (one might think) on blasphemy: are you really sitting down to write a new Genesis? Yes, replies John; because that is the truth to which I am bearing witness. I am telling a story about something that has happened in which heaven and earth have come together in a whole new way, about the long and dark fulfilment of the Creator's purposes for his creation. And, John might continue, since I am writing in the tradition of the Hebrew Bible, it won't surprise you that I am telling this story of creation and new creation in terms of the fulfilment of the divine purpose in, for, and through Israel.

Thus, if we were to bring our categories of "history" and "eschatology," let alone "theology" itself, to John, I think this is how he would anchor and expound them: that by "history" he might mean the course of events in the Creator's world, and by "eschatology" he might mean the ultimate purposes of the Creator for his world, to be accomplished through his purposes for Israel. And in both cases, again obviously, these purposes are laid bare, for John and for the other early Christians, in the events concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

I want to begin with John, not least the Prologue, rather than with an exposition of these larger abstractions, for programmatic reasons. I have long had the sense that theology, not least philosophical theology, and perhaps even analytic theology, has tended to start with its own abstract concepts and, in expounding and adjusting them, has drawn in bits and pieces of Scripture on the way. That, I suppose, is better than nothing; but it can provide the illusion of engagement with the text rather than allowing the text to lead the way.

Of course, a suggestion like that will today meet the slings and arrows of outraged postmodernism: what is this "text," and how can it possibly "lead the way"? But part of my proposal is precisely that a *historically responsible* reading of the early Christian writings, allowing them to be themselves in their actual historical setting, will lead to an *eschatologically attuned* reading both in terms of the text's apparent intention and in terms of its reappropriation by later generations, including our own; and that this eschatologically attuned reading must be understood in terms of the new creation, which, in John's book, was launched in Jesus and continues to make its way in the life-giving power of the Spirit.

Only when we have begun to glimpse this can we then make our way to a historically grounded critique of the hermeneutical traditions that have pulled and tugged at both exegesis and theology over the last two hundred years. Obviously there will only be time for a brief sketch of all that, but I hope at least to open up some issues and to do so, as I say, on exegetical grounds.

Exegesis is a branch of history, and we have suffered from a misperception about historical exegesis. People sometimes talk of the "historical-critical method," as though there were one and only one thing that might be so called.

Karl Barth, famously, asked Ernst Käsemann the meaning of the two words, and particularly the meaning of the hyphen between them; I do not know what Käsemann replied, though itself that might be significant. The phrase has however been used as a slogan for a kind of negative criticism, following through an eighteenth-century desire to do something called "history," but which in fact was running a philosophical *a priori* through the material, with Hume in the background and with the Epicureanism of the Enlightenment supplying the framework.

And sometimes the phrase has then acquired the apparent high moral ground of a supposed relentless intellectual honesty: we today cannot believe this or that because we live in the modern world. The response to this has been varied, with some capitulating and producing a reductionist account of Jesus and the first Christians, some doing their best to shore up the historical foundations, and some escaping into a second-order world where the truth of the gospel is not dependent upon whether this or that actually happened.

These debates about Jesus and his first followers, and the theological and hermeneutical questions which are raised, go closely together with the larger questions of theology proper (if there is such a thing?): What can and must we say about God, about God's world and God's relation to that world, and how do we say it?

The large question of so-called "natural theology," in particular, and whether any such thing is desirable let alone possible, turns out to be another way of addressing the same question as the question of God's action in Jesus. In other words, the question as to whether we can start with the study of this small bit of history and work up to truth-statements about God turns out to be a specific case of the question as to whether we can start with observations of the natural world and work up to God from there.

And hovering over both those projects, and their apparent intertwining, is the question as to whether that was the right question to ask in the first place. Those are among the larger issues that I will now leave in the background as we dive in and look at what John seems to be doing in his Prologue and in the Gospel as a whole.

It would be possible to run this thought-experiment with Paul, or indeed, especially following Richard Hays's remarkable recent book, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, with the three Synoptic Gospels, or indeed with Hebrews or Revelation; but in light of time constraints I will stick with John.[2]

John: New Creation, New Temple

Let me then follow through on the basic insight that John thinks he is writing a

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2   Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016).

new Genesis. This offers a framework for the Gospel, since chapter 20, the Easter account, seems to me to match the Prologue quite closely, with the early morning, the darkness preceding the light, and Mary's appropriately mistaking Jesus for the gardener. This is common knowledge but the corollary is not always observed: that for John, as for Paul and the others, new creation means new *creation*, the *renewal* of the present world rather than its abandonment and replacement by some other kind of world altogether. The resurrection is the reaffirmation of the goodness of creation following decisive divine judgment on the dark forces that have corrupted the present world; or, to put it the other way, when John depicts the arrival of the kingdom of God on earth as in heaven it is, truly, *on earth* as well as in heaven, with the risen and Spirit-giving Jesus forging the ultimate link between the two.

But there is more to seeing John as a new Genesis than just this. Five things, closely related, stand out, each of which I regard as vital for understanding how the early Christians spoke of God's action in Jesus, each of which I think ought to form part of the framework for a fresh and creative collaboration between exegesis and theology in tomorrow's confused world.

1. The Temple—Link between Heaven and Earth

The first is that John sees creation and new creation, and Jesus in the middle of them, in terms of the temple. Jewish and Hebrew Bible scholars have been writing about ancient temple-theology for quite some time, but it's only recently that New Testament scholars have picked up on it, not always (in my view) very helpfully; and my impression is that this has had little if any impact on systematic or analytic theology.[3]

It is now common coin among Genesis scholars that the ancient world would see Genesis 1 in terms of the creation of a temple, a heaven-and-earth reality in which the two spheres or realms are held together and seen as compatible, if dangerously so. The seven stages of creation are the stages of building this heaven-and-earth palace for God and humans to live in, and the "rest" on the seventh day is not simply God taking a day off but rather God entering into his new home to enjoy possession of it as Lord. That's the language used later on for the Jerusalem temple: Zion is God's resting-place, the house where he comes to take his ease among his people, through whom he rules creation.

Did John then think, in writing a new Genesis, that he was writing a new temple-theology? The question answers itself: of course he did. The temple is one of the major themes throughout the book, with Jesus himself as the focal point; hence, in the Prologue itself, the decisive v. 14, where 'the Word became flesh, and lived among us'; the Greek is *kai eskēnōsen en hemin*, which literally means that the Word "tabernacled," pitched his tent, in our midst.

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3 For what follows see now my Gifford Lectures, *History and Eschatology*, ch. 5.

This theme grows and swells, through the reference to Jacob's Ladder at the end of chapter 1 (with heaven opened and angels ascending and descending; 1:51), into the wedding at Cana in chapter 2 (the wedding symbolizing the coming together of heaven and earth), followed at once by the temple-scene where Jesus is "speaking about the 'temple' of his body" (2:21); and so on.[4]

As with several of John's themes, not least the Word itself, these are stated emphatically at the start in order that the reader may then hold them in mind while, so to speak, watching the action unfold: this, we are to understand, is what is really going on.

When, on Easter morning, Mary sees the two angels in the tomb, they are sitting one at the head and the other at the feet of the slab where Jesus's body had laid—a reflection, as some have pointed out, of the mercy-seat at the heart of the sanctuary. This is where the living God meets with his people. In particular, all this has to do with that overarching Johannine theme, the revelation of the divine glory. As we shall see, the ancient Jewish hope for the divine glory was for a renewed temple, as in Ezekiel, to which the glorious presence would return at last.

But that is to anticipate the third of my four points.

2. Humanity as Image of God

The second point, closely allied to the themes of new creation and new temple, is the role of humans in God's image. The climax of Gen 1 comes at vv. 26–28. If Genesis 1 is the great cosmic temple, then humans are the divine image placed within that temple. This rules out at a stroke centuries of puzzle as to what aspect of humanity might be supposed to be the divine "image"; that isn't the point. The picture is *vocational* (and indeed to see it like that sets in quite a new context all the great questions of sin and salvation, as I have argued elsewhere).[5]

The "image" in a temple is there for a purpose, indeed, for a double purpose: so that the worshippers may bring their worship to the image and thus to the god who is imaged, and so that the power and protection and stewardship of the god may flow out through the Image to the world around. This would be true of any pagan shrine and image, and it is what Genesis is saying about the vocation of human beings within the heaven-and-earth temple we call the cosmos. In both paganism and the Bible, the deity is *present in and as* the image. Psalm 8 picks up this theme and, in later usage, applies it not least to Israel's king, and perhaps also to the high priest.

When we read John 1 in this light we see that at more or less the same point in the story where Genesis has the creation of humans in God's image (at the climax

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4   Quotations from the New Testament are the author's translation: N. T. Wright, *The Kingdom New Testament: A Contemporary Translation* (London: SPCK; San Francisco: HarperOne, 2011).

5   See my *The Day the Revolution Began* (London: SPCK; San Francisco: HarperOne, 2016).

of the narrative), John has the Word becoming flesh. And the close thematic parallels to this passage in Colossians 1 and Hebrews 1 ought to leave us in no doubt that John wants us to make exactly that connection. Jesus is the true human, the ultimate Image-bearer, the one *in and as* whom the Creator is now present in, with, and for his creation.

John emphasizes this most strongly when Jesus stands before Pilate on the Friday, the sixth day of the week, and Pilate declares *ecce homo*, "Here's the man!" (19:5). John's narrative is nearly complete at that point. Still, if we follow through the themes of creation and new creation, we see that Jesus goes to his death with the word *tetelestai* ("it's all done"), echoing Gen 2:1–2. The six-day work is finished; and on the seventh day God rests, this time in the darkness of the tomb, before the new creation, which, as John emphasizes, happens "on the first day of the week" (20:1).

But if John is writing a new Genesis, then v. 14 is also an indication that he is including a new Exodus at the same time.

3. The Exodus-Tabernacle Complex—God Coming to Dwell with His People

This brings me to the third point. One of the themes to emerge from recent work on ancient biblical temple-theology is the reading of Genesis and Exodus as a single narrative arc. (When I originally wrote that sentence I mistyped "arc" as "ark," which was also appropriate, but from another angle.) From early days, and particularly in the Second Temple writings, the wilderness tabernacle and then the Jerusalem temple were seen as small working models of the whole creation. They were not "religious" buildings seen as an escape from the rest of the world, signalling access to a remote divine sphere; they were advance signposts, eschatological pointers, indicating (like Noah's ark itself) that, despite the vocational failure of the image bearers, the waters of chaos would not overcome the world.

The calling of Abraham in Gen 12—with Abraham seen very much as the new Adam—points ahead to the whole Exodus narrative with its climax in the tabernacle, into which the divine glory comes to dwell (Exod 40:34–35). This, it seems, is the purpose of Israel, Abraham's family: to be the guardians of the tabernacle, the carriers of the promise that there would be new heavens and new earth.

The slavery in Egypt, and then the Exodus, speak volumes about how the people of Israel, themselves part of the Adam-problem, can fulfil this vocation. The giving of Torah seems, in this light, to be the preparation for the coming of the tabernacle and particularly of the divine glory that will dwell in it.

All this is vital for John as he unfolds this major theme: that when the Word becomes flesh and "tabernacles' in our midst, "*we gazed upon his glory, glory like that of the father's only son, full of grace and truth.*" There are multiple echoes here of the Exodus story in which God reveals to Moses that he is full of *ḥesed*

and *'ĕmet* (Exod 34:6–7). Even the Johannine theme of Jesus as the Passover Lamb is, I think, subordinate to this point. In Exodus the new working model of creation has its own divine image within it in the person of the High Priest, Aaron himself.

Then, in the Second Temple period, we find the theme that I have come in recent years to regard as the major clue to all the early Christian accounts of God's action in Jesus. Ezekiel 10 tells of the divine glory, riding on the throne-chariot, abandoning the temple to its fate because of the persistent idolatry of people and priests alike. But in the final dream-like sequence of the book, the temple is rebuilt; and in Ezek 43 the divine glory returns at last.

This is the point, as well, of the whole poem of Isa 40–55: the watchmen will see the divine glory returning to Zion—though when they look closely what they will see is the figure of the Servant. And the point is this: in two of the major so-called post-exilic books, Zechariah and Malachi, the temple has been rebuilt, but the promise of YHWH's glorious return remains unfulfilled. Both of these prophets insist that it will be fulfilled, that YHWH will indeed return, but that very insistence is powerful evidence that he hasn't done so yet.

Of course, the people are offering sacrifice, and praying, in the newly restored temple, because that's how sacred space works. It is the same with the Western Wall in Jerusalem to this day, where devout Jews and even visiting Presidents go to pray, even though no Jew supposes that Israel's God is really in full and glorious residence on the old Temple Mount. But when the later Rabbis make a list of things that Solomon's temple had, which the second temple didn't have, they include the *Shekinah*, the glorious divine presence.[6]

And the whole New Testament, Mark as well as John, Luke and Paul alike, insist that this is how we are to see Jesus: as the living embodiment of the returning God of Israel. The place to start if we are to understand New Testament Christology, I suggest, is with the Second Temple narratives in which Israel's God had made promises about the new temple (which, from what I said before, is obviously the sign and means of new creation). But we also need to reckon with the way the logic of that temple-discourse works in terms of the simultaneity of the returning divine glory and the appearing of the true divine image. The coming of God and the appearance of the truly human one seem to be literally made for each other.

These are the themes that harmonize in the music that is the food of love. Those whose ears can only hear one note at a time will find it strange to be told that all these notes—temple, image, divine glory, high priest, Messiah—can somehow come together. John's exposition of divine love will be our fifth point, which we shall reach in a moment.

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6   Bavli Yoma 21b in the Jerusalem Talmud.

In John we should not be surprised that, even though this temple-theme has not usually been explored, people have nevertheless seen chapter 17, one of the climactic moments of the whole narrative, as a "high-priestly" prayer. And just as other themes are fused together, like the varied rainbow colours brought back into the pure white light from which they came, so Jesus turns out to be *both* the true temple *and* the true image within that temple, *and also* the High Priest . . . *and*, of course, the victorious Messiah.

4. The Victory of God's Kingdom

But the fourth point is where we switch from Shakespeare to Virgil. "Arms and the man I sing"; that is the classic Roman ideology, the song of a nation whose vocation was war.

Throughout John's Gospel, but reaching a peak in chapter 12 and then again in 16 and the dialogue with Pilate in John 18 and 19, John presents Jesus as the one who, like David confronting Goliath, is going out to do battle with "this world's ruler" (12:31). Most have taken this as a reference simply to the unseen forces, the dark satanic power that must be dethroned. That is certainly part of it, but I think that John, like other writers of the time, doesn't make so clear a separation between what we call "spiritual" and what we call "political" powers. When Jesus says that "the ruler of the world is coming" (14:30) he seems to mean troops, not demons, though it is the Satan entering into Judas that will "accuse" him, will hand him over (13:2, 27; 18:3).

The theme is stated most clearly in 12:31–32. Some Greeks at the feast have asked to see Jesus, and Jesus appears to regard this as a sign that the last battle is near: if his message is to bear fruit in the wider world, the grain of wheat must fall into the earth and die: the dying fall, perhaps, of the music of love. What is required for the whole world to be able to receive, and respond in faith to, the news of God's kingdom is for the dark power that has kept the whole world in captivity to be overthrown.

This is new-Exodus language: Pharaoh must be defeated for the slaves to be freed. And this will happen through Jesus's death: "Now comes the judgment of this world! Now this world's ruler is going to be thrown out! And when I've been lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself." (12:31–32)

As with other preliminary statements, John wants his readers to hold this image of the victorious battle in mind throughout what follows, particularly when Jesus confronts Pilate—arguing about kingdom, truth, and power—and then going to his death as Rome does what it does best, only to discover that it has been lured into a trap, leading to the moment when God does what God does best, namely creation and new creation.

This is the heart of the New Testament's theology of atonement, the heart of what the early Christians believed about God's action in Jesus.

We see it—to look outside John for just a moment—in the fourth chapter of Acts, where the disciples, having been threatened by the authorities, pray a prayer based closely on Ps 2, celebrating the fact that the nations did their worst and that, when their power was exhausted by their rage against the Messiah, God exalted and enthroned the Messiah and served notice on the powers of the world that their time was up and that they had better come into line. Thus the song of Virgil is overcome by the song of Moses and Miriam, the victory song of the Exodus people—which in Exod 15 ends, of course, with the establishment of the temple itself (Exod 15:17). The dark waters of chaos are overcome with the creation of the heaven-and-earth reality of the original cosmos. The dark waters of the flood are overcome with the ark, itself symbolizing a new temple. The overcoming of the Red Sea leads to the construction of the tabernacle. In Dan 7 the monsters come up out of the sea, the same terrifying symbolism that Melville exploited in *Moby Dick*, and God vindicates the true human, not now an Ishmael but "one like a son of man," giving him authority over the monsters and through him establishing his kingdom on earth as in heaven (Dan 7:13–14).

John has built all of this and more into his account of God's action in Jesus. Jesus as Israel's Messiah wins the victory, the Lion of Judah over the Eagle of Rome, the God-reflecting human against the monsters, the "son of man" as himself the ladder between earth and heaven (1:51). His body, the ultimate "temple," will be destroyed and rebuilt in three days (2:19–22); here, too, we are to hold this picture in our minds as we read the story of the crucifixion and resurrection in chapters 19 and 20, so that, for instance, the breathing of Jesus's spirit on the disciples in 20:19–24 is itself an important temple-moment, with the disciples thereby constituted as the new-temple people for the world.

The tabernacle and Solomon's temple were always designed as small working models of the intended new creation. Now, with the preparation of the Farewell Discourses behind them, the disciples are to be the living and active temple in which the Spirit dwells—the new reality corresponding to the promise of Ezek 43—with the living water flowing from this temple, as from the Garden of Eden, to refresh and irrigate the whole world.

The Johannine theme of divine victory, like the equivalent moments in Heb 2 or Col 2, not to mention the Synoptic gospels and Revelation, is bound up with the theme of the temple, which is itself a central way, perhaps *the* central way, in which the early Christians thought and spoke of God's action in Jesus and what it meant.

5. And the Greatest of These Is Love

There remains one theme, vast and all embracing. John's music is indeed the food of love, and by *agapē* he means the covenant love of God for his people and, through his people, for the world. "He had always loved his own people in the world; now he loved them right through to the end [*eis telos*]" (13:1). This is yet another heading which functions as a lens through which we are to see the events of arrest, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection. It looks back to the famous "This is how much God loved the world" in 3:16 and on to the challenge to Peter ("Simon, son of John, do you love me?") in 21:13–17.

Here, as with Paul, I think we often fail to draw out the fact that this is *covenantal* language, whose natural home is in Exodus and Deuteronomy, in the Psalms and in Isaiah, particularly in the promises of restoration after the exile. That is, for John, the ultimate meaning of incarnation and cross: the word *agapē* does not feature in the Prologue, just as the word *logos* is conspicuously absent in the rest of the Gospel. But the reality is everywhere, with creation itself as the act of overflowing divine love and the covenant with Israel the agonizing subsequent phase of that same love, all held together in the love of Father and Son for one another which is the deepest secret of both the Prologue and of the Gospel as a whole.

And this is the final prayer of Jesus as the High Priest at the end of chapter 17: "so that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them." This language of divine indwelling is temple-language. It is thus the language of creation and new creation, of Jesus as the image and the disciples, receiving the Spirit, as themselves the new image-bearing new temple; It is the language of the new world that will emerge once the final battle with the dark powers has been fought and won. All these themes converge, with much more for which there has been no time here.

We could have told a very similar story from Paul, from the Synoptics, from Hebrews, from 1 Peter, or from Revelation. Here, I think, we are near the heart of what the first Christians thought and wished to say about God's action in Jesus.

Johannine and Systematic Reflections on History, Eschatology, and New Creation

Most of us exegetes, faced with this rich multi-layered food of love, will find so much to satisfy us that we wonder why we should be troubled with theological or philosophical schemes from which much of the above has been carefully screened out. This is the problem at the heart of the Logos project, the dream of bringing together "analytic" and "exegetical" theology.

All that I have said so far is a matter of *historical exegesis*. I have come as a first-century historian, paying particular attention to the echoes and resonances

that the author of the Fourth Gospel has allowed us to hear within the echo-chamber, the cultural encyclopedia, of his day, and particularly of his Jewish world.

I haven't had time to go into the partial parallels in the Wisdom of Solomon or indeed Ben Sirach, or the fascinating ways in which the biblical wisdom traditions, particularly Prov 8, have contributed.[7]

But my point is that from this essentially historical project—from the exploration, as much as we can determine, of what a particular text meant in the first century—we have as an extraordinarily powerful, whole, and integrated theological picture, which, like all the best theological pictures, is open-ended in that it positively summons its readers to live within its world: these things are written that you may believe.

And it leads me to be suspicious of any approach to Christian understanding that would sit light to this rich tradition, which would simply use it as a back-marker while exploring other ways of talking about God and Jesus. If systematic or analytic theology has no room for these themes of temple and image, of Israel as the temple-guardians and Jesus as the temple in person, of the Paschal victory through which the new temple is to be established—*not just as decoration around the edge of something else, but as central load-bearing themes*—then such theology has a hollowness at its heart.

In particular, I think the temple-theme is of enormous help when we address the issues of history and eschatology as they have emerged in recent centuries. It is not difficult to see why the temple has been sidelined. In New Testament studies in particular, dominated for the last two centuries by German protestants wrestling with the world bequeathed to them by Kant and Hegel, the temple seemed, on the one hand, so Jewish, and it was taken for granted that Judaism was the wrong sort of religion. And it seemed, on the other hand, so Catholic, with a similar comment. So it was reduced to the status of metaphor—which is why, incidentally, that tradition could never understand Mark 13 and parallels, since the fall of the temple in AD 70 was not, for people who thought like that, an event of any great theological significance; and that points to another important story to which I shall return presently.

In particular, the temple-theology of John and the others is the larger and more appropriately multiplex world of which the later Patristic categories of "divinity" and "humanity" are less nuanced imitations; as though one were to try to play Tallis's 40-part motet with a string quartet. But the food of love cannot be so easily reduced to the fast-food outlets.

When we talk of "divinity" and "humanity," John would understand what was

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7   Nor have I addressed the motif of God's action through the *word*, found not only in the Hebrew Bible (where God creates by *dābār*) and in the Targums (where both creation and redemption come through the *memra* of YHWH).

being said, but he would insist that from the start God's world was made as a temple, a single bifocal reality, and that humans were made from the start to stand at the threshold of heaven and earth, the royal priesthood reflecting God to the world and the world back to God. Temple-theology does effortlessly--and the early Christians all knew it did effortlessly—what later formulations struggled to do often with a sense of *credo quia impossibile*. And, in particular, temple-theology insists that if earth and heaven are made for one another, then earth matters, and continues to matter. Saying this does not detract from, but rather enhances, all that one might want to say about heaven.

The heart of it all is, of course, that for John and Paul, for Matthew, Mark, Luke and the rest, incarnation is not only *not* a category mistake, *it is the very fulfilment, the eschatological unveiling, of the divine purpose from the beginning*.

Eschatology must not be allowed to play a supposedly "vertical" role over against history's "horizontal" role. The very notion of eschatology itself emerges from within the Jewish world. Ancient paganism supplies very little to match, apart from the political eschatology of Augustus's court poets, which forms a fascinating parallel, not least because the narrative of Rome's rise to imperial glory was obviously not copied from Israel's stories, nor they from it.[8] To understand Jewish eschatology aright we must understand the Second Temple world and the way in which the early Christians rethought that world around Jesus and the Spirit.

In particular, the temple-theology I have briefly sketched stands firmly over against some of the main currents of thought in the eighteenth-century world, which still exercises a powerful magnetic pull today. Despite the critiques of post-modernity, despite the many attempts, at the time and subsequently, to put imagination back alongside reason, the modernist split world has remained the assumed presupposition.

I do not think this split world is well described in the words "naturalism" and "supernaturalism." Those terms themselves all too easily play into an assumed Deist order, in which the naturalist assumes an absent and non-interventionist god and the supernaturalist assumes the same Deist divinity, but supposes that this divinity sometimes reaches into the world from the outside, as it were, does things, and then goes away again. This of course—heaven help us!—is how many Christians today think about the entire drama of Incarnation and then Ascension.

The real problem is not "naturalism" but Epicureanism, which was already well in place a century before Charles Darwin ever boarded ship to look at finches

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8   See N. T. Wright, "The Evangelists' Use of the Old Testament as an Implicit Overarching Narrative," in *Biblical Interpretation and Method: Studies in Honour of John Barton,* ed. K. J. Dell and P. M. Joyce (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013), 189–200.

and turtles. The rediscovery of Lucretius in 1417 enabled subsequent generations to formulate philosophical schemes in opposition to the vast mediaeval synthesis, and by the eighteenth century this produced, within a few years, Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (history in a godless world), Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (economics in a godless world), the French Revolution (politics in a godless world), Erasmus Darwin's theories (science in a godless world), and, not least, Reimarus's attempt to write about Jesus *etsi Deus non daretur* ("as if God does not exist").[9]

These belong together and create a climate in which it is almost impossible to understand temple-theology, since this theology is grounded in a worldview in which heaven and earth are made for one another, with humans as the fragile and vulnerable midpoint.

It is, however, from within the world bequeathed to us by the eighteenth century that the word "history" has often been used to indicate, in true Epicurean style, a random process of cause and effect. And the word "eschatology" then came to be seen in terms of an essentially "other" god bringing this whole process to a shuddering halt and establishing something totally different instead.

That is why, towards the end of the nineteenth century, Weiss and Schweitzer were able to write about the early Christian hope of the coming of the kingdom in terms of "the end of the world." They could only reach this conclusion by screening out the natural environment of the Jewish apocalyptic texts to which they were referring. That natural environment was (what we would call) socio-political: not about 'the end of the world', but about the end of the present *world order*.

This is the great irony of Schweitzer's claim that Jesus passes by our century and returns to his own. It was precisely in Schweitzer's time that some radicals in both France and Germany, anxious about the arrogance of a Hegelian "progress," were talking openly about "the end of the world." Had they begun with the temple-theology within which the heaven-and-earth visions of the apocalyptists actually belong, they might have realized that such writers, poised between the promises of Isaiah and Ezekiel and the ongoing realities of Second Temple life, were looking not for the abolition of the space-time world, but for the proper integration of heaven and earth, of which the temple was the ultimate symbol, with victory over the pagans and the healing of earth's injustices as part of the package. Of course, the texts in question are not monochrome. There are passages, for instance in *1 Enoch* 42, which seem to indicate that things on earth are so bad that nothing can now be done for it. But these are, I think, the exception.

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9   Although this maxim first appears in fourteenth-century scholastic theology (as a thought experiment in the debate about objectivist and voluntarist ethics), its modern use is usually traced to Hugo Grotius's 1625 treatise on the legal status of war, *De iure belli ac pacis*. On the signs of Epicureanism within the 18th century "Enlightenment," see my *History and Eschatology*, ch. 1.

In particular, what Weiss and Schweitzer, and their greatest successor Rudolf Bultmann, never seem even to have imagined is that the heaven-and-earth language of the apocalyptists had a strongly *political* reference. The Lutheran "two kingdoms" theology, in an unholy alliance with neo-Kantianism, kept this at bay in German New Testament scholarship for much of the nineteenth and twentieth century, but the cat is now well and truly out of the bag.

As Hebrew Bible scholars know, when the prophet speaks of the sun and moon being darkened and the stars falling from heaven, this is not a cosmic weather forecast. It is an attempt to draw out the full significance of the coming overthrow of Babylon, the city that had seemed to hold the world together.[10] This is where, again, the temple-theology comes into its own, with the biblical theme of temple and victory, which we briefly noted in John (and could also have noted in Acts, Paul, or Revelation).

All this remains invisible to the Epicurean eye. And the neo-Kantian eye, seeing that something important is going on there none the less, can only translate it into the Platonic vision of an ideal world which sits at an oblique angle to the present world, rather than, as in a biblical vision, transforming the present world by winning the victory over the powers and so launching new creation itself. (I often have to remind students that, if we go to the first century looking for someone who believes that we humans are exiles from our true home in heaven and that we are looking forward to our souls going back there one day, the person we're after is Plutarch. That is Middle Platonism, not Christianity.)

What we have seen in much modern theology, including—alas—biblical exegesis, is a de-Judaized, de-historicized version of the New Testament, which, hardly surprisingly, cuts little ice in terms either of genuine human transformation or genuine Christian political witness.

In particular, the combination of Epicureanism and neo-Kantianism, which has dominated at least my field, has made it almost impossible to speak biblically about the resurrection. Indeed, the whole Enlightenment project has squeezed it out: if world history reached its climax, and humans came of age, in western Europe in the eighteenth century, then this cannot have happened in Palestine in AD 30. There cannot be two climaxes of history.

But, as has often been shown, the implicit eschatology of the Enlightenment ("now that we live in the modern world" and all that) is, in fact, a parody of Jewish and Christian eschatology, producing in turn its own version of *inaugurated*

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10 See, for example, Isa 13:6–10. For a study of the this-worldly references of apocalyptic texts, see J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), ch. 6: "The Coming of God in Judgment and Salvation" and ch. 9: "Cosmic Destruction at Christ's Return?"

eschatology, where the great revolution has happened but is also still to happen—the source of much tension in Europe and America right now.

That is another story. But my point is that the underlying philosophies have made it almost impossible to believe in the resurrection, and hence even to glimpse that in the Bible, and especially the Gospels and Acts, Paul and Revelation, resurrection is all about the new creation which is both the fulfilment of the purpose of Genesis, the real hope of Israel, the unveiling of genuine humanness, the victory over the power of death itself and hence over all tyranny for whom death is the final weapon, and above all the powerful revelation of love. The sea-monsters have been defeated; Roman arms can do nothing before the rich multi-part biblical music, which is both the revelation of love and the food of love. It is all summed up in John's opening paragraph: "In the beginning was the *Logos*"; and "the *Logos* became flesh and lived [tabernacled] in our midst," enabling us to gaze "upon his glory, glory like that of the father's only son, full of grace and truth."

One might wish at this point to say a word about the reframing of a natural theology within this Johannine temple-theology; but I will let John say it for me: "Nobody has ever seen God. The only begotten God, who is intimately close to the father—he has brought him to light." Literally, "he has *exegeted* him" (1:18).

Yes, we need all the analytic tools available for our tasks. The very words "history" and "eschatology" themselves are blunt instruments, and we need to sharpen them up. The word "Logos" itself contains so many layers of meaning that the world itself might not contain the books that would analyse them. But we must make a start. And how better for the Logos project to begin than by allowing the biblical categories themselves, for a change, to set the agenda. *En archē ēn ho logos . . . . kai ho logos sarx egeneto, kai eskēnōsen en hēmin*. Let's start there.

Temple Theology, Holistic Eschatology, and the *Imago Dei*: An Analytic Prolegomenon in Response to N. T. Wright[1]

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Abstract

In this essay I respond to the programmatic call of N. T. Wright in his 2017 Logos Institute Lecture for systematic and analytic theologians to take seriously the work of biblical theologians. This essay thus offers something of a prolegomenon, outlining some areas in which certain strands of biblical theology and analytic theological reflection can be mutually informative. To do so, my essay unfolds in three ways. In the first section, I provide some reasons to think that biblical theologians are onto a reading of Scripture that merits the attention of analytic theologians. In section II, I outline some areas in the biblical theological data that would benefit from analytic exploration and reflection. Finally, in sections III and IV, I present a test case: the *imago Dei* and the importance of the future bodily resurrection. This should help show how this strand of biblical theology and analytic theological reflection can be mutually informative.

