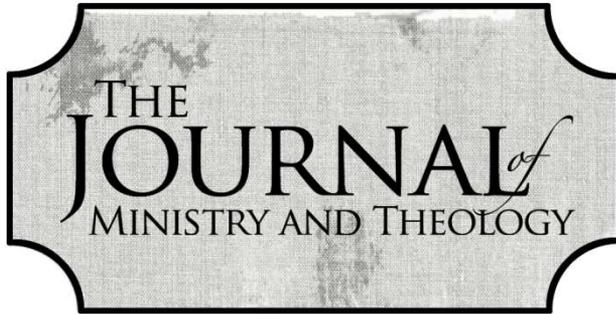


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2 Timothy 2:2

*And the things that you have heard from me
among many witnesses, commit these
to faithful men who will be able
to teach others also.*

The Biblical Basis of the United States Constitution¹

Dr. Mike Stallard
Dean of Baptist Bible Seminary
Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania

INTRODUCTION

Surprisingly perhaps, the United States Constitution never uses the word *God*. Such a state of affairs is totally different from the Declaration of Independence, which appeals to God as a major part of its argument on three occasions. First, the Declaration opens with an appeal to “the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them.” Second, one can note the most famous line of the document: “We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” These first two references to God appeal to God’s design of nature and of men to justify the existence of an equality that does not come from

¹ The only book-level treatments of this topic that this author has seen to date is the older work Dan Gilbert, *The Biblical Basis of the Constitution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1936) and the recent work, Douglas Anderson and Mark A. Beliles, *Contending for the Constitution: Recalling the Christian Influence on the Writing of the Constitution and the Biblical Basis of American Law and Liberty* (Charlottesville, VA: Providence Foundation, 2005). Gilbert’s work argues primarily from the moral quality of the content of the Constitution to a basis in similar biblical teaching especially in the Ten Commandments. The latter work of Anderson and Beliles is more comprehensive of various issues and more targeted in its critique of modern abuses of the Constitution. Yet it still argues somewhat from analogy. My presentation here, while not dismissing these two approaches, is in a different direction but with similar conclusions.

those who govern. Instead it comes from the Creator God and is revealed in the work of his design. By using such language the framers of the Declaration are raising the bar, so to speak. To violate these divine designs is a serious charge indeed. Third, the Declaration closes with a statement of faith in God: "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor." Here it is clear that the framers believed in the immanence of God. God is a God of history who governs the affairs of men. There can never be any harmony between these words and a full-blown deistic outlook. God is active in the world now. He is not on the sidelines watching what men do. In such ways, the human authors of the Declaration made major foundational appeals to God and his creation.²

In light of this truth in 1776, the obvious question is why the Constitution does not use similar language just eleven years later in 1787. One could point at the outset to the different purposes of the two documents as a place to start an explanation. The Constitution is a pragmatic text that answers the "how" question. It is intended simply to give the structure of how the government is to operate. On the other hand, the Declaration answers a "why" question. Consequently, it is more philosophical. Furthermore, the young nation is defending its decision for independence in the eyes of a Western world steeped in Judeo-Christian ethics during the Enlightenment with its own twists and turns. Legally and morally, the need to appeal to God should not be a surprise.

² Later on a brief look will be given to influences upon the founders that came from outside the Bible or beyond strictly Judeo-Christian thought. Interesting debates emerge about whether the founders were more influenced by Locke, Leibniz, or Montesquieu along with a host of other writers and thinkers contemporary and ancient. Even if influence is found, such dependence would not negate the founders' use of the Bible and the Judeo-Christian worldview of which they were a part.

Yet the oddity remains. Why is God not referenced in the United States Constitution?³ One might expect such a reference in the Preamble—the union established with the help of God would fit nicely. However, no direct appeal to God is made there, although one might see the purpose of securing the “Blessings of Liberty” as hearkening back to the Declaration and its pronouncements. There are some indirect references to God perhaps as seen in the need for senators to be “on Oath or Affirmation” when trying a president for impeachment.⁴ The overwhelming majority of oaths in those days, as in this day in our land, were done with an oath to God. Thus, George Washington at the first inauguration added the words “So help me, God” to the constitutionally established words in Article II, Section 1.⁵ The word *Lord* is used in the final statement giving

³ One interesting exercise would be to compare the appeals to God in the Articles of Confederation, the document used to govern the new nation starting in 1781 (although the document was approved by the Continental Congress in 1777) until the U.S. Constitution was established. The Preamble to that document refers to the Lord in the standard expression for dates: “on the fifteenth day of November in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy seven.” Like the Constitution there are indirect appeals to God by mentioning oaths (Article IX). However, the Articles of Confederation have one appeal to God in the closing section of the document that is similar to the Declaration and not the Constitution: “And Whereas it hath pleased the *Great Governor of the World* to incline the hearts of the legislatures we respectively represent in Congress, to approve of, and to authorize us to ratify the said articles of confederation and perpetual union” (emphasis added). In spite of this reference, the Articles seem to fall short of the Declaration in statements about God.

⁴ U.S. Constitution, Article I, Section 3.

⁵ Peter A. Lillback and Jerry Newcombe, *George Washington's Sacred Fire* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Providence Forum P, 2006), 224. The actual wording of the Presidential Oath in Article II, Section 1 is “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.” In 2009 at the inauguration of Barack Obama, the words were not said

the date of the document: "in the Year of our Lord." However, the Constitution is clear that no religious test can be applied as a "Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States."⁶ This last point is often misused by those who reject Christian influence in the country and wish to see the founding as secular in orientation.⁷

So what is to be made of the diminished God-language in the U. S. Constitution? Does it reflect a worldview of the founders that downplays biblical heritage and Christian teaching? What follows is a presentation that answers this question in the negative and shows a measured amount of affinity between biblical teaching and the content of the Constitution. However, before continuing some cautions must be voiced.

CAUTION: THE NEED FOR BALANCE

Cultures and subcultures almost always rewrite some of their historical traditions in their own image. From the young secular man that once told this author with apparent glee that Benjamin Franklin had over twenty illegitimate children to the staunch evangelical Christian who sees a copy of a Bible verse tucked in the pocket of every founding father, the predictable portrait emerges to justify the current position.⁸ They—the

quite right. Later Chief Justice Roberts visited the White House and administered the oath again. Technically, President Obama was not President until that later moment. The adding of the words "So help me God" is a tradition started by Washington and carried on by each following President.

⁶ U.S. Constitution, Article VI.

⁷ For example, see Austin Cline, "Godless Constitution: Constitutional Law without Gods or Religion," <<http://atheism.about.com/od/godlessliberals/p/Constitution.htm>> (accessed 21 October 2011).

⁸ This author cannot remember the person's name who said this or the occasion. The discussion of Benjamin Franklin's moral life has been a major point of examination by scholars. There is no question

founding fathers—were like “us.” Typically in such cases the truth is somewhere between the extremes.

The Christian must admit that the founding fathers were not perfect, evangelical believers. For example, much is rightly made of the refusal of the founders to eliminate slavery in the young nation.⁹ This was their great sin that they left the nation and that was only solved by the bloodletting of a Civil War. One might be hard pressed to praise men who had the power to end slavery but chose not to do so (many actually owned slaves). Evangelical Christians who like the religious, even evangelical, tone of the statements of the Founders must be honest about these indisputable historical details.

On the other hand, there has been in our nation a growing trend, especially since the 1960s, to accuse the founding fathers of being deists rather than more traditional Christians. While it is true that men like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin toyed with mild forms of deistic thought, neither was a full-blown deist since they both believed in prayer and the involvement of the deity in the affairs of nations. One example to discuss is *the* founding father, George Washington, the first president of the United States. Due largely to Paul Boller’s influential *George Washington and Religion* (1963) it has become fashionable during a time of intensified secularization to insist that Washington was at best a nominal Christian and

that he did not practice the sexual morality taught in the Bible although he called it weakness rather than strength in a person’s character. At least one illegitimate son is clearly known. There is no hard evidence for any others although there is abundant recorded evidence of the flirtatious nature of this particular founding father. For more information, see H. W. Brands, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Doubleday, 2000).

⁹ A study of the biblical view of slavery cannot be made here. However, the assumption is made that NT principles lead in the direction that forcing other human beings into unwilling servitude is a serious and heinous sin.

most likely a deist.¹⁰ This false historical image has been so strong that even fairly conservative and accurate historians on the contemporary scene have been taken in by the ruse.¹¹ However, the stellar and thoroughly documented work *George Washington's Sacred Fire* by Peter Lillback has proven with more than a thousand pages of argumentation that the father of our country was deeply evangelical in his convictions.¹² Secularists must honestly face such an avalanche of evidence.

DEPRAVITY AND THE CONSTITUTION

Perhaps the most remarkable evidence of a biblical worldview in the Constitution is the underlying belief in the depravity of men and women. This is in stark contrast with the French Revolution of 1789. Americans emphasized a freedom with responsibility while many French emphasized a liberty with limited responsibility. Americans started from the premise that men are basically evil and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. The French started from the premise that men are basically good. What resulted immediately from each revolution may be instructive. In America, a dynamic nation emerges with a limited government including checks and balances on the evil tendencies of men. France immediately goes through a reign of terror followed by the despotism of Napoleon.

Most American founders were horrified at what was happening in France during the French revolutionary period. John Adams found the French somewhat immoral and

¹⁰ See Paul F. Boller Jr., *George Washington and Religion* (Dallas: Southern Methodist U, 1963).

¹¹ Michael Allen and Larry Schweikart, *A Patriot's History of the United States* (New York: Sentinel, 2004), 130. The authors state that "Like Franklin, Washington tended toward Deism..."

¹² Peter A. Lillback and Jerry Newcombe, *George Washington's Sacred Fire* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Providence Forum P, 2006).

irreligious in everyday living.¹³ This was contrasted to the moral uprightness, in his view, of Americans in general (although not all as Franklin's example showed) for whom the system of government was appropriate. At a human level, George Washington was hostile to the radical revolutionaries for many reasons including their harsh treatment of Marquis de Lafayette, a beloved figure in the American Revolution.¹⁴ However, the major concern was that the French Revolution was demonstrating what the depravity of man could accomplish if left unchecked. Washington noted that "the blessed religion revealed in the Word of God will remain an eternal and awful monument to prove that the best Institutions may be abused by human depravity."¹⁵ Lillback captures the intent of Washington and by extension that of many other founders:

Washington's religion manifested itself precisely at this point in the constitutional debate. The ideas he expressed by terms such as "limited power," "the separation of powers," "the rule of the people," "checks and balances," and the "need for amendment," all existed for one simple reason—people abuse power. The idea of abuse of power and political depravity were openly admitted at the Constitutional Convention, and also seriously pondered by Washington. Political depravity is a theological concept that flows from the doctrine of human sinfulness—a basic postulate of Christian teaching. In fact, Washington asserted that human depravity could ultimately destroy the Constitution, even with the checks and balances it possessed. In his proposed Address to Congress in April 1789, he described how the Constitution, with

¹³ Cited in Brands, *First American*, 552ff.

¹⁴ Lafayette became a tragic figure due to the French Revolution. He seemed to cause animosity on both sides, the rebels and the loyalists. He escaped the guillotine and eventually went to the Southern Netherlands in an attempt to gather his family and go to the United States. Instead, he ended up in prison for a few years at the hands of a counter-revolutionary force. Washington demonstrates great relief in a letter to Lafayette when he was finally released. See Lillback, *Sacred Fire*, 783.

¹⁵ Cited in Lillback, *Sacred Fire*, 58.

all of its wisdom, could ultimately come to naught by the depravity of the people and those who govern them, since the Constitution in the hands of a corrupt people was a mere “wall of words” or a “mound of parchment.”¹⁶

In Lillback’s analysis, the connection between the design of the Constitution and a belief in human depravity is obvious, especially in Washington. Thus, it is not surprising to see Alexis de Tocqueville some years later note that Americans viewed their Christian religion, even when they did not take it seriously at the personal level, as “indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions.”¹⁷ However, perhaps the clearest statement of the founders on the issue of depravity is found in the *Federalist* No. 51:

But what is government itself but the greatest of all reflections on human nature? If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place, oblige it to control itself.¹⁸

¹⁶ Ibid., 220.

¹⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1945). This work was originally published in 1835, translated by Henry Reeve into English. A retranslation by Francis Bowen occurred in 1862. There have been numerous printings of this popular document.

¹⁸ Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, *The Federalist: A Commentary on the Constitution of the United States Being a Collection of Essays written in Support of the Constitution agreed upon September 17, 1787, by the Federal Convention*, Introduction by Edward Meade Earle (repr., New York: Random House, n.d.), 337. The so-called Federalist Papers were circulated initially as individually published essays but eventually collected in one volume. The Federalist Paper here is generally thought to be written by Hamilton or Madison.

The writer goes on to mention that such an understanding is obvious by looking at experience. The observation of nature thus goes hand in hand with biblical teaching on depravity.

That depravity is a concern in the biblical text appears in passages like Ephesians 2:1-7 and Romans 3:9-18. While evangelicals debate the extent of depravity in each man and what specific work of God erases or ameliorates such depravity, the tendency of evangelicals generally is to believe a doctrine of man's depravity. Man is a sinner. He must be saved. The sinful nature of a man, among negative implications, leads to problems in political governance.

One should not be astonished to view the founders as interested in the Bible in such a way. Eidsmoe claims that "Washington, Hamilton, Jay, Madison, and Witherspoon are more typical of the founding fathers as a whole than are Jefferson and Franklin. Their religious convictions earnestly sought to establish a government that would reflect and promote the ideals they revered."¹⁹ If Madison is the author of *Federalist* No. 51 mentioned above, it can be said of his words that he "learned this concept at the feet of the man he respectfully called 'the old Doctor,' the Rev. Witherspoon."²⁰ The founders for the most part did not fear Christianity. Instead, they allowed it to keep them grounded solidly in a biblical understanding of depravity.

"SEPARATION OF POWERS" AND "CHECKS AND BALANCES"

Consequently, the framers developed a system of Constitutional checks and balances within the federal government. First of all, there are three separate branches of government: legislative (Article I), executive (Article II), and judicial (Article III). This prevents the consolidation of power in the hands of one man (potentially tyrannical monarchy) or in the hands of a group of men (an oligarchy or aristocracy running

¹⁹ John Eidsmoe, "The Judeo-Christian Roots of the Constitution," in *Restoring the Constitution* (Dallas, TX: Probe Books, 1987), 94.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

over the other factions in the nation). Furthermore, the duties of each intrude upon the duties of those in other branches of government to deepen the checks and balances. For example, the President appoints ambassadors and Supreme Court justices, but the Congress must approve such appointments.²¹ The President and his executive branch handle foreign affairs including the execution of war.²² He is the commander in chief of the military. However, only Congress can declare war.²³ The President can make treaties with foreign powers, but the senate must ratify them.²⁴

Similarly, the legislative branch makes laws.²⁵ However, the President can veto the laws made by the legislature.²⁶ The Congress can override the veto.²⁷ Moreover, the legislature is bicameral. That is, there are two houses, a lower house of representatives and an upper house of senators. Bills must be passed by both houses, not just one.²⁸ The give and take involved in all of this makes it more difficult for any one person or group of legislators to consolidate power. For the legislature (and for the President), terms are specified that are not lifetime terms. Each person must face the people for re-election.

Finally, for the judicial branch, the President appoints its members, not the judges themselves. That is, the Court is not a self-perpetuating body. However, appointments are approved by the Senate (as stated earlier). The justices decide disputes

²¹ U. S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ U. S. Constitution, Article I, Section 8.