In biblical theology, there is a body of literature growing in prominence that expresses two related (purportedly biblical) themes: what's been called "holistic eschatology" and what's been called "temple theology."[2] A gloss on these themes paints a picture of the point and purpose—the *telos*—of creation and the things

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1   This essay was previously published in *Theologica: An International Journal for Philosophy of Religion and Philosophical Theology* 2, no. 1 (2018) 95–114. It is reprinted here with permission.

2   "Holistic eschatology" appears to be a term coined around the same time by J. Richard Middleton and Richard Bauckham. See J. Richard Middleton, "A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Case for a Holistic Reading of the Biblical Story of Redemption," *Journal for Christian Theological Research* 11 (2006) 73–97; and Richard Bauckham, "Eschatology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, ed. John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, and Iain Torrance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 306–22. "Temple theology" as a way to think about the Christian story appears to have been coined by N. T. Wright in, at least, his 2017 Logos Institute lecture, published in this journal as "History, Eschatology, and New Creation in the Fourth Gospel: Early Christian Perspective on God's Action in Jesus." But as you'll see through the citations and information present in section I of the present article, other biblical theologians are presenting biblical theological matters along the same lines, even if not with the labels that Middleton, Bauckham, and Wright provide.

in creation, namely that the *whole* creation is meant to be a temple for YHWH. The way this literature presents the case, the Christian Scriptures (to include the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament) declare, from the creation narrative in Genesis 1 to the revealing of the New Creation in Rev 22, the future redemption of the entire material universe, not just human creatures.[3] And this is purportedly because the cosmos has been, from the beginning, purposed to be a *home* for the triune God.[4]

Whether one agrees with this assessment of one of the metanarratives of the Christian Scriptures, or whether one thinks that there's a metanarrative in the Scriptures *at all*, the surge in the biblical theology literature advancing these lines, in my view, demands some attention. One part of the theological guild that may well need to consider the deliverances of the scholarship detailing holistic eschatology and the inter-related temple theology is analytic theology. I wish to begin doing so in this essay.

What I want to offer here, though, isn't an argument for this particular reading of the biblical narrative (though I will offer some cursory reasons to think it's plausible). Instead, I aim to offer something of a prolegomenon, outlining some areas in which these strands of biblical theology and analytic theological reflection can be mutually informative. To do so, my essay unfolds in three ways. In the first section, I provide some reasons to think that the biblical theologians are onto a reading of Scripture that merits the attention of systematic theologians, and analytic ones, in particular. In section II, I outline some areas in the biblical theological data that would benefit from analytic exploration and reflection. Finally, in sections III and IV, I present a test case: the *imago Dei* and the importance of the future bodily resurrection. This should help show how this strand of biblical theology and analytic theological reflection can be mutually informative.

I. Taking Seriously Biblical Theology

In his paper given at the 2017 Logos Conference in St. Andrews, UK (published in the current issue of this journal), N. T. Wright opines:

> If systematic or analytic theology has no room for these themes of

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3   See Bauckham, "Eschatology," 311; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004); G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells Among Us* (Downers Grove, IL. InterVarsity, 2014); and J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic 2014), 159, 163, and throughout.

4   John Walton explicates the difference between a house and a home *vis-à-vis* God's work in setting up creation, moving it from a house (with material parts) to a home (wherein those parts are functioning in the desired way). Compare: one has just moved into a new house with unpacked boxes and unarranged furniture; it is yet to be a *home*. See John H. Walton's compelling case concerning this notion as it relates to the creation story in Gen 1 and 2 in Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009); and Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 47 in particular.

> temple and image, of Israel as the temple-guardians and Jesus as
> the temple in person, of the Paschal victory through which the new
> temple is to be established—*not just as decoration around the edge
> of something else, but as central load-bearing themes*—then such
> theology has a hollowness at its heart.[5]

I take this to be an exhortation to systematic/analytic theologians to do what Wright calls "temple theology."[6] That is, to take seriously—as "central and load-bearing"—the idea that the cosmos itself is meant to be a temple for YHWH, a place that is *home* for him.

As I stated earlier, there is a growing list of reasons to take seriously this line of reasoning. To begin, it's becoming increasingly clear (so far as I understand the biblical theologians) that the creation narrative in Genesis 1 is written in such a way as to communicate that what God is doing in the narrative is building a temple. One of the ways readers of this story are supposed to know this is through reflecting on the last thing that is put into the temple, as was the case (so say the exegetes) in ancient Near Eastern practice, viz., the image of the deity.[7] True to form, this happens on Day 6, the last day of YHWH's "work" of creation (Gen 1:26–31).

Another way the writer alerts his reader to the temple-building theme in Gen 1 and 2, perhaps the most important picture of all for the Hebrews, is the divine rest on the seventh day.[8] This is because, in ancient Near Eastern thought, temples are places in which gods *rest*. It is important to note here that, according to the ancient Near Eastern specialists, 'rest' doesn't mean sleeping, relaxing, or the like. It means, instead, *ruling* in an unfettered sort of way, a way in which one is not beset on any side by one's enemies or forces of chaos. The same is true, so say biblical theologians, of the resting that YHWH does on Day 7 (Gen 2:1–2). God takes up residence and rests—that is, *rules*—in his temple.[9]

Though there are myriad ways in which the writer of Genesis purportedly

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5   Wright, "History, Eschatology, and New Creation in the Fourth Gospel." 11; emphasis original.

6   This is not to be confused with the "Temple Theology" project of Margaret Barker, which, so far as I can tell, isn't orthodox (it posits, for example, that the Bible teaches that YHWH and "God Most High" are different beings, that Torah replaced Wisdom, a female deity whom Barker supposes is the deity Asherah (whom she says the Israelites were supposed to worship), among other things. See, for example, Margaret Barker, "Wisdom and the Other Tree: A Temple Theology Reading of the Genesis Eden Story," paper presented at the 2012 Society of Biblical Literature international meeting, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

7   J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), 87.

8   Jon D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," *Journal of Religion* 64, no. 3 (1984) 275–98, here 288; Moshe Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the *Sitz im Leben* of Genesis 1:1–2:3," in *Cult and Cosmos: Titling Toward a Temple-Centered Theology*, ed. L. Michael Morales (Biblical Tools and Studies 18; Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 149–60.

9   Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 47; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 66; Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 81; Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord."

alerts his reader to the temple building narrative of Genesis 1, one final way worth mentioning is the seven-day structure given in Genesis 1 and the beginning of Gen 2. It's worth mentioning because of the way that the temple-building story is told in 1 Kgs 6–8, the construction of Solomon's temple. The proliferation of sevens deployed in the 1 Kings temple-building narrative is, by some, taken to be emblematic of temple building.[10] Moreover, some think that the Genesis narrative's use of the seven-day structure indicates that the writing of the creation account is post-exilic, that is to say, well after the building and destruction of Solomon's temple, as a way to encourage those Israelites returning from exile to build the Second Temple.[11] I don't have the requisite expertise to make a judgment about whether that's a correct understanding of the timing of the writing of the early chapters of Genesis. But, it seems to me that the issue of timing isn't overly important to the larger point. For, it could be that, had Gen 1 and 2 been a part of the original five books of Moses, the writer(s) of 1 Kings might well have been using it as a typological pattern for his account of the creation of the Solomonic temple.[12] Whatever the direction of influence, it does seem that the creation account and the building of Solomon's temple are meant to mirror each other for at least one reason: to express that the cosmos is meant to be YHWH's temple.

Similarly, these scholars have been at pains to demonstrate that Solomon's temple and, indeed, the tabernacle, were meant to be *microcosms*, pictures of the creation in miniature.[13] From the outer court of the tabernacle/temple and its "sea," passing through the veil depicting the heavenly host and into the Holy of Holies—the very presence of YHWH—one is, so exegetes tell us, supposed to picture the visual representation of the point and purpose of the created order as a place within which God can be at home with his creation.[14]

Now, this Old Testament temple theme is thought to run through the New Testament, as well. Purportedly, one can see this clearly in the opening chapter of

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10 Levenson, "The Temple and the World," 288; Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 83; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 61.

11 By Middleton's lights, the dating is ambiguous for a number of reasons; see Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 144–45. For an argument that the Pentateuch (of which Genesis 1 is a part) is postexilic, see Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say About Human Origins* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012), 5; also ch. 2: "When Was Genesis Written?"

12 For a developed overview of paradise—Garden—imagery in the Solomonic temple, see Lawrence E. Stager, "Jerusalem and the Garden of Eden," in *Cult and Cosmos*, 99–118.

13 Levenson, "Cosmos and Microcosm," in *Cult and Cosmos*, 238–47.

14 More imagery in the Old Testament abounds, but space requires I leave the rest for homework. For a nearly exhaustive treatment, see Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 29–80. This sort of imagery is attested too in Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*, 81. Peter Enns also suggests that, "The temple that the Israelites constructed, at God's command, was an instantiation of God's true temple, the heavens and the earth. This is why Israel's sanctuaries are described as minicreations" (Enns, *The Evolution of Adam*, 72). According to John Lundquist, the notion that temples are microcosms is a common theme in ancient Near Eastern religion (Lundquist, "The Common Ideology of the Ancient Near East," in *Cult and Cosmos*, 49–68, here 51–54).

John's gospel. Here, says Wright, John is writing a new Genesis echoing the very first line of Gen 1 (John 1:1a: *En archē en ho logos*/In the beginning was the Word) complete with temple imagery: *kai ho logos sarx egeneto kai eskēnōsen en hēmin* (and the word became flesh and *tabernacled* with us (John 1:14a). And, thinks Wright, if John is writing a new Genesis 1, an account of *new creation*, John is also writing a new temple building story. Again, on this way of reading the Christian Scriptures, creation *is* a temple. So, a new creation is a new temple.

Biblical exegesis concerning eschatological matters is beginning to point in the same direction. G. K. Beale and J. Richard Middleton have shown rather persuasively that the imagery John the Revelator deploys in his description of the New Jerusalem in Rev 21:16–21, particularly its cubic shape and jeweled adornment, means to draw the reader's mind to 1 Kgs 6 and the cubic dimensions of the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple. The use of the cubic imagery in Revelation is key: as it turns out, the entire cosmos is now a Holy of Holies, a place full of the unfettered presence of God.[15]

Thus far is a gloss on the way a number of biblical theologians are reading the Christian Scriptures. And, if there's merit to these claims, then there's a possibility that, if the Christian story is true, then YHWH's purpose for his creation is for it to be his temple, his home. And, if that's correct, then what's going on at the eschaton—at Christ's *parousia*—is that YHWH is setting all things right. Following the insights of John Walton, YHWH will finish setting his house in order and making it a *home*.[16] Christian eschatology, on this view, suggests that the "newness" of the New Creation isn't numerical newness; it's qualitative newness. That's the picture these scholars propose is given to readers in Old Testament passages like Ezek 40–48, Isa 65:17–25; 66:1–24, and the New Testament in Rom 8:18–30, Rev 21 and 22, et al. With John Polkinghorne, reading Scripture this way suggests that the New Creation is not a further instance of *creatio ex nihilo*; this material creation isn't to be crumpled up and thrown away with a new one being made out of nothing. Rather, the New Creation results from an act of *creatio ex vetere* (out of the old).[17]

As I've argued elsewhere, there's at least one further reason to take the *redemption* of the present cosmos as YHWH's eschatological goal. The resurrection of Jesus provides a foreshadowing, a first instance (in the biblical wording: a first-fruits) of a wider-scale promised redemption.[18] Jesus's whole body is raised from

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15 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 23, 348; Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 170–71.

16 Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One*; Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 47; see also Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord."

17 John Polkinghorne, "Eschatological Credibility: Emergent and Teleological Processes," in *Resurrection: Theological and Scientific Assessments*, ed. Ted Peters, Robert John Russell, and Michael Welker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 43–55, here 50.

18 See Joshua Mugg and James T. Turner, Jr., "Why a Bodily Resurrection? The Bodily Resurrection and the Mind-Body Relation," *Journal of Analytic Theology* 5 (2017) 121–44, esp. 122–24.

the dead and walks out of the tomb. That it's the numerically same body that walks out—though qualitatively changed—is the explanation for why the tomb is empty.[19] The resurrected Jesus *qua* human being is a *microcosm* of the eschatological condition of *this very cosmos*. This fits with the proffered narrative of Christian Scripture I outline above. Jesus is thus the center and source of the wider New Creation, the very God that makes the New Creation his temple (Rev 21:22–23; 22:1–2a). From this, one should be able to sense the "whole" in "holistic eschatology." Eschatology is not just about the future end of human beings; it's about the future end (*telos*) of God's good creation.[20]

Now, the analytic reader will have noticed that some of the language, indeed, some of the "central and load-bearing" language (to borrow Wright's phrasing), in the preceding discussion is more murky than clear. Following Mike Rea, I take it that a hallmark characteristic of good analytic theology is to prioritize precision, clarity, and logical coherence.[21] In the next section, then, I'll attempt to draw attention to some of the unclear points in the above discussion. This I hope will serve as a sort of *prolegomenon* inviting analytic theologians to attend to the biblical theological project described above.

To reiterate: the reason I think analytics should be compelled to do this is because the swell in scholarly support for this reading of Christian Scripture demands attention, such that it might shift central doctrines in Christian theology. (Compare: the findings of the biological sciences, particularly evolutionary biology, and the ways in which theologians and philosophers have seen fit to re-think the Fall, death, suffering, and teleology in the creation.)

I'll analyze and discuss a further area needing analytic examination in sections III and IV. For now, I turn my attention to highlighting some issues in the foregoing biblical theological narrative that would benefit from analytic reflection.

II. Where Might the Analytic Theologian Help?

What follows is not a comprehensive overview of the theological issues brought to light by the recent biblical theological work in temple theology and holistic eschatology. It's neither comprehensive of the way I've glossed the biblical theological

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19   Mugg and Turner, "Why a Bodily Resurrection?," 127. See also David Fergusson, "Interpreting the Resurrection," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 38, no. 3 (1985) 287–305, here 303; David Fergusson, "Introduction," in *The Future as God's Gift: Explorations in Christian Eschatology*, ed. David Fergusson and Marcel Sarot (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 1–7, here 3; and Murray J. Harris, *Raised Immortal* (London: Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1983), 44.

20   See the excellent and clear way that Bauckham spells this out in "Eschatology," 316.

21   Michael C. Rea, "Introduction," in *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1–30, here 5–6; also Thomas H. McCall, *An Invitation to Analytic Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic 2015), 17–18.

literature, nor of the issues that crop up in the field generally.[22] Instead, I wish to pull some highlights and offer some reasons for thinking that, if this sort of biblical theology is to make inroads into the wider theological academe, it will benefit from analytic attention. I've already intimated that it *should* receive some attention, now I'll try and show where, in particular.

God's Omnipresence

The literature I outline above makes much of God's fashioning the material cosmos into his home. Indeed, these biblical theologians are wont to employ the prophetic language wherein YHWH's glory and the knowledge thereof "fills the earth as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14).[23] This surely sounds right, and it sounds biblical (where "biblical" means something like: implied by the Christian Scriptures understood to be read as a coherent whole). But it's not clear what it *means*. What kind of thing is YHWH/YHWH's glory such that he/it could *fill* anything? Yes, the Bible presents its readers all sorts of passages detailing how YHWH and/or YHWH's glory "fills" the tabernacle/temple (Exod 40:34; 1 Kgs 8:6–13; 2 Chron 7:1) and that he/his glory can be "seen," even if only his back-side (Exod 33:17–23). But, the Christian tradition has always seen fit to think about YHWH in non-physical, immaterial terms; that is to say, one is encouraged to think about YHWH in such a way that he *cannot* be seen (save for in the God-man, Jesus Christ). YHWH *created* the material cosmos; he is not, himself, material. And if the terms "immaterial," "material," and the like are understood in a way consistent with the way Descartes, for example, might have understood them, then it doesn't seem *possible* that

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22 To note one example, one that many analytic theologians might find interesting, is the thesis that the original task given to the human pair, Adam and Eve, was a task to subdue the wild area of the creation, outside of the Garden in Eden, that YHWH left for the work of his vice-regents, viz., humans. One of the prevailing implications of this line of thought is that, outside of the Garden, there was death, non-order, and so on. It was the job of the humans to co-rule with YHWH and expand the glorious presence of YHWH, and his wise order, throughout the earthly cosmos, to make all of it his temple. Does such a view of the creation account provide a theodicy, or does it just push back a step the question of why God would set up such a world in the first place? Does such a view mean that, in the beginning, humans could have, through co-ruling with the only wise God, been able to manipulate and direct elementary particles to overcome the deleterious effects of entropy? It should be obvious that these sorts of questions are ripe for analytic inquiry. For, if this way of thinking of the human being turns out to be nonsense, one might well be within her rights to reject such a reading of the biblical text. For more on this understanding of the human vocation in Genesis, see Terence E. Fretheim, "The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and Law in Exodus," in *Cult and Cosmos*, 317–30, here 321ff.; Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 131; Sean M. McDonough, *Creation and New Creation: Understanding God's Creation Project* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2017), 185ff.; Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 56–57; and Ronald E. Osborn, *Death Before the Fall: Biblical Literalism and the Problem of Animal Suffering* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014).

23 For similar scriptural sentiments see: Pss 57:5, 11; 72:19; 108:4–5; Hab 2:14; Isa 6:3; 11:9. For a representative sampling of biblical theologians deploying this language, see McDonough, *Creation and New Creation*, 205; N. T. Wright, "Excursus," in *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 170–80, here 176; and Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 163.

YHWH/YHWH's glory could fill something, if he and/or it is not a material or physical object (in the Cartesian vernacular: if he or it is not a *res extensa*).[24]

The pantheist or panentheist might, at this point, wish to offer her own views to explain how God and his glory can fill the earth. Classically, however, pantheism and panentheism prove troublesome for Christian theology. The majority report is that they blur the distinction between Creator and creation.[25]

There's work to be done, then. Providing an explanation for how YHWH can "fill" the earth is one area in which, by my lights, the biblical theologian might benefit from the analytic theologian's help, at least if she wants coherently to affirm the classical conception of the Christian God. For if one can't get clear on what one means when one suggests that the cosmos is meant to be God's home (particularly, YHWH's), or one cannot begin to provide a model for how such a thing might be possible, then it's not clear why anyone should listen to such a thesis. Note that this is not to say that one *cannot* get clear on what this sort of language means; nor is it to say that there is no model forthcoming. Indeed, I think one *can* get clear on this language; moreover, it's part of my intention in this essay to invite attempts at model building.

Alternatively, suppose the biblical theologian denies the classical way of thinking about YHWH.[26] In other words, suppose that the biblical theologian thinks that the traditional notion of God as immaterial and "outside" of space and time (and so on) is faulty, that it does not report accurately the teaching of the biblical text. Here, too, the analytic theologian can provide resources for thinking through the most coherent models of the divine Being. Biblical theology, after all, is not designed to carve reality at the joints and build metaphysical models; such is the work of the metaphysician. The analytic theologian can take her skill in analytic metaphysics, her knowledge of the biblical and theological material, and partner with the biblical theologian to fill out the biblical theologian's concepts. As a multi-disciplinary field, analytic theology is *meant* to bring disparate disciplines into conversation. My contention, then, is that analytic theologians have a vital role to play in systematizing and clarifying this burgeoning work in biblical theology, not least with respect to God's omnipresence.

Jesus is the Temple; The New Creation is the Temple

The gloss I give on the biblical theological story about the *telos* of creation paints a picture in which two statements are true. (1) That Jesus is the archetypical temple toward which the Old Testament tabernacle/temple were meant to point. And (2)

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24 René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy with Selections from the Objections and Replies*, ed. and trans. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 6.78

25 For an overview of pantheism, panentheism, and its relation to classical theism, see R. T. Mullins, "The Difficulty with Demarcating Panentheism," *Sophia* 55 (2016) 325–46.

26 Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this line of thought.

that the redeemed creation, the New Creation, will be YHWH's temple; this is because the creation was always meant to be God's temple. But how is it possible that both are true? *Is* it possible? Again, analytic insights seem needed. For, it's one thing for a biblical theologian to paint a beautiful picture of the narrative of the biblical story; it's another thing to make it logically and metaphysically coherent. In my view, punting to the mysterious "somehow" is less than helpful, at least in the thoughtful and learned confines of academic discourse. To get a sense of what I mean by the "somehow" move, here is Wright deploying it:

> Those whose ears can only hear one note at a time will find it strange to be told that all these notes—temple, image, divine glory, high priest, Messiah—can somehow come together. . . . like the varied rainbow colors brought back into the pure white light from which they came, so Jesus turns out to be *both* the true temple *and* the true image within that temple, *and also* the High Priest—*and*, of course, the victorious Messiah.[27]

Notice that, in the explanation, what's offered is a metaphor: rainbow colors working back into white light. I get the image; I worry that the semantic content of the metaphor outstrips its propositional content.[28] That is to say, I'm not sure that there's an explanation of the metaphor—one that makes it propositionally clear—forthcoming. For, it's not clear how disparate and *prima facie* competing biblical themes might be the result of a refracting theological prism; nor is it clear why one should think they are. Even less clear is what a theological prism is or might be. And I grant that the themes about which Wright speaks *are* true! But much more needs to be said to show that they are, in fact, true and *how* they are true. This is particularly so given what a number of these exegetes say: the Christian tradition, up until now, has been largely missing the point with respect to the purpose of God's creation and human beings within it.[29] Well, if one is going to offer a reading of the biblical narrative that goes against the larger tradition, systematicians are within their rights to require that biblical theologians provide some clear reasons to think that their tradition-competing explanation (if it is tradition-competing) is metaphysically and logically coherent.

Why think that systematic theologians are within their rights to ask for clear reasons here? The most obvious answer is that, if a given explanation, *E*, of some phenomenon, *P*, is metaphysically and logically incoherent, then *E* is false. That's just the nature of explanations (insofar as explanations are given in the form of

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27 Wright, "History, Eschatology, and New Creation in the Fourth Gospel," 7–8.
28 Rea, "Introduction," 5–6.
29 But see McDonough, *Creation and New Creation*, who thinks that these themes have been, even if not as clearly explained, a driving force in the early church's theology of creation and new creation.

propositions). There's another answer, though, that gets to a larger and more salient point. It is common-coin for theologians to suggest that the history and development of doctrine in the Christian tradition is, at bottom, overseen by the Holy Spirit. When one comes back at the tradition with a competing doctrine, however, one implicitly or explicitly suggests that the Holy Spirit's oversight has, at least in some particular respect, allowed for an error. Obviously, the Holy Spirit's oversight doesn't rule out of court a revisionary critique of Christian doctrine in light of new scriptural or theological insights. The various expansions, clarifications, and corrections of Christian doctrine in the ecumenical creeds, Trent, Vatican I, Vatican II, the Protestant Reformation, and the various and sundry Protestant synods, confessions (and so on) prove the point. Notwithstanding debates about whether the theologian ought to give pride of place to tradition or Scripture as the primary source of Christian theology, that deference of *some kind* is afforded to the tradition's reading of Scripture (insofar as that's locatable, which is an issue that takes us too far afield) *vis-à-vis* Christian doctrine seems *prima facie* reason to be cautious about doctrines that run (purportedly) against the deliverances of that reading.[30]

Having said this, I anticipate a worry from the systematician's side of the aisle: that I'm prizing reason over revelation. To alleviate this worry, notice that I am *not* suggesting that clear metaphysical explanations are necessary to take seriously a particular doctrine or reading of Scripture. Rather, what (in my view) *is* necessary is that proposed readings of the biblical text and corresponding doctrinal deliverances not be metaphysically impossible or incoherent. This is simply because metaphysically or logically impossible things are nonsense (and so even calling them "things" is a misnomer). Of course, Christian theology allows (perhaps, even demands) mystery. Consider the Incarnation. It's important, though, to recall that the tradition has been at pains to provide explanations of the God-man that are *not* metaphysically or logically incoherent.[31] The same holds true of other doctrines that are beyond our complete comprehension (e.g., the doctrine of the Trinity).[32] So far as I can tell, no thinker providing a model of these doctrines suggests that his/her proposed model is a full explanation of what's going on; the models are, instead, offered as genuine possibilities (that is to say: not incoherent). What I'm calling attention to in the present essay, then, is a need for constructive

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30 Oliver D. Crisp, *God Incarnate: Explorations in Christology* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 8–19.

31 Timothy Pawl's recent work is one fine example: Pawl, *In Defense of Conciliar Christology: A Philosophical Essay* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Oliver Crisp advances Christological models that take mystery seriously, too. He provides reasons to caution against thinkers who demand that a clear model of that which is beyond our ken. See Oliver D. Crisp, *Divinity and Humanity: The Incarnation Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 36 n. 2.

32 See, e.g., William Hasker's recent treatment of the doctrine, wherein he proposes a new model of the Trinity, in Hasker *Metaphysics and the Tri-Personal God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

theological work that does for temple theology and holistic eschatology what current analytic theology does for the doctrines just mentioned.

So far, I've provided reasons to think that the following two things are true: (a) that there are good exegetical reasons for affirming the recent biblical theology of temple theology and holistic eschatology and (b) that these recent developments in biblical theology would benefit from analytic attention. Moreover, if what the biblical theologians say is true, namely, that these biblical theological themes are *central* to the Christian story, then it stands to reason that the doctrinal developments out of this story may well be every bit as important to Christian theology as the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation (for, *ex hypothesi* they tell us what the point and purpose is of God's creation, his mission in Jesus, and the consummation of all things). For purposes of this essay, I will proceed as though it's true that the biblical theological deliverances I've outlined provide Christianity doctrines that are central to the Christian faith. To do so, I offer a test case that uses the exegetical deliverances of the biblical theologian and the conceptual resources of analytic theology to show how the two disciplines can be, and should be, mutually informing.

III. The Divine Image in YHWH's Temple

According to the biblical theology outlined above, the cosmos is meant to be YHWH's temple. One of the ways the Christian is supposed to know this is because, in the very outset of the Christian Bible, the image of the deity is the last thing to be put into the creation. This, as you'll recall, is suggestive of ancient Near Eastern temple-building practices wherein the last thing placed in a god's temple is his/her image. The writer of Genesis 1 paints the same picture of YHWH's temple (Gen 1:26–28).[33]

Unlike the other ancient Near Eastern religions, however, the image of the Israelite deity is not carved from stone or wood; it is not fashioned "with human hands" (a Hebraism that suggests idolatry).[34] Rather, YHWH's image is a living, breathing organism: human being, an image YHWH himself makes. This helps

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33 Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 87.
34 McDonough, *Creation and New Creation*, 193; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 224–26. Thus Beale (*The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 224 n. 45): "The word *cheiropoiētos* ('handmade') occurs 14 times in the Greek Old Testament and always refers to idols! Outside Acts 7:48, the word in the New Testament occurs five times, once with respect to pagan temples (Acts 17:24), three times to the Jerusalem temple that was passing away (Mark 14:58; Heb. 9:11, 24), and once with regard to physical circumcision (Eph. 2:11). The wording 'the work of men's hands' in the Greek Old Testament refers without exception to idols." Beale also notes (*The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 226): "Similarly, 1 Kgs 6:7 says that Solomon's temple was 'built of stone prepared at the quarry, and there was neither hammer nor axe nor any iron tool heard in the house while it was being built.' This description of the silence of human tools during the construction of Solomon's temple may be a subtle pointer to the ultimate temple which would be made completely without human hands." Given this, I'm tempted to think that the 1 Kings passage is meant to communicate that Solomon's building project was not idolatrous. Making an argument for that is outside my purview.

explain the Second Commandment, of course, but there's a further reason I mention YHWH's image and its ancient Near Eastern context, viz., it helps shed light on what an "image of God" is. For, as it turns out, "image of God" language is not unique to Israelite theology. Moreover, it seems as though the Israelites borrowed the term for at least one particular purpose: to explain what it is that humans *do*. The writer of the Genesis 1 account assumes (so goes the argument) that his readers/hearers will know what divine images do. They represent the sovereign rule and power of a deity in a particular geographical location.[35] Image bearers have a *job*. On this way of thinking, "image of God" is the title of a *vocation* or an *office* rather than a term that designates a kind of object (that is to say, in metaphysical terms, *imago Dei* is not a kind sortal. Compare: "office assistant" denotes a vocation, it doesn't tell us what sort of thing fills the role; it could be a computer, a robot, a female human, a male human, or some other sort of thing).

If the designation "image of God" assigns or denotes a particular role, namely, one that proclaims a deity's sovereign presence in a land, then the "image of God" is a matter of function. That the *imago Dei* is a functional term is common in biblical theological understandings of the human being and his/her role in the cosmos. Often, this is placed in contradistinction to classic views of the image, views that suggest an ontological similarity between a deity and her/his image. For example, Wright confidently declares that the functional reading "rules out at a stroke centuries of puzzle as to what aspect of humanity might be supposed to be the divine 'image'; that isn't the point. The picture is *vocational*."[36] Wright's argument, I take it, is that, if the label "image of God" is vocational, then it is not ontological (i.e., it is not a kind sortal). Classically, Christianity affirms that the *imago Dei is* a kind sortal, for it is thought to explain essential aspects of the species "human being." Some of these supposedly essential components of the human being are a rational and immaterial mind/soul and free will. For, so goes the argument, God is a rational/immaterial mind with free will, and humans are like God (qualifications notwithstanding for the unlimited nature of the Creator and the limited nature of created humans).[37] The way the biblical theologian portrays the argument, then, seems to put the classic understanding of the *imago Dei* and a contemporary biblical theological understanding at loggerheads. Are they?

As with the biblical theological portrait outlined in section I, I'm willing to

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35 Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 25.
36 Wright, "History, Eschatology, and New Creation in the Fourth Gospel," 5.
37 See Jaroslav Pelikan's outline of a patristic argument along these lines (e.g., in the thought of Gregory of Nyssa) in Jaroslav Pelikan, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 131. There are other offered components too. Some think that the triune nature of God explains why those that are made in his image are essentially communal beings. See, for example, Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2001).

follow the biblical theologian in thinking that the *imago Dei* is a vocational title. However, I think it's too quick to dismiss the tradition's understanding of the human being. As it turns out, the functional view and the ontological view are consistent and mutually informative. To see why, consider what Richard Middleton says about the *imago Dei*:

> When the clues within the Genesis text are taken together with comparative studies of the ancient Near East, they lead to what we could call a functional—or even missional—interpretation of the image of God . . . . On this reading, the *imago Dei* designates the royal office or calling of human beings as God's representatives and agents in the world, granted authorized power to share in God's rule or administration of the earth's resources and creatures . . . . Since the main function of divinity in both Israel and the ancient Near East is precisely to rule (hence kings were often viewed as quasidivine), it is no wonder that Psalm 8 asserts that in putting all things under their feet and giving the dominion over the works of God's hands, God has made humans "little less than ʾĕlōhîm" (8:5–6 [MT 8:6–7]). It does not matter whether ʾĕlōhîm is translated as "God" or (with the Septuagint) "angels," the meaning is virtually unchanged. In the theology of both Psalm 8 and Genesis 1, humans . . . have been given royal and thus godlike status in the world."[38]

According to Middleton, the human being, as image bearer, is meant to share in God's rule and administration over God's earthly creation.[39] Moreover, because God rules his creation in wisdom, humans are meant to help rule in light of that same wisdom (see Prov 1–4).[40] God's image bearers, then, are meant to be *wise*.

This conclusion elicits at least two questions: What sorts of things are wise? What is *wisdom*? Following Oliver O'Donovan, one can reasonably define wisdom this way: "the intellectual apprehension of the order of things which discloses how each being stands in relation to each other."[41] Putting it another way, wisdom is the observing and understanding of an inherent God-designed order in the creation and the conforming of oneself to that order (Prov 1:7; Job 28:28).[42]

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38 Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 27–28.
39 See also Frank H. Gorman, Jr., "Priestly Rituals of Founding: Time, Space, and Status," in *Cult and Cosmos*, 351–66, here 357.
40 On this, see Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 87–88; Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 144; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 162.
41 Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 26.
42 Though wisdom is often (perhaps rightly) reflected on in the discipline of philosophy, John Walton, a biblical theologian, offered these helpful sentiments (Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 124, 143).

On this understanding of wisdom, one that is wise can discern teleology within nature and societies, that there's a way that God set up the cosmos to function, and that there's a purpose for the whole and each part of the whole. Things that *are* wise, then, are things that can observe and understand order. I submit that such things are *rational* things and I take it that rational things are *persons*.[43] If this is correct, and given the sort of task to which the office holder of *imago Dei* is called, it follows that the sort of thing occupying that office is a person. Moreover, according to the biblical story, the office holder is not *a* person; it's democratized to *all* persons of a particular kind, viz. humans.[44] Thus, given the particular role assigned to YHWH's image, there's an entailment between being YHWH's image and being a person, a rational human being.[45]

Let me further clarify why it is that I think the vocational/functional and onto-logical views of the *imago Dei* are mutually informative. To do so, consider the following two senses of the image of God:

IG$_{ANE}$: Any *x* is an image of a god if *x* represents the rule and power of a deity in a particular geographical area.

IG$_{OT}$: Any *x* is an image of YHWH if *x* represents the rule and power of YHWH in YHWH's creation and, with YHWH, *x* co-rules YHWH's creation.

I submit that IG$_{ANE}$ and IG$_{OT}$ ar e consistent. This is so because what we are told by exegetes is that what it is for YHWH's images to represent the rule and power of YHWH (a deity) is for his images to co-rule with him, to act as his vice-regents in the cosmos.

Why does it matter that these two notions of the *imago Dei* are consistent? For this reason: conceivably there are *myriad* ways in which YHWH might have

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43 Boethius classically defines a person as an individual substance of a rational nature. See Boethius, "A Treatise Against Eutyches and Nestorius," III.34, in *The Theological Tractates*, trans. H. F. Stewart and E. K. Rand (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.), 30–46. http://www.ccel.org/ccel/boethius/tracts.pdf. See also Aquinas, *Summae Theologiae*, Ia.29.1 respondeo, in St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, vol. 1, in *Great Books of the Western World, no. 19*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952).

44 Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 44–45; Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 204–205; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 117.

45 To not take us too far afield, let me note here briefly that what I mean by "rational human being" is a species designation, one that tells us about the sort of thing a human is. Another way to say it is: rational animal. All I mean by this is that, by virtue of being a member of the particular species "human being," one is rational, even if not actually or actively rational (i.e., all humans are poten-tially rational). I follow Thomas Aquinas and some of his recent interpreters here. See Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*, VI.6, in St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence* (2nd rev. ed.; trans. Armand Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1968). See also Christopher Brown, *Aquinas and the Ship of Theseus* (London, UK: Continuum, 2005), 51–52; Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 53; and David S. Oderberg, *Real Essentialism* (London: Routledge, 2007), 8, 47ff., 93ff.

wanted his image bearers to represent his rule and reign in a particular geographical area. For example, he might have, consistent with the gods of ancient Near Eastern religions, wanted his images to be stationary and inanimate images of wood and stone. If that's right, then there's a sense in which N. T. Wright's casual dismissal of the tradition's understanding of the *imago Dei* is correct. It's *not* the case that the term "image of God" delivers a metaphysics of human beings. Yet, there's also a sense in which Wright's dismissal is wide of the mark. Indeed, his dismissal makes the same mistake (if it is one) as the one who thinks that the *imago Dei* just is a term denoting an ontological similarity between humans and YHWH. The mistake is to think that 'image of God' has just one sense. Instead, it seems as though 'image of God' may be something of a generic term, under which there are specific varieties. I think the biblical theologian will grant me this nuance, for the exegetical evidence appears to suggest that YHWH's images are given a very different sort of task than the images of other ancient Near Eastern deities.[46] Thus, while the generic IG_{ANE} may point solely to a vocational/functional designation, a species of image, IG_{OT}, for example, might deliver a vocational calling that *entails* a particular ontology of the image bearer.[47] As I argue above, in the specific sense, the image of YHWH *does* entail a particular ontology of the image bearer, viz., that it's a person and a human.[48]

There is one other vitally important characteristic that contemporary research brings to bear on what it is to be an IG_{ANE} (and, thus, an IG_{OT}). According to experts in ancient Near Eastern understandings of the image of God, image bearers are *physical, visual,* and *locatable* entities; they are *embodied*. These features are, according to the research, *built in* to the meaning of the term.[49] The upshot is that there are no such things as invisible, immaterial, non-spatially locatable images

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46   Other ancient Near Eastern religions suggested that humans were created to serve the gods by providing them (the gods) with food, housing, and clothing. This is what Walton calls "The Great Symbiosis." Contrarily, YHWH needs nothing from humans. Rather, he invites them to participate in stewarding his creation with him. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 48–49. See also Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 149–50, 166–67; Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 44.

47   For another recent treatment of an argument concluding that a functional account entails an ontological account, see Joshua R. Farris, *The Soul of Theological Anthropology: A Cartesian Exploration* (London: Routledge, 2017), 33–35. Farris argues that the particular functions to which YHWH's images are called, coupled with some additional philosophical considerations, reveals the essentially immaterial nature of the human being. We disagree on this score, viz., that humans are essentially immaterial; nevertheless, his arguments make similar moves to those I provide above. See also J. P. Moreland, *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei: Human Persons and the Failure of Naturalism* (London: SCM, 2009), 4–5.

48   One might think this is an odd way of phrasing things. I phrase it this way because I take it that this allows for a consistent position with the biblical data about YHWH's image in the Garden in Eden and also an orthodox Christology, which suggests that Jesus Christ both is the true image of God and not a human person, but a divine person with a human nature. He is, then, a person and human, but not a human person.

49   Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 25.

of God, at least, if one thinks that the ancient Near East is whence the meaning of the term is derived. Given that it is, the following principle is true:

> Embodied Images (EI): for all entities y, if y is an image of God, then y is *embodied*.

A moment's reflection on (EI) delivers some potentially interesting implications. For, if one thinks that all human persons are essentially image bearers, and that every human person is essentially a human person, then it follows that no human person can be disembodied. Mounting a defense of such an argument, though, takes me too far afield.[50] Instead, I want now to turn my attention, with IG_{ANE}, IG_{OT}, and (EI) in hand, to an analytic exploration of the bodily resurrection and the *telos* of all things. That is, I wish to show how combining the resources of analytic theology with the deliverances of holistic eschatology and temple theology can clarify why it is that human beings will be bodily resurrected into the New Creation.

IV. The Temple, Holistic Eschatology, and Bodily Resurrection

Given sections I–III of this essay, call the actual world "W," assume that it's shorthand for "the actual and entire created order," and consider the following argument:

1. W's *telos* is to be YHWH's temple, the place in which YHWH dwells with and is worshipped by his creation.
2. W's *telos* will be completed at the eschaton.[51]
3. At the eschaton, W will be YHWH's temple, the place in which YHWH dwells with and is worshipped by his creation. (From 1, 2)

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50 (EI) is a central reason I disagree with the conclusions of the function to ontology arguments Farris and Moreland (independently) make concerning the imago Dei. I agree, given the particular representative role that YHWH wants of his images, that this particular function implies some ontological things about YHWH's images (see n. 24). I disagree on in what the ontology consists. The difference between Farris's view, Moreland's view, and my own view is that theirs doesn't take into account the essentially physical, locatable, and visible nature of image bearing. For space, I leave aside discussion of theories of the divine image offered by, for example, Oliver Crisp in *The Word Enfleshed* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 51–70; and Jason McMartin in "The Theandric Union as *Imago Dei* and *Capax Dei*," in *Christology: Ancient and Modern*, ed. Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 136–50. Crisp suggests that the divine image is, at least in part, seated in the ability of individual concrete human natures possibly to have been united hypostatically to the Logos. McMartin's thesis is that the *imago Dei* consists in the *capax Dei*, the ability for relationship/participation with/in God (McMartin, "The Theandric Union as *Imago Dei* and *Capax Dei*,"136–50). I take it that McMartin's thesis is consistent with the sketch I advance here; but he draws out his picture of the image without reference to temple theology and holistic eschatology such that our individual points of emphasis are different. And, though it may be the case that the view I advance here implies his view, it's not clear that his view implies mine.

51 I'm tempted to say "consummated" rather than "completed."

4. An essential property of W is that it contains YHWH's image bearers.

5. The conjunction <IG_{or} is true and it's true that human beings are IG_{or}> is t r ue.

6. EI is true

7. Therefore, at the eschaton, W will contain embodied human beings. (From 3–6)

I submit that, *given* sections I and III of this essay, this argument seems straightforward, almost obvious. Nevertheless, (4), at least, deserves further comment. Doing so also will help clarify just how interweaving holistic eschatology and temple theology makes a case for why there will be a human bodily resurrection.

Look again at (4). It states that an essential property of W is that it contains YHWH's image bearers. Notice that (4) concerns only the actual created order (or, in possible worlds semantics, the actual *world*). (4) is silent about what other sorts of cosmoi YHWH might have created (i.e., other possible worlds); (4) concerns only W, the actual world/creation. I haven't the space fully to develop arguments for (4); so, for purposes of my argument, I'm going to stipulate that (4) is true—at least, that it's true given sections I and III. The biblical theologians espousing that which I've overviewed suggest that, in the case of *this* creation, YHWH's plan always included his image bearers, viz., human beings, to be his vice-regents. His temple *will* include his image and his image bearers *will* co-rule with him.[52]

(7), then, follows directly from premises (4) through (6) (premises (5) and (6) are those that explicate more clearly the otherwise suppressed understanding of YHWH's image in (4)). However, (7), as stated, doesn't yield the result toward which I'm aiming with the argument. Recall that I want to clarify how interweaving holistic eschatology and temple theology makes a case for why there will be human bodily *resurrection*. Unfortunately, (7) is silent about resurrection. What it says is that at the eschaton, W will contain embodied human beings. It does not say how they get there. What I need is a more specific conclusion like the following:

9. Therefore, at the eschaton, W will contain resurrected human beings.

To get to (9), though, I need a further premise.

What sort of premise might get from (7) to (9)? In answer, allow me to offer the following:

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52 Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 56–57, 159; McDonough, *Creation and New Creation*, 160.

8. The eschatological bodily resurrection furnishes *W*, at the eschaton, with embodied human beings.

From (7) and (8), (9) follows immediately. Here's a clearer look:

7. At the eschaton, *W* will contain embodied human beings.
8. The eschatological bodily resurrection furnishes *W*, at the eschaton, with embodied human beings.
9. Therefore, at the eschaton, *W* will contain resurrected human beings. (From 7, 8)

By my lights, (8) should carry the endorsement of biblical theologians thinking through temple theology and holistic eschatology. Additionally, there seem to be a number of biblical texts that suggest what I take to be the semantic content of (9) (e.g., 1 Cor 15:12–57; Rom 8:18–25), viz., that the promise of the New Creation (i.e., the eschatological *W*) includes the bodily raising of the dead saints into the New Creation.[53] Thus, (7) through (9) paint a clear picture for why humans *will* be bodily resurrected into the New Creation: it is a way *W* is furnished with image bearers.[54]

An important upshot of the argument from (1) through (9) is that, given what "temple theology" suggests is the point and purpose of God's creation, human afterlife contributes to the *telos* of the whole of God's creation, God's eschatological cosmic temple. That is, human afterlife is not the *central* focus of YHWH's eschatological purposes; but it *is* an *essential* component of God's eschatological purposes. Thus, beyond helping explain why (1) through (9) are conceptually connected, a reason that holistic eschatology is important to the doctrine of resurrection (and Christian doctrines of afterlife in general) is that it provides a framework for placing an importance on the redemption of the whole *and* the redemption of human beings. Temple theology, then, fills in more fully *why* it should be that YHWH renews the whole of his creation and human beings as essential parts of that whole. But, of course, humans (given their image bearing nature) cannot be renewed and redeemed fully without being bodily resurrected (see EI). Consequently, if YHWH intends to redeem and renew human beings fully, then YHWH will bodily resurrect human beings into the New Creation.

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53 I provided further arguments elsewhere James T. Turner, Jr., "On the Horns of a Dilemma: Bodily Resurrection or Disembodied Paradise?" *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 75 no. 5 (2015) 406–21; James T. Turner, Jr., "Purgatory Puzzles: Moral Perfection and the Parousia," *Journal of Analytic Theology* 5 (2017) 197–219; Mugg and Turner, "Why a Bodily Resurrection?"

54 Notice, too, that (8) allows space for theologians to consider whether, alongside bodily-resurrected humans, God might create entirely new human beings in the New Creation or even the continuation of pro-creative activities. Though, I do not endorse these positions.

Conclusion

If the rise in biblical theological support for "temple theology" indicates that the systematic theologian should take its deliverances seriously, then analytic theologians, as systematic theologians, should take seriously N. T. Wright's clarion call: temple theology should be front and center in one's theological study and construction. Add to this the biblical theological insights concerning holistic eschatology and it becomes apparent that Christian dogma concerning personal eschatology—not to mention eschatology and theology, generally—*must* include robust accounts of bodily resurrection. After all, bodily resurrection is, as I say above, part and parcel of the temple-patterned *telos* of God's creation. Because of this, I've used this essay as a prolegomenon (of sorts) for analytic engagement with biblical theology. The hope is that the analytic theologian should be able to see that the biblical theologian is worthy of attention—particularly with respect to holistic eschatology and temple theology—and that, through analytic analysis, important matters of Christian dogma (e.g., the bodily resurrection and *imago Dei*) can be clarified.

A Holistic Eschatology? Negotiating the Beatific Vision and the New Earth in Recent Theology

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Abstract

Given the prominent place of eschatology in recent Christian theological discussion, this article addresses a current disagreement that has arisen concerning the extent to which there is room in the world to come for both the presence of God (with the beatific vision) and new creation (with the renewal of cultural activities and earthly life). This article introduces the present discussion and outlines the biblical evidence for a both/and approach, where a new heaven and a new earth is permeated with divine presence (the cosmic temple theme). This provides the foundation for assessing points of disagreement between scholars who affirm a holistic eschatology (J. Richard Middleton and N. T. Wright) and those who are critical of this eschatology (Michael Allen, Hans Boersma, and Matthew Levering). While arguing for a holistic eschatology on biblical grounds, this article seeks to bring greater clarity to the current discussion and to call participants in this discussion to greater clarity and charity in assessing and communicating disagreement.

Should Christians be expecting an eternal home that is heavenly or earthly in its location and character? In this article, I argue that the Bible witnesses to a holistic eschatology in which humans are transformed but remain image-bearing agents of creativity, culture, relationality, and rule in a renewed cosmos still consisting of both heaven and earth, since this cosmos in its entirety is of great importance to God. The biblical witness also affirms the central and thoroughgoing presence of God in the renewed creation, and this divine presence is a reality for which we appropriately long and pray. This presence of God makes possible, rather than conflicts with, the renewed cosmos and its glory.

This vision of the future is *earthly* not just in its affirmation of the presence of earth, but also in its affirmation that God will be faithful to transform and preserve humans and other creatures, and in the expectation of continued relationship

among humans, the cosmos, and its non-human creatures. This vision is *heavenly* in that it envisions the presence of God, and the heavens themselves are part of the renewed cosmos.

I will demonstrate the biblical basis for this harmonious vision by considering important biblical texts associated with resurrection, new heaven and new earth, hope for all things, and the vision of God. I will also engage with present theological scholarship at each of these points. But first, I will briefly survey the present scholarly discussion concerning earthiness in Christian eschatology.

The apostle Paul observes that our knowledge of the eschatological future that God plans in love for his people is quite incomplete, in a manner analogous to the incompleteness of knowledge held by children as compared to the knowledge held by adults (1 Cor 13:8–13). After an extensive review of related theological matters in his 2012 book, *Life After Death*, and extended equivocation on this particular question, Anthony C. Thiselton ultimately concludes that we simply cannot know whether God might have eschatological purposes beyond the human experience of God in a final beatific vision.[1] Arthur O. Roberts suggests there is an appropriateness to the incompleteness of our eschatological knowledge and that if our hope were too lucid we might shirk our current responsibility, yet if our hope were too opaque we might despair in the face of tragedy and death.[2] While acknowledging Roberts's point and also taking caution from the way in which the first coming of Jesus was surprising and beyond expectation, we should also recognize that we have significant biblical texts addressing the age to come and its profound relationship to all that has come before. We might even consider ourselves teenagers, rather than children, in the matter of eschatological knowledge. Thiselton's firmly agnostic conclusion is thus strange and unnecessary.

Nonetheless, the opening question concerning whether Christian hope is heavenly or earthly can be confusing. This confusion can result from a lack of exposure to the various biblical strands at play or precisely because of tension between strands that one has not adequately resolved. For some readers of Scripture the question may be a fully resolved issue (thus a non-question), while for others it may seem like an impossibly convoluted question. Certainly, we are going to heaven, right? But aren't the meek inheriting the earth? Is there going to be *both* a new heaven *and* a new earth? If so, how is "new" to be understood?

Confusion, disagreement, and difficulty characterize the active discussion of this topic also at the academic level. An emphasis on the earthly dimension of biblical hope has become quite common in recent decades both in biblical

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1   Anthony C. Thiselton, *Life after Death: A New Approach to the Last Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 213–15.
2   Arthur O. Roberts, *Exploring Heaven: What Great Christian Thinkers Tell Us About Our Afterlife With God* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 168.

scholarship and in popular books on the subject. Notable scholarly contributions that emphasize the earth in God's eschatological future include N. T. Wright's *Surprised By Hope* (2008) and J. Richard Middleton's *A New Heaven and A New Earth* (2014).[3] A strong reaction has correspondingly surfaced, typically among systematic theologians, that seeks either to maintain a particular focus on God in the world to come or even to reject the so-called earthiness entirely. From among the demurring theologians, I will pay special attention to the recent eschatological writing of Hans Boersma, Matthew Levering, and Michael Allen.

The two 2019 *Christianity Today* Book Awards (winner and award of merit) for the Theology and Ethics category were given to Hans Boersma's *Seeing God* (2018) and Matthew Levering's *Dying and the Virtues* (2018).[4] Although Boersma is a Protestant theologian, while Levering is Catholic, it is Boersma who rejects most fully any earthiness and prioritizes most fully church tradition that affirms the beatific vision as the final eschatological state. Levering's earlier book on eschatology, *Jesus and the Demise of Death* (2012), provides a theological foundation for his more ethically focused *Dying and the Virtues*.

Michael Allen, a Protestant theologian and the author of *Grounded in Heaven* (2018), represents a different kind of protesting voice. Allen appears at one and the same time to consider the eschatological earthiness of Wright and Middleton to be correct and important and yet to find critical correctives in Levering's and Boersma's efforts to defend the beatific vision.

The exchange among these scholars concerning eschatology can be intense. In his book, *Surprised By Hope* (2008), Wright affirms a holistic eschatology (Middleton's term), which includes the ongoing operation of human creativity in new projects of creation in the world to come.[5] Levering responds in *Jesus and the Demise of Death* (2012). Grounded in Aquinas, Levering rejects Wright's holism, characterizes Wright's vision as "an everlasting duration of new cosmic projects," and concludes that this "fits more closely with Aquinas' understanding of hell."[6] Levering restates and expands this same concern in perhaps even more striking fashion in *Dying and the Virtues* (2018). He describes in some detail the Muslim hope of experiencing manifold delights in heaven, including the particular articulation of the Sufi theologian al-Ghazali which includes "a promise that each man will be united in marriage with 12,500 women possessed of various

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3   N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008); J. Richard Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014).

4   "Christianity Today's 2019 Book Awards," *Christianity Today*. Accessed Jan 7, 2019. https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/january-february/christianity-today-2019-book-awards.html

5   Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 161.

6   Matthew Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death: Resurrection, Afterlife, and the Fate of the Christian* (Waco, TX: Baylor, 2012), 113.

degrees of sexual experience, and that sexual intercourse with each of these women will last for as long as a lifetime on earth, since each man will each day have the sexual energy of seventy men on earth."[7] Levering then concludes that even the eschatology of al-Ghazali gives more centrality to the vision of God than does that of Christians like Wright.

Although Middleton admits that this language may be too harsh, he describes popular hymnody that reinforces the idea of going to heaven as the church's eternal destiny as the practice of "singing lies in church" (a phrase he takes from A. W. Tozer).[8] Middleton notes that he has offered a monetary reward his whole adult life (as a pedagogical incentive) to anyone who can produce a biblical passage that describes heaven as the final home of the righteous. He reports that the numerous churches, campus ministries, and classes to which he has made this challenge have yet to earn any money.[9]

Michael Allen responds to Middleton's biblical exposition and claims by pejoratively labeling Middleton's position as "eschatological naturalism."[10] He further implies that Middleton's position is the result of the human heart being an idol-making factory (using words from Calvin).[11] He thus suggests that Middleton's motivations for affirming a holistic eschatology are not primarily biblical, but instead involve at least as much an idolatrous and inappropriate clinging to created things rather than to God. For Allen, Middleton has lost God as "the center of our hope."[12] Finally, Allen also claims that Middleton "regularly maligns the spiritual hope of earlier Christians," even mocking the martyrs of the church.[13]

If I might quickly assess the first of these striking claims, I find that "eschatological naturalism" is a strange and hardly fitting label for a theology of cosmic transformation fully dependent upon God to accomplish a tremendous act of new creation. Beyond that, the biblical witness leads me to believe that the intensity of conflict between proponents of the beatific vision and holistic eschatology need not exist. As an initial illustration, we may look at the Beatitudes in Matt 5. Matt 5:8 reads: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God," a reference to what later came to be called the beatific vision.[14] With only two intervening verses, Matt 5:5 reads, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth," which

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7   Matthew Levering, *Dying and the* Virtues (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 159–61.
8   Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 27–30. Also Middleton, "Singing Lies in Church." Accessed Dec 10, 2018. https://jrichardmiddleton.wordpress.com/2014/11/02/singing-lies-in-church/
9   Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 14.
10   Michael Allen, *Grounded in Heaven: Recentering Christian Hope and Life on God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 7–8, 39.
11   Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 35–37.
12   Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 37–38.
13   Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 41. Also "Eerdmans Author Interviews: Michael Allen." Accessed Dec 10, 2018. http://eerdword.com/2018/11/06/eerdmans-author-interviews-michael-allen/
14   All biblical translations in this essay are from the NIV.

implies the redemption of earthly life. Although only v. 5 appears in Middleton's extensive scriptural index (with several page references), and only v. 8 appears in the extensive scriptural index of beatific vision proponent Boersma (also with several page references), these verses sit next to each other in the Gospel of Matthew and in their context they give no appearance of mutual exclusivity.

This article may thus be conceived as taking marching orders from the Beatitudes in pursuit of eschatological synthesis of a new earth and the vision of God. Indeed, we will find that much of the biblical material concerning the world to come holds together the presence of God and earthiness just as tightly as the Beatitudes.

Resurrection.

Let us begin by considering resurrection. Although the biblical evidence regarding resurrection speaks of transformed and imperishable resurrection bodies, these remain earthly bodies befitting a holistic eschatology, rather than immaterial entities befitting a solely spiritual participation. Grounded in his extensive research on this topic, Wright emphasizes that the understanding of resurrection was not multivalent or confused in the ancient world leading up to and during the time of the New Testament. Even pagans knew resurrection did not mean life after death without the body (as a spirit or soul), but instead denoted a return to embodied life (life *after* life after death) with a tangible, physical body. It was on this basis that pagans rejected resurrection, as did the Jewish Sadducees.

The hope of most Jews, however, was for an eventual, corporate, bodily resurrection of the righteous (though, given the preceding discussion, "bodily" as a modifier should be redundant when applied to resurrection).[15] Thus, the surprise for Jews of Jesus's day was not the tangible or physical nature of his resurrected body, but the resurrection of a single person in the middle of time (rather than a corporate resurrection at the end of the age).

Our surprise in reading Luke 24 and John 20–21 today may often be just the opposite. The physicality of the resurrected Jesus is what often strikes us. As Roland Chia observes, while Jesus "could appear and disappear at will," he could also be touched, eat with others at a shared meal, and the marks of crucifixion were still visible on his resurrection body.[16] In Luke 24, Jesus walks and talks with two disciples on the Emmaus road and later makes his physicality a point of emphasis: "Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have" (Luke 24:39). The situation is similar in John 20–21, where Jesus tells Thomas, "Put your finger here; see

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15 Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 35–40.
16 Roland Chia, *Hope for the World: A Christian Vision of the Last Things* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), 76–77.

my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe" (John 20:27). In both Luke and John, Jesus is clearly recognized as the same person, though not immediately.

Wright adds the observation that the empty tomb would be unnecessary if these Gospels had understood Jesus to have an immaterial or otherwise entirely discontinuous body, and further notes that it is also remarkable that Jesus is not pictured as being transformed into luminosity, as might have been expected from the language of Dan 12:3.[17] We observe that Jesus remained male and that his response to the Sadducees in the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 22:23–33; Mark 12:18–27; Luke 20:27–40) regarding resurrection should not be understood as implying that in the resurrection people become like angels in all respects; rather, only marriage and procreation are specifically in view.[18]

In Acts, the resurrection is central to the preaching of the early church and the physicality of the resurrected Jesus remains integral to the message (Acts 10:39–41). Such a message earns sneers from pagans who are not impressed by physicality (Acts 17:32). Paul's resurrection discussion in 1 Cor 15 emphasizes the connection between the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection to follow of Christians; he makes this link particularly clear by calling the resurrected Christ "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20). Moreover, that Christians are looking for a resurrection and a resurrection body like Christ's is a common theme in the New Testament (see Rom 6:5; Rom 8:11, Phil 3:21; Acts 1:11)

The fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians should, therefore, be read as addressing a general resurrection that is as physical as that of the resurrected body of Jesus. The text's emphasis on bodies likely came as a shock to those Corinthians who appear to have seen themselves as already having arrived, spiritually and eschatologically (e.g., 1 Cor 3–4). In 1 Cor 6:13b–14 Paul explains that "the body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also." Sexual immorality matters because the body matters to the Lord and the body will be raised from the dead. The Lord's Supper is irreducibly material (1 Cor 11) and the church is pictured as the body of Christ (1 Cor 12). In 1 Cor 15 Paul begins by emphasizing the death, burial, and resurrection appearances of Christ (1 Cor 15:3–8), in all their earthy bodiliness. Later in the chapter Paul chooses the metaphor of seeds, and the different physical bodies that result from sowing them, in order to illustrate the bodily transformation accompanying the eschaton (1 Cor 15:35–38).

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17 Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 44.
18 Randal Rauser, *What on Earth Do We Know About Heaven? 20 Questions and Answers about Life after* Death (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 61.

However, confusion sometimes arises in considering the language of 1 Cor 15:44–50. This text is commonly translated such that the present body is a "natural" body, while the resurrection body will be a "spiritual" body (e.g., NIV, KJV, ESV, NASB). The NRSV casts the contrast as being between a "physical" body and a "spiritual" body, thus seeming to imply the latter is non-physical. While translating this text into English well is not a simple matter, the NRSV translation is particularly unhelpful. Although the immediate and extended context is important, even considering v. 44 on its own should make clear that Paul's language is not contrasting the physical with the non-physical. Richard Hays's discussion of v. 44, which he calls "the nub of the argument," is particularly lucid and describes how the NRSV "reinstates precisely the dualistic dichotomy between physical and spiritual that Paul is struggling to overcome."[19] In the parallel constructions σῶμα ψυχικόν and σῶμα πνευματικόν both equally denote a bodily reality, while the modifiers (derived from the nouns for soul and spirit, respectively) indicate that the former is ensouled or soulish and the latter is enspirited or spiritual. Hays recommends the Jerusalem Bible translation of v. 44: "When it is sown it embodies the soul, when it is raised it embodies the spirit."[20]

In the very next verse (1 Cor 15:45) Paul references Gen 2:7, where God breathes into the human and the human becomes a living creature, a ψυχὴν ζῶσαν (LXX). James Dunn helpfully reminds us that πνεῦμα and ψυχή are closely related terms. Both are associated with breath and life, and the underlying Hebrew terms are nearly synonymous in early biblical usage.[21] Thus, in 1 Cor 15:45 Paul establishes a parallel between the original breathing of life into the human and the even more glorious breathing of resurrection life, which Christ has secured through his resurrection, and which Christ himself will in the future breathe into humanity—as God originally did in Gen 2:7. The affronts to the Corinthians here may be multiple as they are forced to accept both eschatological bodies and that they are not as πνευματικός (spiritual) as they thought they were, with true πνευματικός being purely a future hope, as Fee points out.[22] However, that Christ now serves as the source of resurrection life for humanity, pictured as a πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν in the parallelism of v. 45, in no way negates the physicality of Christ's resurrection body or the physicality of resurrection in Paul's thinking and context generally. The use of *soul* and *spirit* language in 1 Cor 15:45 further underlines the appropriate interpretation of 1 Cor 15:44. This verse also offers an interesting resonance with Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit on the disciples in John 20:22.

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19 Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 272.
20 Hays, *First Corinthians*, 272.
21 James G. D. Dunn, "The Holy Spirit," in *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. I. Howard Marshall et al. (3rd ed.; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 1125–29, here 1126.
22 Gordon D. Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 874.

A review of contemporary beatific vision proponents concerning resurrection does not identify any compelling reason to alter our conclusion that resurrection implies a fully bodily future life. Thiselton twice notes that Jesus's resurrection body does not provide a comprehensive description of the future resurrection body, specifically given that it was revealed in the present world.[23] It is certainly true that we lack a comprehensive description of the resurrection body, for many reasons. However, what we have remains instructive.

Thiselton, both a systematic theologian and an author of two exegetical commentaries on 1 Corinthians, agrees that "physical body" is an inappropriate translation in 1 Cor 15:44 and he offers alternatives such as "animated body" and "ordinary human body." In addition, Thiselton recognizes the activity of the Holy Spirit animating both ordinary human bodies and resurrection bodies as we have described; he also affirms Wright's articulation of resurrection and argues that "spiritual body" should not be affirmed in an oxymoronic way, as Martin Luther approaches doing.[24] Similarly, Allen seems to affirm both the physicality of the resurrection body of Jesus and its relevance to Christian hope.[25]

In contrast, Levering appears to struggle through a set of contradictory affirmations. He affirms the resurrected Jesus as "strikingly corporeal," noting that he has "a true human body, with nutritive and sensitive capacities," glorious in its sheer goodness.[26] However, he later argues that resurrected bodies will have only spiritual sensation, no longer having physical senses because these involve bodily alteration for their use, whereas in resurrection life communication with God "will govern entirely the way that our bodiliness manifests itself."[27] Nonetheless, he offers that while there are no creational projects to pursue, the blessed will enjoy bodily movement "in order to see the beauty of the whole new creation," presumably somehow via spiritual (rather than physical) senses and without any bodily alteration.[28]

Boersma presents a similar and equally illuminating struggle for coherence. He characterizes as "particularly vexing" the question of what purpose a body might serve if the spiritual vision of God is the only matter at hand and if we correspondingly imagine souls to be participating fully in the beatific vision in an intermediate state prior to bodily resurrection.[29] The solution Boersma offers is that the vision of God will be at least partly physical, taking place through physical

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23 Thiselton, *Life after Death*, 90, 114.
24 Thiselton, *Life after Death*, 122–28.
25 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 53.
26 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 33, 40–41.
27 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 114, 119.
28 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 120.
29 Hans Boersma, *Seeing God: The Beatific Vision in Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 420–21.

eyes, which have been transfigured.[30] It is difficult to see how this solution, despite its apparent boldness over against longstanding tradition, addresses the value of the resurrected body (apart from the postulation of physical vision). Moreover, this singular focus on physical eyes seems to stem from an overly literalistic interpretation of the vision metaphor, which is only one biblical metaphor for experiencing the presence of God.