²⁴ U. S. Constitution, Article II, Section 2.

²⁵ See especially U. S. Constitution, Article I, Sections 7 and 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

about the law between parties. Countermanding that to some extent is the fact that the Congress can decide the limits of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and all federal courts it creates. In these ways and others, the appropriate balance of power is maintained between three branches of government with additional checks and balances to prevent the consolidation of power. Depravity in the form of abuse of power thus has a chance to be checked and prevented. The result of this approach to government has been successful enough that many other nations have copied the same general framework for how they operate in their government. The major goal is to maintain individual liberty in balance with personal responsibility.

One must also note that the biblical doctrine of depravity did not stand alone in the framers' minds when they developed this approach to government. The founders knew about the Greek city-states and the Roman Republic. They also knew the history of the British Empire with its common law and the checks and balances and liberties involved in that developing governance. In a general sense, all of these elements factor into the development of the American founding.

However, one person stands out for special mention. He is quoted more often by the framers than anyone else other than the biblical authors although he is little known.²⁹ His name is Charles de Montesquieu (1689-1755), a Frenchman who studied and wrote political philosophy that attracted many of the American founding fathers. His major work is *The Spirit of the Laws* published in 1748. He was an expert in Roman history and Greek philosophy, although he saw their systems overall as insufficient for implementation in the modern context. Nonetheless, many of the features of the ancient political systems can easily inform modern developments. Furthermore, one cannot evaluate Montesquieu as a child of continental Europe in general or France in particular. He lived for several months in England and seems to have the greatest praise for English political traditions. Thus, there are many things to say in

²⁹ Eidsmoe, "Judeo-Christian Roots of the Constitution," 79-80.

analyzing Montesquieu and the influences upon him which cannot be covered completely in this forum.

However, there are two major points whose absence would cause an inadequate view to be obtained relative to the topic at hand. First, Montesquieu argues from human nature or experience that some form of republicanism might be preferred to help maintain the balance or tension between an individual's security and freedom.³⁰ Such concerns stem from the difficulties that seem to be inherent in the social structure of humanity. While not espousing a view of depravity, one might come to the same place as Scripture by noting that such social structure needs protection if any lasting good is going to come from the governmental forms that it takes.

Second, Montesquieu proposes a separation of powers, partly through study of the English system. However, it is also true that separation of power ideas harken back to the Greek and Roman days. Pangle's commentary on Montesquieu attempts to put things in the proper place:

This understanding of the true nature of the English system emerges clearly enough in Montesquieu's description of the principles of the English constitution. The idea of preventing oppression in a republic by balancing selfish competitive factions was of course not invented in Montesquieu's England. Nor is the scheme of institutionalizing this balance through a division of governmental power an innovation. But in the English system as described by Montesquieu these ideas take on a radically new form. In addition Montesquieu's new principle of "separation of powers" goes beyond the classical aim of stabilizing the balance of competing factions and tries to create out of the competition of selfish interests a new guarantee for personal security and the rule of law.³¹

³⁰ Charles de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, Great Books of the Western World, Vol. 38, ed. Robert Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 9-13. See also Thomas Pangle, *Montesquieu's Philosophy of Liberalism: A Commentary on The Spirit of the Letters* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1973), 20-47.

³¹ Pangle, *Montesquieu's Philosophy of Liberalism*, 117.

Hence, Montesquieu's use of balance of power ideas in government actually forges creatively to new heights. The founders were able to think along the trajectory and extrapolate to their situation with the details filled in. Along the way, the American fathers would have easily seen the affinity of Montesquieu's approach to the biblical worldview that they imbibed from the religiosity of Colonial America and its recent Great Awakening.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VERSUS STATE GOVERNMENTS

A second major way in which the framers helped to put chains on depravity and thereby preserve liberty was to limit the federal government in such a way so that the various states retained more responsibilities. This sets up a kind of tension between federal and state governments that diffuses power and provides further checks on the federal government than the internal checks and balances. The principles for this overall understanding are grounded in the ninth and tenth Amendments to the Constitution:

Ninth Amendment: The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

Tenth Amendment: The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.³²

The Ninth Amendment denies a regulative principle in the Constitution in determining the rights of individuals. The rights the people have are more than are listed in the actual document. The enumerated lists do not limit the people's rights. They limit the federal government. The Tenth Amendment may be even stronger. The federal government has only those powers listed

³² These two amendments are among the most disobeyed statements of the Constitution in modern American governance.

in the Constitution. Any powers not specifically cited to belong to the federal government are automatically assumed to be powers belonging to the states or to individuals. This focus on “States’ Rights” was designed to prevent the development of a centralized despotic government. Thus, de Tocqueville noted that the “government of the states is the rule, the Federal government the exception.”³³

One might be tempted to look at the framers’ design to attempt to hold off the depravity of man as producing an inefficient system of government. Such an assessment is accurate. In the balance between security and freedom, there must be enough security to allow people to live without fear. However, there must be enough obstacles in the way of the government to allow for the maximum amount of freedom. Thus, Americans prosper without the government bearing down on them but sacrifice services in an inefficient system.

BILL OF RIGHTS AND SCRIPTURE

In 1791 the first ten amendments to the U. S. Constitution were ratified and became law. It is a matter of the historical record that Bible-believing Christians had an influence on the creation of this Bill of Rights. The powerful Baptist pastor John Leland from Virginia had enough political clout to influence James Madison to pursue aggressively an amendment guaranteeing religious liberty.³⁴ In looking at the first ten amendments, it is instructive to see what content suggests any grounding in biblical teaching.

1 -- Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

³³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Chapter 8, 118.

³⁴ See J. M. Dawson, *Baptists and the American Republic* (Nashville: Broadman, 1956), 108-109.

Here the focus is on freedom of religion, the press, and the right to petition. For now we will highlight the aspect of the freedom of religion. One must note that the amendment language goes both ways. There is to be no established church under the federal government (state governments are another matter settled elsewhere). The government does not appoint church leaders. Churches do not appoint government leaders. The language does not suggest that Christians have no right to speak publicly about political, ethical, and moral issues that affect the nation. However, influence should never morph into control.

The general passage that is at the center of discussion for this amendment is Matthew 22:21: "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." Grudem gives the generally received understanding of this biblical text when he notes that Jesus "established the principle that there is one realm of activity under the authority of civil government and another realm of activity under the direct authority of God."³⁵ Second, in the book of Acts the reader readily notices that the church is in no way connected to Rome, the empire of the first century. The domains are different; the organizations are not related. Thus, the Bible seems to support the content of the First Amendment which speaks to the relationship of the church and the state.

2 -- A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

The well-traveled debate over the right to bear arms centers on this particular amendment. If one chooses to emphasize an individual's right to bear arms, the Bible narrative shows that the disciples following Jesus carried a sword probably for protection (Luke 22:38). In this case the biblical narrative can serve as a precedent for the right to bear arms. If one chooses to emphasize a corporate right to bear arms in a corporate governmental way (some interpret the militia this way), then

³⁵ Wayne Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 99.

Romans 13:1-7 gives governmental authorities the right to bear the sword. Thus, in either reading of this text, one can see a biblical grounding of this amendment.

Amendments 3 through 7 below will be listed together since a similar principle governs the reading of each amendment.

3 -- No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

4 -- The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

5 -- No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

6 -- In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

7 -- In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

These amendments cover quartering soldiers (#3), searches by authorities (#4), and rules for trials both civil and criminal (#5, 6, 7). In a general sense all of these are rationally thought out applications of limiting governmental authority in light of possible abuses due to depravity. So, perhaps we can assert that here is some level of common sense. However, it is also possible to notice that some biblical texts speak of a kind of due process which is the point of these constitutional texts. The treatment of property with respect as is found in the Mosaic legislation would be important (e.g., Lev 19:13; Exod 22). Appropriate rules for trials such as witnesses would also be significant (e.g., Deut 17:6, 19:15). The idea of due process found in such legal texts in the Bible informs such thinking for legislative priorities in Constitutional texts.

There are some cautions that need to be mentioned here. The United States is not a covenant nation like Israel. One has the right to ask what right we have to view Mosaic legislative texts as speaking to how nations should execute their laws today. We do not want to repeat the Christian Reconstructionist mistake.³⁶ As a dispensationalist, this present author would make sure to avoid the replacement theology of the founding fathers and an over-application of OT texts to American life and experience. The best that one can do is to apply the text indirectly with dispensational sensitivity. There can be no direct application. A second caution comes from the presence in the OT of examples where due process was not the case. One could ask the Canaanites or Amalekites if they experienced due process. Nonetheless, we learn from the examples of the OT so that we can live better (e.g., 1 Cor 10:6). In that sense perhaps, it is possible that the due process of these particular amendments find an analogy in Scripture and protections against the potential expression of the depravity of governmental authorities.

³⁶ Greg Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, 3rd. ed. (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media P, 2002). In this work, Bahnsen argues for the application of the OT text in exhaustive detail in today's culture. This cannot be harmonized with a dispensational understanding of Scripture.

8 -- Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

This amendment is probably the clearest example where Constitutional law finds clear precedent expressed in the biblical text. The statement concerns the fact that the judgment or punishment must fit the crime. A person who drives 56 mph in a 55 mph zone should not be executed for this crime! This teaching is expressed in Exodus 21:23-35: "But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise." Jesus also addresses this text in his words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:38-42). Generally, this verse has been abused greatly as permission to carry out vengeance. But this would contradict teaching elsewhere in the Bible (Rom 12:19). The passage in its OT context teaches that there are precise limits to punishment that is meted out. The founding fathers would have been aware of this biblical text and understood it appropriately.³⁷

CONCLUSION

Any attempt to ground all of the Constitution in biblical teaching would be tricky business. The founders were extremely educated men and well read. Their familiarity with history, philosophy, and political theory is easily demonstrated. As a result many streams of influence combine to produce the document of the U. S. Constitution. However, most, if not all, founders embraced the Judeo-Christian worldview. The Bible was respected, read, and used. Its application in such an important matter of life such as government would not have been dismissed easily. In light of the matters discussed above, especially the issue of depravity, the Constitution is a document designed to maximize protection against political abuse and to take full advantage of the blessings of liberty. In this light, it is

³⁷ Amendments 9 and 10 have already been covered in an earlier section of this paper.

safe to suggest that there is a biblical basis for the U. S. Constitution.

Ancient Aliens or Demonic Deception?

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INTRODUCTION

Ancient Aliens on the History Channel

For the last three years the History Channel has televised a program called *Ancient Aliens*.¹ The one-hour program features interviews with scientists, authors, and archaeologists. The ancient alien theory posits that extraterrestrials with superior knowledge of science and engineering landed on earth thousands of years ago, taught early man about technology, and influenced ancient religions. Erich von Daniken² made the ancient alien theory popular in his best-selling book *Chariots of the Gods*³ published in 1968. Giorgio Tsoukalos is the consulting producer of History Channel's *Ancient Aliens* and one of its featured commentators in all three seasons. He is head of the Center for Ancient Astronaut Research as well as the publisher of *Legendary Times* magazine.

¹ This article was originally written for and delivered as a Faculty Forum paper at Baptist Bible seminary on January 30, 2012.

² Erich von Daniken is a Swiss author who is best known for his controversial claims that extraterrestrials have influenced early human civilization. He is co-founder of the Archaeology, Astronautics and SETI Research Association (AASRA) and designed the theme park Mystery Park in Interlaken, Switzerland. His 31 books have been translated into 20 languages and have sold over 68 million copies.

³ Erich von Daniken, *Chariots of the Gods* (New York: Berkley Books, 1999).

Evidence for Ancient Aliens?

Ancient alien theorists believe that life exists on other planets and that humans and extraterrestrials have crossed paths before. They point to two types of evidence to support their ideas. First, they point to ancient religious texts in which humans witness and interact with gods or other heavenly beings who descend from the sky (sometimes in spaceships) and who possess spectacular powers. Second, they point to huge stone structures such as Stonehenge, the ruins at Puma Punku, and the pyramids of Giza in Egypt and argue that early Stone Age man did not have the technology or ability to build these wonders of the world.

The Mission of Ancient Aliens

Why did the ancient aliens come to earth? The *Ancient Aliens* program gives the following reasons:

If ancient aliens visited earth, what was their mission, and is there evidence that points to when they will return? Ancient Sumerian tablets describe an alien race, known as the Anunnaki, who come to earth to mine for gold. Egyptian hieroglyphs depict hybrid creatures that were part man, part animal. Mysterious crop circles and unexplainable crystal skulls are thought to contain messages that man has yet to decipher. Strange evidence may exist in multiple cultures throughout history suggesting that aliens came here to explore, excavate raw materials, experiment on human beings and even for pure conquest.⁴

⁴ *Ancient Aliens* episode "The Mission" was shown on the History Channel on 4 May 2010.

**IS THERE EVIDENCE FOR
ANCIENT ALIENS FROM MYTHS
AND LEGENDS?**

Atrahasis

Atrahasis is an Akkadian polytheistic account of creation and flood.⁵ Atrahasis begins with the powerful gods (Anunnaki) forcing the lower gods (the Igigi gods) to do all the work. The lower gods revolted and marched on the house of the god Enlil and demanded that they be relieved of digging the rivers and canals. The Anunnaki decided to create man as a result. In Atrahasis, humans are made from clay mixed with blood and flesh from a slaughtered god.⁶

In his book *There Were Giants Upon the Earth* Zecharia Sitchin⁷ argues that the Anunnaki were space travelers and interplanetary settlers who came from the planet Nibiru to earth in need of gold. Sitchin equates the Anunnaki of Atrahasis with Elohim in Genesis. Sitchin translates Elohim as gods who said, Let us make man in our image. He claims that the Annunaki then made the Adam in their image.⁸

⁵ Atrahasis was written in cuneiform script and it was found in Sippar. It is currently located in the British museum (room 56). See Clyde Fant and Mitchell Reddish, *Lost Treasures of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 12.

⁶ Bill Arnold and Bryan Beyer, eds., *Readings From The Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 21-30.

⁷ Zecharia Sitchin was born in the Soviet Union and raised in Israel. He spent sixty years researching and translating Sumerian cuneiform tablets and other ancient texts and has written many books promoting the ancient alien theory.

⁸ Zecharia Sitchin, *There Were Giants Upon The Earth* (Rochester, VT: Bear & Company, 2010), 2.

Sitchin writes,

For more than thirty years now, since the publication of *The 12th Planet*, I have done my best to show that there is no conflict between Bible and Science, Faith and Knowledge. The Link is missing I said, because someone jumped the gun on Evolution and used sophisticated genetic engineering to upgrade a *Homo erectus* or *Homo ergaster* (as some prefer to call his African cousin) by mixing his genes with their advanced genes. That someone was the biblical Elohim (whom the Sumerian called Anunnaki)_ who came to Earth from their planet Nibiru, fashioned the Adam, then took the Daughters of Man as wives. That was possible, I explained, because life on their planet and on our planet is based on the same DNA. ... But through the grace of Fate and the professionalism of dedicated archaeologists, such evidence—a physical body of an Anunnaki—does exist. It is the skeletal remains of Nin.Puabi.⁹

In Genesis Moses explains how God created man in his image:¹⁰ “So God created man in his image, in the image of God he created him, male and female He created them” (Gen 1:26). The word for God in this verse is Elohim. Elohim is a plural word, but it is used with the singular verb created. The Hebrew text uses the singular pronoun “his” and not the plural pronoun “their.” Elohim refers to the one Creator God and not to a plurality of gods (aliens) as Sitchin asserts.