This review, so far, of resurrection in the Bible does not lead us to expect a resurrection that changes us from being bearers of God's image in a broader physical creation. Instead, this review has now led us to consider Wright's claim that the early Christians "believed that God was going to do for the whole cosmos what he had done for Jesus at Easter."[31] Wright thus sees an earth-affirming eschatology as the conclusion that naturally and necessarily follows from resurrection.

New Heaven and New Earth

A transformed and imperishable resurrection body seems to call out for a matching world in which to live as embodied creatures. Thus, we should not be surprised to find promises of a new heaven and a new earth in the Bible (Isa 65–66; Rev 21–22; 2 Pet 3). We should also not be surprised that this new cosmos exhibits both continuity and discontinuity with the existing cosmos. As with Jesus, the cosmos is transformed, but still recognizable.[32] The New Testament provides many examples of the word "new" being used in contexts with significant continuity (e.g., John 13:34; Acts 17:19; 1 Cor 11:25; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 2:15; 1 John 2:8).

These new creation texts are full of the heavenly, the heavens, and the presence of God. These passages are also full of the earthly, the earth, and human vocation. It is not the case that reference to heaven represents discontinuity, while reference to the earth represents continuity. Rather, both evidence continuity and transformation. Unfortunately, we can expect the Matt 5 reading pattern that I observed earlier (where some see only the heavenly or the earthly, to the near or total exclusion of the other) to rear its head with these passages as well.

Consider how resurrection for the cosmos mirrors resurrection for humanity in many respects[33] and that the resurrection body is itself both heavenly and earthly. Although the earthiness of Jesus's resurrection body receives a particular emphasis in the Gospel accounts, these accounts also attest to changes in Jesus's body that make it unlike what we know of current bodies; likewise, the resurrection body of believers is described by Paul as a *spiritual body*, meaning a tangible body animated by the presence of the Holy Spirit in a profoundly new way.

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30 Boersma, *Seeing God*, 422–29.
31 Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 93.
32 Rauser, *What on Earth*, 46–47.
33 G. K. Beale, *Revelation: A Shorter Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 464.

Revelation 21–22 (the last two chapters of the canon) are full of heaven and earth from beginning to end. We are wise to heed Gordon Fee's advice that taking the images found there (such as of a lamb on a throne in the middle of a city) too literally will doom our efforts and do a disservice to John.[34] No literalistic interpretations or speculative hypotheses are required to see that not only is the presence of God prominent in these chapters, but so is an earthly new creation, which emphasizes human rule and culture.

The heavenly aspect of John's vision is evident in that the holy city, the New Jerusalem, comes down out of heaven from God (21:2). Furthermore, it depicts a God-centered reality in that God will dwell with people and wipe away their tears (21:3–4); God replaces the Jerusalem temple and provides the city its light (21:22–23; 22:5); the throne of God is present (22:1–3); and the servants of God see God's face (22:4). Chapter 22 emphasizes that the Lord is coming soon (22:7, 12, 20) and the holiness of God permeates both chapters, even down to the cubic dimensions of the city mirroring the Holy of Holies.[35]

Although Rev 21–22 has a heavenly dimension and certainly depicts a God-centered reality, there is both a new heaven and *a new earth* (21:1). Beyond that, we are told to trust that "all things" are being made new (21:5), which hearkens back to the twenty-four elders praising God for having created "all things" (4:11). Then, there is a city that has continuity with Jerusalem (21:2); the city is coming down to earth (21:2; also 3:12), whether to a mountain or, more likely, being viewed from a mountain as the city descends (21:10).[36] And the city is not focused solely on the glorious light of God; rather, the light enables the city to function (21:22–26). The distinctiveness of kings and nations remains, and they contribute their glory and honor to the city (21:24–26). The section in 21:1–22:5 describing all of this that must soon take place (22:6) concludes not with the vision of God (22:4) but with God's servants reigning forever (22:5) alongside an Edenic tree of life (22:2).[37] Thus, the repeated promises of the Lord's coming in chapter 22 refer to his coming to dwell on earth. The presence of God, which is certainly described in these chapters, is in no way separated from earthly life.

We can come to the same conclusion by examining the descriptions of the new heaven and new earth promised in 2 Pet 3 and Isa 65–66; they also indicate the presence of genuine earthly life. Second Peter 3 summarizes the Christian hope in v. 13: "But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells." The day of the Lord is coming and its accompanying purification will result in a cosmos in which righteousness

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34 Gordon D. Fee, *Revelation: A New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 292.

35 Fee, *Revelation*, 298–99.

36 Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 389–90.

37 Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 379.

dwells. Indeed, while the heavens will disappear (2 Pet 3:10a) and be destroyed by fire (2 Pet 3:12), the earth, according to the best text-critical analysis of 3:10b, will be "laid bare" (or, more literally, "found") rather than "burned up" (KJV). This makes good sense of the purification described in the passage.[38] But even if we took it that the heavens and the earth were being equally burned in purification or destruction, this could hardly be the basis for an argument for a purely heavenly future. The hope of 2 Pet 3:13 remains the same in either case: "a new heaven and a new earth."

Regarding Isa 65–66, Derek Kidner observes that the picture is strikingly earthy.[39] Both Rev 21 and Isa 65 describe the "former things" that have been left in the past and this includes suffering, so that weeping will be replaced with joy. Yet in Isa 65 this replacement is followed by the unhindered building of houses, planting of vineyards, and bearing of children (Isa 65:17–23). However this language is understood, it does not involve the *replacement* of earthly life with a beatific vision.

The challenge of interpreting eschatological texts is only part of the problem in sorting out two relationships in the Bible that are pertinent to this discussion, namely, the relationship between the beginning and the end of the story, and the relationship between heaven and earth.

Concerning beginning and end, there is both continuity and discontinuity, and it is often easier for interpreters to emphasize one or the other than to hold both together.

For discontinuity, we have the related elements of darkness, sea, an anti-God actor, and a tree of good and evil at the beginning (Genesis 1–3), but not at the end.[40] Central to the beginning is the command to be "fruitful and multiply," but marriage and procreation appear to cease in the end (Matt 22:23–33; Mark 12:18–27; Luke 20:27–40).[41] There are indications that animal predation may cease (Isa 65:25) and that a perishable humanity will become imperishable (1 Cor 15:50–54), possibly along with the entire cosmos (Rom 8:21). The creation generally, and humanity specifically (now fundamentally animated by the Holy Spirit), appear more fully and gloriously imbued with the presence of God at the end than at the beginning. With such significant discontinuity, a final state of purely beatific vision might sound biblically viable. However, our entire discussion of resurrection and new creation so far speaks against this being the final state.

Indeed, continuity between the beginning and the end is emphasized by the picture of humans reestablished as God's ruling image bearers in Rev 22:1–5.

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38 Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 160–62.
39 Derek Kidner, "Isaiah," in *New Bible Commentary: Twenty-First Century Edition*, ed. Gordon J. Wenham, et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 669–70.
40 Beale, *Revelation*, 465.
41 Roberts, *Exploring Heaven*, 125–27.

These verses at the end of Revelation understand the destruction of evil as resulting in humans being restored to their image-bearing role of rule over the earth (Gen 1:26–28). Additional New Testament texts testify to image restoration (e.g., Rom 8; Col 3; Rev 5), understood as the same image borne by Christ (2 Cor 4; Col 1).[42] Furthermore, resurrection is integrally connected to restoration of rule in Daniel, in intertestamental literature, and in the New Testament.[43] God's commitment to the entirety of creation (the heaven and earth of Gen 1:1) is closely connected to image-bearing humans remaining in this role.

Concerning the relationship between heaven and earth, it is striking that some proponents of a Christian hope that genuinely includes both heaven and earth feel the need to call this new creation "heaven."[44] But it is simply confusing when these proponents say that we hope for a "heaven" consisting of a new heaven and a new earth. It is common and fair enough to see heaven and earth coming together in Rev 21–22, particularly in that the presence of God comes from heaven to earth. However, this recognition should not dissolve the distinction between heaven and earth. We can agree with Chia that God is commonly pictured as residing in heaven in Scripture, without agreeing that therefore Rev 21–22 pictures strictly "heaven."[45] Revelation 21–22 decisively locates the New Jerusalem on earth, not in heaven.

Biblically, God does not reside only or essentially in heaven (unless we are referring to the body of the risen Christ[46]). As creator, God existed prior to creation, so God in some sense resides essentially outside of creation. However, having created the heavens and the earth, God has chosen to inhabit creation. It is notable that various psalms hold together God creating the heavens and residing in them (e.g., Pss 33; 102; 115; 136); and yet the heavens cannot contain God (1 Kgs 8:27; 2 Chr 2:6).

Moreover, neither the presence of God, nor even the vision of God, arrive on earth for the first time in Rev 21–22.[47] God is present in some sense in Eden, in the breath of life God gives humans and animals, in the temple, with prophets, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in the church, and in the very existence of the earth. The Lord is God in heaven and on earth (Deut 4:39; 10:14; Josh 2:11). Or as Isa 66:1 says, "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." Not only does God not reside solely in heaven, but heaven has other inhabitants, including

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42 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 28; Iain Provan, *Seriously Dangerous Religion: What the Old Testament Really Says and Why It Matters* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 318, 336.

43 See the discussion of this theme in Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 139–50.

44 For example, Chia, *Hope for the World*, 101–106, 148; Rauser, *What on Earth*, 18–19, 73–79; Roberts, *Exploring Heaven*, 34.

45 Chia, *Hope for the World*, 102.

46 Rauser, *What on Earth*, 24.

47 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 72–75, 80–81.

fully physical ones (and not just the body of Christ). The Bible places sun, moon, stars, birds, and storehouses of precipitation in heaven (e.g., Gen 1 and 7; Ps 148; Matt 6; 1 Cor 15). We should not assume in our eschatological thinking that inhabitants like these are all moving out. Even in the imagery of Rev 21–22 in which God provides light, the sun is described as not necessary for the city, rather than as non-existent (Rev 21:23; 22:5). In summary, it should be possible within a holistic eschatology to describe a future hope as entirely dependent on God (who is commonly said to be in heaven), which is heavenly, stored up in heaven, and coming from heaven—without thereby describing our future home itself as "heaven" (for which there is no biblical warrant).[48]

As in the case of resurrection, a review of contemporary beatific vision proponents concerning new creation does not identify any compelling reason to the see the new heaven and new earth as purely "heavenly." Thiselton offers passing support for the holistic eschatology of Jonathan Moo, but elsewhere speaks of the postresurrection context as non-earthly.[49] For Thiselton, singing God's praises for eternity will not be boring because time will be different and we will be different.[50] Thiselton heavily leverages the exegetical work of biblical scholar Robert Gundry in arguing that Rev 21–22 is purely a matter of heaven and the beatific vision.[51] Unfortunately, although this leveraging leaves the impression that Gundry supports Thiselton's argument, Gundry's exegesis is firmly against Thiselton's conclusion. Thiselton removes Gundry from his discussion of the passage at precisely the point at which this would have become clear.[52] True, Gundry argues that the imagery of the New Jerusalem represents a people only, rather than a people and a place.[53] However, Gundry is firm, from his thesis statement onward, that this New Jerusalem of people is clearly *located* on earth and is of a fully earthly character. For Gundry, the New Jerusalem "is God's dwelling place in the saints rather than their dwelling place on earth. The new earth—the whole of it so far as we can tell, not just a localized city no matter what megalopolitan size it might attain—is the saints' dwelling place."[54] This view may mirror Provan's conclusion that Eden represented the whole earth.[55]

Levering appears to take the cosmic purification and destruction of Rev 21–22

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48 For a discussion of the legitimate role of heaven in biblical eschatology, see Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 220–21.
49 Thiselton, *Life after Death*, 115, 139–42, 197–98.
50 Thiselton, *Life after Death*, 205.
51 Thiselton, *Life after Death*, 186, 197–203.
52 Thiselton, *Life after Death*, 198.
53 Robert H. Gundry, "The New Jerusalem: People as Place, Not Place for People" *Novum Testamentum* 29, no. 3 (1987) 255–56.
54 Gundry, "The New Jerusalem," 254–64.
55 Provan, *Seriously Dangerous Religion*, 33–36.

and 2 Pet 3 seriously in *Jesus and the Demise of Death*.[56] However, he does not accept the language of a new heaven and a new earth as referring to cosmic events, but thinks it is a description of entry into participation in the beatific vision.[57] In other words, the presence of God is to be taken seriously in Rev 21–22, according to Levering, but not the presence of new creation.[58] For Levering, despite the biblical context, all that is left is to "plunge into God's glory ('face to face')."[59] Boersma suggests that "new heaven and new earth" are among a "dizzying array of images" concerning the last things in the Bible from which we may privilege some metaphors on various theological and philosophical grounds, and "theologians throughout the tradition have privileged the metaphor of vision."[60]

In contrast, Allen affirms that "heaven comes to earth" in the end, and that the earth that the meek inherit (Matt 5:5) is a "plot of land" rather than "an ethereal existence."[61] He even notes the eschatological hope of the ships of Tarshish in the New Jerusalem (Isa 60).[62] Allen is concerned, though, that renouncing heaven as our destination might undermine the heavenly nature of our hope, as expressed particularly in Heb 11–13.[63] But, as we have seen, we should be able to be heavenly-minded, and specifically to hope for the coming of the heavenly city of Heb 11–13, without needing a hope of going to heaven (or needing to express our hope in this unbiblical way).[64]

Hope for All Things

God's holistic commitment to the created world is also captured in the "all things" theme (Rev 21:5) that coincides in Rev 21 with the new heaven and new earth (Rev 21:1). Middleton helpfully traces many instances of this "all things" theme in the New Testament and concludes that a common element in each case is that God's promised saving activity is pictured as being restorative rather than as "God doing something completely new."[65] In the Gospels, Jesus affirms that the prophets teach the restoration or renewal of all things (Matt 17:11; 19:28; Mark 9:12).[66] In Acts, we similarly hear concerning Jesus that "heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets" (Acts 3:21). It is often explicit that "all things" includes both heaven

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56 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 115–19.
57 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 115–19.
58 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*,, 123.
59 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 125.
60 Boersma, *Seeing God*, 1–5, 38–41.
61 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 38, 52.
62 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 29; Rauser, *What on Earth*, 87–91.
63 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 14–15, 52–53.
64 Thomas R. Schreiner, *Biblical Theology For Christian Proclamation: Commentary On Hebrews* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015), 399.
65 Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 155–63.
66 Chia, *Hope for the World*, 51.

and earth and things within each. This includes Col 1:15–20 in which "in him all things were created . . . and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven" and Eph 1:9–10 in which God "purposed in Christ . . . to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ." In Heb 1:2, we also understand that the universe was made through the Son and that this Son (Jesus) has been "appointed heir of all things." Finally, Romans 8 speaks not only of the redemption of our bodies (Rom 8:23), but also of all creation groaning in hope and anticipation of being granted this same freedom (Rom 8:19–22). Middleton sees in Rom 8:19–23 a "profound appeal to the exodus story," and to the holistic salvation God provided Israel in freeing them from Egypt and establishing them as a holy and flourishing people.[67]

As Bible readers, we should be profoundly unsurprised that God values all of God's created world enough to offer it a comprehensive act of new creation. In Gen 1 the world and all its creatures exist and are called good before humans arrive on the scene. God's image bearers serve a royal and priestly role in caring for an already good creation. In Gen 2 trees are made that are "good for food" but also "pleasing to the eye" (Gen 2:9), and the human is placed in the garden to care for it (Gen 2:15). The closing chapters of Job and psalms like Ps 104 demonstrate God's care for, and value of, animals—independent of God's relationship with humanity.[68] Psalm 148 also speaks of the whole creation worshipping God. Revelation 5:13 testifies to this same reality. In Hos 2:18, God makes a covenant with "the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky and the creatures that move along the ground."[69] We have already discussed the Isaianic possibility of an eschatological end to predation, though not an end of animals themselves (Isa 11 and 65).[70] In sum, as Ps 36 states, "You, Lord, preserve [lit. save] both people and animals" (Ps 36:6).

Jesus and the Demise of Death (2012) shows promise at the outset when Levering observes that "the vision of God does not compete with our knowledge and love for creatures, as it would if God were a reality alongside creatures rather than the transcendent Creator."[71] And in his concluding chapter he appears set to pursue a positive answer to the question of "whether an insistence on bodily resurrection and new creation can be joined with an equal insistence on the beatific vision."[72] He ends this chapter with what sounds like a wholly positive answer: "In sum, the vision of God fulfills our embodied life on earth and is profoundly

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67 Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 81.
68 Provan, *Seriously Dangerous Religion*, 223.
69 Provan, *Seriously Dangerous Religion*, 301.
70 On this, see Provan, *Seriously Dangerous Religion,* 284–85; Rauser, *What on Earth*, 106–11; Roberts, *Exploring Heaven*, 96–97.
71 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 3.
72 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 109.

united to bodily resurrection and the new creation of the cosmos."[73] Unfortunately, this concluding sentence bears next to no connection to the substance of the chapter that precedes it, since immediately prior Levering claims that when Eph 1:9–10 is fulfilled so that all things in heaven and on earth are united in Christ, "plants, animals, and so forth" will be no more.[74] He thus rejects a holistic eschatology faithful to all of creation in favor of purely plunging into God's glory. The reason he gives is that a holistic eschatology "threatens to bog us down in endless work."[75]

Strikingly, in *Dying and the Virtues* (2018), Levering takes up the opposite position regarding plants and animals in the world to come, having been influenced by the theologian Paul Griffiths.[76] He does this without seeming to note his change of position and without providing much argumentation or commentary, whether biblical or theological. In now affirming non-human, eschatological life (departing from Aquinas on this point), Levering simply concludes that Aquinas "is not sufficiently attuned to the enduring value and beauty of plant and animal life, both in itself and in its relationships with human beings."[77]

The Vision of God

The biblical passages alluded to by beatific vision proponents attend to the vision, presence, or glory of God, without providing any evidence that such presence is inconsistent with a new creation of heaven and earth and a humanity capable of image-bearing responsibilities as before. In fact, we saw that the important beatific vision passage, Rev 21–22, is not only consistent with new creation and human rule, but features them prominently. We will observe these same patterns in examining a few additional passages that are cited relative to the beatific vision.

In 1 Cor 13:12 Paul affirms an eschatological future in which "we shall see [God] face to face." As David Garland notes, "'Face to face,' 'mouth to mouth,' and 'eye to eye' are OT idioms that imply that something comes directly, not through an intermediary or medium."[78] Such directness with God is not exclusive to the eschatological future, since this exact language was already observed in the Old Testament in connection with Jacob (Gen 32:30) and Moses (Exod 33:11; Deut 5:4). In context, 1 Cor 13 is about the importance of other-focused human love, the lack of which was undermining the Christian community in Corinth (esp. 1 Cor 12–14). First Corinthians 13:13 seems to envision this human love as part

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73 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 125.
74 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 124–25.
75 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 110, 125.
76 Levering, *Dying and the Virtues*, 166–69.
77 Levering, *Dying and the Virtues*, 168.
78 David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 625.

of the eschatological future.[79] In any case, there is no exclusive beatific vision here.

In 1 John 3:1–2, we are told that even as children of God our eschatological future has not been made entirely clear, but we do "know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Certainly, v. 2 unproblematically indicates that "we shall see him as he is." In terms of being like him, the context indicates that John's primary concern here "is about ethical living and reflecting the character of the Father."[80] However, it is also fair to be reminded by this passage of the relevance of Jesus's resurrection body to our own hope of resurrection (we shall be like him also in our bodiliness).[81] Texts like Matt 5:8 and Heb 12:14 similarly observe the correlation between holiness and seeing God. John 17:24 records Jesus's prayer: "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory." This verse resonates with Rev 21–22 and the glorious presence of the "Lord God Almighty and the Lamb" (21:22) in the holy New Jerusalem, which is located on the earth.

The biblical witness of such texts represents a problem for an exclusive beatific vision in multiple respects. As we have observed, an exclusive beatific vision struggles theologically even to affirm a genuine resurrection body and is quick to abandon the broader creation. An exclusive privileging even of the vision of God over the presence of God exacerbates the problem (as with Boersma's interest primarily in the eyes of the resurrection body). Moreover, an exclusive beatific vision also faces an internal difficulty that is quite daunting if the entirety of our eschatological hope rests on the vision metaphor. This difficulty is the biblical witness to God's ongoing invisibility and the related theological doctrine of divine invisibility. Allen spends an entire chapter wrestling with his paradoxical affirmation that "God is visible. God remains invisible."[82]

Conclusions

This article has argued that the eschatology found in the Bible is holistic, affirming both a renewed creation and the profound presence of God. This eschatology is earthly in the sense that there remains an earth and that humanity remains in image-bearing relationship to the earth and to all of creation. This eschatology certainly affirms that we will see God, although this is not the only biblical metaphor for the eschatological presence of God.

Our exploration of important biblical texts associated with resurrection, new heaven and new earth, hope for all things, and the vision of God does not provide

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79 Hays, *First Corinthians*, 228–31.

80 Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, and 3 John* (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 142.

81 Jobes, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 142.

82 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 59–87.

biblical grounds to support an eschatology of exclusively beatific vision, especially one that crowds out the body, the earth, or any non-human creation. Although defenders of this position often cite some mix of the biblical passages we have reviewed, there are also indications that they themselves recognize that the foundation of their argument is not truly a biblical one. Levering's approach is that "a Thomistic theology of resurrection and eternal life should accord with Scripture without claiming to derive 'exegetical conclusions' in a strict sense."[83] Boersma goes in a fideist direction, claiming that "it is not possible to offer a rational argument explaining why the beatific vision constitutes our final end."[84] Nonetheless, Boersma does offer just such a rational argument, though not one founded on the Bible.

Boersma holds to a tradition in which there is some flexibility between absolute stasis with God and eternal progress into God, but in which there is no room for ongoing human creativity. There is no such room because it is felt that our eschatological future must terminate "in God himself, not in other objects or relationships."[85] Human creativity is viewed as being in competition with theocentrism.[86] There is undoubtedly a sort of logic to this, though we need not accept it as biblical or sound. Moreover, pejoratively labeling a holistic eschatology "this-worldly" is neither accurate nor an argument against it.[87]

Levering expresses a similar logic based in Aquinas, that because "it is impossible for any created good to constitute man's happiness," we must eventually abandon all created goods and simply rest in the source of all good.[88] However, if both sin and death have been defeated in Christ, then we might wonder about a logic that needs to exile or annihilate the non-human creation as a way to remove any possible opportunity for human idolatry. And N. T. Wright has observed that if we envision soul escape rather than bodily resurrection, then death has not, in fact, been defeated.[89]

While some might critique an eschatology of beatific vision in terms of the Bible versus Tradition, or of Jerusalem versus Athens, it may instead be helpful to highlight (and interrogate) the underlying intuition that in the end the one appropriate activity must be the singular focus on the one God.

In order to achieve some measure of progress and peace amidst this eschatological disagreement, it would help to speak more clearly and charitably with one another. Michael Allen's 2018 book, *Grounded in Heaven*, represents an

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83 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 2.
84 Boersma, *Seeing God*, 26.
85 Boersma, *Seeing God*, 32.
86 Boersma, *Seeing God*, 33.
87 Boersma, *Seeing God*, 41.
88 Levering, *Jesus and the Demise of Death*, 111.
89 Wright, *Surprised by Hope*, 15.

interesting case as a book that attempted a kind of bridging, but fell short in terms of both clarity and charity. Allen more than once states his desire to retain both the earthiness of the neo-Calvinist eschatological vision and God as "the personal center and very substance of our hope."[90] Allen wants to ensure that God's presence is central and that God is not only the instigator of our eschatological future but also integral to this future.[91] He is concerned that current proponents of holistic eschatology, like Middleton, may be mixing up the primary and the secondary in their presentations.[92]

However, Allen raises these concerns in a sharp and acerbic way without any acknowledgement that the emphasis in projects like these may be weighted to the earthy precisely because the authors are engaging with popular and scholarly articulations that have lost the earthy entirely, sometimes with firm intentionality. Allen claims that "no one wishes to shift to an eschatology that is ethereal or disembodied" and then recommends on the very next page work by Levering and Boersma that articulates just such an eschatology.[93] Allen appears to give Levering and Boersma a pass for their straightforward and unapologetic denials of eschatological earthiness while repeatedly hurling the epithet "eschatological naturalism" at Middleton, even though Allen himself concedes that Middleton repeatedly affirms the eschatological presence of God in *A New Heaven and a New Earth*.[94] Either Allen does not actually affirm holism, or he inadequately characterizes Levering and Boersma, and misunderstands his distance from them concerning new creation.[95] Either way, this lack of clarity and charity makes *Grounded in Heaven* quite confusing, and undermines the potential it might otherwise have had to nurture a Christian hope that anticipates both the presence of God and the renewal of creation.

It is worth the effort to assess the effectiveness of Allen's negotiation of holistic eschatology and beatific vision, not only because of the timeliness of his book, but also given the importance of this topic to Christian theology and practice. The *Christianity Today* book awards given to beatific vision proponents Boersma and Levering represent awards given to the "the books most likely to shape evangelical life, thought, and culture."[96] It is certainly true that a Christian hope consisting strictly of beatific vision is capable of undergirding loving action toward the

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90 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 8–9, 46–47, 56–57.
91 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 22–23, 34–38.
92 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 39–40.
93 Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 44–45.
94 Allen lists the following pages in Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth* that address the presence of God: 89–90, 107, 166–68, 172 (Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*, 41, 47); but see also 46–49, 153, 179, 230–31.
95 Note that Levering supplies a recommendation of Allen's book in the book and on its back cover.
96 *Christianity Today*, "Christianity Today's 2019 Book Awards." Accessed Jan 7, 2019. https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/january-february/christianity-today-2019-book-awards.html

present world, and that this hope has done so in the past. However, it is equally true that the benefit of a Christian hope that envisions creativity, culture, relationality, and rule as part of the world to come is not only that it matches the biblical witness. Rather, this Christian hope is also bound to undergird a higher valuing of and more faithful participation in these pursuits in the present world. As Middleton succinctly summarizes the relationship between theology and ethics, "ethics is lived eschatology."[97]

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97 Middleton, *A New Heaven and a New Earth*, 24.

The Legacy of Cain in Pop and Rock Music[1]

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Abstract

Over the centuries Jews and Christians have retold and reinterpreted Genesis 4 in literature and the visual arts. While sacred music contains little to no mention of Cain and Abel, there are dozens of references to the story in pop and rock music. Popular artists have incorporated references and retellings of the story into songs often with a particular focus on the person and legacy of Cain. This paper traces how the Cain and Abel story has exerted significant influence over these artists as they reinterpret and apply the tale of Cain's treachery in their own contexts.

Genesis 4 describes the first and most infamous of murders. Cain, envious of his brother, commits the first recorded act of fratricide. Over the centuries Jewish, Christian and Muslim interpreters have appropriated and retold the story in literature and the visual arts.[2] This retelling has also occurred in music where the story of the two brothers was the topic of several oratorios. More recently an operatic version of Gen 4 was written by Danish composer Bent Lorentzen, which was performed by the Royal Danish Opera in Copenhagen in 2006.[3] While this may be an expected response in religious contexts, it is surprising the degree to which the story has impacted so-called "low" culture.[4]

While sacred music rarely mentions Cain and Abel, there are dozens of references to the story in pop and rock music. My interest in the reception history of Genesis 4 began with Jewish and Christian literary texts and expanded to include

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1   This is an expansion of a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Great Lakes Biblical Society, March 15, 2019, in Akron, OH.

2   See John Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry*; Themes in Biblical Narrative 14 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

3   Nils Holger Peterson, "Cain and Abel, Story of: Music," in vol. 4 of *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 763.

4   For a discussion of the categories of "high" (fine art) and "low art" (popular) see John A. Fisher, "High Art Versus Low Art," in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, eds. Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (New York: Routledge, 2005).

interpretive traditions reflected in visual art.[5] Yet, even with a heightened aware-
ness of the way the story was appropriated throughout history, I was still some-
what surprised one day to hear the line "I am what Cain was to Abel" while
listening to Jon Bon Jovi's song "Blaze of Glory."[6] Thus I wondered how the story
might be reflected in music.

I began my research using a lyrics database, which yielded about 800 results
for songs that featured the name "Cain." A search of "Abel" yielded 300 more
hits.[7] I focused on 55 songs that demonstrate some type of influence from the
Cain and Abel story.[8] I will trace this influence below by first focusing on three
artists, Bruce Springsteen, John Mellencamp and Prince. This is followed by a
consideration of the way that some songs have adopted and/or reinterpreted the
Mark of Cain. I then consider a handful of songs that reflect on the legacy of
Cain.

Bruce Springsteen

Three Springsteen songs mention Cain and Abel. The first and most overt in
its references is the 1978 song "Adam Raised a Cain."[9] Sung in first person, it
opens with the description of a baptism witnessed by a father who recognizes
that he and his son both have the same "hot blood" running in their veins. Later,
the third stanza begins with "In the Bible Cain slew Abel and East of Eden he
was cast," followed by the line "You're born into this life paying for the sins of
somebody else's past." We then hear a description of the father in later years,
living in pain and blaming others followed by the line "You inherit the sins, you
inherit the flames." In between stanzas the chorus repeats the simple line "Adam
raised a Cain."

Inspiration for the song is said to come from the 1955 film *East of Eden* with
James Dean.[10] But it is also reflective of the relationship between father and son.
In numerous interviews and his 2016 autobiography, Springsteen acknowledges
a difficult relationship with his father, especially in the early years.[11] His lyrics

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5   John Byron, "Who Killed Cain? Interpretive Solutions to a Theological Problem," *Biblical Reception* 3 (2014): 96–111.
6   Jon Bon Jovi, *Blaze of Glory* (Vertigo, 1990).
7   A number of songs were eliminated since some lyrics spell the English contraction "can't" the way it was sang. Thus yielding such lyrics as "cain't ya hear me cryin?" in Bob Dylan's "Poor Boy Blues" and a variety of Country and R & B songs.
8   This was by no means easy since it is rare for musicians to explain their music in the detail that an academic would appreciate.
9   From the album *Darkness on the Edge of Town* (Columbia, 1978).
10   Dave Marsh, *Bruce Springsteen: Two Hearts: The Definitive Biography 1972–2003* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 134.
11   See Bruce Springsteen, *Born to Run* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016). Before his death in 1998 the elder Springsteen was asked which of his son's songs he liked best. "The one about me," he answered (Brian Hiatt et al., "100 Greatest Bruce Springsteen Songs of All Time," *Rolling Stone*

announce the realization that he cannot escape the sins of his father and that his own role as Cain in the relationship is not one he chose. This sentiment is echoed in a live acoustic version (1993) that Springsteen introduces by noting he has a three-year-old son who "scares me already" before saying "this is a song about fathers and sons."[12] It seems the Boss has become Adam and his toddler son Cain.