Gilgamesh Epic

The Akkadian version of the Epic of Gilgamesh was discovered by Austen Henry Layard in the library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh in 1849. The epic was found on twelve

⁹ Ibid., 343-44.

¹⁰ For more information on what Genesis teaches about the creation of man and my critique of ancient Babylonian and Egyptian myths about man’s creation see my article: Gary Gromacki, “Adam: Man or Myth?” in *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 15, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 24-67.

Akkadian tablets. The first modern translation was published in the early 1870s by George Smith. The discovery created quite a stir among Bible scholars because of the similarities between the Gilgamesh Epic and the Genesis Flood narrative (Genesis 6-9).

Gilgamesh was a ruler of the dynasty of Uruk. He was the son of the goddess Ninsun and an unknown man. Gilgamesh was two-thirds god and one-third man. The first ten tablets describe the adventures of Gilgamesh and his close friend Enkidu.

Erich von Daniken gives his interpretation of the ten tablets in his book *Chariots of the Gods*:

The first clay tablet relates that the victorious hero Gilgamesh built the wall around Uruk. We read that the god of heaven lived in a stately home which contained grainaries and that guards stood on the town walls. We learn that Gilgamesh was a mixture of god and man—two-thirds god, one-third man. Pilgrims who came to Uruk gazed up at him in fear and trembling because they had never seen his like for beauty and strength. In other words, the beginning of the narrative contains the idea of interbreeding between god and man yet again.

The second tablet tells us that another figure Enkidu was created by the goddess of heaven, Aruru. Enkidu is described in great detail. His whole body was covered with hair; he wore skins, ate grass in the fields, and drank at the same watering place as the cattle.

The third tablet goes on to tell us about a cloud of dust which came from the distance. The heavens roared, the earth quaked, and finally the sun god came and seized Enkidu with mighty wings and claws. We read in astonishment that he lay like lead on Enkidu's body and that the weight of his body seemed to him like the weight of a boulder. Even if we grant the old storytellers a fertile imagination and discount the additions made by translators and copyists, the incredible thing about the account still remains: How could the old chroniclers have known that the weight of the body becomes as heavy as lead at a certain acceleration? Nowadays we know all about the forces of gravity and acceleration. When an astronaut is pressed back into his seat by a force of several G's at takeoff, it has all been calculated in advance. But how did this idea occur to the old chroniclers?

The fifth tablet narrates how Gilgamesh and Enkidu set out to visit the abode of the gods together. The tower in which the goddess Irninis lived could be seen gleaming in the distance long before they reached it. The arrows and missiles which the cautious wanderers rained on the guards rebounded harmlessly. And as they reached the precinct of the gods, a voice roared at them, "Turn back. No mortal comes to the holy mountain where the gods dwell; he who looks the gods in the face must die." "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live," it says in Exodus ...

On the seventh tablet is the first eyewitness account of a space trip told by Enkidu. He flew for four hours held to the brazen talons of an eagle. This is how his story goes literally: He said to me, "Look down at the land. What does it look like? Look at the sea. How does it seem to you? And the land was like a mountain and the sea was like a lake. And again he flew for four hours and said to me. Look down at the land. What does it look like? Look at the sea. How does it seem to you? And the earth was like a garden and the sea like the water channel of a gardener. And he flew higher yet another four hours and spoke: Look down at the land. What does it look like? Look at the sea? How does it seem to you? And the land looked like porridge and the sea like a water trough." In this case some living creature must have seen the earth from a great height. The account is too accurate to have been the product of pure imagination. Who could have possibly said that the land looks like porridge and the sea like a water trough if some conception of the globe from above had not existed. Because the earth actually does look like a jigsaw puzzle of porridge and water troughs from a great height.¹¹

In the eleventh tablet Gilgamesh meets Utnapishtim who has been called the Babylonian Noah. After Enkidu died, Gilgamesh was filled with grief. He roamed the earth and crossed the waters of death in a boat looking for immortality. Beyond the waters of death Gilgamesh encountered Utnapishtim (also called Atrahasis) who told him the story of the great flood. According to Utnapishtim the god Ea warned him that a flood was coming and that he should build a boat. The boat should be

¹¹ Von Daniken, *Chariots of the Gods*, 56-59.

120 cubits square, seven stories high, covered with bitumen, and loaded with food, gold, silver, his family, craftsmen, and animals. The storm lasted six days and six nights. When the boat finally grounded on a mountain, a dove was sent out, then a swallow, and finally a raven. When Utnapishtim came out of the ark, he offered sacrifices, around which the gods flocked like flies.¹²

There are many similarities between the Gilgamesh Epic and the Genesis Flood. In each account the flood was divinely planned. Utnapishtim is the tenth antediluvian king, while Noah is the tenth patriarch from Adam. In each account the hero receives a divine warning about a coming flood. In each account the family of the hero is saved. In each account animals of every kind are taken on board the boat. In each account the boat had decks and was sealed with bitumen. In each account the flood came because of rain falling on the earth. In each account people perish outside the boat. In each account birds (dove and raven) are sent out of the boat. In each account the boat is grounded on a mountain. In each account a sacrifice is offered by the hero after coming out of the boat.

Erich von Daniken writes, "If we work on the hypothesis that the Epic of Gilgamesh came to Egypt from the Sumerians by way of the Assyrians and Babylonians, and that the young Moses found it there and adapted it to his own ends, then the Sumerian story of the flood, and not the biblical one would be the genuine account."¹³

While it is true that the Gilgamesh Epic is probably older than Genesis, that does not mean that it is more accurate or historical account than Genesis. It also does not mean that Moses borrowed from the Gilgamesh Epic. The similarities of the two accounts show that the global flood was an historical event. But the differences show that Moses did not borrow from this account but under the inspiration of the Spirit wrote a true, historical account of the global flood (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:19-21).

¹² Arnold and Beyer, *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, 66-70.

¹³ Von Daniken, *Chariots of the Gods*, 62.

There are also several significant differences between Genesis and the Gilgamesh Epic. Genesis indicates that God sent the global flood because of violence on the earth (Gen 6:13). In the Gilgamesh epic no moral cause is given for the flood. The gods capriciously decided to destroy all people.

The Bible depicts God as sovereign in control of the global flood (cf. Ps 29). In the Gilgamesh Epic there are many gods and they are not in control as evidenced by the statement, "...the gods were terror stricken at the deluge" (XI.113).

In Genesis the ark of Noah had three decks (Gen 6:16), while in the Gilgamesh Epic the boat had seven decks (XI, 60-61). The ark of Genesis is shaped like a barge (Gen 6:15) while the boat in the Gilgamesh Epic is shaped like a cube ("its width and its length shall be equal") (XI.30).

In Genesis it rained 40 days and 40 nights and Noah and his family were on the ark for 371 days. In the Gilgamesh Epic the flood lasted seven days (XI.127-130 = "Six days and six nights the wind blew, the downpour, the tempest and the flood overwhelmed the land. When the seventh day arrived, the tempest, the flood, which had fought like an army, subsided in its onslaught.").

In Genesis Noah sent out a raven and then a dove (Gen 8:7-8). In the Gilgamesh Epic Utnapishtim sent a dove, then a swallow, and finally a raven (XI.145-153). In Genesis after the flood Noah offered a sacrifice that pleased the Lord (Gen 8:21). The Gilgamesh Epic indicates that Utnapishtim offered a sacrifice as well, and "The gods smelled the savor, the gods gathered like flies around the sacrifice." In the Gilgamesh epic the gods crowded around because they had not eaten any food for a period of time and they were starved.

Greek Mythology

The *Theogony* ("birth of the gods") is a poem by Hesiod (8th-7th century BC) describing the origins and genealogies of the gods of the ancient Greeks. Hesiod's *Theogony* is a synthesis of a variety of local Greek traditions concerning the gods organized as a narrative that tells how they came to be and how they

established control over the cosmos. It is the first Greek mythical cosmogony. The *Theogony* tells the story of the battle of the Titans. Ancient alien theorists believe that the gods of Greek mythology were in reality ancient aliens who fought against one another.¹⁴

How did the battle of the Titans come about? The Greek god Cronus married the Titaness Rhea. From their union came Demeter, Hestia, Hades, and Poseidon. Fearing that one of his descendants would dethrone him, Cronus swallowed each of his children as soon as they were born. Rhea found this situation more than she could bear, so she consulted Uranus and Ge before she gave birth to Zeus. When Zeus was born, she concealed Zeus in a cave on Crete, giving Cronus a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes to swallow. The baby Zeus was nurtured on the milk of the goat Amaltheia. Today the Greek expression for the cornucopia (horn of plenty) is still the horn of Amaltheia. When Zeus grew up, he encountered his father Cronus. He used a potion to force Cronus to disgorge all the children in his belly along with the stone he had swallowed instead of Zeus. Zeus took the stone to the Oracle at Delphi and set it up as an eternal symbol of his superiority. The children of Cronus decided they wanted to punish their father and rallied around the leadership of Zeus to wage war on Cronus. Cronus took as his allies the majority of his brothers the Titans, and so the famous battle of the Titans was fought against the future gods of Olympus. Oceanus (the father of all things) and his daughter Styx, her children Kratos (Power), Bia (Violence), Zelus (Zeal), Nike (Victory), and Prometheus took the side of the gods of Olympus. Ge (the mother of the Titans) aided the gods of Olympus by prophesying that they would be victorious only if they liberated the Cyclops and the Hundred Handed Ones, whom Cronus had imprisoned in Tartarus. Zeus liberated them and they played a decisive role in his victory. Cyclops gave Zeus his thunderbolt; Poseidon, his trident; and Hades, the "hat of darkness," a dog skin helmet which made him invisible. The Titans made their camp on Mt. Orthrys, while the gods led by

¹⁴ *Ancient Aliens* episode "Aliens, Gods and Heroes" shown on the History Channel on 17 November 2011.

Zeus made their camp on Mt. Olympus. The war lasted 10 years. Hades (made invisible by his helmet) crept up on Cronus and stole his weapons. While Poseidon menaced Cronus with his trident, Zeus finished him off with his thunderbolt. The Hundred Handed Ones bombarded the other Titans with rocks. A sudden yell from the god Pan made them turn on their heels and run (“panic”). The Titans who survived the war were imprisoned in Tartarus, where the Hundred Handed Ones stood guard over them. The victorious Olympian gods ascended into the sky.¹⁵

Sitchin believes that the actions of Alexander the Great were affected by his belief that he was a son of the gods. Alexander the Great believed that his father was the Egyptian god Amon. Alexander then was a demigod. Alexander went to Delphi, a sacred site in southern Greece to consult the oracle. At Delphi in the temple to the god Apollo the legendary priestess (the Sibyl) would go into a trance and speaking for the god would answer the visitor’s question. Alexander went to Siwa in Egypt to a temple dedicated the Egyptian god Amon whom the Greeks considered to be the Egyptian “Zeus.” The secret revealed to Alexander was that his true father (Amon) was the god Marduk in Babylon. As a result of finding this information out Alexander set out for Babylon with the Greek army. Alexander’s Greek army defeated the Persians, and he marched on to Babylon and reached the city in 331 BC. Alexander the Great rode through its magnificent Ishtar Gate (now in Berlin’s Museum of Ancient Near East) But Alexander found the god lying dead in a golden coffin--his body immersed in special oils for preservation. Alexander was determined to make Babylon the capital of his new empire. But on June 10, 323 BC, Alexander died of a fever.¹⁶

¹⁵ Maria Mavromataki, *Greek Mythology and Religion: Cosmogony, the Gods, Religious Customs, the Heroes* (Athens, Greece: Editions Hailis, 1997), 8-9.

¹⁶ Sitchin, *There Were Giants Upon The Earth*, 4-18.

Sitchin argues,

For reasons that defy understanding, it is the norm in scholarly circles to classify the records of ancient civilizations thus: If the ancient tale or text deals with kings, it is considered part of Royal Annals. If it deals with heroic personalities, it is an epic. But if the subject is gods, it is classified as Myth; for who in his right scientific mind would believe as the ancient Greeks (or Egyptians or Babylonians) did, that the gods were actual beings—omnipotent, sky roaming, engaged in battles, scheming trials and tribulations for heroes—and even fathering those heroes by having sex with human females. So it is ironic that the saga of Alexander the Great is treated as historical fact.¹⁷

Sanskrit Texts from India

Many Sanskrit texts written in India dating back to 6000 BC contain references to mythical flying machines called vimanas. Hindu scripture describes an enormous flying creature called a Garuda that shook the ground when it landed on earth. Ancient alien theorists think that this supposed creature may have been a misinterpreted alien spacecraft.¹⁸

Chinese Legends

Chinese legends tell of the Han leader Huangdi arriving on earth on a flying yellow dragon. Ancient alien theorists believe that this dragon may have been a spacecraft.¹⁹

¹⁷ Zecharia Sitchin, *There Were Giants Upon the Earth*, 14-15.

¹⁸ *Ancient Aliens* episode “The Evidence” shown on the History Channel on 27 April 2010.

¹⁹ *Ancient Aliens* episode “The Visitors” shown on the History Channel on 27 April 2010.

American Indian Legends

The Hopi and Zuni people celebrate Kachinas, gods from the sky, whose headdresses and costumes appear to represent modern helmets and protective clothing. Giorgio Tsoukalos, Director for Ancient Astronaut Research and publisher of *Legendary Times Magazine* argues,

For example, Native Americans still today refer to a train as a fire horse, a throwback to a time when they did not have the word train in their vocabulary. The same applies to the things and events our ancestors wrote down. They had no way of calling a flying object by the words aircraft or plane so they did the next best thing. They described it with objects with which they were most familiar in their everyday lives. Misunderstood technology. So if there are detailed, intricate descriptions of beings that descended from the sky on flying shields or fiery chariots and taught ancient humanity in various academic disciplines in the remote past, then we must start to explore these accounts from another perspective.²⁰

IS THERE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR ANCIENT ALIENS?

Ancient alien theorists argue that huge stone constructions like the Temple at Baalbek, the pyramids of Giza in Egypt, Stonehenge in England, the Moai of Easter Island, and the stone ruins of Puma Punku could not have been built by Stone Age man. The technical engineering precision seems to indicate that ancient aliens must have done the work themselves or taught ancient man technological skills and gave them tools to use to construct these great structures. The stones from these structures have been cut with such precision that it appears that machine tools were used to cut them. Where did these tools come from? How were these huge blocks of stone put into place? Ancient man was too primitive. Therefore, ancient aliens

²⁰ In the foreword of the book by Eric von Daniken, *Twilight of the Gods* (Pampton Plains, NJ: New Page Books), 12.

did it or gave ancient man technology (that we do not possess) to do it.

Temple at Baalbek, Lebanon

The temple of Baalbek is located about 50 miles northeast of Beirut, the capital of Lebanon. It was once the greatest Roman temple in the world. In Roman times the city of Baalbek was called Heliopolis, the city of the Sun. The platform below the Roman temple is one of the great enigmas of the ancient world as it holds stones that weigh hundreds of tons each. No one knows how they were transported.

Philip Coppens writes, "The Russian scientist Matest Agrest in 1959 proposed that Baalbek was used as a launch platform for extraterrestrial spaceships. Indeed, until NASA moved the gigantic Saturn V rocket to its launch pad on a huge tracked vehicle, no one had transported such a weight as the stones of Baalbek."²¹

Pyramids of Giza in Egypt

One of the big puzzles for secular archaeology has been the origin of the pyramids in Egypt. The pyramids at Giza were high quality structures when they were first built at the beginning of the kingdom of Egypt. How could the ancient Egyptians build the pyramids at Giza?