The second reference appears in "Gave it a name," released in 1998, the year Springsteen's father passed away.[13] It opens by recounting Cain's murder of Abel and laments that when Cain was unable to stand the guilt or blame, "he gave it a name." Stanza two describes a drunk wife beater who, because he can't stand the shame, "gave it a name." When asked about its meaning Springsteen replied: "I guess the song is about what people do with the parts of themselves they don't like very much."[14] The song was used in the HBO miniseries "Show me a Hero." The first episode opens with Springsteen singing "Gave it a Name" which illuminates the passing of blame and hiding of wrongful actions that will occur throughout the show, a pattern reflective of Cain's actions in Genesis 4:9.[15] When God asks Cain "where is your brother Abel?" he deflects the attention and blame from himself by saying, "I don't know; Am I my brother's keeper?"

The final reference is in "What Love can do" (2009), a song laced with religious language and imagery.[16] The song mentions how we all "bear the Mark of Cain," but that we can "let the light shine through." This is emphasized by the chorus "Let me show you what love can do." The song seems to reflect Springsteen's recognition that although we, like Cain, cannot escape the shadow of the past, love can make a difference.

When asked about these references and if he studies the Bible, Springsteen indicated he reads through the Bible from time to time, but that "those particular references are just part of everyone's internal landscape at this point. Everyone knows those stories and understands what you're talking about when you use those references."[17]

But there may be more to the story. In his autobiography Springsteen describes

Magazine (January 16, 2014). Accessed April 30, 2019. https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/100-greatest-bruce-springsteen-songs-of-all-time-32486/adam-raised-a-cain-45327/).

12 Bruce Springsteen, "Adam Raised A Cain," at Stockholms Stadion, Stockholm, Sweden (May 28, 1993). Accessed Sept 28, 2018. https://youtu.be/V59gE5APaF0

13 From the album _Bruce Springsteen_: 1972–1998 (Columbia, 1998).

14 Melinda Newman, "Springsteen Backtracks," _Billboard Magazine_ (November 7, 1998), 109. Accessed April 30, 2019. https://www.americanradiohistory.com/Archive-Billboard/90s/1998/BB-1998-11-07.pdf

15 Caroline Madden, "'Show Me a Hero' and I'll Write You a Springsteen Song," _Pop Matters_ (February 29, 2016). Accessed April 30, 2019. https://www.popmatters.com/show-me-a-hero-and-ill-write-you-a-springsteen-song-2495450610.html

16 From the album _Working on a Dream_ (Columbia, 2009).

17 Newman, "Springsteen Backtracks," 109.

his childhood in New Jersey and how he lived "literally in the bosom of the Catholic Church." The church was "just a football's toss away"[18] from his house and the town's first church service and funeral were held in his home's living room.[19] The house was later condemned, sold and turned into a parking lot for the church.[20] Springsteen considered his life "inextricably linked with the life of the church"[21] with no hope of escape. "There is no out." He realized one day. "I live here."[22]

His estrangement from religion began in the eighth grade when a nun ordered another student to smack the daydreaming Springsteen across the face. The separation was confirmed when he was publically beaten on the altar during six a.m. mass for not studying his Latin.[23] However, he later came to "ruefully and bemusedly understand that once you are a Catholic you are always a Catholic . . . . I don't often participate in my religion but I know somewhere . . . deep inside . . . I'm still on the team."[24] In another revealing comment he connects his complex relationship with his father with that of the church by saying: "As funny as it sounds, I have a 'personal' relationship with Jesus. He remains one of my fathers, though as with my own father, I no longer believe in his godly power."[25]

Biblical imagery is certainly part of Springsteen's "internal landscape," and his complex relationships with his father and the church find expression in the person of Cain. Like Cain, Springsteen cannot escape the sins of his father let alone his own. Nor can he escape the church. They are inextricably connected. And Springsteen both celebrates and laments this realization through his use of the Cain and Abel story.

John Mellencamp

John Mellencamp mentions Cain and Abel in four of his songs, but unlike Springsteen he offers little that might explain why. [26]

The brothers first appear in his 1978 "Pray for Me."[27] The song begins with a reference to God giving Moses a few rules. In the third stanza we hear how "the way of the transgressor is hard" followed by "Cain and Abel and their old man playing croquet in the backyard, two guys beat up the sole survivor."

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18 Springsteen, *Born to Run*, 5.
19 Springsteen, *Born to Run*, 5.
20 Springsteen, *Born to Run*, 12.
21 Springsteen, *Born to Run*, 13.
22 Springsteen, *Born to Run*, 13.
23 Springsteen, *Born to Run*, 16.
24 Springsteen, *Born to Run*, 17.
25 Springsteen, *Born to Run*, 17.
26 There is a fifth reference in the 2008 "Longest Days" that mentions "raising Cain." But it did not seem relevant to the above discussion.
27 From the album *John Cougar* (Riva, 1978).

The second reference comes five years later in "Warmer place to sleep" (1983),[28] a song packed with biblical allusions.[29] In the second stanza he sings:

> Well I've seen the heart of darkness, read the writing on the wall,
> And the voice out in the desert, was the voice out in the hall.
> And once he called me Abel, and once he called me Cain,
> And for forty days and for forty nights I slept out in the rain.

The siblings turn up again eleven years later in the song "Brothers" (1994), which reads like someone's long list of complaints about his brother.[30] The references to Cain and Abel begin in the second line with an adaptation of Gen 4:9: "Just because we have the same mum and dad doesn't mean I'm your keeper." The song goes on to compare their relationship to Cain and Abel at several points including the following lines:

> I don´t approve of anything you do
> 'Cause we're brothers, brothers, brothers
> Cain and Abel and me and you
> It is as normal as it can be
> This sibling rivalry

Suspicions that the song is autobiographical are confirmed in an undated interview, in which Mellencamp said:

> I think that to write a song that has any ability to connect with somebody on a powerful level, one should write about what he/she knows. I have two brothers and one is younger than me and totally different from me. Probably that song, "Brothers," it is about my younger brother and me. At the time that I wrote it, I didn't really think so. I thought the song was more about a Cain and Abel kind of story, but a couple of years later I realized it might have been about that. I love that song, it is a cool song and I think it is about me.[31]

The brother in the song is Ted Mellencamp who served as the musician's tour manager for many years and passed away on March 4, 2016.[32] The Cain and

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28 From the album *Uh-huh* (Riva, 1983).
29 The references include: "been up to the mountain," "breakfast with a wise man," "to bed with Jezebel," "rested in the arms of the devil," and "a heart of stone" (to name a few).
30 From the album, *Dance Naked* (Mercury, 1994).
31 "John Mellencamp," *Unmask Us*. Accessed May 9, 2019. https://www.unmask.us/songwriters-k-m/john-mellencamp-p1
32 "Tour Manager Ted Mellencamp Dies," *Celebrity Access*. Accessed May 9, 2019. https://celebrityaccess.com/caarchive/tour-manager-ted-mellencamp-dies/

Abel story helps Mellencamp frame the apparently sometimes-tense relationship between the two brothers.

The final reference is in "Fruit trader" (1998). The song begins with Cain telling Abel he needs to get busy because watermelons are burning up in the sun. Abel responds: "Brother, you're drivin' me silly, raisin' up this fruit trader bull, you know it ain't no fun."

In the second stanza we hear:

> So Cain rose up and he slay his brother
> The human soul and violence sometimes can be the next of kin
> And feelings are real in moments of desperation
> When the lowest dimension of the animal is let in.

When asked about the song's meaning by *Billboard Magazine,* Mellencamp said it was his observation "of how we live and the way people exist in the '90s."[33]

As mentioned above, Mellencamp reveals little about the inspiration for his songs and the biblical references they contain. Nonetheless, his attraction to the Cain and Abel Story is significant. What's more, this influence extends beyond his music into other art forms. In 2012 Mellencamp co-wrote a Southern Gothic musical with novelist Stephen King entitled *Ghost Brothers of Darkland County*. The story is about two dead brothers haunting their family at a cabin in the woods and contains frequent references to Cain and Abel.[34]

In addition to being a song writer and playwright, Mellencamp is also a painter. His website displays numerous paintings by the artist.[35] Of particular interest is a double self-portrait in which Mellencamp stands next to himself. Both figures are nearly identical except that the one is holding a knife. Scrawled across the bottom of the painting are the words "Qayin and Hevel," a transliteration for the Hebrew names Cain and Abel.[36]

While Mellencamp offers few explanations for his adaptations of the Cain and Abel story, his attraction to the story is fascinating nonetheless. One can't help but wonder if the story became an allegory for the potential of good and evil or even the tension between good and evil in his own life.

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33 Jim Bessman, "Mellencamp Starts Anew on Columbia Set," *Billboard Magazine* (September 12, 1998), 121. Accessed May 9, 2019. https://www.americanradiohistory.com/Archive-Billboard/90s/1998/BB-1998-09-12.pdf

34 Jim Farmer, "Review: 'Ghost Brothers' soars with Mellencamp's music, but it's still a work in progress," *ARTS ATL* (April 13, 2012). Accessed June 13, 2019. https://www.artsatl.org/review-ghost-brothers-soars-with-mellencamps-music-but-is-very-much-a-work-in-progress/

35 Johnmellencampart.com. Accessed May 9, 2019. https://www.johnmellencampart.com/paintings#!

36 Richard Reep, "In his paintings, John Mellencamp's America is a darker place," *Orlando Weekly* (December 3, 2014). Accessed May 9, 2019. https://www.orlandoweekly.com/orlando/in-his-paintings-john-mellencamps-america-is-a-darker-place/Content?oid=2293540

Prince

Prince Roger Nelson, known to the world simply as "Prince," was one of the most talented, influential, and identifiable cultural icons over the past five decades. With album sales in excess of 100 million, he was one of the most prolific songwriters ever.[37] He was also one of the most sexually charged artists in music. The song "Darling Nikki"[38] was considered so vulgar that "it inspired Tipper Gore to start Parents Music Resource Center, a Washington, D.C.-based group that lobbied for greater oversight of the music industry."[39]

Yet Prince was no pagan. Indeed, he had strong religious beliefs that seem contradictory in light of the boundaries he so often pushed.[40] The son of jazz musician John Nelson, Prince was raised as a Seventh Day Adventist. He was later baptized as Jehovah's Witness in 2001 and began attending a Kingdom Hall near his home in Minneapolis.[41] On more than one occasion he participated in door-to-door evangelism, donning disguises to deflect attention.[42]

Although he seemingly wandered from his childhood faith at times, the focus on sex in his music should not be confused with an abandonment of religion.[43] This is evident as early as 1981 in "Controversy," which includes musings on God and the words of the Lord's Prayer.[44] Similarly, his 1987 song "the Cross" encourages listeners to remember the cross in the midst of sadness and crisis.[45]

Significant for the topic at hand is a song in which Prince reflects on the Cain and Abel story. "There is Lonely" is a mournful ballad so brief that it seems almost incomplete as it expresses the depths of loneliness and isolation.

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37 Mark Beech, "Measuring Prince's Musical Impact: A Look at the Sales Numbers," *Forbes* (April 21, 2016). Accessed June 10, 2019. https://www.forbes.com/sites/markbeech/2016/04/21/measuring-princes-musical-impact-a-look-at-the-sales-numbers/#77f479a816e5

38 From the album *Purple Rain* (Warner Bros., 1984).

39 Clair Hoffman, "Prince's Life as a Jehovah's Witness: His Complicated and Ever-Evolving Faith," *Billboard Magazine* (April 28, 2016). Accessed June 10, 2019. https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/cover-story/7348538/prince-jehovahs-witness-life

40 Libby Hill, "Prince Practiced Door-to-Door Evangelism," *Los Angeles Times* (April 22, 2016). Accessed June 10, 2019. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/music/la-et-ms-prince-jehovah-witness-20160422-story.html

41 Prince's conversion to Jehovah's Witness was facilitated by his friendship and conversations with Larry Graham, bass player for the group Sly and the Family Stone.

42 Dudley Brooke, "The Day I hung out at Prince's house, talking fame, disguises and Michael Jackson's Death," *Washington Post* (April 22, 2016). Accessed June 10, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2016/04/22/the-day-i-hung-out-at-princes-house-talking-fame-disguises-and-michael-jacksons-death/?utm_term=.839968c676a2

43 For an examination of the Bible's influence on Prince's music see Jonathan Downing, "'Take Me Way!': Prince, the Bible and the End of the World as Sexual Liberation," *Academia* (unpublished paper). Accessed June 10, 2019. https://www.academia.edu/8315626/_Take_Me_Away_Prince_the_Bible_and_the_End_of_the_World_as_Sexual_Liberation

44 From the album *Controversy* (Warner Bros., 1981).

45 From the album *Sign O' the Times* (Warner Bros., 1987). After becoming a Jehovah's Witness Prince changed his understanding of "the cross" to be a "wooden stake," in keeping with teachings of his new church.

Is it me or did the room just get darker?
Is it me or did I just lay down and die?
Is this a dream or did the world just crumble at my very feet?
How in heaven will I ever be alright?
There is lonely and there is lonely
And then there is how I feel right now
Perhaps only Cain when he'd slain his brother
Could ever come close to knowing how

From the album *The Vault: Old Friends 4 Sale*,[46] the song was recorded sometime between 1985 and 1994. Released in 1999, two years before he became a Jehovah's Witness, it is not clear if his recent spiritual awakening influenced the writing of the song. More likely, the song is an example of how Prince's music is underpinned by his reception of the Bible through the teaching and exegesis of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.[47] Combined with this is Prince's well-known penchant for privacy and struggles with loneliness and depression. Before his death in 2016 his parents had died within six months of each other and he had not seen his sister, Tyka Nelson, in several years. His isolation from family led him to tell those in his inner circle "you guys are more like family to me than my blood relatives."[48] Prince was found dead, alone in the elevator of his Minneapolis home, on April 21, 2016. While "There is Lonely" was released many years before his death, it seems this song helped Prince to describe the depths of his loneliness. For him it could only be described by identifying with the person of Cain; someone who compounded the loneliness by killing his only brother.

The Mark of Cain

A particular detail in the Genesis story picked up by a number of artists is the mark of Cain. In Gen 4:15 Cain is given a promise of divine protection sealed by a mark from God. Genesis doesn't describe the mark, but while the Bible connects the mark with divine protection, some interpreters understood it as a curse that God placed upon Cain, thus making it a badge of shame.[49] Interesting for our purposes here is how the mark of Cain is consistently interpreted negatively in pop and rock music. This can be seen by the way it is appropriated in songs by artists like

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46 Prince, *The Vault: Old Friends 4 Sale* (Warner Bros., 1999). Recorded between 1985 and 1994, it was the final album released by Warner Brothers as part of Prince's 1992 contract obligations. Unlike his previous albums, Prince did not embark on a concert tour and did little to promote the album.
47 Downing, "Prince, the Bible and the End of the World," 2.
48 Amy Forliti, "Investigation says Prince was isolated, addicted and in pain," *Associated Press* (April 20, 2018). Accessed June 10, 2019. https://www.apnews.com/94806d16569541d98032ce2b2f82aa6a
49 One suggestion is that Cain was punished with leprosy (Genesis Rabbah XXII.12). For other explanations see Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition*, 119–21.

the Grateful Dead,[50] Joni Mitchell,[51] Kansas,[52] Motorhead,[53] and White Snake,[54] to name a few.

One poignant example of this interpretative trend is in a song by Israeli folk/pop artist Noa.[55] Sung in first person, the song is a young woman's lament about an ever-growing problem deep within her. In the song we learn that the problem is a result of the past and causes her overwhelming pain. And while she has pondered the solution, it would mean her own death. Four times in the song the phrase "Mark of Cain" is repeated. Similarly, the phrase "Child of Pain" is also repeated four times, twice connected to the "Mark of Cain." It is only in the closing lines of the song that we learn that the "Mark of Cain" is her unborn child, a pregnancy resulting from rape. It is something from the past she cannot escape that will be with her all of her life.

A second example comes from the title track of the 2002 Indigo Girls album "Become You."[56] Written by Amy Ray, it reflects on the singer's southern roots and her struggle coming to terms with them. The song's first stanza opens with Ray confronting one of her rural North Georgia neighbors who sings "a rebel song" and still binds his southern identity with the values of the Confederate States of America.[57] Ray's distaste for this identification is made clear in the second stanza with the line "Our southern blood, my heresy, Damn that ol' confederacy." Later in stanza five she sings:

> The landed aristocracy, exploiting all your enmity
> All your daddies fought in vain
> Leave you with the Mark of Cain.

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50 Grateful Dead, "Mississippi Half-Step Uptown Toodeloo" from the album *Wake of the Flood* (Grateful Dead Records, 1973)—"On the day when I was born Daddy sat down and cried / I had the Mark just as plain as day, which could not be denied. / They say that Cain caught Abel rollin' loaded dice / Ace of Spades behind his ear and him not thinkin' twice."

51 Joni Mitchell, "Shadows and Light" from the album *The Hissing of Summer Lawns* (Asylum, 1975)—"For wrong, wrong and right / Threatened by all things / Man of cruelty-Mark of Cain / Drawn to all things / Man of delight-born again, born again / Man of the laws, the ever-broken laws."

52 Kansas, "Mystery and Mayhem" and "Pinnacle" from the album *Masque* (Kirshner, 1975); "End of the Age" from the album *Drastic Measures* (CBS Associated, 1983). Much of the music produced by Kansas in the 1970s and 80s was written by Kerry Livgren whose conversion to evangelical Christianity led to his exit from the band and a career in contemporary Christian music.

53 Motorhead, "Sacrifice" from the album *Sacrifice* (CMC International, 1995)—"In you the poison breeds / Crawling with the Mark of Cain / And no-one shall / Set you free / Again."

54 White Snake, "Walking in the Shadow of the Blues" from the album *Live in the Heart of the City* (Liberty/EMI, 1980)—"I love the blues / They tell my story / If you don't feel it I will tell you once again. / All of my life I've been caught up in a crossfire / 'Cause I've been branded with the devil Mark of Cain."

55 Noa, "Mark of Cain" from the album *Calling* (Geffen Records, 1996).

56 Indigo Girls, "Become You" from the album *Become You* (Epic, 2002).

57 Alison Law, "How the Performances, Song Lyrics, and Activism of the Indigo Girls Demonstrate the Mutable Composition of Southern Identity" (M.A. Thesis, Georgia State University, 2015), 22.

In between stanzas the chorus repeats "It took a, long time to become the thing, I am to you." The best explanation for the "thing" that took Ray a long time to become is probably appreciative of her southern heritage. Yet it is a heritage she embraces "while rejecting the tenets of the Civil War and the Jim Crow-era South."[58] Ray was born April 12, 1964 in Decatur, Georgia, about ten miles from Stone Mountain with its carved face depicting Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson. The memorial was dedicated to the confederacy and opened on April 14, 1965, exactly 100 years after Abraham Lincoln's assassination and one year and two days after Ray's birth. The mountain is also where the rebirth of the Klu Klux Klan took place in 1915. Ray never says she has this specific image in her mind, but her reference to the confederacy as the "Mark of Cain" on Southerners and memorials like this one and others throughout the south certainly reflect her belief that for many southerners their heritage is a badge of shame from the sins of their past.

Legacy of Cain

This final section contains a handful of songs that are not easily categorized. I group them together here because they reflect on the legacy of Cain and are interesting for observing the way the story has influenced some artists.

American singer, songwriter, and social activist Joan Baez refers to Cain and Abel in two songs. Set in Germany in or around Heidelberg, the song "For Sasha" focuses on remembering the Holocaust and all that was lost.[59] In one line a wounded solider of the Third Reich is lying in a hospital bed and approached by a prisoner of the camps. The solider says to him: "If you are Abel and I am Cain / Forgive me from my bed of pain." The appeal to Genesis 4 suggests that even though they may consider one another enemies, the solider and the prisoner are brothers. And although one is guilty of attempting to murder the other, the possibility of forgiveness still exists.

Baez's 1988 single "The Crimes of Cain" is the title track to the true story film *To Kill a Priest*. The film is about Jerzy Popiełuszko, a Roman Catholic Priest in 1981 Poland, at the beginning of the Solidarity movement. It tells the story of the radical priest and the security agent who shadows him for months and finally kills him.[60] The song is sung to the priest as it remembers the impact he had on the

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58 Law, "Performances," 24.

59 From the album *Honest Lullaby* (CBS, 1979).

60 In his review of the film, Roger Ebert laments that the security agent is a more interesting character who delivers an impassioned speech in defense of his murder of the priest and that he felt more identification with the killer than his victim, something he thinks is "hardly the effect the film must have intended." However, this is the same situation we find in Genesis 4. Readers learn more about Cain and his defense for killing Abel, who is a minor character without a voice in the story. Roger Ebert, review of *To Kill a Priest* (October 13, 1989). Accessed June 11, 2019. https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/to-kill-a-priest-1989

solidarity movement. The line "the many crimes of Cain" is repeated three times, the final time following the words from the Lord's Prayer: "Oh, forgive us all our trespasses and we will forgive the many crimes of Cain." As she did in "For Sasha," Baez uses the legacy of Cain to reflect not only on the infamous first murder but also the potential for forgiveness that can be found in the story.

Cain was again the central figure in another title song, this time for the 1999 *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. The film is about a young man who struggles to make a living in 1950s New York City employing his "talents" of telling lies, forging signatures, and impersonating people. The film opens with the haunting voice of Sinead O'Connor singing a "Lullaby for Cain." The song is sung from the perspective of Eve, as she recalls Cain's envy and murderous act while at the same time mourning his exile and the nightmares that will forever disturb his sleep and brand him with a mark, the shame of Cain.

In 2000 Cher caused an outcry from the Roman Catholic Church with her song "Sisters of Mercy." The song is a searing sonnet in which she refers to nuns as "sisters of hell." The song has very personal meaning for the singer. Cher said her mother put her in a Sisters of Mercy-run orphanage while working at an all-night diner, intending it only as a temporary arrangement. But when her mother returned, the sisters told her she should put Cher up for adoption because she was unfit to raise her. It took her mother six months to get Cher back.[61] In the song Cher sings

> In God's house she's held a hostage by a cruel and heartless mob . . . . Sisters of Mercy, daughters of hell, they always weave the web of lies and wrap you in their wicked spell. Sisters of Mercy, masters of pain, they try to crucify your innocence and do it in God's name.

In the final stanza of the song Cher switches from calling the nuns "Daughters of hell" to "Daughters of Cain."[62] While the reference is brief and not expanded upon, the meaning is clear. Cher has appropriated the legacy of the notorious murderer Cain and projected it onto the nuns and by extension the church. They are no better than their murderous ancestor, Cain.

Concluding Thoughts

The above analysis demonstrates how the Cain and Abel story has exerted significant influence over some contemporary songwriters and performers. The notorious story with its description of the first murder, the killer's attempt to hide his guilt,

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61 Teri VanHorn, "Cher Song Upsets Catholics, Calling Nuns Daughters of Hell," *MTV News* (November 6, 2000). Accessed May 9, 2019. http://www.mtv.com/news/1427049/cher-song-upsets-catholics-calling-nuns-daughters-of-hell/

62 For an overview of the interpretive history regarding Cain's daughters see Byron, *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition*, 140–64.

and the mark given to the killer by God has cast a long shadow. When studying these songs it is not always clear the extent to which writers/performers are familiar with the story and whether their own religious background has led to the story's inclusion in the lyrics. Some seem to know the story well and retell it in their own way.

One of the more interesting aspects is the intersection between the lives of the artists and the story. These musicians were able to identify with the characters and events without having any apparent deep religious convictions. They applied it in so many diverse ways but all found a common voice in the narrative. This speaks to the power of story in general and sacred story in particular.

Hospitality, Homosexuality, and the People of God: Pursuing a Hermeneutical Question

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Abstract

This essay examines the Pentateuch's understanding of the *gēr*—the "alien" or the "sojourner"—to develop a theology of hospitality that can help to address the question of homosexual inclusion in the church. It argues that the Pentateuch directed ancient Israel to show hospitality to the foreigners among them based on the hospitable welcome they themselves had received from God, and that it extended this hospitality to include, especially, those who were not formally a part of the covenant community. The Pentateuch's recognition of the *gēr* as a potential recipient of Israel's hospitality stands out as distinct in the ancient world. Though the Pentateuch itself does not have LGBTQ people specifically in view when it talks about the *gēr,* extending this vision of hospitality to include LGBTQ people today may be seen as a consistent application of this theme in the modern context. Questions, however, remain. In light of the tension between the welcome of the *gēr* in the Pentateuch and the purity codes of that same literature (such that certain forms of illicit sexuality are thought to pollute the land), the essay concludes without fully resolving exactly what sort of inclusion of LGBTQ persons is authorized by Scripture. Perhaps the concrete nature of biblical hospitality would suggest that such questions are better worked out in the context of a specific community seeking authentically to embody such hospitality, rather than by offering broad generalizations in advance.

One of the most pressing issues facing the contemporary North American Church is the question of inclusion for homosexual men and women in the community of faith. As Miguel De La Torre puts it, "Probably no other issue today is having a greater impact on churches and denominations, many of which are at the brink

of schism."[1] In 2007 a study by the Barna Group asked 16- and 26-year-olds to describe present-day Christianity, and the most popular choice among non-Christians and Christians alike was "antihomosexual."[2] As biblical scholars, theologians, and church leaders alike explore the question of homosexual inclusion from various perspectives, one consistent conclusion emerges, regardless of whether one is on the affirming or non-affirming side of the debate: that the church can and should do better in offering a compassionate and Christ-like response to the gay men and women in their midst. Among the many theological themes one may draw on to this end, the theme of hospitality—the biblical call to welcome the stranger in Jesus's name—offers the most potential as a starting point. As Wendy Vanderwal-Gritter argues, "the first priority in considering how your church might engage those outside the heterosexual mainstream is that of patient, relational hospitality."[3] Vanderwal Gritter herself is the director of Generous Space Ministries, a ministry aimed at creating greater acceptance and better dialogue between the LGBTQ community and the Christian church. The ministry of "hospitality" is one of its core values.[4]

It is certainly true that the Scriptures enjoin the people of God to practice hospitality as an expression of the gospel and as a mark of their Christian identity. In *Entertaining Angels*, Andrew Arterbury presents a close reading of the theme of hospitality as it appears in Luke-Acts—in Peter's hospitable welcome of the messengers from Cornelius, for instance (Acts 9:48–11:18), or in Lydia's hospitable welcome of Paul (Acts 16:11–15)—and suggests that early readers of these texts would have easily recognized the emphasis Luke places on hospitality "as a means of spreading the gospel and fulfilling the Christian mission."[5] For Luke, the practice of hospitality was a missional act, one of the ways in which the church was to fulfill its call to extend its witness to Jesus to the ends of the earth. Though the Christian tradition shaped it in new ways, the seed for this kind of "missional hospitality" was planted, in fact, in the teaching of the Torah, which directs the ancient people of Israel to care for the alien as a direct response to the hospitable welcome they themselves had received from God. In Exod 23:9, for instance, God forbids the people of Israel from oppressing the "sojourner," based on the fact that they themselves "were once sojourners in the land of Egypt" (ESV).

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1   Miguel A. De La Torre, *Out of the Shadows into the Light: Christianity and Homosexuality* (St Louis, MO: Chalice, 2009), vii.

2   Justin Lee, *Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs.-Christians Debate* (New York: Jericho Books, 2012), 2.

3   Wendy Vanderwal-Gritter, *Generous Spaciousness: Responding to Gay Christians in the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014)*,* 211.

4   See the Generous Space website, accessed Aug 15, 2018. https://www.generousspace.ca/what-are-we-about/

5   Andrew E. Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in Its Mediterranean Setting*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005), 175.

Christine Pohl puts it like this: "The covenantal structure of their faith framed Israelite responses to the alien. Just as God . . . loves the sojourner . . . so Israel was to act with . . . love that welcomed and provided. As God's love for aliens provided them with food and clothing, so Israel was to express its love in practical, active ways."6

That God's people have a responsibility to be a people marked by their hospitality is demonstrably clear in both the New Testament and the Old Testament. What is less clear, however, is the way in which the practice of hospitality can and should be understood to include people "outside the heterosexual mainstream" (to use Vanderwal-Gritter's terminology).

Does biblical hospitality require that the recipient adhere to the ethical norms of the community before it can be extended? Does the call to practice hospitality supersede the community's desire to maintain certain ethical norms that it believes to be biblical? Are these two things—ethical norms and biblical hospitality—really in conflict in such cases?

And most importantly, would the Bible include homosexual men and women among the group of people it has in mind when it enjoins God's people to "welcome the stranger?" Is "stranger," in fact, the best theological category to use in discussing the status of a gay man or woman in the community of faith? These are all questions that bob to the surface when we attempt to apply the theme of hospitality as part of a theological answer to the question of homosexual inclusion.

Although space precludes an exhaustive discussion of these questions in this essay, when we focus on the Torah—which is, arguably, the seedbed for the Bible's theology of hospitality—and especially on those passages in Torah that command God's people to show compassion to the "sojourner" in the land—a clear thesis emerges. The Torah directs the people of God to demonstrate hospitality through their welcome of and compassion towards the foreigners living among them, a hospitality rooted in the compassionate welcome they themselves have received from God, and extended to include especially those who are not formally part of the covenant community.

The Torah itself does not share the modern understanding that one's sexual attractions constitute a distinct identity analogous in some way to an ethnic identity, and so it does not include homosexual people explicitly in its vision for who might be recipients of Israel's hospitality. However, given the radical nature of the Torah's vision for hospitality—which in many ways stands out as unique in its ancient cultural context—and given the theological truths that it consistently points to as the basis for this hospitality—that YHWH welcomed Israel hospitably when they were "strangers" themselves—a strong case can be made that

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6   Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 28–29.

extending this hospitality to include gay people today is a natural theological extrapolation and a consistent application of this theme in the modern context.

This present study is an attempt to lay an initial groundwork for making such a case. Although it does not resolve all the theological issues that arise when we apply the Torah's teaching on hospitality to the question of homosexual inclusion in the church, it offers a hermeneutical exploration of the possibilities, with the hope of prompting further reflection on this question.

Who is the *Gēr* in Torah?

Although there are a variety of terms that the Old Testament uses to describe the person who is a not at home in the land, or at least is not rooted ethnically in the land that he or she has made their home—the "stranger" or the "alien" of many modern translations—the most consistent term found in Torah is the Hebrew noun *gēr,* the "sojourner," the "temporary dweller," or the "new-comer (with no inherited rights)."[7] This term occurs 58 times in the Pentateuch, and is especially prominent in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, which provides a variety of laws to govern the interactions between the ethnic-born Israelite and the *gēr.*[8] Although the term is ostensibly related to the noun *gûr*—"to sojourn"—José Ramirez Kidd argues that in Leviticus and Deuteronomy it functions as a legal term, denoting a particular individual in Israel with a distinct legal status.[9] He builds his case on the following points: 1) the verb *gûr* is used specifically to describe Israelites "who had left their original towns and went to sojourn temporarily abroad" whereas the noun *gēr* is used to describe non-Israelites "who *came* to sojourn and were ruled by the internal regulations of the Israelite community"—*gûr* describes "emigration" and *gēr* describes "immigration"[10]; 2) unlike other words used to describe "strangers" generally, the noun *gēr* is never used with adjectival value, which suggests that *gēr* is a "*technical term* which designates not a person but a legal status"[11]; and 3) although Torah uses related words like *nêkâri* ("foreigner") and *zûr* ("stranger") in a wide range of contexts, its use of *gēr* is restricted to the masculine form, suggesting again that it served as a technical legal term.[12] Kidd's conclusion is that the term functioned both "as an internal boundary between the native members of

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7   Francis Brown, *The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic / Robinson, Edward, 1794–1963* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), 158.

8   The occurrences by book are: Gen. 15:13, 23:4; Exod 2:22; 12:19, 48, 49; 18:3, 20:10; 22:21; 23:9, 3; Lev 16:29, 17:8, 10, 12, 15; 18:26; 19:10, 33, 34; 20:2; 22:18; 23:22; 24:16, 22; 25:23, 35; 25:47; Num 9:14; 15:14, 15, 16, 26, 29, 30; 19:10; 35:15; Deut 1:16; 5:14; 10:18, 19; 14:21, 29; 16:11, 14; 23:7; 24:14, 19, 21; 26:11, 12, 13; 27:19; 28:43; 29:11; 31:12.

9   José Ramirez Kidd, *Alterity and Identity in Israel* (New York: Walter De Gruyter, 1999), 46.

10   Kidd, *Alterity and Identity*, 24.

11   Kidd, *Alterity and Identity,* 29; emphasis in original.

12   Kidd, *Alterity and Identity, 28.*

the Israelite community and those newly accepted," and as an "external boundary of the community in relation to immigrants, whose religious practices were commonly perceived as a threat to their own material security and religious purity."[13] Christiana van Houten arrives at a similar conclusion at the end of her analysis of the term: the *gĕrîm* refers to "outsiders, who are vulnerable in a new place. They must rely on the protection of a powerful member of the Israelite society and fall under the jurisdiction of the patriarch of the family in most things."[14]

As a legal term in the Pentateuch, it is of great significance that *gēr* regularly appears in association with the "widow" and the "orphan," in the so-called "widow-orphan-stranger" triad of the book of Deuteronomy. This grouping appears ten times (Deut 10:13; 14:29; 16:11; 24:17, 19, 20, 21; 26:12, 13; 27:19), and is notably restricted to this book. Exodus occasionally groups the widow and the orphan together (22:22, 24), but does not include the *gēr* among them, suggesting, among other things, that the addition of the *gēr* as one of the classes of people who deserve special consideration is a later development in Israel's legal tradition. As many scholars point out, setting the *gēr* in association with the widow and the orphan in this way signals his status as a *persona miserae* in the Israelite community, that is, one of the voiceless and vulnerable social classes, dependent on the kindness and generosity of others for their sustenance.[15]

The Torah stands out among ancient Near Eastern legal texts for its recognition of the vulnerable plight of the sojourning alien in this way. As van Houten points out, a search for laws that regulate how the citizens of the land are to treat an outsider who needs to stay among them for some time yields "nothing in the Mesopotamian legal collections."[16] Ramirez points out that in ancient Near Eastern literature "the pair 'widow-orphan' appears either alone or in relation with other elements like 'the poor, the humble, the hungry.'"[17] Ancient Egyptian literature, for example, regularly refers to "the widow and the orphan" as specific categories of underprivileged people, but never to the foreigner sojourning in the land. Many ancient Near Eastern law codes, in other words, recognized the vulnerability of the orphan and the widow and articulated an obligation to protect them, but only the Torah includes the "sojourner" as a member of this underprivileged group. Ramirez suggests that this is because these ancient Near Eastern law codes were based on the principle of solidarity, where members of society higher

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13 Kidd, *Alterity and Identity,* 46.
14 Christiana van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law: A Study of the Changing Legal Status of Strangers in Ancient Israel* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 62.
15 See Pekka Pitkanen, "Ancient Israelite Population Economy: *Ger, Toshav, Nkhri* and *Karat* as Settler Colonial Categories," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 42 no. 2 (2017) 139–53, here 141.
16 Van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law,* 34.
17 Ramirez, *Alterity and Identity,* 36.

up in the social hierarchy had a duty of beneficence to those lower down on the hierarchy, but society itself limited such solidarity "primarily to its own members."[18] On this reading, by setting the *gēr* in association with the widow and the orphan, the book of Deuteronomy signals a radical expansion of the principle of compassion to include "outsiders," people that other ancient near Eastern cultures effectively ignored.

It is clear from this analysis that the term *gēr* refers to a foreigner dwelling in ancient Israel and that in using the term, the Torah is assigning the outsider a protected status in Israelite society in a way that stands out among other ancient near Eastern cultures. What is widely debated, however, is the degree to which these laws expect the *gēr* to conform to the norms of Israelite religion and ethics, as sojourners in the land. Was it necessary for the alien to "convert" in some meaningful way to the worship of YHWH, in order to qualify as a legally-protected *gēr* under the terms of the covenant? Part of this debate stems from the fact that the Septuagint (LXX) translation of the Hebrew Scriptures frequently translates *gēr* with the Greek *prosēlutos*—a word which can be taken to mean, not simply an alien, but specifically one who has converted to the Israelite religion, that is, a Jewish proselyte. It should be noted, however that even the meaning of the Greek word *prosēlutos* is somewhat moot. Matthew Theissen argues that the LXX uses it in contexts where the word cannot possibly mean a "convert" (such as Deut 10:9), and that there is "no clear evidence that the earliest translated books of the Greek Bible worked with a definition of προσηλυτος that meant 'convert.'"[19] Conversely, van Houten argues that, although the term *prosēlutos* does in fact refer to a convert, this is an understanding that the translators have brought to the text, not one connoted by the Hebrew word *gēr* itself. That said, the idea that the Torah has a "convert to Judaism" specifically in mind when it refers to the *gēr* has carried into some Jewish-English translations of the Pentateuch, and is prevalent in the Rabbinical literature.[20]

José Ramirez makes the most convincing case that, whatever else the term may have come to mean, the *gēr* in the Pentateuch is not someone who has converted to Israelite religion, but explicitly someone who has not. We can summarize his strongest arguments as follows: 1) that although the Holiness Code refers to the *gēr* in various places, he or she is never explicitly the addressee in any of the laws[21]; 2) that "only in late additions to the Holiness Code . . . do we come across laws in which the גר is subject to the same precepts as the Israelite"[22]; and 3) that

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18 Ramirez, *Alterity and Identity,* 39.
19 Matthew Thiessen, "Revisiting the προσηλυτος in 'the LXX,'" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132 (2013), 333–50, here 344.
20 Kidd, *Alterity and Identity*, 123.
21 Kidd, *Alterity and Identity,* 52.
22 Kidd, *Alterity and Identity,* 55.

even then, the *gēr* is bound "only by the prohibitive commandments not by the performative ones."[23] More significant than these observations, however, is the fact that elsewhere (beyond the Pentateuch) the Old Testament uses a variety of terms to describe "those who have joined Israel," such as in Zech 2:15, Isa 14:1, and Esth 8:17. Although it is clear that each of these texts has in mind a proselyte to Israelite religion, none of them uses the term *gēr*. In Kidd's words,

> This variety of expressions reflects the uncertainty of the authors. . . . They were confronted with the reality of those who joined Israel, but had not yet found the commonly accepted *nominal* technical term to designate them. If the noun גר had . . . a similar status to that of the later proselyte . . . it is difficult to see how some biblical authors hesitated about how to name those who joined Israel.[24]

This analysis suggests that, while the Torah did place certain expectations on the sojourner to regulate his or her activity within the community and his or her participation in the life of the community, it did not require that her or she demonstrate a commitment to Israel's God in order to qualify as a *gēr* under the terms of the law. Israel was required to show the *gēr* hospitality regardless of his or her status vis-à-vis the Israelite religion. As we will see, this point is significant in our efforts to apply the Torah's principle of hospitality to the question of homosexual inclusion, because it suggests that the community can and should make space for gay men and women, even if they do not share the community's religious convictions on the question of sexual ethics.

The Obligation to the Sojourner in Ancient Israel

Having established that in the Torah, the word *gēr* refers specifically to the non-native born inhabitant of the land, living with and among the people of Israel, one who may or may not have demonstrated a desire to participate in the worship of Israel's God, it is helpful at this stage, before discussing the application of these texts to the modern question of homosexual inclusion, to identify the various ways the Torah directs the people of God to show hospitality to the alien in such cases.

We begin by noting the remarkable fact that the Torah twice commands the children of Israel to "love" the *gēr* (Deut 10:19; Lev 19:34). The only other times the Torah commands the people to "love" anything is Leviticus's command to love one's neighbor as one's self (Lev 19:18), and Deuteronomy's repeated

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23 Kidd, *Alterity and Identity*, 62. That is to say, the law does not require the *gēr* to observe the regulations and ceremonies that are part of Israelite religion, only to avoid those things that would compromise Israel's purity.

24 Kidd, *Alterity and Identity*, 65.

command to "love the LORD your God" (Deut 6:5; 11:1); in terms of the number of times it gets repeated, only the command to love the LORD your God with all your heart compares to this command to love the sojourning alien. Kidd argues that the focus here on "loving" the stranger, rather than simply on providing for him, suggests that the central problem behind the text is "the acceptance of the *gēr* within the community."[25] This is underscored when we consider the reasons Deuteronomy points to as the motive for loving the *gēr*: the fact that YHWH himself loves the *gēr* (Deut 10:18)*,* on the one hand, and the fact that the people of Israel were once themselves *gĕrîm* in Egypt (Deut 10:19b), on the other. Israel's acceptance of the stranger, then, is predicated on YHWH's loving acceptance of them as strangers, and is meant as an expression of empathetic solidarity with the outsider.

The second point we note is that the majority of the laws relating to the *gēr* are specifically intended to address his or her vulnerability as a powerless inhabitant in the land. This is evident, for instance, in the gleaning laws (Lev 19:9–10 and Deut 24:19–21) that prohibit the people from reaping the "very edges" of their fields, or going over their olive trees a second time, so as to leave something for the *gēr* who does not have land to harvest. Here the Torah recognizes the vulnerable status of the alien and enjoins God's people to show them compassion in concrete ways. It is notable that in this law, the *gēr* is paired, not with the widow-orphan grouping, but with the "poor" (*ʿānî*), signaling their vulnerability as the basis for the law. Similarly, we note how Deuteronomy consistently safeguards the legal status of the *gēr*, prohibiting the people of Israel from oppressing them (Deut 24:14), exploiting them (Deut 5:14), or denying them justice (Deut 24:17). The stranger, in other words, is not to be denied the basic rights that the law affords the native-born Israelite simply because they are, in fact, strangers.

The final aspect of hospitality to discuss here are the provisions the Torah makes for the inclusion of the *gēr* in the cultic life of Israel. Here the regulations are more complicated and provisional. They do not presuppose a full or unlimited participation in the worship of YHWH, but they do offer some ways that the *gēr* who wishes to may join in the religious life of the community. Christiana van Houten, for instance, points out that in Deuteronomy the "alien" is specifically listed among those who are invited to participate in the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Booths (Deut 16:11, 14), but there is "no mention of them in the Passover legislation."[26] She attributes this distinction to the nature of the Passover feast as a reminder of the founding history of the nation—"because of its nature, it is not appropriate to invite those who do not share their common history, i.e. aliens."[27]

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25 Kidd, *Alterity and Identity,* 82.
26 Van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law,* 89.
27 Van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law,* 90.

The Feasts of Booths and Weeks, in contrast, are celebrations of the harvest given by the Lord—"As the Lord has been generous with the Israelites, they are to respond with joy and generosity"—and as such it is fitting that the *gēr* be invited to join in the occasion.[28] This is not the only word on the status of the *gēr* vis-à-vis the Passover, however. As Siegbert Riecker points out, "The stranger can live as … *'ārēl* 'uncircumcised' and abstain from Passover and voluntary offerings. . . . [But if he becomes] *mûl* 'circumcised' the stranger can take part in the Passover. With voluntary offerings he can express his praise and thankfulness to YHWH and experience forgiveness of guilt."[29] Taken together, these various texts paint a progressing picture, where the *gēr* is invited to participate in some aspects of Israel's religious life simply because of their status as sojourning foreigner, but a fuller participation in the cult is contingent upon their receiving circumcision as a sign of their commitment to YHWH and the Israelite way of life.[30] In either case, however it is important to note that even the uncircumcised *gēr* is still required to respect and maintain the purity of the land. Van Houten summarizes the various requirements the Torah places on the *gēr* with this intent: they are required to be sexually moral (Lev 18:26); they are prohibited from worshipping Molech (Lev 20:2); they cannot present blemished animals (Lev 22:8); they must not blaspheme (Lev 24:16); they must observe the Sabbath on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29); they must cleanse themselves after eating meat found dead or coming into contact with a corpse (Lev 15:15; Num 19:10), and so on.[31]

The *Gēr* as a Gay Man or Woman in the Church

Before we can apply this study of the *gēr* to the question of homosexual inclusion in the church, two significant hermeneutical challenges need to be addressed. The first is the fact that the contemporary "sexual identity paradigm" with which most modern readers approach the question of homosexuality is itself foreign to the worldview of the Pentateuch. In her book *The End of Sexual Identity: Why Sex is Too Important to Define Who We Are*, Jenell Paris argues that "sexual identity"— the notion that one's sexual desires are somehow "identity-constituting"—is a social construct, a "Western, nineteenth-century formulation of what it means to be human."[32] She argues that the "homosexual/heterosexual" binary that the modern West uses to describe sexual "orientations" is not the only way people have

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28 Van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law,* 89.

29 Siegbert Riecker, "Mission in the Hebrew Bible Revisited: Four Theological Trails Instead of One Confining Concept," in *Missiology: An International Review* 44, no 3 (2016) 324–39, here 329.

30 And even still, as van Houten points out in her discussion of Deut 23:1–8, there were some aspects of Israel's life that the sojourning alien would remain excluded from. See van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law*, 99.

31 Van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law,* 156.

32 Jenell Williams Paris, *The End of Sexual Identity: Why Sex is Too Important to Define Who We Are* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011)*,* 41.

understood the nature of sexual desire, and the belief that people have a specific identity that is determined by their sexual desires is a relatively novel one in the history of human experience.

What Paris's work adds to the present discussion is a reminder that, although it may be intuitive for us to draw a connection between the *gēr* in the Old Testament, as one who is marginalized because of his "otherness," and the homosexual today, who shares a similar experience, it is unlikely that the original audience of Torah would have seen the connection. In their mind, homosexual sex was something that someone did, not a desire that flowed naturally out of who one was. This explains why Leviticus groups homosexual acts in the list of taboo sexual relations (18:22), and why it explicitly applies this taboo to the foreigner living in the land, as much as to the native-born (Lev 18:26).

This is not necessarily to say that the principle of hospitality towards the outsider that we find in the Pentateuch cannot illuminate the question of homosexual inclusion, only that if it is going to, we must first acknowledge that we are using it in ways that would not have been intuitive to the original audience. What the homosexual person in the church shares in common with the *gēr* of ancient Israel are the following: 1) they find themselves "sojourning" in a community that does not share the same cultural ethos as they do; 2) they are often marginalized and left vulnerable because of their "otherness" in the community; 3) they lack access to the power structures that determine their own participation in the community; 4) "we" (members of the community) in many cases have been where "they" are (that is, on the outside of the community); and 5) they may be on a spectrum in terms of their faith-commitment to the religious norms of the community. These commonalities are enough to draw a meaningful connection between the "sojourner" in the Torah and the contemporary homosexual man or woman seeking to participate in the life of the church.

This brings us, however, to the second hermeneutical challenge, namely, how to respect the Pentateuch's emphasis on maintaining a certain sexual ethic in the community, on the one hand, while extending hospitality to the stranger, on the other. As pointed out above, the Holiness Code of Leviticus expected that its laws governing sex would be observed by the foreigner and the native-born alike within the community. How do we reconcile this observation with the thesis that homosexual men and women today can and should experience a hospitable welcome in the church on par with the kind of hospitality Torah requires Israel to practice? This is a complex question, to be sure, but a step forward may be found in analysing the logic of the Holiness Code itself. As Gordon Wenham reminds us, one of the underlying theological concepts at work in the book of Leviticus is the notion of purity and pollution, the idea of contagious uncleanness. In Leviticus,

> The insistence on purification of the unclean is a corollary of the idea that Israel, the camp, and especially the tabernacle are holy. Contact between uncleanness and holiness is disastrous. They are utterly distinct in theory, and must be kept equally distinct in practice, lest divine judgment fall.[33]

One of the reasons underlying the prohibition against homosexual sex in the book of Leviticus, then, is the conviction that tolerance of such practices will pollute the land, and the people, by means of contact with it. In his theological study of the connections between the psychology of disgust and the theology of purity, Richard Beck argues cogently that Jesus effectively reframed the Old Testament understanding of holiness, so that "contact with the unclean" no longer "pollutes." He suggests that one way of reading the ministry of Jesus is to see him as "formally addressing the unresolved conflict between the purity and justice traditions within the life of Israel."[34] He offers a close reading of Mark 1, where we see Jesus coming into contact with various people that the Holiness Code would have excluded from the assembly as "unclean." In each case, Beck argues, Jesus radically inverts the theology of purity itself, and purifies the unclean with his touch. With Jesus, that is to say, "we see a reversal, a positive contamination. Contact cleanses rather than pollutes." This is, admittedly, a theological rather than a strictly hermeneutical move, but it is one supported by sound hermeneutics. It is an axiom of the gospel that the Christ himself has fulfilled the requirements of the Holiness Code, and in himself provides purification for his people (1 John 1:9, 2 Pet 1:9, etc.). As such, he transforms the "contagion logic" of the Holiness Code in just such a way that allows us to practice hospitality towards those who would otherwise have been excluded from the assembly in Leviticus—including the ritually unclean, including the uncircumcised, including the gentile, and including, by extension, the gay man or woman.

Conclusion

This study has left important questions about the practice of hospitality towards members of the LGBTQ community unanswered. What does this kind of inclusion practically entail? How can the community realistically maintain its commitments to a particular sexual ethic while practicing this kind of hospitality? What boundaries can and should the church maintain? While space precludes anything more than the simple acknowledgement that these questions lie urgently on the horizon of future study, an important first step in answering them will be to hear the call

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33 Gordon Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), Kindle Location 285–86.

34 Richard Beck, *Unclean: Meditations on Purity, Hospitality, and Morality* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2012), 81.

to practice authentic hospitality to the "other" as it sounds from the pages of the Pentateuch. In many ways, the concrete nature of biblical hospitality suggests that these questions are better worked out in the context of a specific community seeking authentically to embody it, rather than by offering broad generalizations. For churches that wish to do so, however, the radical welcome of the *gēr* that we find in the Torah should inspire us to risk much more than we might otherwise have dared, to let homosexual men and women make themselves at home in the presence of Jesus in the midst of our communities.

Feasting with the Enemy:
Redemptive Readings of Biblical War Texts[1]

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Abstract

The Old Testament war texts, particularly the descriptions of total-kill warfare in Deuteronomy and Joshua, are troubling for many modern, post-Hague and Geneva Convention readers of the Bible. The same could be said of the descriptions of Yahweh's battle-participation in many of these passages. This article briefly examines a number of past solutions to the difficulties posed by the Old Testament war texts before outlining two important factors in grappling with these challenges. Recognizing the role of hyperbole in ancient battle reports helps to place the biblical texts within their ancient Near Eastern context. When considering the Bible's portrait of Yahweh as warrior, it is also important to recognize the numerous passages which render him as a reluctant war-God who often restricts the violence of Israel's battle activities. These depictions illustrate Yahweh's accommodation of Israel's war-filled culture and highlight ways in which he points his people towards less violent and more redemptive approaches to conflict.

The topic of violence and warfare is one that has some very personal roots. I am the son of German immigrants who came to Canada in the aftermath of WWII. Some of my first memories include my grandparents talking about their experience of the war: my grandfather's role as a clerk in a toy factory, his callup as a middle-aged man late in the war, his incarceration as a POW, and the death of my great-grandfather and my great-aunt during a bombing run. My grandparents' experiences taught me about the chaos and devastation of war. Those stories lie in

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[1] A version of this paper was read at the Fall Interdisciplinary Conference of the Canadian-American Theological Association, October 20, 2018 at Wycliffe College, Toronto, ON, Canada. My gratitude goes to Marion Taylor and the organizing committee for the invitation to present some of this material there. Adapted from *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric?* by William J. Webb and Gordon K. Oeste. Copyright (c) 2019 by William J. Webb and Gordon K. Oeste. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, www.ivpress.com.

the background to my reading of the Bible, and when coupled with the lens of the Hague and Geneva Conventions, raise questions for me about how to read Old Testament war texts, particularly the descriptions of the total-kill of the Canaanites in Deuteronomy and Joshua. Reports of the complete annihilation of entire towns—men and women, children and animals—are chilling and disturbing. Even more disconcerting is the portrait of God in these accounts, for God commissions the total-kill of the Canaanites and participates in the battles.

There are numerous tangled threads when it comes to understanding the war texts in the Bible. Many have worked hard to disentangle them. I can only add a couple of tugs to those threads in this paper.[2] I have found that understanding the role of hyperbole in the biblical conquest accounts is of some help in coming to terms with the descriptions of total-war in Deuteronomy and Joshua. Additionally, when considering well-known portraits of Yahweh's involvement in warfare, it is important to also consider the passages that portray Yahweh as a grieving, reluctant war-God who at times subverts Israel's war practices. When properly appreciated, the use of hyperbole and the portraits of Yahweh as a reluctant war-God point to significant redemptive elements within the Old Testament's descriptions of Israel's wars. But first, let us take a brief look at the total-kill descriptions in Deuteronomy and Joshua.

Total-Kill Warfare in the Old Testament

Several passages in the Pentateuch call for the Israelites to engage in total-kill warfare against the Canaanites. For example, Deut 7:1–2 emphasizes that when Israel entered the land of the Canaanites, they were to "*utterly destroy them*. Make no covenant with them and *show them no mercy*."[3] Similarly, when battling towns inside the promised land, the Israelites were commanded, "You must *not let anything that breathes remain alive*. You shall *annihilate them*—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—just as the LORD your God has commanded."[4]

When reading the narratives in the book of Joshua, the audience is told that the Israelites carefully followed Yahweh's instructions. The first battle in most conquest accounts is paradigmatic and so when the narrator of the book of Joshua describes the conquest of Jericho in Josh 6:21, he uses the language of complete

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2   For a much more developed discussion, see William J. Webb and Gordon K. Oeste, *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric?: Wrestling with Troubling War Texts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019).

3   Italics added. Biblical quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version unless otherwise noted. While the word most often associated with the total-kill of the Canaanites is *ḥrm*, the Bible uses several terms with overlapping meaning to describe these actions: *šmd* (Niphal), "be exterminated, destroyed"; *šmd* (Hiphil), "annihilate, exterminate"; *kḥd* (Hiphil), "destroy, annihilate"; *klh* (Piel), "exterminate, cause to cease"; *krt* (Hiphil), "destroy, cut off"; *nkh* (Hiphil), "defeat, strike down"; *'bd* (Hiphil), "destroy, wipe out."

4   Exod 23:23; Deut 7:16, 23–24, 30; 9:3–4; 12:29–30; 19:1; 31:3–5; 33:27.

destruction: "Then they devoted to destruction by the edge of the sword all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys." Joshua 10 describes a series of Israelite victories in similar fashion, indicating the annihilation of entire towns, including women and children. For example, Joshua captured Hebron and "struck it with the edge of the sword, and its king and its towns, and every person in it; he left no one remaining, just as he had done to Eglon, and utterly destroyed it with every person in it" (Josh 10:37; see also 8:26; 10:28, 35, 39; 11:11, 21). The narrative summaries in Joshua suggest that Israel applied these total-kill actions not only to individual towns, but entire regions (Josh 10:40; 11:11, 20).

Moreover, the book of Joshua affirms that all of these actions took place at Yahweh's command: "As the LORD commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses" (Josh 11:15; see also 10:40; 11:9, 12, 20). These passages and others like them, which recount the complete destruction of the Canaanites, raise hermeneutical, ethical, exegetical, theological, and apologetic questions about the nature of these actions and the character of God.

Past Solutions

From early on, readers of the Bible have grappled with these difficult war texts as they attempted to make sense of what these passages describe. I can only survey a few responses here. One approach, typified by Marcion and taken up in modified form more recently by C. S. Cowles,[5] essentially writes the dilemma off as an Old Testament issue. For Cowles, there is a radical discontinuity between the God we meet in the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. The God of the Old Testament is one of war, punishment, and wrath. But the God we meet in the New Testament has rewritten the OT laws with the gospel of grace and love. However, the New Testament writers themselves saw significant continuity between the work of God in the Old Testament and the work of Jesus in the New Testament (e.g., Matt 5:17; Acts 3:13).[6]

A second response reinterprets the Old Testament descriptions of physical

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5   C. S. Cowles, *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 13–44, 97–101, 145–49, 191–95. Greg Boyd's "looking glass" approach comes at this problem from a different angle. He holds that the biblical depictions of warfare ought to be read through the lens of God's self-giving, sacrificial love on the cross. Boyd then distances God from the violence of the OT battle accounts by asserting that the cross of Christ reveals God's true heart. God accommodated Moses's and Israel's heavily enculturated (mis)understandings of God's total-kill commands. Gregory A. Boyd, *Cross Vision: How the Crucifixion of Jesus Makes Sense of Old Testament Violence* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 9–10, 117–19; Gregory A. Boyd, *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 924–27, 963.

6   For a brief further discussion see Christopher J. H. Wright, *The God I Don't Understand* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 77–81. See also the discussion in Webb and Oeste, *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric*, chs. 2 and 15.

battles as lessons about spiritual warfare. For example, in a sermon on Joshua 8, the church father Origen wrote about the slaughter of the population of Ai:

> You will read in the Holy Scriptures about the battles of the just ones, about the slaughter and carnage of murderers, and that the saints spare none of their deeply rooted enemies. If they do spare them, they are even charged with sin, just as Saul was charged because he had preserved the life of Agag, king of Amalek. You should understand the wars of the just by the method I set forth above, that these wars are waged by them against sin. But how will the just ones endure if they reserve even a little bit of sin? There-fore, this is said of them: "They did not leave behind even one who might be saved or might escape."[7]

In essence, Origen's approach is to redirect readers' understanding of Joshua 8 away from the flesh-and-blood battle at Ai to a spiritual battle against sin. Spirit-ualizing depictions of warfare leave open the question of the historicity of the biblical accounts and side-step the problem of the violence described in the text. Moreover, Stephen's speech in Acts 7:45 assumes that Israel fought concrete, not just spiritual battles against the Canaanites under Joshua.

A third approach to the violence described in biblical battle accounts is to read these stories as foundation stories or "myths" that were retrojected back onto Israel's history.[8] Israel's total-kill battles under Joshua never really happened, at least not in the way described in the Bible. However, even if we grant for the sake of argument that the biblical descriptions do not really reflect what happened, this solution would not solve our difficulties. This approach leaves standing the theo-logical problem of the depiction of God commanding the total annihilation of a people group. This is not merely a small, theoretical glitch, as the Old Testament conquest accounts remained part of Israel's collective memory and have been used to justify the total-kill of a population.[9]

There is no one, simple answer to the issue of violence depicted in the biblical war texts. However, I would like to briefly explore two aspects of this problem that I have found beneficial in wrestling with these difficult texts: the use of

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7 Origen, "Homilies on Joshua 8.7," in *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel*, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, ed. John R. Franke (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 48.

8 Douglas S. Earl, *The Joshua Delusion? Rethinking Genocide in the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), 15–45; Eric Seibert, *Disturbing Divine Behavior: Troubling Old Testament Images of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 91–144.

9 Pekka Pitkänen, "Memory, Witnesses and Genocide in the Book of Joshua," in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham*, ed. J. G. McConville and Karl Möller, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 461 (New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 267–82.

hyperbole in the biblical conquest accounts and the depiction of Yahweh as a reluctant war-God.

Conquest and Hyperbole

One of the factors that I have found helpful in coming to grips with the biblical war texts is the value of reading them within their ancient Near Eastern (ANE) context. Ancient Israel shared not only its experience of military conflict with its neighbors but also the use of similar weapons, strategies, tactics, and even beliefs about the right conduct of war. K. Lawson Younger's seminal work comparing descriptions of warfare in the Bible and the ANE found a significant degree of overlap in the way that ancient peoples *talked about* or *described* their battles.[10] In particular, Younger showed how both ANE accounts and the biblical conquest narratives use hyperbole to portray the results of ancient battles. William Webb and I, along with a number of others, have recently addressed this topic elsewhere, so I will simply point to a few examples here.[11]

Hyperbole is a common literary and rhetorical device that uses emotionally charged overstatement to persuade an audience of a particular point. ANE writers used hyperbole liberally when describing ancient war exploits. The Egyptian Pharaoh Mernepthah claims among his victories that "Israel is wasted, its seed is not,"[12] and the nineth century BCE King Mesha of Moab similarly proclaims his defeat of Ahab and the Israelites on a victory stele saying, Israel "has gone to ruin forever."[13] These claims describe actual battle victories (not recorded in the Bible) but use obviously inflated, emotionally charged rhetoric in an attempt to praise the victories of these kings. ANE scribal accounts intended for public consumption could relate the complete and total destruction of an enemy army or territory while later history, or sometimes even later descriptions in the same account, acknowledge the presence of survivors.

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10 See K. Lawson Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical History Writing*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 98 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990).

11 Webb and Oeste, *Bloody, Brutal, and Barbaric?*, chs. 8–11; Paul Copan, *Is God a Moral Monster?: Making Sense of the Old Testament God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 170–76, 182; Paul Copan and Matthew Flannagan, "The Ethics of 'Holy War' for Christian Morality and Theology," in *Holy War in the Bible: Christian Morality and an Old Testament Problem*, ed. Heath A. Thomas, Jeremy Evans, and Paul Copan (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), 209–39; Paul Copan and Matthew Flannagan, *Did God Really Command Genocide? Coming to Terms with the Justice of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014); Matthew Flannagan, "Did God Command the Genocide of the Canaanites?" in *Come Let Us Reason: New Essays in Christian Apologetics*, ed. Paul Copan and William Lane Craig (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2012), 225–49; Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Reading Joshua," in *Divine Evil? The Moral Character of the God of Abraham*, ed. Michael Bergmann, Michael J. Murray, and Michael C. Rea (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 236–56.

12 William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, eds., *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 6, 41. The idiom, "its seed is not" expresses the claim that no Israelite offspring remains— that they have been completely annihilated—and no one exists to carry on the name of Israel.

13 Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, 2.23, 137.

The biblical battle accounts exhibit a similar use of hyperbole. Once again, just a few examples will need to suffice. Joshua 10:41–42 asserts that Joshua conquered all the territory of the Philistines, but 11:21–22 indicates that the Anakites in that region survived these actions and 13:2 reports that the entire region belonging to the Philistines still required conquest. Similarly, Josh 10:38–39 indicates that Joshua and the Israelites put the entire city of Debir to the sword and totally destroyed the town, yet just a few chapters later, Josh 15:15–16 recounts how Caleb fights against Debir a second time. How can Caleb (re)conquer a city full of people that had recently been completely annihilated? In a summary of Israel's conquest activities, Josh 10:40 says that the Israelites conquered the entire southern regions of Canaan while Josh 11:16–17 reports that "Joshua took the entire land. . ." and a third summary relays how none of Israel's enemies withstood them and that they took *the entire land* because Yahweh gave it into their hands (Josh 21:43–45). Yet Judg 1:1, set immediately after Joshua's death, begins, "Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Canaanites?" In light of what we have read in the book of Joshua, readers should ask "what Canaanites?" and "where did they come from?"