Don Chittick writes,

If the Great Pyramid was completed in about twenty years as Egyptologists generally claim, then some arithmetic will aid in grasping the magnitude of the logistical problems involved. The Great Pyramid is reliably estimated to consist of a total of 2.3 million blocks of stone. Of that number, there were tens of thousands of stone blocks weighing 15 tons and upwards. The most massive stones, of which there were about 100 or more, weighed in excess of 70 tons. The average block weighed about 2.5

²¹ Philip Coppens, *Ancient Alien Question*, 106.

tons, and there were millions of them. If the pyramid was completed in twenty years and contains 2.3 million blocks, and the stonemasons worked ten hours a day, 365 days a year, it would require that 31 blocks per hour to be put in place. If, however, because of the agricultural layoff, only three months were allowed for working, that figure would rise to 128 blocks per hour. There would need to be a continual supply of blocks quarried, as well as moved from the quarry to the construction site. Even using the best modern equipment, the task would almost be an impossibility.”²²

Stonehenge in England

Stonehenge is a composed of large standing stones in a circle. Archaeologists believe that Stonehenge was built from 3000 to 2000 BC. The sarsens (name for the large stones) came from Marlborough Downs. How were the large stones transported? Did they load the stones on boats and then drag them overland? Did an Ice Age glacier move the stones? Eric von Daniken believes that alien astronauts visited earth in the past and had a role in building Stonehenge.²³

The Moai of Easter Island

Easter island is located 2350 miles off the coast of Chile. It is famous for its colossal statues called Moai. There are 887 giant stone heads that guard its coastline. The average height of each of the Moai is 13 feet high and the approximate weight is 14 tons. How could humans without sophisticated tools or knowledge of engineering make and transport these huge stone statues?

²² Donald Chittick, *The Puzzle of Ancient Man*, 3rd ed. (Newberg, OR: Creation Compass, 2006), 128-29.

²³ Von Daniken, *Chariots of the Gods*, 115.

Eric von Daniken writes,

Even if people with lively imaginations have tried to picture the Egyptian pyramids being built by a vast army of workers using the heave-ho method, a similar method would have been impossible on Easter Island for lack of manpower. Even 2000 men working day and night would not be nearly enough to carve these colossal figures out of the steel hard volcanic stone with rudimentary tools—and at least a part of the population must have tilled the barren fields, gone fishing, woven cloth and made ropes. No, 2000 men alone could not have made the gigantic statues. And a larger population is inconceivable on Easter Island. Then who did do the work? And how did they manage it? And why do the statues stand around the edge of the island and not in the interior? What cult did they serve?²⁴

Pacal's Sarcophagus

Pacal the Great ruled over the Mayan city of Palenque, in what is now southern Mexico, during the seventh century AD. When he died, he was buried inside a pyramid called the Temple of Inscriptions. The intricately carved lid of his sarcophagus reflects Mayan art. Ancient alien theorists believe that Pacal is pictured in a spaceship during takeoff, with his hand on a control panel, his foot on a pedal, and an oxygen tube in his mouth.

Erich von Daniken writes,

In 1935 a stone relief that very probably represents the god Kukumatz (in Yucatan, Kukulcan) was found in Palenque (Old Kingdom). A genuinely unprejudiced look at this picture would make even the most die hard skeptic stop and think. There sits a human being, with the upper part of his body bent forward like a racing motorcyclist; today any child would identify his vehicle as a rocket. It is pointed at the front, then changes to strangely grooved indentations like inlet ports, widens out, and terminates at the tail in a darting flame. The crouching being himself is manipulating a number of indefinable controls and has the heel of his left foot on a

²⁴ Ibid., 112.

kind of pedal. His clothing is appropriate: short trousers with a broad belt, a jacket with a modern Japanese opening at the neck, and a closely fitting bands at arms and legs. With our knowledge of similar structures, we should be surprised if the complicated headgear were missing. And there it is with the usual indentations and tubes and something like antennae on top. Our space traveler—he is clearly depicted as one—is not only bent forward tensely; he is also looking intently at an apparatus hanging in front of his face. The astronaut's front seat is separated by struts from the rear portion of the vehicle, in which symmetrically arranged boxes, circles, points and spirals can be seen.²⁵

Nazca Lines and Figures in Peru

In a high plateau in Peru's Nazca Desert, a series of parallel roads and ancient designs stretching more than 50 miles has baffled archaeologists for decades. Erich von Daniken believes that the lines were ancient runways for spaceships of aliens. Geometric shapes which include drawings of animals, birds, and humans, some measuring 600 feet across can also be seen and appreciated only when flying over them. There is no evidence that the Nazca people who lived in the area from 300 BC to AD 800 invented flying machines.²⁶

Tiwanaku and Puma Puncu

Tiwanaku and Puma Puncu are located in the Andes mountains in Peru. Erich von Daniken calls Tiwanaku "a base camp for the gods." He writes,

What would you say if I told you there is a place 13,000 feet high up in the Andes that according to ancient Inca traditions, was built in a single night by the gods? A place where huge stone slabs lie strewn around like discarded playing cards on the floor? Stone slabs that have been carefully cut and transported and yet about

²⁵ Ibid., 122-23.

²⁶ Ibid., 20-22.

which the Spanish chroniclers—writing 400 years ago—said that no man could have moved? A place where gigantic blocks of andesite were cut and worked with incredible precision and archaeologists expect us to believe that it was Stone Age men that did it? A place in which a calendar was discovered that reaches back 15,000 years into the past? A calendar that even shows the phases of the moon for every day and every hour! Let me tell you. This place really exists. It's called Tiwanaku.²⁷

Coppins writes,

Puma Puncu is one of the world's most enigmatic sites. The stones are not only gigantic in size, but they also show chiseling that is so precise and intricate that it is beyond the means of ordinary tools, but required machinery on par with our most modern equipment. Even though we could reproduce some of the chiseling in the rocks, there are so many diverse shapes, channels, tubes and holes that it is not simple to ascertain their purpose.²⁸

One of the construction blocks at Puma Puncu is estimated to be 440 tons and others weigh between 100 and 150 tons each. There are a series of complex blocks (the so-called H letter type blocks) which have 80 surfaces each—rather than the normal six surfaces on a normal brick. The sides are smooth. They have the same diameter and are precisely parallel. The precise workmanship of the stones seems nearly impossible without some type of modern tools or machines. Diamond is a 10 on the Moh's hardness scale for rocks and minerals. The tools used to cut the stones must have been made of diamond. Did ancient man use machine tools with diamonds to cut these stones? Ancient alien theorists think that extraterrestrials with advanced technology cut the blocks of stone and moved them into place.²⁹

²⁷ Von Daniken, *Twilight of the Gods*, 25.

²⁸ Coppins, *Ancient Alien Question*, 162.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 162-63.

The Mitchell-Hedges Crystal Skull

Philip Coppens tells the story of the Mitchell-Hedges Crystal Skull. The crystal skull was made famous in the movie *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. Philip Coppens shows a picture of the crystal skull in his book *The Ancient Alien Question*. He writes,

The skull was named after its discoverer, the adventurer F. A. “Mike” Mithcell-Hedges, if we believe the official version of its find. The official version goes that the skull was found in the ruins of Lubantuun in Belize (then British Honduras) in 1924 during an archaeological survey of the sight. This “skull of doom” as Mitchell-Hedges labeled it was no referenced until 1931, and the seven year gap has been used by skeptics to argue that the story of its discovery is a lie. In his autobiography *Danger My Ally* (1954), Mitchell-Hedges stated that the Skull of Doom is made of pure rock crystal and according to scientists it must have taken 150 years, generation after generation working all the days of their lives, patiently rubbing down with sand an immense block of rock crystal until the perfect skull emerged. It is at least 3600 years old and according to legend was used by the High Priest of the Maya when performing esoteric rites. It is said that when he willed death with the help of the skull death invariably followed. It has been described as the embodiment of evil.³⁰

Coppens gives his evaluation of the skull:

In the case of the Mitchell-Hedges skull and some others, it is clear they were not made by a technology we know and their origins have to found in a lost or unknown—if not alien—civilization. The evidence suggests that these skulls date back to the Mayan world, and that one or two may have come from Teotihuacan, the City of the Gods. Is it a coincidence that in Mayan creation mythology, there was a mystical skull said to be that of a god, and that this god—this mysterious skull---spoke to the Mayan people?³¹

³⁰ Ibid., 132.

³¹ Ibid., 139.

The Sumerian Kings List

The Sumerian Kings List was discovered at Nippur during the excavations that started in 1890 by John Peters and resumed later by John Hayes (1893). The list contains the names of pre-flood Sumerian kings. The list contains the line “after the flood had swept over, when the kingship was lowered from heaven, the kingship was in Kish.” Sitchin argues that the long lives of the Sumerian kings were in reality ancient aliens who ruled the earth.³²

Here is the list of Sumerian Kings and the lengths of their reigns:

- Alulim of Eridu: 8 sars (28,800 years)
- Alalgar of Eridug: 10 sars (36,000 years)
- En-Men-Lu-Ana of Bad-Tibira: 12 sars (43,200 years)
- En-Men-Gal-Ana-of Bab-Tibira: 8 sars (28,000 years)
- Dumuzi of Bab-Tibira, the shepherd: 10 sars (36,000 years)
- En-Sipad-Zid-Ana of Larag: 8 sars (28,800 years)
- En-Men-Dur-Ana of Zimbar: 5 sars and 5 ners (21,000 years)
- Ubara-Tutu of Shuruppag: 5 sars and 1 ner (18,600 years)
- Zin-Suddu- the name is not present on all lists

Genesis indicates that people who lived before the global flood of Noah lived for several centuries before they died. The list of names in the genealogy of Adam to Noah gives a list of humans (not aliens) who lived a long time before they died. The names in the genealogy of Genesis 5 were not kings. Adam lived to be 930 years old and then he died (Gen 5:5). Seth died at the age of 912 (Gen 5:6-8). Enosh died at the age of 905 (Gen 5:9-11). Kenan died at the age of 910 (Gen 5:12-14). Mahalalel died at the age of 895 (Gen 5:15-17). Jared died at the age of 962 (Gen 5:18-20). Enoch lived 365 years and was taken to heaven and did not die (Gen 5:21-24). Methuselah lived was born in the year 687 (from creation). He lived to be 969 years before his

³² Zecharia Sitchin, “When Kingship Was Brought Down From Heaven” in *There Were Giants Upon the Earth*, 83-98.

death (Gen 5:25-27). Methuselah died just before the flood came in year 1656 from creation. Lamech lived 595 years and he died (Gen 5:28-31).

What are we to make of the ages of these men before the flood? Are these exaggerations or real ages? John Whitcomb writes,

Since each named patriarch begat sons and daughters and the age of fathers at the birth of each is named son ranged from 65 to 500 years before the Flood, the biblical record clearly implies that (1) antediluvians lived typically for centuries, (2) their procreative powers persisted also for centuries, and (3) through the combined effects of long lives and large families, the earth could have been filled with people by the time of the Flood (Gen.1:28; 6:1, 11, 13). This in turn implies that not many thousands of years elapsed between Creation and the Flood or between the Flood and the present.³³

Whitcomb also writes,

The great ages of men before the Flood cannot be modified by assuming, for example, that years before the Flood were only one tenth as long as our years. This would indeed make Methuselah a reasonable 97 years old at death. But it would also make Mahalalel and Enoch fathers at the age of six. Obviously, the Scriptures expect these large numbers to be taken at face value. The famous Sumerian King List (c. 2000 B.C.) lists eight kings each of whom is said to have ruled for an average of 30,000 years before the Flood. "Then the Flood swept over the earth." After the Flood, the reigns of kings are listed as being much lower. This must be a highly exaggerated oral tradition of the great longevity of pre-Flood men as correctly preserved in the inspired text of Genesis 5.³⁴

³³ John Whitcomb, *The Early Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 136.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

ARE ANCIENT ALIENS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE?

Was Enoch Abducted by Aliens and Was Noah a Child of the Extraterrestrials?

Erich von Daniken points to the Genesis Apocryphon of the Dead Sea Scrolls for evidence that Enoch was abducted by aliens and that Noah was a child of extraterrestrials.. He writes in a section entitled “Noah: a Child of the ETs”:

Consequently Noah, the survivor of the Flood was not just anybody. Admittedly, his earthly father is given as Lamech, but Lamech never fathered his son. You can read about this in the Lamech scroll, one of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls. It tells how Lamech returned home one day from a long journey of several months. Upon entering his tent, he found a young boy who did not seem to be of his family. He had different eyes, a different hair color, and even a different skin color. Furious, Lamech confronted his wife, but she swore by all that is holy to her that she had not been unfaithful, neither with a soldier nor with one of the sons of God. Worried, Lamech set off to ask his father for advice. This worthy one was none other than Methuselah himself. He too was unable to help and turned to his own father for help, namely Lamech’s grandfather. This was Enoch, the seventh antediluvian prophet. Enoch said to his son Methuselah that he should tell Lamech to accept this strange child as if it were his own. The heavenly beings had laid their seed in the lap of his wife without sexually abusing her. This young cuckoo was destined to become the progenitor of a new race after the Flood. Lamech was to call the lad Noah. And he did. What does this delightful story have to do with the return of the gods? This episode shows that Enoch—Lamech’s grandfather—already knew about the coming flood catastrophe. In other words, the Flood was no natural catastrophe, it was planned. And the Most High (the starship captain) who had had Enoch kidnapped told him this personally. Who arranged the artificial insemination of Lamech’s wife? The same space travelers who also instructed Enoch in several branches of science and carried him away from Earth in a fiery chariot. Enoch is another one who after a long absence is expected to return to earth.”³⁵

³⁵ Von Daniken, *Twilight of the Gods*, 161-62.

What does the Bible teach about Enoch? Enoch lived 65 years and became the father of Methuselah (Gen 5:21). After Methuselah was born Enoch walked with God for 300 years (Gen 5:22-23). Enoch was a prophet as he walked with God. Jude 14 says, "Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.'" Enoch prophesied about the second coming of Christ to the earth long before the first coming of Jesus into the world. He predicted that the Lord would come to earth with thousands of his saints to judge and punish the ungodly for their sinful words and deeds. The saints probably is a reference to holy ones or good angels.

Enoch lived 365 years and then he was taken to heaven. People searched for Enoch, but he could not be found. Enoch did not experience death. He was caught up to heaven before he died. He was raptured. He is one of only two people in the OT not to experience death. The other man was Elijah. Elijah was caught up to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kgs 2:10).

Hebrews 11:5-6 says, "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death and was not found, because God had taken him; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Were the Sons of God in Genesis 6 Ancient Aliens?

Who were the Sons of God and the daughters of men in Genesis 6? Here are the possible views.

The Sons of Gods were Ancient Aliens who married women (Erich Von Daniken)

Erich Von Daniken in his book *Chariots of the Gods* gives this view of the Sons of God in Genesis 6.

As yet undefinable ages ago an unknown spaceship discovered our planet. The crew of the spaceship soon found out that the earth had all the prerequisites for intelligent life to develop. Obviously the “man” of those times was no *homo sapiens* but something rather different. The spacemen artificially fertilized some female members of the species, put them into a deep sleep, so ancient legends say, and departed. Thousands of years later the space travelers returned and found scattered specimens of the genus *homo sapiens*. They repeated their breeding experiment several times until they finally produced a creature intelligent enough to have the rules of society imparted to it. The people of that age were still barbaric. Because there was a danger that they might retrogress and mate with animals again, the space travelers destroyed the unsuccessful specimens or took them with them to settle them on other continents. The first communities and the first skills came into being; rock faces and cave walls were painted, pottery was discovered, and the first attempts at architecture were made. These first men had tremendous respect for the space travelers. Because they came from somewhere absolutely unknown and then returned there again, they were “gods” to them. For some mysterious reason the “gods” were interested in passing on their intelligence. They took care of the creatures they bred they wanted to protect them from corruption and preserve them from evil. They wanted to ensure that their community developed constructively. They wiped out the freaks and saw to it that the remainder received the basic requirements for a society capable of development.³⁶

Were the Sons of God ancient aliens who married women and had giants? Evangelicals would reject that interpretation. Evangelicals, though, give three legitimate views for the sons of God.

***The Sons of God were Descendants of Seth
who Married Ungodly Cainite Women***

This view states that the sons of God were descendants of the godly Seth who sinned by intermarrying with the women of the ungodly line of Cain. There are several arguments for this

³⁶ Von Daniken, *Chariots of the Gods*, 70.

view. First, the context focuses on the contrast between the godly line of Seth and the ungodly line of Cain in Genesis 4-5. Second, Moses referred to Israel as “my son,” so godly people can be called sons of God (Exod 4:22). God does not want his people to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. God desired his people to marry believers and not unbelievers. Abraham told his servant not to get a wife for Isaac from the daughters of the Canaanites (Gen 24:3-4). Isaac told Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman (Gen 28:1). Third, Moses did not use the regular Hebrew word for angel (*malak*) in Genesis 6:1-2, a word he used 28 times in the Pentateuch. Fourth, the Nephilim were the offspring of the sons of God and daughters of men, and they are described as mighty men, men of renown (Gen 6:4). The word mighty men, the Hebrew word *gibbor*, always refers to men and never to the offspring of angels and men (cf. Judg 6:12).

***The Sons of God were Ancient Kings
who Married a Harem of Wives***

This view states that the sons of God refer to despots who perpetuated the corrupt lifestyle of Lamech by establishing harems. Their sin was that of polygamy. There are several arguments for this view. First, this is an old view as it was espoused by the Aramaic Targums and the Greek translation of Symmachus which reads “the sons of the kings or lords.” Second, the Hebrew word for “God” in Genesis 6:1 (*Elohim*) is used in the OT to refer to judges or rulers (cf. Exodus 21:6).

***The Sons of God were Demons
Who had Sexual Relations with Women***

This view states that the sons of God were demons (fallen angels) who invaded our planet and had sexual relations with women. The demons assumed human form, seduced women, and produced an offspring of giants. This perversion was a Satanically inspired attempt to corrupt the human race and thus ruin the Messianic line and prevent Messiah from coming. The serpent (Satan) knew of the promise of the Messiah which God

gave to Adam and Eve (Gen 3:15). He knew that the seed of the woman would defeat him. So in order to prevent that from happening Satan had some demons intermarry with women and he sought to corrupt the human race. The sin of the sons of God was gross sexual immorality. There are several arguments for the demon view.

First, the words “sons of God” are used exclusively of angels in the OT (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). Job 1:6 says, “Now there was a day when the *sons of God* came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan also came among them.” The angels appear here before God to give an account of their actions. Job 2:1 says, “Again there was a day when the *sons of God* came to present themselves before the Lord and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.” After Satan had taken away Job’s wealth and children, he appeared before God again. God permitted Satan to take away Job’s health but not his life. The Lord appeared to Job in a whirlwind and questioned Job about his creation. God asked Job where he was when he laid the foundations of the earth and “when the morning stars sang together and all the *sons of God* shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). This verse indicates that the *sons of God* shouted for joy at the creation of the world. This means that God created angels before He created the earth (Gen 1:1).

Second, the oldest written reference to this view is found in the book of Enoch. This book said that two hundred angels in heaven saw the beautiful women on earth, lusted after them, and took for themselves wives who then gave birth to giants. The Book of Enoch was not included in the Hebrew canon.

The Book of Enoch has five divisions:

- 1.The Book of the Watchers (chapters 1-36)
- 2.The Book of the Similitudes (chapters 37-71)
- 3.The Book of Astronomical Writings (chapters 72—82)
- 4.The Book of Dream Visions (chapters 83-90)
- 5.The Book of the Epistle of Enoch (chapters 91-107)

The Book of the Watchers states,

And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them and said to one another, "Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children." And Semjaza, who was their leader, said unto them, "I fear you will not and indeed agree to do this deed and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin." And they all answered him and said, "Let us all swear an oath and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecation not to abandon this plan but to do this thing." Then swore they all together and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And these are the names of their leaders: Samlazaz, their leader, Araklba, Rameel, Kokablel, Tamlel, Ramlel, Danel, Ezeqeel, Baraqijal, Asael, Armaros, Batarel, Ananel, Zaqiel, Samsapeel, Satarel, Turel, Jomjael, Sariel. These are their chiefs of tens. And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives and each chose for himself one, and they began to go into them and to defile themselves with them and they taught them charms and enchantments and the cutting of roots, and made them acquainted with plants. And they became pregnant and they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells: Who consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts and reptiles and fish and to devour one another's flesh and drink the blood. Then the earth laid accusation against the lawless ones.

Third, the Jewish historian Josephus believed that the sons of God were angels. He wrote in *Antiquities* 1:3:1 that "many angels accompanied with women and begat sons that proved unjust."

Fourth, Genesis shows that angels appeared as men when seen on the earth (Gen 19:1-5). Two angels went to Sodom, and Lot brought them into his home to protect them from the homosexual advances of the men of Sodom. The men of Sodom asked Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them" (Gen 19:5). The men of Sodom thought that the angels were men. The angels demonstrated that they were not men when they struck the men of Sodom at Lot's door with blindness (Gen 19:11).

Fifth, the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) interprets sons of God as angels of God.

Sixth, three NT passages possibly refer to Genesis 6 and identify the sons of God as fallen angels (1 Pet 3:18-20; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). First Peter 3:18-20 says that Christ “preached to the spirits in prison, who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.” One view is that the spirits in prison refer to the fallen angels of Genesis 6 who disobeyed God long ago in the days of Noah. This view states that Jesus announced his victory over Satan to these demons either between his death and resurrection, or after his resurrection and before his ascension. He told these incarcerated demons in Tartarus that their attempt to corrupt human flesh and prevent his coming to redeem man had failed.

Second Peter 2:4 says, “God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” This verse could not refer to the fall of Lucifer since Lucifer is not confined to hell, but has access to roam the earth (1 Pet 5:8) and access to come into the presence of God (Job 1). So this reference must refer to the demons of Genesis 6 who are now confined in the gloomy dungeons of hell (*Tartarus*).

Jude 6 says,

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Here we see that Jude identifies the sin of the angels with the sexual perversion of Sodom and Gomorrah. It is interesting that the Greek word for “their own home” is a word that refers to a spiritual body for which believers are longing (2 Cor 5:2).

There are several problems with the demons only view. The Hebrew verb “take a wife” is a standing expression for marriage. In Matthew 22:30 Jesus said that angels do not marry. If angels

do not marry, then the sons of God could not be angels. If the demons did marry women in violation of God's created order, then they would have violated the position God created them to have. Could the demons have had children (giants) by the women they married? What would be the relationship between their offspring and Adam? Their children would be half demon and half human.

***The Sons of God were Demon Possessed Kings
who Married a Plurality of Wives (had Harems)***

This is a combination of some of the views. The sons of God were demon possessed kings from the line of Cain who married a plurality of wives. Some fallen angels left their habitations and possessed human rulers who were guilty of polygamy in establishing harems. There is some evidence for this view. First, we see Satanic influence behind ancient near eastern kings. In Ezekiel 28 there is a prophecy about the king of Tyre, and it is evident from reading this prophecy that Satan was influencing or possibly even possessing him. Ezekiel 28:11-15 is the section that relates to Satan. He was in Eden; he was an anointed cherub; he was on the mountain of God; he was created perfect. These descriptions do not fit the king of Tyre. So an argument can be made for Satan being the demon who influenced the king of Tyre. There was also a demon who influenced the prince of Persia. He is described as a demon who opposed a good angel who was sent to Daniel. In fact the demon was so powerful that he opposed the good angel for 21 days, and the archangel Michael had to come to his aid so he could take the answer to prayer to Daniel (Dan 10:13). Pharaoh was viewed as a god in Egypt. In the Ancient Near East, kings were often described as gods (half man and half god). Possibly they had supernatural powers that caused people to worship them and serve them.

Ross writes,

Many have suggested that the sons of God were the godly line of Seth and the daughters of men were the Cainites. But this does not do justice to the terminology of the context. Others view the sons

of God as angels (as in Job 1:6) who cohabited with women on earth. This, however, conflicts with Matthew 22:30. The incident is one of hubris, the proud overstepping of bounds. Here it applies to the sons of God, a lusty, powerful lot striving for fame and fertility. They were probably powerful rulers who were controlled (indwelt) by fallen angels. It may be that fallen angels left their habitation and inhabited bodies of human despots and warriors, the mighty ones of the earth. It is known from Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Daniel 10:13 that great kings of the earth have princes ruling behind them—their power is demonic. It is no surprise that in Ugaritic literature (as well as other nations' literature), kings are described as divine, half divine, or demi-gods. Pagans revered these great leaders. Many mythological traditions describe them as being the offspring of the gods themselves³⁷

Were the “Giants on the Earth” the Descendants of Ancient Aliens? (Genesis 6:4)

Genesis 6:4 says, “There were giants on the earth in those days and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown” (NKJV). The NIV says, “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days.” Who were these giants or Nephilim?

Zecharia Sitchin writes, “It was only after concluding that the biblical Nefilim were the Anunnaki of Mesopotamian lore that it dawned on me that Anakim was simply a Hebrew rendering of the Sumerian/Akkadian Anunnaki.”³⁸

Some Bible teachers believe that the Nephilim were people of great size and strength. The translation “giants” was influenced by the Septuagint’s word for them. The Hebrew word is taken from a root meaning “to fall.” Many Bible teachers believe that these men had the ability to fall upon others and kill them because of their superior size and strength. Delitzsch

³⁷ Allen Ross, “Genesis,” in *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Vol 1, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1983, 1985), 36.

³⁸ Sitchin, *There Were Giants On The Earth*, 200.

believes that the Nephilim were the result of the union of fallen angels with women. Third, some believe that the Nephilim were “giants” in the sense of being great leaders like Napoleon or Washington. They were great men in power and influence. Genesis 6:4 says that they were heroes, men of renown.

The Nephilim lived on the earth during the time before the flood and during the time after the flood. Notice that Moses wrote “and also afterward.” This does not mean that the flood was local and that the Nephilim survived the flood. Moses indicates in the book of Numbers that the twelve spies saw the Nephilim in the land of Canaan. Numbers 15:33 says, “There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants) and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

The Nephilim were a group of tall, proud, and strong people. Genesis 6:4 says that they were mighty men who were of old, men of renown. The word for mighty men describes heroes or military men. The same word is used in Genesis 10:8-11 to describe Nimrod. He was a mighty one on the earth. He built several cities, including Babel and Nineveh which were part of his empire. He was a powerful ruler. The phrase “men of renown” means that they were men of wealth and power.

Did Ezekiel See a Flying Saucer with Ancient Aliens?

The prophet Ezekiel wrote about an amazing vision he experienced. He wrote, “Then I looked and behold a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself, and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire” (Ezek 1:4). Did Ezekiel see the landing of a flying saucer with aliens in it?

Erich von Daniken writes,

Ezekiel gives precise details of the landing of this vehicle. He describes a craft that comes from the north, emitting rays and gleaming and raising a gigantic cloud of desert sand. Now the God of the Old Testament was supposed to be omnipotent. Then why does this almighty God have to come hurtling up from a particular

direction? Cannot he be anywhere he wants without all this noise and fuss.³⁹

Ezekiel saw four living creatures in his vision (Ezek 1:6). These creatures are identified as cherubim in Ezekiel 10:1-3. They have special access to God and are bearers of God's throne-chariot. Gold images of cherubim were on the ark of the covenant (Exod 25:17-22; Num 7:89; 1 Chron 28:18). God was said to be enthroned between the cherubim of the ark of the covenant. Ezekiel saw the cherubim carrying the throne chariot of God.

The cherubim looked like men, but they had four faces and four wings (Ezek 1:10-11). The four faces on each cherub were face of a man, face of a lion, face of an ox, and face of an eagle. These represent the highest forms of life in God's created realm. Man is mentioned first as he is the pinnacle of God's creation. The lion is the king of beasts. The ox is the strongest of domestic animals. The eagle is the greatest of the birds. Their feet were like those of a calf. They had human-like hands.

Ezekiel saw what he described as a wheel beside each of the living creatures (Ezek 1:15). Did Ezekiel see a flying saucer or UFO? No. He saw wheels within wheels by each of the cherubim. The wheels could roll in four directions. The rims of the wheels were full of eyes all around. Ezekiel described how the wheels and cherubim were related (Ezek 1:19-21). The wings of the cherubim joined together (Ezek 1:22-24). The sound the object made when it was moved was like the sound of rushing waters and an army going to battle.

Ezekiel saw a likeness of a throne over the heads of the cherubim (Ezek 1:26; cf. 10:1-3). The throne had the appearance of a sapphire stone. Ezekiel saw what looked like a man seated on the throne (Ezek 1:26). The man looked like glowing metal and fire (Ezek 1:27). A rainbow encircled the throne (Ezek 1:28; cf. Rev 4:3). This was a theophany and not an alien! Ezekiel had a vision of the glory of God.

The splendor of God's glory was so bright that Ezekiel could only see his form before he was forced to look down (Ezek

³⁹ Von Daniken, *Chariots of the Gods*, 47.

1:28). The glory of the Lord is referred to 16 times in Ezekiel's writing (1:28; 3:12, 23; 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23; 39:21; 43:2 [twice], 4-5; 44:4). By using the terms *appearance* and *likeness*, Ezekiel pointed out that he had not seen God directly because that would have been instant death (Exod 33:18-23; John 1:18). Ezekiel responded in humble worship and submission as he fell face down in awe of God's majesty.

THE PUZZLE OF ANCIENT MAN: BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN PAST CIVILIZATIONS

Pre-Flood Civilization: The Progress of Civilization in the Line of Cain (Genesis 4:20-22)

After Cain murdered his brother Abel, he went to the land of Nod on the east of Eden. Cain married his wife and they had a son which he named Enoch. Cain built a city and called the name of the city after his son Enoch (Gen 4:16-17). Here is the first city mentioned in the Bible. In defiance of God who told him that he would wander, Cain decided to settle down and build a city. The descendants of Cain are listed as Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methushael, Lamech. Lamech married two women, Adah and Zillah, and became the first polygamist. Lamech had three sons: Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain. His sons were instrumental in the advance of civilization.

Jabal was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock (Gen 4:20). He was the first real "cowboy." He felt at home on the range. Before Jabal, men had been tied down to one spot. Jabal would take his house with him and go where the grass was green and where the water was cool. The phrase "father of" means that he taught his sons his trade. They followed in their father's footsteps of learning how to make tents and raise cattle.

Jubal was the brother of Jabal. Jubal was the father of those who play musical instruments (Gen 4:21). He invented the harp (a stringed instrument) and the flute (a wind instrument). Jubal plucked a string and liked the sound. He built the first "guitar."

A harp or lyre was a ten-stringed instrument. Jubal took a reed and blew into it. It made a sound. He discovered that when holes are made in the reed that different sounds could be made. He invented the shepherd's pipe or flute. Jubal was the founder of the fine arts.