These factors lead to the conclusion that, like ANE battle accounts, the Bible also uses hyperbole to describe Israel's campaigns in the land of Canaan. Battles were fought and people suffered as casualties of war, though not every man, woman, and child was annihilated. In this light, the conquest accounts of Joshua do not intend to say that Israel conquered every last Canaanite city. Nor does the use of total-kill language necessarily mean the complete annihilation of an entire town. Rather, hyperbole was a legitimate way of expressing the broad scope or extent of a battle victory using methods common to ANE writing on conquests in order to express the greatness of God's work.

Recognizing the use of hyperbole does not resolve our ethical or theological questions about biblical warfare. But it does allow us to place these biblical battle narratives within an ANE context, which helps us not to superimpose our modern, Hague and Geneva Convention-informed expectations upon these ancient accounts. This observation also points to a reduced severity in the biblical total-kill descriptions—not everyone was killed in Israel's battles against the Canaanites.

Portraits of an Uneasy War God

Even with a recognition of the use of hyperbole, with its implied lesser violence, we are still left with the uncomfortable realization that Yahweh often participated in Israel's destructive battles against the Canaanites. In some instances, Yahweh instructed the Israelites in how to fight (Josh 6:1–5; 8:1–2). At other times, in a synergy of divine and human action, Yahweh facilitated the delivery of the enemy

into Israel's hands (6:2; 8:1; 10:8; 11:8). In other cases, Yahweh directly participated in the battle. For example, Josh 10:10–14 recounts how at Joshua's directive, Yahweh arranged a celestial omen that threw the Canaanites into a panic and then hurled stones from heaven at the fleeing soldiers (killing more individuals than the Israelites did with the sword).[14]

Yahweh's participation in Israel's battles is not unique to the biblical conquest accounts. The portrait of Yahweh as a warrior is found in the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings—in every part of the Hebrew canon:

- Exod 15:3—"The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name."
- Isa 42:13—"The LORD goes forth like a soldier, like a warrior he stirs up his fury; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes."
- Zeph 3:17—"The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory."
- Ps 24:8—"Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle."

The New Testament also utilizes divine warrior language and imagery in its portrayal of the eschatological Christ (Rev 19:11–21). Thus theologically, the description of Yahweh as warrior is not merely a quirk of the conquest narratives but appears throughout the Bible. These images might persuade some that Yahweh unabashedly and unreservedly condones the use of warfare. However, this is not the full story. There are numerous other portraits of Yahweh that are often overlooked, some of them stemming from the conquest texts themselves. These passages convey a very different picture of Yahweh, for they depict him as an uneasy war-God who redemptively restricts war-violence and who only reluctantly engages in the war practices of this sin-stained world. We now turn to examine this picture as it unfolds in the following passages.

Temple Building and Boasting (Exodus 25–31, 35–40; 1 Kings 5–8; 2 Chronicles 3–6)

One of the places where we catch a glimpse of Israel's God as an uneasy war-God is when, once again, we compare Israel's war practices with those of her neighbors. A common theme in descriptions of ancient warfare involves the connection between victory in battle and the building (or restoration) of temples. Many kings in the ANE world followed a standard three-step pattern: *battle*, *build*, and *boast*. A king who fought a victorious battle would often go on to build (or renovate) a

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14 Gordon Oeste, "'A Day Like No Other' in the context of Yahweh War: Joshua 10:14 and the Characterization of Joshua," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57 (2014) 689–702.

temple for his patron deity, where he would boast about his proudest accomplishments by commissioning artists to memorialize the victory on the temple's walls.

Egyptian temple iconography includes some graphically violent scenes that brag of battle victories. The temple built by Ramses II at Abu Simbel includes an engraving depicting the powerful king about to slay a Hittite warrior. The tower entrance to the mortuary temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu includes an enormous inscribed portrait of Ramses about to strike several captives with his mace while holding them up by the hair as the god Amun watches this ritual offering.[15] Other engravings include severed hands and soldiers' genitalia gathered as war trophies.[16]

Ancient Near Eastern written accounts also partner victory in battle with temple building. In the Enuma Elish, the god Marduk establishes his house (his temple) shortly after concluding his primordial battle and victory over Tiamat and Qingu.[17] Similarly, after defeating an enemy coalition, Iahdun-Lim, king of Mari, boasts on the walls of the temple of Shamash how he "heaped up [enemy] dead bodies" before going on to build Shamash's temple.[18] Likewise, Nebuchadnezzar II crows about what he did to the Egyptian army after the battle of Carchemish, saying he "defeated and destroyed it until it was completely annihilated."[19] However, he is also remembered for his renovation of Esagil (the temple of Enlil and the gods), the restoration of Ezida (the temple of Nabû), E-temen-anki (the ziggurat of Babylon), and E-urimin-ankia (the ziggurat of Borsippa).[20]

In the Levant, one section of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle recounts the god Baal's battle and defeat of the sea-god (Yamm), while a bit later, the audience is told of how Baal received permission to build his own house (temple).[21] A comparable situation in the human realm is illustrated in the Aramaic Zakkur Inscription.[22] The Moabite king Mesha waged total-kill (ḥrm) warfare against the Israelite town of Ataroth and then built a sanctuary to his god Kemosh.[23]

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15 See José das Candeias Sales, "The Smiting of the Enemies Scenes in the Mortuary Temple of Ramses III at Medinet Habu," *Oriental Studies: Journal of Oriental and Ancient History* 1 (2012) 79–116.

16 James Henry Breasted, ed., *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. 4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 52.

17 James Bennett Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 3rd ed. with supplement (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 502.

18 Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, 2.111, 260.

19 Jean-Jacques Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, ed. Benjamin R. Foster, Society of Biblical Literature Writings of the Ancient World 19 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 227.

20 Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, 2.122B, 310.

21 William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, eds., *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 86.

22 Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, 2.35. In the inscription, Zakkur king of Hamath and Lu'ash tells of how he defeated a coalition of seventeen Syrian kings before embarking on a building program that included fortifying cities and building shrines and temples.

23 Mesha builds a *bmt*, "high place," which is not a temple but does serve as a religious sanctuary

As we can see, a common pattern for ANE kings was to go to war on behalf of their patron deity, build a temple in honor of their god, and then boast about their victories, often with accompanying warfare imagery engraved on the temple's walls. Strikingly, however, this pattern is almost completely absent from the biblical text.[24] Moreover, the iconography of Yahweh's house is completely devoid of the portraits of violence so often seen in ANE temples. The adornments of the tabernacle and later temple were benign, and included floral (palm trees—1 Kgs 6:29, 32; flowers—1 Kgs 6:29, 32; pomegranates—1 Kgs 7:18, 20; lilies—1 Kgs 7:22; gourds—1 Kgs 7:24) and faunal patterns (the bulls of the bronze sea—1 Kgs 7:25, 29; 2 Chr 4:3; lions—1 Kgs 7:29), cherubim (1 Kgs 7:29), and geometric shapes (chains—2 Chr 3:5, 16). The symbolism of the flowers and animals, along with the numerous depictions of cherubim used to decorate the temple, evokes the initial, Edenic presence of Yahweh in the Garden of Eden and speaks loudly of Yahweh's rejection of the violence of warfare and its accompanying boasts of power so common elsewhere in the ANE.

David's Bloody Hands (2 Chr 22:7–8; 28:3)

An even more stunning development is the rejection of David, Israel's greatest warrior king, as builder of the temple (2 Sam 7:5–7; 1 Chr 17:4–6). This is a highly significant break with the common ANE "victorious war-king as temple builder" theme. Temples were only built with explicit divine consent.[25] For this reason, despite Yahweh's sanction of Israel's battles,[26] his rejection of David as temple builder in favor of his son Solomon (2 Sam 7:12–13) speaks volumes. The Chronicler specifies that it is the significant amount of blood spilled in battle and David's "great wars" that lie behind Yahweh's rejection of David as temple builder:[27]

> David said to Solomon, "My son, I had planned to build a house to

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(Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, 2.23, 137–38).

24 The one exception might be the construction of the tabernacle in Exodus 25–31, 35–40 after the defeat of the Egyptians in Exodus 15 and the Amalekites in Exodus 17. However, Moses is no warrior-king. Moses and the Israelites also do not play an active part in the victory at the Red Sea, nor is the celebratory song directly connected to the tabernacle-building narrative. However, Exodus 15 does assume a sanctuary to which Yahweh will lead his people (Exod 11:13, 17). In the case of the defeat of the Amalekites, Israel fights a defensive battle and does not connect the victory to the building of the tabernacle.

25 Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and North-West Semitic Writings*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 105 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 163.

26 E.g., "The LORD gave David victory wherever he went" (see 1 Sam 23:1–2, 4; 30:8; 2 Sam 5:12, 19, 23–25; 8:6, 14; 22:1; 1 Chr 11:10, 14; 14:10; 18:6, 13).

27 See the discussion in Donald F. Murray, "Under YHWH's Veto: David as Shedder of Blood in Chronicles," *Biblica* 82 (2001) 457–76; Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 10–29*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 772–75. Note however, the perspective of Brian E. Kelly, "David's Disqualification in 1 Chronicles 22:8: A Response to Piet B. Dirksen," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* (1998) 53–61.

> the name of the LORD my God. But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood in my sight on the earth.'" (1 Chr 22:7–8)

> But God said to me, "You shall not build a house for my name, for you are a warrior and have shed blood." (1 Chr 28:3)

Yahweh's refusal to allow David to build the temple becomes even more extraordinary when we consider the otherwise very positive portrait of David in Chronicles. That Israel's warrior-king *par excellence* is not allowed to build the temple for Yahweh due to the blood that he has shed breaks from the typical ANE patterns of warfare success. The choice of Solomon, the man of *shalom* (1 Kgs 4:24; 1 Chr 22:9), as the builder of his earthly dwelling place points to Yahweh's preference for peace.

All the King's Horses (Deut 17:14–20)

Another place where we see Yahweh as the reluctant warrior-God is in Deuteronomy 17. One of the key areas of difference between Israel and her ANE neighbors lies in the parameters placed around the king's power by Yahweh. While other ANE kings sought to expand and develop their armed forces by acquiring war horses and chariots, the "Law of the King" (Deut 17:14–20) seeks to limit the king's ability to build a powerful army by restricting his impetus to accrue war horses and in this way curb his ability to wage aggressive, offensive wars.

Horses were the most desired (and feared) weapons of war because they served as a platform from which warriors could nimbly strike at the enemy and then skitter quickly out of harm's way. As a result, Deborah O'Daniel Cantrell notes how "the warhorse became the ultimate symbol of power in literature, art, and reality."[28]

It is with this perspective in mind that we should read Deut 17:14–20. The king was not to rely on his military might or the strength chariots provided, for he "must not acquire many horses for himself, or return the people to Egypt in order to acquire more horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You must never return that way again'" (Deut 17:16). This prohibition contrasts with the practice of many ANE kings, who attempted to accumulate as many horses for their chariot forces as possible. It also counters the temptation of Israelite kings to focus on warfare and instead insists that the king's primary focus be on learning Torah

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28 Deborah O'Daniel Cantrell, "'Some Trust in Horses': Horses as Symbols of Power in Rhetoric and Reality," in *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright, Ancient Israel and its Literature 18 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 131.

(Deut 17:18–20). Yahweh, the Lord of heaven's armies, was Israel's true defender (Ps 46:7; 48:8; Isa 37:16–20).

Reduction of Troops and Weapons of War
(Josh 11:6; 2 Sam 8:4; 1 Chr 18:4; Judg 7:1–8)
In addition to Deut 17:14–20, which redirects the king's focus away from the accumulation of horses and towards the Torah, several passages further emphasize Yahweh's desire to dampen a war-leader's ability to wage aggressive war by restricting his access to troops and weapons. In the conquest narratives themselves, we see how Yahweh instructs Joshua to hamstring Canaanite horses and burn their chariots (Josh 11:6). Likewise, David hamstrings most of the captured enemy horses after his battle with Rehob of Zobah, leaving only one hundred (2 Sam 8:4; 1 Chr 18:4).[29]

In Judg 7, Yahweh instructed Gideon to reduce (rather than inflate) the size of his army (see also 2 Chr 25:5–10). When Gideon musters a force of thirty-two thousand warriors, Yahweh insists he decrease the number of fighting men, first to ten thousand, and then down to three hundred. This reduction fosters faith in Yahweh for victory (rather than the size of the army) and diminishes any reason for boasting, which often accompanies ANE battle victories. Yahweh's approach here also undermines any expansionistic war aspirations on Israel's part.

When we combine the portrait of troop reductions in some biblical passages with the prohibition against accumulating warhorses and the portrait of a God who does not like David's war killings, we see good evidence that the issue on the table in Scripture is not just about trusting God. It is about *trusting God with less violent means* to achieve peace and security in the land.

Delegitimizing Revenge-Warfare (Judges 9)
Kings went to war for multiple reasons. Sometimes expansionistic aspirations lay behind the decision to fight, but often a desire for vengeance due to an earlier defeat fueled ancient battles. Payback for a vassal's rebellion or retaliation for the assassination of a treaty-partner could also spark a war. Revenge motivated many ANE battles.[30]

The Abimelech narrative of Judg 9 illustrates the folly that can accompany

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29 Cutting the *flexor metatarsus* allowed horses to continue to stand but not trot or canter until the cut healed. These horses could still be used for breeding stock or domestic purposes. See Deborah O'Daniel Cantrell, *The Horsemen of Israel: Houses and Chariotry in Monarchic Israel (Ninth-Eighth Centuries B.C.E.)*, History, Archaeology, and Culture of the Levant 1 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 42–43.

30 E.g., Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, 2.282, 217; Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: Volume II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 75–76. Vengeance also served as a key motive behind many Hittite battles (Younger, *Ancient Conquest Accounts*, 129–30).

battles initiated by royal desires for revenge. Abimelech secured his rise to king-ship through a pact with his kinfolk in Shechem, using ill-gotten monies from the temple of Baal-Berith to hire a band of scoundrels and then murder his rival seventy half-brothers (Judg 9:2–5). However, one brother, Jotham, escapes and confronts Abimelech and the Shechemites with the recklessness of making Abi-melech their (illegitimate) king. He warns that such a step will only result in mutual destruction (Judg 9:15, 20). Jotham's words come to pass when the Shechemites turn against Abimelech (Judg 9:25–31). In a deliberate act of retri-bution, Abimelech launches an attack that wipes out the city, including his kinfolk, before he himself dies by the combination of a millstone dropped on his head and a *coup de grâce* by his armor bearer (Judg 9:52–54).

Repayment for rebellion found its conceptual legitimation in the warnings about insurrection set out in ancient vassal treaties. However, many battles went well beyond a just and measured repayment, often using overwhelming and excessively violent force to instill terror and suppress future rebellion.[31] Often these wars of retribution not only impacted rebellious leaders and instigators but also inflicted severe "collateral damage" upon civilian populations in the form of exile and/or enslavement or the multiple atrocities wreaked by a siege.[32]

Abimelech's excesses illustrate the foolishness of his revenge-fueled battle against the rebellious Shechemites. Abimelech defeated the city and killed "the people that were in it; and he razed the city and sowed it with salt" (9:45), effect-ively eliminating *his own* kingdom. But Abimelech did not stop there and pro-ceeded to attack Thebez, where he eventually met his doom (9:53–54). Both Abimelech and the Shechemites are destroyed in a divinely instigated example of MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction), illustrating the destructiveness and reck-lessness of revenge-fueled warfare.[33]

The War-Exemption Clauses (Deut 20:1–9; 24:5)
In the period of the monarchy, Israel and Judah established standing armies. How-ever, a key part of the fighting force was comprised of reserve troops called up for battle. Deuteronomy 20 sets out instructions for how Israel was to wage war. The pre-battle protocol set out in Deut 20:1–9 surprisingly includes a series of excep-tion clauses allowing troops to opt out of battle participation. These exemptions

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31 The Assyrians reserved their fiercest punishments, like flaying alive or impaling, for traitors and usurpers. For example, Sargon II boasts of flaying Ia'ubidi from Hamath for fomenting rebellion (Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 285); see Boyd Seevers, *Warfare in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 241–43.

32 See for example the reports of Sethos I, Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, 2:4F, 31.

33 For further discussion, see Gordon K. Oeste, *Legitimacy, Delegitimacy, and the Right to Rule: Windows on Abimelech's Rise and Demise in Judges 9*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 546 (New York: T&T Clark, 2011).

from military service provide yet another picture of Yahweh as a God who only reluctantly accommodates Israel's war-dominated cultural context and markedly restricts its war-making capabilities.

Deuteronomy 20:5 allows any soldier with a recently constructed house to "dedicate" or properly occupy the new home before participating in battle. The verb ḥnk ("dedicate") denotes setting a proper foundation in order to shape future direction (cf. Prov 22:6; 1 Kgs 8:63). Establishing residence in a new home could potentially include not only setting up the home, but also a ritual "housewarming," which sets out blessings upon occupants and visitors.[34] In this way, this exception clause prioritizes domestic responsibilities over tribal or national military and political interests.

Likewise, Deut 20:6 allows the soldier who has just planted a vineyard to forego battle participation for a time in order to enjoy the fruits of his labors. This economic exemption represents a potentially significant release from military service, for it took between four and five years for the fruit of the vine to be ready for consumption.[35] The prospective warrior is given plenty of time to devote to peaceful, pastoral pursuits that further the economic and domestic good of the family rather than a king's military aspirations.

Yahweh's legislation not only established a provision of time off for engaged soldiers to marry their betrothed partner, but also added a one-year moratorium on service (whether military or other) for any newlywed (Deut 20:7; see also 24:5). This domestic provision not only expresses a concern for time to foster a strong marital relationship (and potentially, the establishment of one's name through offspring), but explicitly adds that the warrior should devote himself to the happiness (śmḥ) of his wife (24:5). This provision acknowledges the foundational place of the family in the life of the nation and sets family concerns above those of a militaristically minded community.

A final provision in the Deuteronomic legislation permits anyone overcome by fear to opt out of a battle (Deut 20:8–9; see also Judg 7:3). While the primary intent of this stipulation is to ensure that a small number of warrior's fears would not infect the rest of the army, it also had the effect of allowing anyone to legally forego participation in a given battle. It is difficult to say how many soldiers may have taken advantage of this clause, as peer pressure undoubtedly would have played a role in making non-participation difficult (cf. Judg 5:2, 15–17, 23). Nevertheless, this instruction gives legitimacy for not joining the war effort to a significant reality experienced (though maybe not admitted) by many.

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34 Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy*, New International Version Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 472.

35 Victor H. Matthews, "Treading the Winepress: Actual and Metaphorical Viticulture in the Ancient Near East," *Semeia* 86 (1999), 24. Leviticus 19:23–25 prohibits the consumption of the fruit of a newly planted tree (likely including grape vines) until the fifth year.

These exemption clauses legitimate the potential of opting out of battle for a number of reasons and benefit ordinary Israelites over a king or war leader. By doing so, these policies make clear "that the important aspects of normal life in the land take precedence over the requirements of the army."[36] In addition, many of those impacted by these laws were younger men—prime fighting men—who were in the process of establishing their families. Removing these men from the ranks of potential warriors (some for possibly extended periods of time) diminished both the number and quality of experienced men available for battle at any given time. Moreover, these legal provisions would (hopefully) have fostered greater trust in Yahweh rather than the sensibilities of a human leader when it came time for battle. Furthermore, these divinely sanctioned exemptions would (potentially) give pause to a king's expansionistic aspirations, for he could never really know the full extent of the forces available to him. Together, these exemptions point to Yahweh's prioritization of family concerns over and above those of a military-minded community or war leader.

A God who Grieves War Violence (Isa 16:9, 11; Jer 48:30–32, 35–36)
Israel's literature of lament frequently features cries of anguish in the aftermath of military defeat (Lam 5:10–15; Ps 44:6–16; 89:38–52). On occasion, the biblical authors portray Yahweh joining in the lamentation (Amos 5:1–2; Jer 4:16–18; 9:9–10; Mic 1:8). Yet what astounds me is the way that the Old Testament portrays Yahweh's grief not only for *his own people* but also for the war-damage inflicted on Israel's *enemies*, like the Moabites:

> Therefore I weep with the weeping of Jazer for the vines of Sibmah;
> I drench you with my tears. (Isa 16:9; see also 15:5)

> Therefore my heart throbs like a harp for Moab, and my very soul
> for Kir-heres. (Isa 16:11)

The prophet Jeremiah similarly expresses Yahweh's grief over the impending devastation about to be unleashed upon the Moabites via a Babylonian invasion (see Jer 48:46):

> I myself know his insolence, says the LORD; his boasts are false,
> his deeds are false. Therefore I wail for Moab; I cry out for all
> Moab; for the people of Kir-heres I mourn. More than for Jazer I
> weep for you, O vine of Sibmah! Your branches crossed over the

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36 Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 274. Craigie notes that these exemptions may be idealistic from a modern point of view.

sea, reached as far as Jazer; upon your summer fruits and your vintage the destroyer has fallen. (Jer 48:30–32)

And I will bring to an end in Moab, says the LORD, those who offer sacrifice at a high place and make offerings to their gods. Therefore my heart moans for Moab like a flute, and my heart moans like a flute for the people of Kir-heres; for the riches they gained have perished. (Jer 48:35–36)

In the ANE, patron deities were frequently portrayed as the aggrieved party when foreigners overran their people. However, this grief is normally expressed in terms of anger with the deity's own followers.[37] By contrast, these prophetic portrayals in Isaiah and Jeremiah paint a different picture—a picture of a God who grieves the pain and destruction unleashed by warfare. Moreover, God's grief is not restricted to the effects of battle on his own people but extends even to nations acknowledged as Israel's enemies.[38] Terence Fretheim summarizes the implications of these passages well when he says, "That God is represented as mourning over the fate of non-Israelite peoples as well as Israelites demonstrates the breadth of God's care and concern for the sufferers of the world, whoever they might be. Israel has no monopoly on God's empathy."[39]

Feasting with the Enemy (2 Kgs 6:8–23)
An episode in the middle of the Elisha narratives gives another glimpse of the way in which Yahweh subverts typical war practices, this time by using the conventions of hospitality. Second Kings 6:8–23 begins with the Arameans at war with the Israelites. After repeated unsuccessful attempts to ambush Israel's king, the Arameans send the army to capture Elisha in his hometown of Dothan because of his repeated warnings to the king of the location of these traps (6:8–12).

Elisha uses the language of a typical pre-battle war-oracle (6:16) to calm his servants' fears. When Elisha asks Yahweh to strike (*nāḵâ*) the Arameans, readers anticipate a military blow, for *nāḵâ* often describes the results of a fierce battle.[40] Yet though Yahweh's angelic army has the Arameans surrounded and outnumbered (6:17), Elisha asks Yahweh to strike the Arameans with a (nonlethal) bright light or blindness (6:18).[41] Elisha then proceeds to lead the (temporarily) visually impaired Arameans directly to the original object of their campaign—the king of

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37 Hallo and Younger, *The Context of Scripture*, 2.23, 137; 2.123A, 311; 2.124, 315; see Deut 29:24–28; Ezra 5:12; Jonah 3:4, 9; 1 Kgs 23:26–27; Jer 25:7–9.
38 In Jeremiah 48, the expressions of Yahweh's grief at the war-violence to come upon Moab (48:30–38) follows mere verses after a statement of Moab's antagonism against the Israelites (48:27).
39 Terrence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 137.
40 Num 21:24, 35; Deut 7:2; Josh 8:21, 22; 10:10; Judg 3:13, etc.
41 Rachelle Gilmour convincingly argues that the bright light is the means by which the Arameans are struck and that temporary blindness is the result ("A Note on the Horses and Chariots of Fire

Israel in Samaria. Israel's king sees this Aramean vulnerability as an opportunity to strike a decisive blow (*nāḵâ*) against his enemy (6:21), yet Elisha prohibits killing the Aramean POWs, saying "Do not kill [*nāḵâ*]. . . . Would you kill [*nāḵâ*] those you have captured with your own sword or bow?" (6:22).[42] Then, in a brilliant move designed to turn enemies into guests, Yahweh's spokesman invokes the traditions of hospitality, instructing the king to set food and water before the Aramean soldiers. After enjoying a feast together, guest and host are locked in an unwritten reciprocal agreement where neither can harm the other, for the guest has been granted "temporary family status."[43] The Israelites cannot legitimately strike a single Aramean any more than they could harm their own brothers or cousins.

Captured combatants in the ANE were sometimes killed,[44] but the vast majority were turned into slaves.[45] Yet in 2 Kings 6 through the creative invocation of the peaceful protocols of hospitality, hostilities are quelled and mortal enemies part, if not in peace, at least under a truce. This example does not overturn Israel's war practices, but it does serve as a redemptive breakout from typical biblical and ANE warfare practices and illustrates how God points his people towards more creative and less violent solutions to the problem of war.

Conclusions

These "subversive" war passages, and others like them, do not directly overturn the war ethos of ancient Israel. However, they do push us to ask: Why does Yahweh shed tears at the destruction of Israel's enemies? Why is Yahweh's temple adorned not with boasts of defeated enemies and images of battle victories, but with flora, fauna, and geometrical shapes that evoke the Garden of Eden? Why does Yahweh strictly forbid acquiring ancient-world weapons of mass destruction—horses and chariots—when every other ANE power was trying to acquire them? Why does Yahweh repeatedly work to restrict his people's ability to effectively wage war? These examples, and many others, portray Yahweh as a highly reluctant war-God who unexpectedly subverts the practice of war among his people and hint at redemptive alternatives to the war-culture in which Israel was steeped.

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at Dothan," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 125 [2013]: 310–11). See Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings*, Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 74.

42 Following the New International Version here.

43 Mario Liverani observes, "The guest, who is in some way assimilated with members of the host household, cannot be injured, and certainly cannot be killed" in "Adapa, Guest of the Gods," in *Myth and Politics in Ancient Near Eastern Historiography*, ed. Zainab Bahrani and Marc Van De Mierrop (London: Equinox, 2004), 16.

44 James Henry Breasted, ed., *Ancient Records of Egypt*, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1906), 113.

45 See Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 261; T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985), 78.

When taken together, this collection presents a hopeful and redemptive picture of Yahweh and his attitude towards warfare. Ancient warfare was bloody and brutal, but the use of hyperbole to describe battles in both the ANE and the Bible helps us to see that while the rhetoric of the conquest accounts may indicate the total-kill of a population, the reality seems to have been much less than that.

The subversive war portraits of Yahweh allow us to see a tender-hearted God who grieves the effects of war not only on his own people but even on Israel's enemies. At times Yahweh even circumvents the devastation of battle through peaceful hospitality and other nonviolent means. Perhaps the most astounding and conspicuous statement about Yahweh's attitude toward war is made when he does not allow David to build the temple. This prohibition shows how strongly Yahweh is tilted towards peace, especially in contrast to other ANE perspectives, which celebrate and esteem war in their temple building. These examples illustrate the extent of Yahweh's accommodation of the war-tainted culture in which his people lived, but they also point towards his desire to dampen and diffuse the damage done by war.

These redemptive elements in the Old Testament's depictions of war invite us to look forward to the New Testament and the ministry of the ultimate Prince of Peace. One day, at the great white judgment throne (Revelation 20), God will judge all atrocities, great and small, with perfect justice and fairness. Then the injustices of war-violence will finally and completely be rectified as Yahweh's shalom reigns supreme.

BOOK REVIEWS

Mary Iozzio and Patricia Beattie Jung, eds. *Sex and Gender: Christian Ethical Reflections*. Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1626165304. Pp. 257. $86.95 (USD). Hardcover.

Sex and Gender is a new volume consisting of previously published essays by the Society of Christian Ethics. The selection includes nine articles spanning two decades, though most are from the last five years. The editors have carefully selected material that represents the most important contributions on the subject and is also characteristic of the SCE. The articles address homosexuality, sexuality and power, harassment, AIDS in South African churches, masculinity in Catholic churches of Korea, sexting, trafficking, and moral discernment in ecclesiology. Each article is an excellent read, though I am disappointed not to see one on transgender subjects. This appears to be an area still under development in Christian ethics.[1]

The first chapter, by Jean Porter, considers the debate regarding natural law and gay marriage. For most of history (especially Medieval times) Christians developed a theology of marriage from natural law (i.e., what is considered consonant with nature; this approach has origins largely in Aristotle). Porter contends that an argument for same-sex relationships can be made within this natural law theory, despite the scholastics' own rejection of homosexuality. For many Christian readers, this might seem strange at first. But it quickly becomes apparent that the scholastics gave a number of reasons for both marriage and sex that hardly represent the views of most Christians today.

For example, Porter points out that "the scholastics were profoundly ambivalent toward sex and marriage, so much so that some early scholastics regarded sexual desire and union as venially sinful even within the context of marriage" (29).[2] In general, "The scholastic theology of marriage took its starting points

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1   One of the main books currently on this subject from a Christian perspective is Mark Yarhouse, *Understanding Gender Dysphoria: Navigating Transgender Issues in a Changing Culture* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2015). There are, of course, many works in Queer Theology (such as those by Linn Marie Tonstad and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott) that address the theological aspects of nonbinary anthropologies and themes.

2   Elsewhere, she states As Aquinas puts it, there are some kinds of marriage—polygamy, for example—that undermine or foreclose the attainment of one of the secondary purposes of marriage, for example, mutuality between the spouses, but that are nonetheless legitimate from a natural law perspective because they do at least allow for the expression of the primary purpose of marriage, namely, the care and proper education of the young" (27).

from a doctrine, inherited from Augustine and affirmed by Peter Lombard, according to which the institution of marriage exemplifies and preserves three central values, namely, the faithfulness of the spouses, fruitfulness as expressed through progeny, and the sacramental bond between the spouses" (29). When one keeps these broader goals in mind, the answers to contemporary issues begin to take different shapes. "We need an account of the ways in which the diverse purposes of sex and marriage fit within a general teleological account of the life and functioning of the human organism," Porter says. "The critical point here is that sex and marriage need to be seen within the context of an overall pattern of life, one that we share with the other primates to some extent, even though it both informs and is transformed by our capacities for rationality" (35).

This perspective naturally opens the door to "innovative" forms of marriage. Reproduction has always been a natural reason for marriage, but the church still recognizes marriages that do not yield children—and indeed, were never meant to. What has becomes central, then, are all the other purposes of marriage—sanctification, sacramental value, mutual love, etc.[3] Thus, "If the sex act can serve more than one natural purpose, we cannot just conclude that a kind of act that forecloses one of these is necessarily perverse or unnatural so long as it can serve other legitimate purposes" (38). And "once we grant that sex serves more than one purpose in human life, including the formation and expression of personal bonds, it is apparent that the expression of interpersonal erotic love can readily be interpreted as a natural purpose in these terms" (40).

In making this natural-law case for same-sex marriage, Porter continually notes the importance of procreation and the establishment of family. Heterosexual and homosexual unions need not threaten each other (but may actually complement each other, see p. 20). In her conclusion, she is also careful to distinguish this argument from other contemporary ones: "There is a good case to be made that a current tendency to regard romantic love as the sole and sufficient basis for marriage reflects the exigencies of a capitalist society in which family structures stand in the way of the processes of production and the accumulation of wealth" (41). Whether in traditional or same-sex unions, Westerners tend to overplay romantic love.

David Gushee, in the second chapter, continues the contemporary case for

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3 [W]hat is envisioned . . . is the extension of the institutional claims and restrictions of marriage to a class of unions that cannot fulfill the reproductive purposes of marriage but that may well embody other aims served by that institution. . . . We already extend the institution of marriage to include the heterosexual couples who are incapable of reproduction. . . . We as individuals and as a society have a particular stake in promoting the reproductive functions of marriage, whatever else we do, but that does not rule out the possibility of recognizing and promoting other purposes, as our traditions and current conditions may suggest" (37).