Tubal-Cain was the son of Zillah. He was the first to forge tools out of bronze and iron (Gen 4:22). The word *forge* means to hammer or sharpen. He learned to make tools for farming. He probably also made the first weapons of bronze and iron.

Post-Flood Civilization: The Tower of Babel and the Spread of Babylonian Religion and Culture (Genesis 11)

The descendants of Noah were united as they all spoke one language (Gen 11:1). The people journeyed to the land of Shinar (Mesopotamia). They showed ingenuity in building a city named Babylon and the tower of Babel (Gen 11:3-4). The people resolved to make bricks out of the materials available to them. Here we see the ingenuity of the people fanned by the flame of ambition and pride. They used brick instead of stone and tar for mortar. Nimrod was the dictator of these people (Gen 10:8-10).

Enuma Elish is the Babylonian account of the building of Babylon. There are some similarities of this account with Genesis 11.

When Marduk (the god of the Babylonians) heard this, brightly glowed his features like the days, like that of lofty Babylon, whose building you have requested. Let its brickwork be fashioned. You shall name it the Sanctuary. The Anunnaki applied the implement. For one year they molded bricks. When the second year arrived, they raised high the head of Esagila equaling Apsu (heaven). Having built a stage tower (the tower of Babel?) as high as Apsu, they set up in it an abode for Marduk, Enlil and Ea. In their presence he adorned it with grandeur. (Enuma Elish, Tablet VI, lines 55-64)

Matthews writes,

Mesopotamian religion claimed that their cities were of divine parentage. A symbol of this obsession with divinity among the

Mesopotamians was the ziggurat (Akkadian *ziqquratu*) that was erected as early as the third millennium B.C. The ziggurat was a step ladder edifice, made up of mud bricks, whose bottom was square or rectangular. The precise meaning of the structure is unknown, though it is widely agreed that it formed a stairway between the gods and earth (Gen 28:2). At the foot of the ziggurat as well as the pinnacle was a temple area serving as a habitation for the gods. Ziggurats may have been considered an earthly imitation of the heavenly residences of the gods.⁴⁰

Kidner writes,

The primeval history reaches its fruitless climax as man, conscious of new abilities, prepares to glorify and fortify himself by collective effort. The elements of the story are timeless and characteristic of the spirit of the world. The project is typically grandiose: men describe it excitedly to one another as if it were the ultimate achievement—very much as modern man glories in his space projects. At the same time they betray their insecurity as they crowd together to preserve their identity and control their own fortunes.⁴¹

The sovereign Lord came down to see the huge tower that the men were building. The statement made by God after he evaluated the Tower of Babel and before he judged the people has always fascinated me: “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do, now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them” (Gen 11:6). What does this statement mean? It does not mean that God was threatened by sinful man’s great architectural construction. Is the God of the Bible opposed to the advancement of society? No. But He is opposed to collective apostasy. The people were in rebellion against God. God had told Noah and his sons to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen 9:1), but the descendants of Noah rebelled and

⁴⁰ Kenneth Mathews, *The New American Commentary: Genesis 1-11:26* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996), 470-71.

⁴¹ Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: 1967), 109.

decided to work together to build a city (Babylon) and a tower to heaven (tower of Babel).

As a result God decided to judge the rebellious people. The Lord confused the languages of the people at Babel. The word *Babel* to the Babylonians meant “gate of god.” But to the Hebrews the word *Babel* meant confusion. The tower of Babel incident led to the spreading out of people groups.

The Table of Nations

The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 raises some puzzling questions. Extensive and accurate knowledge of widely separated groups of people around the world was acquired in order to make this table. How was this knowledge acquired?

Rene Noorbergen offers this explanation:

It is very apparent from the generation list of the sons of Noah that the post-Flood peoples spread rapidly across the surface of the earth.... It also becomes obvious that in order for the Genesis 10 genealogy list to have been composed, there must have been an advanced degree of communication among all these people. Someone living during the colonizing of these distant lands had the ability to correspond with all the descendants over a relatively long period of time...; otherwise the composition of such a detailed listing as the Table of Nations would have been impossible. This communication between remote regions presupposes an early knowledge of geography. In fact, there is ample evidence that no long after the Deluge, the descendants of Noah carried out an extensive survey of the entire globe, mapping and charting every continent.⁴²

⁴² Rene Noorbergen, *Secrets of the Lost Races* (Collegedale, TN: Norcom P, 1992), 94.

CONCLUSION:

Ufos and Close Encounters in America's Past

Strange encounters and sightings of mysterious objects in the sky have occurred through history. The log from Christopher Columbus's first voyage to America contains a report of strange lights in the sky. America's founding fathers even claimed to have had some unexplained encounters. Benjamin Franklin wrote in *Poor Richard's Almanac* in 1728 of his belief in "beings on other planets." On April 5, 1800, in Baton Rouge someone observed a light that was 200 yards off the ground that crashed but did not make a crater. Thomas Jefferson approved this report on this phenomenon, and it was presented to the American Philosophical Society. Ancient alien theorists point out that the founding fathers of America were Free Masons who studied ancient civilizations of the past and sought to acquire their lost knowledge. Nine of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Free Masons. Thirteen of the 39 signers of the Constitution were Free Masons. The Free Masons were inspired by the ancient wisdom of Egypt. In 1791 George Washington laid the cornerstone for the city of Washington, DC, with Masonic rituals. The George Washington monument in Washington, DC, is shaped like an Egyptian obelisk and supposedly points to Pleiades. The all seeing eye in the Pyramid is on the back of every one dollar bill in America.⁴³

Ancient alien theorists argue that we have experienced twentieth century contact with aliens. In 1942, the Battle of Los Angeles involved the U.S. military and Air Defense allegedly fighting a UFO. WWII Air Force planes were buzzed by balls of light that some think could have been extraterrestrials. On 1947 a flying saucer allegedly crashed in Roswell, New Mexico. In July 19, 1952, there was tension between Russia and America. Seven strange objects were viewed on radar, and Americans were

⁴³ *Ancient Aliens* episode "Aliens and the Founding Fathers" shown on the History Channel on 5 October 2011.

concerned about a Russian attack. Fighter jets were scrambled, but all seven UFOs disappeared. What were the lights that penetrated the airspace of America? No one knew. Many believed that they were aliens from outer space.⁴⁴

Seti = The Search For Extra Terrestrial Intelligence

Many in NASA are involved in searching outer space for evidence of extraterrestrial life. Around the world SETI (Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence) researchers have scanned the universe for signals from aliens and have not found any.

Carl Sagan was one of the leading proponents of SETI. He wrote in the book *The Cosmic Connection*:

At this very moment the messages from another civilization may be wafting across space, driven by unimaginably advanced devices, there for us to detect them—if we only knew how....Or perhaps the message are already there, present in some everyday experience that we have not made the right mental effort to recognize. The power of such an advanced civilization is very great. Their messages may lie in quite familiar circumstances.... The message from the stars may be here already. But where?⁴⁵

Ancient Aliens or Demonic Deception?

Is there intelligent life in outer space? Do extraterrestrials exist? Did ancient aliens visit planet earth, create man, teach early man technology, and influence them to worship them in ancient religions? The program *Ancient Aliens* answers yes to these questions.

I personally do not believe in the existence of aliens. But I do believe in the existence of God and angels. I believe that the Bible teaches that God created life and man on planet earth just

⁴⁴ *Ancient Aliens* episode “The Return” shown on the History Channel on 25 May 2010.

⁴⁵ Carl Sagan, *The Cosmic Connection* (New York: Doubleday, 1973).

over 6000 years ago. The Bible does not mention any visits by ancient aliens. The Bible indicates that early man was smarter than evolutionists give them credit for. The inventions by Cain's descendants before the flood and the building of the ark by Noah and his three sons (Shem, Ham, and Japheth) show that early man had technological skills. The building of the tower of Babel involved technical skills. When God confounded the languages of the peoples, some followers of Mizraim went to Egypt and built the great pyramids of Giza. Scientists and engineers today still have not figured out how the ancient Egyptians did it.

I do believe that ancient man was visited by demons in the past. I believe that the sons of God of Genesis 6 were demonic rulers who took wives and had children by them. There were giants on the earth before and after the flood (Goliath). Some of these physically tall and strong people were possibly able to move the stones and build structures that von Daniken and other ancient alien theorists believe that only aliens could have done.

Ancient peoples turned from the worship of the one true God to the worship of idols (Romans 1). Demons may have physically manifested themselves to these ancient peoples and this would have led to false religions practiced around the world. It is interesting that the priests of these false religions spoke of bird men flying in the sky. We know that angels (and demons) have wings and can fly. Paul wrote "that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons" (1 Cor 10:20). Paul warned Timothy about "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim 4:1) and "falsely called knowledge" (1 Tim 6:20). We know from the book of Revelation that there is coming a final conflict between Satan and his demons and Michael and his good angels during the last half of the tribulation period (read about it in Revelation 12). Ancient alien theorists like Erich von Daniken say that we should believe the Mayans and look for the return of the extraterrestrials on December 23, 2012. Jesus said that his followers should not set dates for his return. But we know from the Bible that Jesus Christ will return first for his church at the Rapture (1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51-58) and

then with his church at the second coming of Christ to earth to establish his kingdom (2 Thess 1; Rev 19). Now those are two events that we can look forward to.

The Rape of Dinah in Genesis 34: An Exegetical, Theological, and Pastoral Consideration of Sexual Abuse and Its Effect on the People of God

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INTRODUCTION

A basic exegesis of the Dinah incident provides a starting point for reflection on the devastating effects of sexual abuse on God's people, and how the church and, secondarily, the professional counseling community can cooperate in addressing it.

The initial sexual experiences of the human race were altogether lovely. God commanded Adam and Eve to cleave (דבק) in an intensely pleasurable way that promoted physical and emotional security.¹ However, the Genesis text shows how quickly human sexuality degenerated after the fall, coming to include such perversion as (1) the mockery of Noah's exposed nakedness by his son in 9:22; (2) attempted forcible sodomy in 19:1-11, accompanied by an offer to placate the lust of the abusers by offering virgin daughters in the place of male visitors; (3) incestuous assault(?) of a drunken father by his daughters in order to conceive children in 19:30-38; and (4) a patriarch's use of a supposed temple prostitute who turns out to be his daughter-in-law in 38:12-26. To these may be added the

¹ For an excellent discussion of God's intention for sexual union, centering on Genesis 1-2, see Andrew Schmutzer, "A Theology of Sexual Abuse: A Reflection On Creation and Devastation," *JETS* 51, no. 4 (2008): 785-812. Pages 789-93 deal with God's ideals.

enigmatic events of 6:1-3 that seem to have exhausted divine patience, leading to the flood.² All of the instances noted above are demeaning, and some are violent.³ The Dinah account fits well within these parameters. She is yet another who is used and abused.

GENESIS 34

The Rape of Dinah (vv. 1-4)

The narrative begins with Dinah, Jacob's daughter by Leah, going out to be among the daughters of Caanan. The implication of *וַתֵּצֵא* is debated. It may be that she went out among the Caananites regularly as the preterite form can be given a characteristic (perfect) nuance. The word *לָרֹחַ* can refer to "looking at with interest" and "gazing at so as to become acquainted."⁴ Although it was not unusual for young women of this period to be unsecluded (Gen 24:13-21, 29:6, 11-12),⁵ to go

² A most challenging aspect of the passage is the interpretation of "the sons of God." Among the plausible choices may be included ungodly Sethites who intermarried with pagan women, angels (fallen), and descendants of Lamech who carried on his violence. Waltke (with Fredricks) opts for a combination, men controlled by fallen angels (*Genesis*, [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001], 115-17).

³ In *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress P, 1984), Phyllis Trible examines several OT accounts in which women are emotionally or sexually abused. While she provides numerous helpful insights, her conclusions are not all well-founded. Biblical characters are not victimized primarily because of gender, class, or nationality. There are severe losses for males, the well-resourced, and the powerful, too. The main culprit is human depravity, not the entitled male who takes advantage of a less-powerful person.

⁴ BDB, 907, 8a.

⁵ Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* trans. John McHugh (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1973), 30.

out alone among the Shechemites was a different case. It was not normal for girls of marriageable age to go out to an alien city unguarded.⁶ Not only is Dinah's action personally careless, but the fronting of the verb suggests broader danger to Israel as a whole—forbidden intimacy with Caananites. Waltke calls Dinah's action "improper and imprudent."⁷ It probably goes too far to call her action promiscuous. To draw a parallel with Leah's going out in 30:16 misses the mark. Leah was a married woman who desired her husband. The verb itself should not be interpreted negatively, per se. Restraint should be shown at this point. Dinah may have been lacking judgment, even foolish, but there is a big difference between imprudence and immorality.⁸ Parry correctly notes that the heavy blame in the passage is directed against others.⁹ Readers may call Dinah foolish, perhaps, but not promiscuous.

Dinah is soon noticed by Shechem (v.2) from the royal line of Hivites, a people inhabiting Caanan. Four verbs, closely knit together, describe his impulsive and violent act. Shechem "saw her"..."took her"..."laid her"..."humbled her." The terseness of description magnifies its thoughtlessness. The seeing of Shechem is paralleled with Dinah's seeing the girls of the land.¹⁰

⁶ N. Sarna, *Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 233.

⁷ Waltke with Fredricks, *Genesis*, 461.

⁸ See Robin Parry, "Feminist Hermeneutics and Evangelical Concerns: The Rape of Dinah as a Case Study," *TynBul* 53, no. 1 (2002): 13-16. I am satisfied with his conclusion that while רָאָה does at times appear in contexts describing immorality there is not enough consistency in the usage to draw a fair conclusion here.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰ Robert Alter, *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (London: W. W. Norton, 1996), 189.

The lack of ב with אַתָּה following שָׁכַב may serve to emphasize her objectification.¹¹ He did not lie *with* her, he “laid her.” There is no relationship, no concern. This is rape.¹² Some translators render the last two terms as a hendiadys,¹³ but others favor expressing them independently.¹⁴ The advantage of translating עָנָה as a fourth term is that it gives due emphasis to the humiliation associated with the act. This piel form of עָנָה may be rendered “and he bowed her down.”¹⁵ If so taken, this young man of royal Hivite descent forced the maiden to bow before him—to be assaulted.

The narrative takes an unexpected twist in verse four. Here we find a young man, Shechem, who has committed an atrocity against a woman with whom he is now genuinely smitten. The words דָּבַק and אֶהָב both usually suggest intimacy and emotional commitment that is further emphasized by יִדְבַר עַל לֵב. This is genuine love.¹⁶ Each of these terms is used in Genesis to describe intimate relationships. Together they sound an alert; intimacy with Hivites was an abomination (Cf. Deut 7:1-3). This

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² For a contrary opinion, see Lyn M. Bechtel, “What If Dinah Is Not Raped? (Genesis 34),” *JOT* 62 (1994): 19-36. Bechtel argues that Shechem’s affection and offer of marriage, coupled with lack of apology for a rape, indicate that the Shechemites were “honorable men.” In view of the preceding verbs in the sentence this thesis simply cannot be sustained.

¹³ So the NASB, “and lay with her by force”; NIV, “and violated her”; and Holman, “and raped her.”

¹⁴ So the ESV, “and lay with her, and humiliated her;” and NKJV, “and lay with her and violated her.”

¹⁵ See BDB, 776.

¹⁶ So says John Sailhammer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 200. He still sees the forcible rape and humiliation as the main point of the verses.

danger is amplified by Shechem's request that his father obtain Dinah for him as a wife. His reference to her as "the child" (הילדה) may suggest that respect for her was still lacking.¹⁷

The Contrasting Responses (vv. 5-7)

The contrasting responses of Jacob and his sons are highlighted in the interplay between his silence and their anger (הרה-חרש). Dinah has been defiled (טמא).¹⁸ Her life is forever changed, for she will not be considered marriageable in Israel. Despite this grievous assault, Jacob does nothing. Bush understands the silence to be a mark of good discretion,¹⁹ but most see it differently. Jacob has failed to act in the time of crisis. Cotter rightly notes of Dinah that "she is the unnoticed daughter of the unfavored wife"²⁰ and that Jacob's emotions are "strangely flat" considering the supposedly life-changing transformation recorded in previous chapters.²¹ Waltke sees the numerous mentions of the father-daughter relationship (vv. 1, 2, 3, 8, 19) as drawing attention to his neglect.²² The male cowardice that had endangered Sarah, Rebekah, and Hagar is played out here again.²³ As Shechem is about to speak for his

¹⁷ Waltke with Fredricks, *Genesis*, 463.

¹⁸ BDB, 379C. 1.

¹⁹ Bush, *Genesis*, 189.

²⁰ David Cotter. *Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical P, 2003), 253.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

²² Waltke with Fredricks, *Genesis*, 461.

²³ Cotter says, "In each generation of this family so far, there is a nightmare for a woman" David W. Cotter, *Genesis*, *Berit Olam* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical P, 2003], 252].

son's interests before Jacob, Dinah's brothers come in from the field. In contrast to Jacob, who had no evident response when he heard about the assault, they experience both great grief (עצב)²⁴ and intense anger (הרה).²⁵ The narrator accepts their viewpoint as correct. The thing that had been done was morally senseless and "a thing disgraceful according to Israel's standards."²⁶

The Negotiation for Dinah (vv. 8-12)

Hamor's approach is blunt and seemingly oblivious to the circumstances of the situation. There is no recognition of the assault, let alone an apology. Neither is there an acknowledgment that Dinah remain in his quarters as a hostage.²⁷ He also expands his request radically, calling for wholesale intermarriage among the two peoples. Hamilton summarizes this expansion of the proposal as follows: (1) an offer of peaceful co-settlement; (2) access to and mobility throughout Shechem's territory; (3) the possibility of purchasing land.²⁸ Hamor essentially offers a shortcut to getting the land which God had promised to Israel, but the price tag is exceedingly high. Shechem now joins the conversation, no longer content to have his father negotiate. His hope of finding favor (חן) in the eyes of Dinah's family lends strong irony to the narrative in light of later events. In exchange for "the girl" he

²⁴ This hithpael preterite may have a reflexive nuance denoting intense internal vexation. See also BDB 780D for parallel with Genesis 6:6, where God himself is enraged over sexual misconduct.

²⁵ This verb means "to burn with anger" (BDB, 354). It is intensified by מאד.

²⁶ See נבלה in BDB, 615.

²⁷ Cotter, *Genesis*, Berit Olam, 255.

²⁸ Victor Hamilton. *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 359.

offers the normal compensation, a bride price (מֶהָרַךְ), to be paid to the father for the purchase of a wife.²⁹ He also tenders the מֶהֶן, an additional gift to be given should the family accept the proposal.³⁰ At this point in the narrative only Hivites have been given voice. Shechem has spoken to Hamor (v.4), Hamor to Jacob and his sons (vv.8-10), and Shechem to Jacob and his sons (vv. 11-12). Jacob has not uttered a single recorded word. His sons would now take over.

The Deception of Simeon and Levi (vv. 13-17)

The response of the sons is introduced with the phrase וַיַּעֲנוּ “they answered.” The lexical form of the verb is עָנָה that has the same radicals as the verb translated “cause to bow down” in verse 2.³¹ Thus what follows would be the sons’ “answer” to the rape of their sister. They were extraordinarily zealous to vindicate Dinah with regard to the terrible defiling³² that she had endured. This was certainly a welcome contrast to their father’s inaction. But their means and the extent to which they would go would not be honoring to their God. Sailhammer says, “The plans and schemes are no longer Jacob’s, they were the plans of his sons.”³³ They would deceive³⁴ and destroy the

²⁹ BDB, 555, “the purchase price of a wife.” See also Exodus 22:16 and 1 Samuel 18:25.

³⁰ DeVaux, *Ancient Israel*, 28. He notes that “when Rebecca’s family accepted the terms of Abraham for her marriage to Isaac, Abraham’s servant had brought out jewels and dresses for the girls and presents for the parents (Gen. 24:53).”

³¹ See BDB, 772 and 776.

³² The verb טָמָא means to render impure, pollute, defile, and here, to sexually degrade (BDB, 379).

³³ Sailhammer, *Pentateuch*, 201.

Caananites. They feigned righteous motives. They could not afford to lose face by joining with an uncircumcised people, they claimed. But should the Hivite males all agree to undergo the procedure, they would obtain not only Dinah, but all the rest of the women of Israel as well. Furthermore, Israel would be willing to become one people with the Hivites, thus agreeing in principle with Hamor's earlier invitation. Their bargain, however, comes with an implied threat. Should they not agree to the terms, the Israelites would take Dinah back with them, one way or another.³⁵ Their plan to use circumcision to defeat a hated enemy was ill-advised from the beginning. In the first place, it did not have the same sacred meaning outside of Israel as it did for some of the surrounding peoples. For some of them it was regarded as making a man fit for a normal sexual life, serving as an initiation into marriage.³⁶ For Israel, it was so much more, a sign borne in the body of God's promise to bless them and their progeny (Gen 17:10-14). Sailhammer sees a word play between אִוָּת (sign) in 17:11 and the אִוָּת (consent) in 34:15, 22-23 for the two peoples to live as one.³⁷ They far overstep in using the sacred sign in association with their skullduggery.

The Shechemite Compliance (vv. 18-24)

Hamor and Shechem are well-pleased with the proposal, and Shechem, motivated by his desire for Dinah, moves quickly

³⁴ This is emphasized in the noun מַרְמָה which means "deceit" or "treachery" (BDB, 941).

³⁵ Note that לָקַח is used here, as v. 2 where the rape is described. They intend to "seize" her as well for the purpose of taking her home to safety.

³⁶ De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 48.

³⁷ *Pentateuch*, 201.

to comply. The editorial comment in verse nineteen should not be missed: Shechem the rapist was “more respected than anyone in his father’s household.” The leadership of Jacob’s next-door neighbors would someday fall to him. The danger was great for God’s people.

He went on to the city gate with his father to speak to an assembly about the prospects. The two men are clearly convinced of the good intentions of Jacob’s family whom they describe as שלמים, “covenant of peace people.”³⁸ As Hamor makes a strong appeal for community circumcision, his true motivation surfaces. He has little interest in making fair restitution to Jacob for the assault of his daughter. Rather, he wants to take possession of Jacob’s livestock and other property. The danger signal is sounded again. Marriage to Caananites would bring defilement and subjugation.

The men of the city responded to the appeal and were all circumcised. The three-fold use of כל strongly emphasizes that there were no exceptions. Every male old enough to be welcome at the gate complied.

The Attack on Shechem (vv. 25-29)

On the third day after the circumcision, Simeon and Levi attack the helpless Shechemites. It is reasonable to assume that other members of their clans assisted them in the wholesale slaughter. Their description as “Dinah’s brothers” reminds the reader of their motivation. They are her full brothers and they want to enact justice regarding her rape. Wenham comments that “it was Jacob’s failure to act that provoked them to behave in such an extreme way. He had not loved Leah, or her daughter

³⁸ The plural form of the adjective שלם is used. They are considered “safe ones” or “peaceful ones.” The term has covenantal implications. See BDB, 1023-24. The Hivite leaders are proposing the most intimate of agreements. They are less than forthcoming with their own people and present the scenario in unrealistically positive terms.

Dinah, but they did.”³⁹ Having disposed of Hamor and Shechem, they freed Dinah from her confinement and went out.

Following the slaughter, the rest of Dinah’s brothers came to the city to loot. They took sheep, cattle, crops, and anything else of value in the city, even women and children. Their actions cannot be justified. The narrator devotes as much space to the wanton looting (thirty-seven words) as to the killing (thirty-six words).⁴⁰ They had undertaken holy war without a word from God.⁴¹ They would ultimately pay a high price for their uncontrolled zeal (Gen. 49:5-7).

The Heated Exchange (30-31)

Jacob’s voice is heard for the first time at this point. He chastises his sons for putting him in a bad place with the numerous peoples of the land. He is weak and cowardly, concerned about the potential pillaging of his house but *still* not with the ravishing of his daughter. His sons, however, are unrelenting in their representation of their dear sister. Their voice continues to be heard: “should our sister be treated like a prostitute?”

From this point in the book, to the end, the sons will exert their wills over Jacob. He seems to have lost his credibility and force, what Alter calls, “the price paid for failure to lead in the vindication of his daughter’s humiliation.”⁴²

The narrative raises an important question: does Dinah’s silence in the text indicate her lack of value in Hebrew culture? In Genesis 34, several men speak: Shechem, Hamor, Simeon and Levi as one, and Jacob. Dinah, the victim of violent rape,

³⁹ Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*. Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word), 2:315.

⁴⁰ Hamilton, *Genesis 17-50*, 370.

⁴¹ Waltke, *Genesis*, 467.

⁴² Alter, *Genesis*, 194

seemingly has no voice. She does not speak a single word. What does this mean? Some scholars have concluded that she is intentionally marginalized, a product of androcentric thinking. Caroline Blyth contends that “the rape event is focalized and given meaning solely through these androcentric voices . . . while any representation of Dinah’s experience as a victim of sexual violence effectively remains little more than, a narrative periphrasis.”⁴³ Blyth continues, “Her silence becomes nothing less than a form of oppression, the mark of her exclusion from honest representation within the text.”⁴⁴ Van Wolde interprets the passage quite differently, but comes to similar conclusions.⁴⁵ She understands the intercourse between Shechem and Dinah to be consensual. The tension in the text for her is that Dinah has dared to act independently, engaging in sex outside of accepted parameters, for which she is assailed as “a whore” by her brothers.⁴⁶ She concludes, “The prohibition of free movement, and having one’s own perspective, and free speech is as bad as rape, because it makes people, women, invisible and they do not remain in our memories.”⁴⁷

Such concerns may be addressed as follows: (1) Dinah’s moral relevance need not be denied by her silence, “but only that in the telling of this story, the rape is not the main focus of

⁴³ “Terrible Silence, Eternal Silence: A Feminist Re-Reading of Dinah’s Voicelessness in Genesis 34” (*Biblical Interpretation* 17 [2009]: 483-506: 485).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 486. For an extensive feminist reading of Genesis 34 see Blyth’s book *The Narrative of Rape in Genesis 34: Interpreting Dinah’s Silence* (New York: Oxford U P, 2010).

⁴⁵ Ellen Van Wolde, “The Dinah Story: Rape or Worse?” *Old Testament Essays* 15, no. 1 (2002): 225-39.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 235.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 237.

the plot.”⁴⁸ Discourse analysis supports this view. Direct discourse often reveals the theology of narrative passages.⁴⁹ The spoken parts of this narrative show that the main idea of the passage is that God’s people would be in danger of defilement and subjugation should they intermarry with Caananites. This in no way diminishes Dinah as a person, the gravity of the assault, or women in general. Indeed, the assault leads to holy war. In addition, many women are featured prominently in the OT through spoken parts. (2) Dinah’s status is not diminished by reference to her as “Jacob’s daughter” or “their sister.” Reference is also made to “her father” and “her brothers” (v. 11).⁵⁰ They belong to her as much as she to them. (3) She did indeed have voices to speak for her. That of her father failed her, but the voices of her brothers spoke loudly in her support. (4) She also has the sympathetic and enduring voice of the narrator to speak for her. He looks upon the event with strong disapproval and communicates this throughout the story. Shechem, Hamor, and Jacob are all portrayed negatively, while the anger of the brothers (not their extreme violence) over her mistreatment is viewed positively.⁵¹

SOME PRINCIPLES TO BE TAKEN FROM GENESIS 34

Although the passage is not primarily about sexual abuse there are several insights that are relevant to the discussion:

⁴⁸ Parry, “Feminist Hermeneutics,” 20.

⁴⁹ See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

⁵⁰ Parry, “Feminist Hermeneutics,” 11.

⁵¹ Paul Noble, “A ‘Balanced’ Reading of the Rape of Dinah: Some Exegetical and Methodological Observations,” *Biblical Interpretation* 4, no. 2: 173-204. See in especially 178-82 and 184-86.

- (1) Believers need to be aware of the potential perils of their environments and conduct themselves accordingly. This is not to say that a person is *ever* to be blamed for being abused. Nevertheless, it is foolish to frequent dangerous places where questionable characters will likely be encountered.
- (2) Sexual abuse is abhorred in Scripture and should be by God's people as well.
- (3) Authority figures need to speak boldly for the interests of the abused.
- (4) Immense frustration and subsequent loss of respect for authority occurs when authorities neglect their responsibility toward the abused.
- (5) Righteous anger should be expressed and righteous actions taken.
- (6) It is highly tempting to exact unjust vengeance in abuse situations.

A CASE STUDY

The following case study, from the writer's former pastorate, demonstrates the complex challenges of sexual abuse for a local congregation.

Congregant "A" began to attend the church with his wife and three children, a son thirteen-years-old, a daughter eleven, and a son, ten. The children all seemed well-adjusted. "A" seemed a bit odd and somewhat controlling. Many Sundays, he would approach me after the sermon with subtle critique or a self-affirmation that he was already doing what I had suggested in the message. His sons attended a summer camp where they wore dress shirts and ties for significant portions of the day. I eventually learned that he was divorced and estranged from an adult daughter. The family attended Sunday morning service, and the children were regulars in Sunday School and Good News

Club during the week. Within a few months of their arrival, I received a call from "A" who was using the CB in his delivery truck. He revealed that his wife had caught him in bed with his preteen daughter that morning and that he had been tossed out of the house. I told him to come to my home study from which we would travel together to the DCFS office for his confession. When he arrived, he seemed a bit reluctant to turn himself in, but I said that I would report him immediately if he did not. We dropped off his truck and drove to the city for the confession. After about forty-five minutes with "A," the social worker emerged and proceeded to tell me in living color every way in which my parishioner had violated his daughter. He also assured me that "A" would be doing significant time in the penitentiary. The social worker suggested that I go home since the abuser would be detained for arrest and booking. By this time I was dealing with a high degree of anger.

As soon as I got home, there was a phone call waiting for me from a different DCFS office than the one where "A" had confessed. An individual had picked up the initial call of "A" to me on a home scanner and had reported hearing my name to the agency. I called their office and provided the pertinent information. After telling my wife about the situation, I called each church elder to an emergency meeting for that evening. It was difficult to share the events of the day with the other leaders of the church and to experience their reactions. I became irritated by the incredulity of one of the men who kept asking me to repeat the details of what had happened, but finally they understood. We all agreed that evening that the congregation would need to be informed and that "A" would need to make a public confession (Matt 18:15-17).

The next day, Tuesday, I called my personal attorney, a member of the Christian Legal Society, for counsel regarding the church discipline proceeding. He advised me to obtain the arrest report from "A"'s local newspaper and to use this already publicly disclosed information as the material to be shared with the congregation. I also called the offender to my study where I informed him that he would be required to make a public confession. He was hesitant, but I told him that this was mandated by the elders as a condition of continuing fellowship

in our church. He said that he would, and we scheduled the statement for Sunday evening.