"full-inclusion."[4] He first notes the peculiar way in which evangelicals and fundamentalists use the Bible and do theology—such as making a case "from 11 of the 1,189 chapters in the Bible," which "is seen as settling 'the LGBT issue'" (52). He then notes four caveats to the whole traditional approach (53). First, is that the texts used in the traditionalist cases go further in their "rejectionist rhetoric than many traditional evangelicals want to go these days." That is, there appears to be an initial layer of inconsistency in traditionalism. Second, the issue has reductionistically become about "sexual acts," which "systematically blocks attention to the human beings who happen to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender; to relationships, not just acts." Third, "Because the biblical texts do not discuss what today is called sexual orientation and identity, traditionalists continue to struggle with these human realities."[5] He then notes problems stemming from this, whether in reparative therapy or in simple rejection of LGBT person's orientation, and the harm this inevitably causes. Fourthly, "In general, the fixed nature of the interpretive paradigm around the Big Six texts blocks engagement with any other data: the claims of contemporary research and clinicians, personal experiences of and with LGBT people, or alternative renderings of the biblical witness. Some conservative evangelicals are methodologically committed precisely to *not engaging* such other potential sources of knowledge."

Gushee argues that one cannot expect the scriptures to be an encyclopedia of tried and true psychological and biological knowledge. "Scriptures about creation and sexuality need to be integrated with reasonably certain claims from science about gender-and-sexual-orientation diversity, leading to the conclusion that just because creation accounts fail to mention this diversity, it does not mean that it does not exist or that such diversity is morally problematic. Perhaps," then, "we will one day conclude that such sexual diversity has as little moral significance in itself as 'handedness' diversity, which also was once seen as a problematic orientation in need of correction" (55). Gushee also briefly mentions many of the familiar arguments on this topic. For example, he contends that most of the biblical texts condemn various sexual practices because of their "predation, abuse, and exploitation" (57).

His biblical-theological perspective also plays a role, which gives priority to

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4   I use this label because it appears to have become standard in the discussion. In any case, the fuller version of Gushee's argument appears in his *Changing Our Mind: Definitive 3rd Edition of the Landmark Call for Inclusion of LGBTQ Christians with Response to Critics* (Canton, MI: Read the Spirit Books, 2017).

5   This is notably disputed by William Loader in his many works on this subject. Gender orientation, or at least the desires stemming from it, appears to be a focus of Paul in Rom 1, and there is a Greek myth about Zeus and collapsing the original tri-sexual human species (male, female, androgynous) down to two sexes, which resulted in an internalized orientation, at times, towards the same sex.

eschatological redemption instead pure "restoration" to a "perfect" Eden.[6] This is interesting to me for many reasons, and one is because how much it overlaps with the concerns of another major contemporary debate within conservative evangelicalism: evolution and the origins of the human species. Contemporary science—combined with consensus on the post-exile authorship of Gen 1 (and possibly 2–3)—has caused no little shift within classical theistic Augustinian-reformed theology.[7] Monogamous, heterosexual marriage appears to be more the *end product* of a long history of human relations (and for *that* reason would be "ideal"), as opposed to an original historical state from which our species deviated later on. Regardless, Gushee's point is well-taken: larger theological assumptions determine one's reading and application of scripture.

In a similar twist, Gushee notes that theology is not simply revealed or inserted into the biblical authors' minds (at least not always). Rather, the theologies we hold in the scriptures are (especially in letters) the result of local, ground-up pastoral work. "Is perspective-shifting sympathy with the suffering of one's child a tempting seduction from God's Truth or is it a path into God's Truth? Do we read ourselves and other people through the lens of sacred texts that we love or do we read texts through the lens of sacred people that we love? Or do we encounter both sacred people and sacred texts through the lens of Christ whom we love above all?" (58). In his view, then, "In making this move [towards LGBT people], I am not setting aside scripture. I am embracing its deepest and most central meaning" (61).

Sex and Gender then goes on to focus on other topics. Karen Lebacqz in "Love Your Enemy: Sex, Power, and Christian Ethics" identifies a number of dynamics surrounding sexuality. In one place, she notes the problem with expressing in difference to (hardcore) pornography. "In pornography, women are raped, tied up, beaten, humiliated—*and* are portrayed as initially resisting and ultimately enjoying their degradation. No wonder many real-life rapists actually believe that women enjoy sadomasochistic sex or 'like' to be forced; this is the constant message of pornography" (74). Elsewhere, she uncovers the negative effects of

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6   "Christian theology does better looking forward to redemption in Jesus Christ rather than gazing back into the mist of an unreachable pristine creation. . . . If redemption is understood to mean a return to Eden, a restoration of pristine original creation, looking forward to redemption helps little. But if redemption looks more like gathering up the good-yet-broken strands of human existence and moving forward into a kingdom of forgiveness, grace, and new beginnings, that's different" (55). Cf. a similar point made in the first few chapters of Brian McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), who points out the Greek influence on western readings of the Jewish creation story.

7   See my review of William Cavanaugh and James K. A. Smith, eds., *Evolution and the Fall* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017) in *The Canadian American Theological Review* 6:2 (2017): 85–89.

patriarchy—and how language of "mutuality" can often be misused to downplay its pervasiveness.[8]

Traci West then discusses the "The Harms of Sexual Harassment." Among other complicated facets of this problem, she believes that "the greatest legal progress in addressing inappropriate behavior has occurred in the context of the workplace, mainly because it has been successfully claimed that, in this setting, these 'mundane' interactions are public violations with economic consequences, and thus, should be subject to sanctions" (100).

Katherine Attanasi then looks at the AIDS/HIV epidemic in South Africa and how it is related to church culture and theology. Readers learn about the struggle for Pentecostal women and others to insist on the use of condoms (one of the most effective ways of spreading the disease in that context but are oddly resisted). In another interesting article, Hoon Choi discusses the various challenges of militarism and masculinity in Korean Catholicism.

"Mobile Porn?" by Karen Peterson-Iyer assesses the challenging phenomena of teen sexting, the legal battles and rules involved, and what steps need to be taken for genuine justice. Along the way, she notes how "the message of purity culture is, ironically, not so different from our overly sexualized popular media culture: for both, a woman's worth lies in her ability, or her refusal, to be overtly sexual. Both approaches teach American girls that their bodies and their sexuality are what make them valuable" (156). Thus,

> [w]hile at times well-intentioned, purity advocates perpetuate the same social rubrics that guide girls to understand their own sexual desire as a source of shame and embarrassment. Rather than encouraging girls to understand themselves as moral agents and sex as a moral and deliberate choice, purity culture encourages girls to think of themselves as moral children, in need of a father's, or a husband's, sexual protection (156).

Proposing further corrections to Christian ethics in another arena, Letitia M Campbell and Yvonne C. Zimmerman address "Christian Ethics and Human Trafficking." They point out many of the problems of uncritical anti-trafficking

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8   E.g., "[I]t is precisely my argument that *the partners involved in heterosexual sexuality are not equal in power or status in this culture* and that therefore a sexual ethics that assumes their equality and ignores the differences in power will be an inherently flawed sexual ethics. In a sexist culture, women do not have equal freedom, knowledge, and power with men. Their 'consent' to engage in heterosexual exchange is therefore circumscribed by cultural distributions of power. Until these distributions are attended to, we will not have an adequate sexual ethics. I propose that *the man's status or role as representative of those who have power in the culture is important in the development of a sexual* ethic. . . . we need to keep the political dimensions before us, rather than retreating to a private language of mutuality, relationality, and sharing" (79; italics original).

efforts—which sometimes needlessly target independent uncoerced sex-workers (175) and confuses some of the issues. They

> argue that the dominant framing of human trafficking as "sold sex" around which the US anti-trafficking alliance coheres has a number of significant limitations that are particularly problematic . . . Because nobody is *for* human trafficking, discussions about what human trafficking is, why it is wrong, and which strategies could most successfully curtail it rarely emerge in meaningful ways (174).

Finally, the last article by Sarah Moses looks at how Anglican archbishop Rowan Williams carefully handled sexual ethics debates within the church. She concludes with "strengths and limitations of" his "ethics of recognition" (221).

Sex and Gender is a highly readable, and yet scholarly volume with thoughtful articles that encourages Christians to think critically about some of the most challenging ethical issues of our day. With questions for discussions and "suggested reading" at the end of each chapter, it is also appropriate for advanced discussion groups and classroom use. Readers will inevitably have reservations about one perspective or another. But its pages were worth the read, even as it remains a small, unsystematic "sampler" bound to invoke more questions than answer.

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The Image of God in the Garden of Eden: The Creation of Humankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of the mīs pî pīt pî *and* wpt-r *Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt.* Catherine L. McDowell. Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures 15. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015. ISBN 978-1575063485. Pp. ix + 246. $47.50 (USD). Hardcover.

I first encountered the *mīs pî* ("Washing of the Mouth") and *pīt pî* ("Opening of the Mouth") rituals from Babylonia and Assyria some twenty years ago and immediately perceived their relevance for understanding the idea of humans made in God's image in Gen 1. When I briefly mentioned these rituals in my discussion of comparative materials in *The Liberating Image: The* Imago Dei *in Genesis 1* (Brazos, 2005), I cited (among other sources) an unpublished paper that Catherine McDowell (then Beckerleg) gave at the Society of Biblical Literature in 1999. That paper led to McDowell's 2009 PhD dissertation at Harvard, a revision of which has been published as *The Image of God in the Garden of Eden*.

With this volume, McDowell helpfully makes available to scholars and students of the Bible a clear analysis of the content of ancient Mesopotamian rituals for the consecration and vivification of a cult statue (along with a parallel ritual

for an Egyptian mummy). More importantly, she explores the relevance of these rituals for understanding the status of humans in the Eden story in Gen 2–3 and the possible relationship of the Eden story to the creation account in Gen 1.

In chapter 1, McDowell briefly reviews previous scholarship in order to provide a justification for using the *mīs pî* and *pīt pî* rituals from Mesopotamia, along with the *wpt-r* ("Opening of the Mouth") ritual from Egypt, in order to interpret the status of humanity in Genesis 1–3. She notes that scholars have already made connections between the Genesis creation accounts and those of ancient Egypt, and some have discerned the influence of the *mīs pî / pīt pî* rituals in the idol polemic of Deutero-Isaiah (especially Isa 44:11, 14, 15, 17, 18). She thus suggests that these rituals (both Mesopotamian and Egyptian) might help us understand the creation of humans in Genesis.

McDowell also helpfully distinguishes between typological and historical comparisons between the Bible and ANE materials. Whereas the latter assumes a genetic connection between the materials in question, the former is based on common experience, and does not necessarily involve knowledge of specific sources. This anticipates her later positing at least a typological connection between the *mīs pî / pīt pî* and wpt-r rituals and Gen 1–3, with the strong possibility that the connections may also be historical (p. 176).

McDowell's second chapter consists in a translation and analysis of the structure of the Eden story (which she argues begins in 2:5, not 2:4b as is usually thought). Although this lays the groundwork for her subsequent analysis of the comparative material and its possible connection to the early chapters of Genesis, it is the most perfunctory chapter in the book and it wasn't clear to me that the alternative starting point of the Eden story makes a significant difference for its meaning. The importance of this chapter, however, lies in McDowell's demonstration that the Eden story ends with a catastrophe, without a final resolution. This is in contrast to those interpreters who view the story as a fall upwards. Later, McDowell will argue that the "opening of the eyes" of the first humans is intentionally negative in the Eden story, in contrast to this positive feature of the cult statue in the *mīs pî / pīt pî* rituals.

In chapter 3 (the longest in the book, at 74 pages) McDowell gets down to serious analysis of the Mesopotamian *mīs pî / pīt pî* rituals, comparing them with the Egyptian wpt-r ritual, which she sees as basically similar, despite obvious differences. Although the former concerns the vivification of a cult statue and the latter a mummy, both involve activating an inert object to become an incarnation or theophany of a deity.

McDowell's focus is on the Mesopotamian texts and she lucidly explains the ritual's temporal and geographical framework; it took place over two days in four locations, from the temple workshop, to a riverbank, then a garden, and was finally

placed in the temple as its permanent residence. McDowell lays out very well what happens in each location and makes the important point that the ritual combines birthing and manufacturing imagery (in contradistinction to those who emphasize one or the other). Along the way she addresses differences between the variant texts found at Niniveh and Babylon, and proves to be an adept guide to the interpretive disputes concerning these texts. This is all done so clearly that the reader doesn't have to be an ANE expert to follow her exposition and analysis.

In chapter 4 (the book's second longest chapter), McDowell first analyzes the meaning of humans as God's "image" (*ṣelem*) and "likeness" (*dĕmut*) in Gen 1:26–27 and the possibility that an analogous concept is found (without the terms for "image" or "likeness") in the Eden story. From her study of the use of *ṣelem* and *dĕmut* in the rest of the Bible, along with their Akkadian cognates, McDowell concludes that the divine-human relationship portrayed in Genesis 1 involves *kingship* (representative rule on behalf of God), *kinship* (humans as part of God's family), and *cult* (humans are compared to a divine statue in a temple).

McDowell then turns to the question of whether the Eden story also portrays humans as an image of God. She points out similarities between the general sequence and purpose of events in the Eden story and the *mīs pî / pīt pî* rituals as well as specific points of commonality, including the animation of the image by divine breath, the installation of the image in sacred space (a temple garden in Gen 2), the feeding of the image, and the opening of the eyes as significant for god-likeness. She concludes that the Eden story makes the polemical point that the true images of God are not statutes, but human beings.

A further contrast with the ANE rituals is that unlike the opening of the eyes of the statue in the ANE being part of the animation of the image leading up to its installation in the temple, humans in the Eden story are installed as God's image in the garden-temple near the start of the narrative and the sort of god-likeness later achieved by the opening of their eyes in Gen 3 is illegitimate, causing them to forfeit the sacred space of the garden. Given the similarity (and intentional differences) between the biblical and ANE texts, McDowell suggests that the writer of the Eden story most likely had personal knowledge of the *mīs pî / pīt pî* rituals (though she admits that she cannot strictly prove this).

The issue of the difference between the Eden story and the ANE rituals takes us to chapter 5, which addresses the possible relationship between the creation account in Gen 1:1–2:3 and the Eden story. Here McDowell delves into a detailed analysis of various theories for the sources, date, and authorship of both accounts, showing that despite a general assumption among critical scholars that the Eden story is earlier and Gen 1 is later, there is actually no unanimity on these questions and—more importantly—there is no decisive evidence for dating either account.

Her conclusion to this chapter briefly challenges Andreas Schüle's argument

that the Eden story critiques the understanding of humans as God's image in Genesis 1. Instead, McDowell entertains two possibilities. The Eden story might have been written to further clarify and explain the startling use of terms for a cult statue to describe to human beings in Genesis 1. On the other hand, Genesis 1 could be later, serving to make explicit, by the use of such terms, the notion of humans as God's image, which is portrayed more subtly in Gen 2–3.

In chapter 6 we have the author's succinct summary of the book's argument, with suggestions for further research. We are indebted to McDowell for such a lucid study, which thoroughly analyzes relevant ancient Near Eastern texts and parses their relevance for understanding the creation of humans in the Eden story, the human role in the garden, and the ensuing narrative of tragedy and expulsion.

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The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: Second Edition.
Miles V. Van Pelt and Gary D. Pratico. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.
ISBN: 978-0310532828. Pp. xv + 302. $16.10 (USD). Paperback.

Among the most essential tasks in the learning and mastery of any language, whether one is a beginning, intermediate, or advanced student, is the ability to effectively build up one's working vocabulary. As Miles V. Van Pelt and Gary D. Pratico, the authors of *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: Second Edition*, state:

> few things will hinder a student's proficiency and enjoyment of a language more than an inadequate stock of basic vocabulary. In fact, those who would minimize the issue of vocabulary memorization will almost certainly struggle with proficiency in the language and find it difficult to fully realize the benefits of studying and reading Hebrew. Stated plainly, vocabulary memorization is vitally important (x).

Initially published in 2003 (also by Zondervan), Van Pelt and Pratico's work has been one of several different tools available to better position students for this challenging process. But how does *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: Second Edition* (*VGBHA*) compare to other works of a similar nature, such as Larry A. Mitchel's *A Student's Vocabulary for Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: Updated Edition* (Zondervan, 2017), and what is unique about the second edition of *VGBHA*?

Prior to elaborating on the specifics of how this new, second edition of *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic* differs from the first, it is

prudent to offer a brief overview of the general framework and basic contents of *VGBHA*. To begin, *VGBHA* is essentially composed of a number of different vocabulary lists. The first (and most important) list is entitled "Hebrew Words Arranged by Frequency." It contains all of the Hebrew words that occur ten or more times in the Old Testament (excluding proper nouns). This list is arranged by frequency, beginning with the most frequent Hebrew words and progressing to those that occur only ten times (see p. x). The entries in this list are sequentially numbered from 1–1903, thus providing a helpful point of reference and a convenient system for breaking the words into discrete groups for memorization (see p. xi). The second major list is an alphabetical listing of words that share a common root, i.e., words that are etymologically related to one another (sometimes called a "cognate" list). The third major list (and one that is new to the second edition of *VGBHA*) contains all Aramaic words, including proper nouns, that occur in the Aramaic portions of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (hereafter HB/OT). Individually numbered and boasting an impressive 705 entries (in contrast to Mitchel's volume, which contains only 648 entries), verbal roots are listed without vowels (see p. xiii). Unlike, however, Mitchel's volume, these words are not arranged alphabetically but only by frequency. Some users may quibble with this fact. Following these three major word lists are three appendices: Hebrew Homonyms (formerly "Identical Words with Different Meanings"), Hebrew Nominals, and Hebrew Verbs. A brief introduction, one-page bibliography of works consulted, and two indices (Hebrew and Aramaic words) round out the volume.

The format of each entry in the vocabulary list is arranged as follows. The Hebrew word appears in the left column. In the larger, right hand column, lexical and other related information is provided. Unlike Mitchel's volume, no syllabication occurs (a user must, therefore, be able to know not only the Hebrew alphabet but also be able to pronounce simple words). There is sometimes an abbreviation that appears in parenthesis, identifying the part of speech or other point of grammatical information, such as gender and/or number (not all entries have been identified by parts of speech). Following any initial abbreviations, the user will find a sense of the word's "semantic range" or "semantic field." The authors state that "the selection of translation values is based largely on frequency of occurrence. With verbal entries, it is especially important to observe that we have not included definitions for derived stems that occur fewer than ten times with a particular verbal root. It is also worth noting that a Qal stem definition may be provided as a point of reference even if the Qal stem is not attested more than ten times with the verbal root" (xi). Aside from certain other information (such as a reference to a cognate or related form) all words also include a number in parenthesis near the end of the entry that identifies how many times a word occurs in the HB/OT.

With respect to the query of what changes, precisely, have occurred between the first and second editions, other than, of course, the inclusion of biblical Aramaic word counts, it is pointed out that *VGBHA* has been "carefully unified" (see p. ix) so that its contents match the vocabulary lists in *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar, 3ʳᵈ ed*. (Zondervan, 2018) and *Old Testament Hebrew Vocabulary Cards, 2ⁿᵈ ed.* (Zondervan, 2018). It is also, perhaps, worth mentioning that while Van Pelt's *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* (Zondervan, 2011) does, in fact, contain all biblical Aramaic words within its lexicon, they are not arranged according to frequency, nor do they include the statistical information that is now available within *VGBHA*. For anyone utilizing any of these three resources, such features are a tremendous asset that make the purchase of this volume not superfluous even if one is already in possession of Van Pelt's *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* or the first edition of *VGBHA*.

Other (small) changes include the removal of the following: (1) "Word List 3A: Proper Nouns Listed Alphabetically," which contained (in the first edition of *VGBHA*) over 400 proper nouns that occurred more than ten times in the HB/OT; (2) "Basic Statistics of the Hebrew Verb—stem and conjunction" (Appendix A in the first edition of *VGBHA*); and (3) "Verbal Roots in the Derived Stems Listed Alphabetically" (Appendix B in the first edition of *VGBHA*). In these changes, nothing of true value has been lost.

One major criticism of this volume is that though the book boasts a "refinement of definitions" (see back cover) the *sui generis* lexicon of David J. A. Clines ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew,* Sheffield Academic, 1993–2016, 9 vols. (*Dictionary of Classical Hebrew: Revised*, Sheffield Academic, 2018), does not appear in the select bibliography—something that causes me to firmly question this assertion. One also notes that certain other works that appear in the bibliography of works consulted are not most recent editions. Furthermore, while the first edition of *VGBHA* mentions an online electronic version of the vocabulary guide (available at www.basicsofbiblicalhebrew.com), and, with it, the ability for students "to hear, sort, practice, and review their vocabulary on the computer in an interactive environment" (p. xii in the first edition of *VGBHA*), the absence of such an invaluable resource to accompany the second edition is most unfortunate. Lastly, though a relatively minor issue, the text of the volume itself is visually unappealing.

These criticisms aside, there is much to commend in this volume. There is far more information in *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: Second Edition* than is provided in Mitchel's coexistent work and *VGBHA* remains one of the precious few volumes of its type to actually incorporate Aramaic vocabulary. To conclude, the affordability and usability of Van Pelt and Pratico's *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic: Second Edition* make it

an excellent tool for those wishing to effectively increase their working vocabulary of both Hebrew and Aramaic. It also makes an excellent supplementary text particularly for those students who are using *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar, 3rd ed*. (Zondervan, 2018), *Old Testament Hebrew Vocabulary Cards, 2nd ed*. (Zondervan, 2018), and/or Van Pelt's *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* (Zondervan, 2011). Highly recommended!

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Leaving Christian Fundamentalism and the Reconstruction of Identity. Josie McSkimming. New York: Routledge, 2017. ISBN: 978-1472480309. Pp. xiii + 264. $165.00 (USD). Hardcover.

As far as the data is concerned, these are hard times for Western Christians. While certain versions of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity thrive in the Southeast (amassing approximately 8–12,000 converts per day), English-speaking Christianity loses over 6,000 members per day.[9] The majority in this group are "Protestant-evangelical." Church attendance in general—across the board of Catholic, mainline Protestant, and evangelicals—has been in a steady decline for the past half-century.[10] "Between 6,000 and 10,000 churches in the U.S. are dying each year."[11] And as Pew Research has long noted, the fastest growing religious category in America are the "nones," those who have no specific religious affiliation.

The answer to why Christianity is dying so fast in this region of the world is hardly a mystery. Surveys of the "nones" plainly identify the three main reasons: "I question a lot of religious teachings," "I don't like religious organizations," and "I don't like the positions churches take on social/political issues."[12] The content of these reasons are, likewise, easy to identify (with or without data). One simply needs to converse with a local post-evangelical.[13] One will hear about coercive church leadership, verbal and sexual abuse/coverups, enforcement of rigid gender roles, exclusion of LGBTQI peoples, uncritical loyalties to political parties, and

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9   See Charles Farhadian, *Introducing World Religions: A Christian Engagement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015); Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

10   David Crary, "Poll: Church membership in US plummets over past 20 years." *Associated Press* (April 18, 2019). https://www.apnews.com/f15241378057486ea437cad490a2ed67

11   Thomas Rainer, "Hope For Dying Churches," *Facts and Trends* (January 16, 2018). https://factsandtrends.net/2018/01/16/hope-for-dying-churches/

12   Becka Alper, "Why America's 'Nones' Don't Identify With a Religion," *Pew Research* (August 8, 2018).

13   Or member of the Facebook group, "The Liturgist."

outdated scholarship (e.g., regarding the Bible's origins and authorship, history, models of Christian ethics, etc.).[14]

Josie McSkimming, a psychotherapist from Australia (former Christian, currently orthodox Jew), conducted an impressive research program examining the religious subset of "Christian fundamentalism" or "conservative evangelicalism"—and how and why people abandoned it.[15] She wanted to see how former evangelicals left their old identity and built a new one.[16] Her study group contained:

1. *Number:* 20 participants from Sydney, Australia
2. *Sex:* 11 female; 8 male; 1 transgender
3. *Sexual Orientation:* 11 heterosexual; 8 gay; 1 transgender
4. *Raised in evangelical family:* 9 no; 11 yes
5. Mostly interviewed within 9 years of exiting fundamentalism
6. Most aged 30–39 years; the rest mostly aged 40–70.
7. Currently identifies as "Christian": 10 yes; 10 no

Her thesis is as follows:

> My argument within this book is that the social construction of identity within CF cannot be divorced from the operation and implications of power. This means that Christian conversion itself is not understood as simply a private moment—but, as Manuel Castells (2004) suggests, a re-formation of the self in terms of social order and political purpose. The power lies in specific discourses and strategies, which need to be maintained and protected by the organization as it reinforces particular value-based, requisite identities. (1–2)

As it is apparent, her study has a particularly post-modern, social-constructionist bent. Her questions are about the role that community, community narratives, and structures of power have in keeping people "in" and forcing people "out":

1. How may a Christian sense of identity be socially constructed,

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14 In my case, I only have to reflect on the recent past. A year ago I was let go as Chief Academic Officer and Associate Professor of Christian Studies at a Christian college because of my publications supporting women in ministry, asserting that the earth is over 6,000 years old, and that the twentieth-century verbal-plenary-inspiration-inerrantist model of bibliology is one perspective among others. (I reject "American evangelical" as a label, though I'm not as uncomfortable with it when I cross the border into Canada.)

15 Special thanks to Beth Beyer at CBE for forwarding me a complimentary copy of the book to review (though, this review was ultimately rejected for publication by *Priscilla Papers*, presumably for being off-topic).

16 I will use "conservative evangelicalism" and "Christian fundamentalism" synonymously.

and what are the effects of apparatuses of power within church communities that shape that process?"

2. What are the responses of people to the apparatuses of power? How are gender differences and sexual identity negotiated and maintained?

3. What personal narratives do people tell about the change process, their new discursive self-concept and changing Christian beliefs? (7)

After a brief intro surrounding these questions, she dives into a very thorough study about the phenomena of "Christian fundamentalism." She reviews the work of the five-volume *Fundamentalism* project of the 1990s (American Academy of Arts and Sciences), and summarizes that "fundamentalism refers to a discernible pattern of religious militancy by which self-styled 'true believers' attempt to arrest the erosion of religious identity, fortify the borders of the religious community and create viable alternatives to secular institutions and behaviors" (16). She also looks to sociologists to shed light. For example, she notes from Nancy Ammerman that "'compromise and accommodation' are among the most dreaded words in the Fundamentalist vocabulary'" (19). And from Sally Gallagher, we read that "in spite of their unique histories, doctrines, institutions, and internal diversity, evangelical, fundamentalist and Pentecostal labels continue to be used interchangeably as equivalent descriptions of conservative Protestants who are uniformly anti-feminist, anti-abortion, anti-gay and (in the US context) anti big government (2003:12)." She also quotes from Australian evangelicals, like Kevin Giles (21), to note the various ways that the word "fundamentalism" can be used.

> In short, Christian fundamentalism may be understood as a totalizing and highly influential social movement, thoroughly adept in the acculturation of its participant members through embracing and promoting a defensive collective identity, suspicious of "the other" but also committed to mission and evangelism. It is apparent that a guarded, fortressed and self-perpetuating inward focus (with requisite identity specifications) emerges. (40)

Then comes her chapter on methodology, and topically-oriented chapters on her findings. McSkimming's analysis into the social mechanics of evangelical life is sometimes dense and wordy, but, despite considerable similarities to Johnson's *Biblical Porn,*[17] was more readable. She brings attention to "regimes of

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17 See Jamin Andreas Hübner, review of Jessica Johnson, *Biblical Porn: Affect, Labor, and Pastor Mark Driscoll's Evangelical Empire* (Duke University Press, 2018) in *Priscilla Papers* 32:4 (2018):29–30.

truth"—that is, systems of accepted, manufactured knowledge that are wielded to keep people under control.

> [T]he authoritative text of the Bible scaffolds and underpins the Christian community. For the participants in this study, it is all about the Bible: its sufficiency, authority and inerrancy. As Alan Aldridge comments, within fundamentalism certain Bible statements are used as shibboleths, or tests, to distinguish between true believers and the nominal Christians or liberals (2013:132). This is how the boundaries of the community on the insider-outsider continuum are defined and policed. (110)

This evolves into Foucault's concept of "self-monitoring." Fundamentalists create a culture in which people subconsciously keep each other in line, instead of the leaders. "The question of minimizing independent thinking to keep people in and make sure the truth boundaries of the evangelical community are policed seems to represent a particular technology of the self: the promotion of compliance and sameness through fostering mistrust of outsiders and alterative thinking" (113). As one interviewee explained it: "'We can't have this conversation. I love him dearly.' That's very effective control" (116).

Questions of gender frequently came up, since it is one of the key areas of Christian fundamentalism's ethic of clear order. Another topic was books and self-education. "Lucy" compared and contrasted her old from new church:

> So in the [named denomination] they say, "You shouldn't be reading that book," because they're really protective of what you're feeding your mind. But *here* it is: "Read whatever you want to read, you know, and let's talk about it. But not talk about it because I have a certain perspective I actually want to bring you to. I don't have any agenda. I just want to help you heal." (170)

Something McSkimming learned from the study is that those who remained Christian "have all 'personalized' their definition of being a Christian, and do not want to be associated with the brand 'Christian' as defined in their previous evangelical churches" (77). Another is that "the push factors were indeed stronger than the pull factors, as disaffiliation was most frequently understood as being affected by the intersection with the church community and leaders. The pull factors of new friends, lovers and preferred communities were relevant, but less potent as turning points or catalytic moments" (228–29). Finally,

> the concept of "believing without belonging" (Davie, 2000) was demonstrated through the finding that many people do not lose

> complete faith after leaving the churches of fundamentalism, as alternative spiritual paths emerge in their lives. Belief in the Christian God, or theism in general, is not seen as contradictory to people's new expressions of being "spiritual" (Streib et al., 2016). (229)

Leaving Christian Fundamentalism is the latest in a massive library of works pointing out the spiritual, intellectual, and spiritual harms of religious fundamentalism. Since the evangelicalism in Sydney is very similar to that of America, it is especially valuable for American readers. By all accounts, it is an excellent read as a work of first-rate academic research and scholarship. It will be challenging to those who are so familiar with a culture of conservative evangelicalism and haven't thought critically about what it's doing to themselves and to others. For those concerned about gender equality, out-proof-texting detractors may only serve to reinforce the same harmful dynamics that gave rise to patriarchalist and sexist ideologies in the first place.[18]

Works like these can also create a somewhat skewed picture. The project did not highlight the *positive* roles of biblical study and internalized ethics, whether before or after "deconversion."[19] However, McSkimmings did include a number of interview conversations that highlighted the possibility of non-fundamentalist religious expression and adherence that isn't destructive. In other words, she doesn't commit the fallacious Sam Harris argument that "all religion is toxic". Her work is too academically self-conscious and informed to let the conversation go in that direction.

In any case, the book is quite eye-opening and can serve many purposes in understanding why people choose to stay or leave their faith. It is not for a popular audience but can still serve a variety of audiences. We should all be grateful for McSkimming's field work and thoughtful reflections.

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18 This would suggest that organizations be conscious not to attach itself to a specific version of evangelicalism that has an uncertain future.

19 McSkimming might find Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015) on catechesis and the internalized *habitus* of Christians a much-needed balance to Foucault's perspective on Christian ethics and discipline (118–21). Foucault's "self-surveillance" might sometimes be mistaken for heightened conscientiousness—which could be particularly useful in an age still recovering from the various traumas of the twentieth century. Somewhat similar criticisms of Foucault are made in Kathryn Tanner, *Christianity and the New Spirit of Capitalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).