On Wednesday, I received the most withering call of my fifteen-year pastorate. I picked up the kitchen phone and heard the abuser's wife (enabler?) screaming full-lunged, accusing me of ruining her family and humiliating her husband. This went on non-stop for about ten minutes, I think, at the end of which time I was sitting on the floor with the receiver in my extended arm. I was not given any opportunity to explain our course of action. She hung up. Neither she nor her children ever attended another service at our church. In their time of greatest need, she withdrew them.

On Sunday morning I informed the congregation that we would be having a members-only meeting that night and requested that they make every effort to attend. At the service I made some preliminary remarks before reading the newspaper account which stated simply that "A" had been arrested on a Class X felony. He then made a basic confession and sat down. People easily understood what had happened. The elders told the congregation that the offender would remain in the fellowship of the church under certain restrictions. He would be required to stay in the main meeting room, away from Sunday School space devoted to children, always in sight of an elder.⁵²

⁵² Churches should extend grace toward repentant abusers, but need to be extremely vigilant in protecting children in the congregation. The rate of recidivism among offenders appears to be high. See Groth, Nicolas A., Robert E. Longo, and J. Bradley McFadden, "Undetected Recidivism among Rapists and Child Molesters" in the *Journal of Crime and Delinquency* (abstract) where the authors summarize, "The results indicate that the majority of the offenders had been convicted more than once for a sexual assault. Furthermore, on average, they admitted to having committed two to five times as many sex crimes for which they were not apprehended." (cad.sagepub.com) Abusers tend to be very manipulative, and are often skilled in deceiving gullible parishioners. For a list of specifically religious defense mechanisms used to explain former actions, or claim a present cure, see Harry Entwistle, "Working Pastorally with Sexual Abusers," *Saint Mark's Review*, Autumn 1992, 22-27. Says the author, "During my

During the period before sentencing, I met with “A” weekly. At times he tried to manipulate me for a good reference, hoping for a reduced sentence. He also said that I should have taken him to a lawyer instead of directly to DCFS. I regularly listened to his rehearsing of the consequences of his actions such as loss of family, loss of livelihood, and concern about incarceration. I do not recall any expression of concern for his family other than financial. He did try to develop someone to run his business while he was doing time.

The church helped the offender’s family the best that we could considering our limited resources. A couple in the church kept in touch with them regularly. We prayed for them and collected money and food which were delivered monthly.

ANALYSIS OF THE INCIDENT IN LIGHT OF GENESIS 34

Did the girl who got abused have a voice? Not one that her father heard, that is for sure. The church did speak clearly for her. Her attacker stood soundly rebuked. Was she ever allowed to hear the voice? She was pulled out of a very loving and understanding church, suffering loss for no fault of her own. Did her mother portray her defenders as evil? Did her mother ever speak to the child’s heart about what had happened? DCFS no doubt spoke helpfully for her and to her. So did the federal government. Was spiritual counsel ever received? Has she received a word from God? We are not privileged to know the answer.

Did the perpetrator get his just desserts? This is hard to assess. He was disciplined by his local church, isolated from his family, suffered as a pariah in his community, and served the prescribed prison sentence. Was this enough?

ministry in prisons I have had to advise many well-motivated Christian groups about the inherent dangers of colluding with the religious defence mechanisms of some prisoners, and of making what I considered to be unrealistic promises to them, e.g. that they will get parole and ‘have a wonderful ministry in the future.’” (25).

Was he ever truly remorseful for his attack? Had he committed sexual abuse before? Has he since? Why was his first family alienated? Did he get rehabbed in prison?

What of theodicy? Was God's providence and goodness vindicated in view of this evil? Was God's will somehow accomplished? God is no author of evil (James 1:13-18). God did accomplish good. He sent the family to our particular church for nurture over a number of months before the discovery of the abuse. The church was instrumental in the arrest, discipline, and continuing nurture of the abuser. It also provided food, money, prayer, and small-scale fellowship for his family while he was in prison. The abuse of the girl stopped, and the government implemented restrictions on the abuser, protecting the child, and, perhaps, others like her, from further harm.

HOW CAN THE AVERAGE LOCAL CHURCH HELP THE VICTIM RECOVER?⁵³

The following practices can be implemented with good benefit in churches of any size:

- (1) The encouragement of a growing relationship with God. Such a relationship helps improve many aspects of a

⁵³ Here I refer to the one receiving sexual abuse. There are many others who suffer as well. Siblings, friends, Sunday School teachers, and church members are also hurt. An oft overlooked sufferer is the pastor who experiences a range of negative emotion while caring for the abused, the abuser, and other distressed persons in the congregation. He also bears the burdens associated with church discipline and its potential legal implications. This is one place where the professional counselor can be of great assistance, and where pro bono service is greatly appreciated. The AACC Christian Counseling Code of Ethics (1-513 Pro Bono Work) says, "Christian Counselors are encouraged beyond their fee schedule, to make a portion of their time available without cost or at a greatly reduced cost to those unable to pay."

victim's life including negative mood, sense of personal growth, resolution of the abuse, self-acceptance, and hope.⁵⁴ It leads to "relating less blame to the perpetrator of their childhood abuse."⁵⁵ Since many abuse victims see God negatively, as distant, non-loving, wrathful, and unkind,⁵⁶ gentle instruction in theology proper is important. It is incumbent upon the local church to present the truth about God who is able and willing to help in the recovery process. The theological meaning of the event may be discussed when raised by the victim or at an advanced stage in the process. Some hold that "any theology that encourages us to view suffering as part of God's plan is dangerous."⁵⁷ Our God, however, is both sovereign and kind (Eph 1:3-14). Avoiding theological tension will not speed resolution or lead to spiritual maturity.

- (2) The practice of spiritual disciplines should be encouraged. Prayer is critical, but advocating extended silence can be counter-productive. Beth R. Crisp has noted that silence is not safe for many abuse victims

⁵⁴ Terry Lynn Gall, Viola Basque, Marizete Damasceno-Scott, and Gerard Vardy, "Spirituality and the Current Adjustment of Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (2007) 46, no. 1 (2007): 101-117.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 102. See also Lisa Rudolffson and Inga Tidefors, "Shepherd My Sheep': Clerical Readiness to Meet Psychological and Existential Needs from Victims of Sexual Abuse." *Pastoral Psychology* 58 (2009), 79-82. They write, "The victim can feel utterly abandoned not only by humans but also by the good God that allowed the abuse to take place." (80).

⁵⁷ So Nancy Nienhuis, "Theological Reflections on Violence and Abuse," *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 59, nos. 1-2 (2005): 112.

because such times are often invaded by flashbacks.⁵⁸ In addition, a core experience for many was enforced silence, so that it is still fraught with frustration.⁵⁹ Perhaps praying out loud while alone and in fellowship groups when with others is a better solution. Personal study of Scripture over time can change thinking about God and help heal damaged emotions.⁶⁰

- (3) An issue related to the above is the need to have a place to verbalize the terror of the event, including the experience, its source, and its ongoing threat.⁶¹ Those who are finally willing to speak need to be entertained at great length. This suggests that a ministry of listening needs to be present in local bodies. Says Andrew Schmutzer, "Part of normalizing the problem of SA [sexual abuse] involves listening to the victim's stories of suffering and drawing these victims back into an empathetic community of care."⁶² Al Miles encourages pastors to assure the survivor, watch words, keep the

⁵⁸ "Spirituality and Sexual Abuse: Issues and Dilemmas for Survivors." *Theology and Sexuality* 13, no. 3: 301-314.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁶⁰ Beverly Dale, "Accompanied by God," *The Other Side*, September-October 1994, 27. Dale writes, "The same God who had been with me through the abuse, who had empowered me to rebel (against it), who had helped me forget in order to survive, was now walking with me, accompanying my slow and painstaking journey . . . The warmth of God's love was melting the frozen glacier of feelings. I began to experience some emotional and spiritual healing. I ran toward it in spite of the pain."

⁶¹ Schmutzer, "A *Theology of Sexual Abuse*," 797, note 66.

⁶² Andrew Schmutzer, "Spiritual Formation and Sexual Abuse: Embodiment, Community and Healing," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 2, no. 1 (2009): 75.

process open-ended, and refer as needed.⁶³ This should not be the responsibility of pastoral staff alone, however. Others, who are called and recruited by leadership should also be available. Especially helpful are those who share the experience of the abused and who have reached some advanced stage of resolution. Well-resourced congregations may consider implementing formal support groups.

- (4) The marriages of victims need support. Sexual and emotional stresses are often intense. Mates of SA victims may suffer deeply and may be tempted to respond angrily to perceived injustices from their wounded spouses.⁶⁴ As counseling proceeds, they should be included. An optional question concerning sexual abuse background may be of profit on pre-marital counseling questionnaires. The effects extend to other family members as well, sometimes resulting in a generalized hatred for men, even innocent sons, brothers, and friends.⁶⁵

⁶³ Al Miles, "Healing Scars of Childhood Abuse," *Leadership Journal*, Spring (1992), 58-63. This article has many practical insights from the then-director of pastoral care at Children's Hospital in St. Paul, Minnesota.

⁶⁴ For a most beneficial treatment of this issue and how to help the abused mate, see Carl Bashinger, "The Spouses of Adult Survivors: How to Respond Christianly" in *The Long Journey Home: Understanding and Ministering to the Sexually Abused*, ed. Andrew Schmutzer, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2012), 325-37. Bashinger says that the mate should understand his abused partner's tendency to manifest repetition compulsion, transference, emotional insulation, and irrational anger. The marriage may be strengthened, however, through sharing in the grief of the abused, rehearsing why they fell in love, speaking the truth to each other, practicing the spiritual disciplines together, and living a healthy lifestyle.

⁶⁵ Miles, "Healing the Scars of Childhood Abuse," 60.

- (5) Forgiveness of abusers should be discussed and explained in a most thoughtful and thorough manner. There are, no doubt, great personal benefits for those who forgive their abusers. Among these are psychological healing, reduction in negative self-referenced feelings, reduced levels of depression and anxiety, as well as elevated self-esteem.⁶⁶ Over-simplification, however, should be studiously avoided. Facile use of Scripture and trite exhortations to “forgive and forget because God does” are theologically illegitimate and unethical.⁶⁷ Painstaking process should not be ignored. Even when forgiveness is granted, it “does not necessitate that the victim retain an ongoing relationship with the offender.”⁶⁸ In fact, “this may not be feasible if the offender does not recognize his transgressions or is unwilling to make amends for them.”⁶⁹
- (6) Congregations should be taught to love without needing to know all the facts of a case. Carol Penner cautions, “A

⁶⁶ Herbert W. Helm, Jr., Jonathan R. Cook, and John M. Berez, “The Implications of Conjunctive and Disjunctive Forgiveness for Sexual Abuse,” *Pastoral Psychology*, 54, no. 1 (2005): 23-32. Page 26 summarizes the research findings of several psychologists.

⁶⁷ Schmutzer, “Spiritual Formation and Sexual Abuse,” 73. The author warns against ignorance of the complex somatic affects of violence and entrenched body memory.

⁶⁸ Helm, Cook, and Berez, “Conjunctive and Disjunctive Forgiveness,” 26.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 26. In addition, for a caution against swift reconciliation with abusive clergy, see James S. Evinger, and Dorteia L. Yoder, “Sexual Abuse, Forgiveness and Justice: A Journey in Faith.” *Journal of Religion and Abuse*, 4, no. 4 (2002): 71-87. The authors recount instances where subtle confessions without contrition have led to the unjustifiable reinstatement of abusers to pastoral ministry.

congregation never knows the whole story of sexual violence, and it does not have the right to know the whole story.”⁷⁰ On the other hand, what is known should be handled with great care. Gossip should be avoided, but so also should caution be taken against being manipulated into keeping unhealthy secrets.⁷¹

- (7) Churches may consider having a special service during which they recognize various forms of brokenness within the congregation. Stories of suffering, testimonies, lament Psalms, and communal silence may be employed.⁷² Pastors should preach about the sexual violence that exists in many communities and not avoid the biblical texts that address it. This can be done in the context of celebrating the gift of our sexuality and “our commitment to treasure each other’s sacredness.”⁷³ Other helpful ritual may include burning a photograph (closure), planting a tree (celebration of life), or the communion table with broken bread (for broken people).⁷⁴ Such public acknowledgement of their pain may aid the recovery of those who have been victims of someone they trusted and help them shed their insecurity, anxiety and suspicion.⁷⁵ As one survivor said, “I was no longer isolated, I no longer had to carry it all

⁷⁰ Carol Penner, “After Sexual Violence: What Happens in the Community of Grace?” *Vision*, Fall 2008, 65.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁷² Schmutzer, “Spiritual Formation,” 84.

⁷³ Penner, “After Sexual Violence,” 66.

⁷⁴ Schmutzer, “Spiritual Formation,” 80.

⁷⁵ James Gould, “Healing the Wounded Heart through Ritual and Liturgy: Accompanying the Abused in Their Healing,” In *The Long Journey Home*, 292.

alone. There were others to say I'm sad with you, I'm angry with you."⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Ibid., 292.

Chiliasm in the Early Church until Nicea: Apologists

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APOLOGISTS

As the Christian church grew in the second century, so did the interaction between believers and others in the Roman Empire. With growing persecutions and especially after the Bar-Kokhba revolt, Christians found it necessary to defend their religion as both law abiding, non-pagan, and clearly distinct from Judaism. Historians generally place the age of the apologists between the Bar-Kokhba revolt (c. 132) and about 230.¹ Persecutions which started during the late apostolic era continued in the apologists' era. Crutchfield notes that the apologists' three objectives included countering false and malicious statement circulating about the church; exposing absurdities and immoralities in paganism in contrast to Christianity; and convincing detractors of the absolute truth of Christianity versus the half-truths of paganism.²

¹ By so titling the time period, historians do not mean to imply that apologetic literature was not written after this time. Augustine's *City of God* provides an excellent example of apologetics for the Roman after this period. His work, however, is classified as theological, as the church continued to develop its polemic and both systematize and institutionalize the faith.

² Larry V. Crutchfield, "The Early Church Fathers and the Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part IV —Dispensational Concepts in the Apologists," *Conservative Theological Journal* 2, no. 7 (December 1998): 376, citing Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, 1:186-87.

In order to limit the scope of this article and because the following apologists generally are given short shrift as relates to their eschatology, the writings of only seven apologists will be analyzed in this paper.³ These include the millenarian views of Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus, Tertullian (and the Montanists with him).⁴

Justin Martyr (c. 100–165)

Considered by some to be the most significant of the apologists,⁵ Justin wrote two *Apologies* and a *Dialogue with Trypho* between 155 and 165.⁶ Most who analyze his millennial views center on his *Dialogue with Trypho*. Trypho was a Jew with whom Justin debates to prove the superiority of Christianity over Judaism.⁷ He refers to the second advent and renewal of Jerusalem in *First Apology* 11⁸ and especially in *Dialogue* 113:

³ To be specific, Quadratus, Aristides of Athens, Aristo of Pella, Hegesippus of whom Eusebius speaks, Hermias, Appollinaris of Hierapolis, and Minucius Felix will not be addressed.

⁴ Some see Tertullian as the first of the Latin theologians and others view him with the apologists. Of course the two groups overlap. Mike Stallard, e.g., sees him in both camps.

⁵ Perhaps because he placed much emphasis on the future and prophetic writings in his writings.

⁶ Brian E. Daly, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (1991, repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 20.

⁷ It is not clear to this researcher whether Trypho was a real or imaginary debate partner.

⁸ “And when you hear that we look for a kingdom, you suppose, without making any inquiry, that we speak of a human kingdom; whereas we speak of that which is with God, as appears also from the

But why do you not similarly investigate the reason why the name of Oshea the son of Nave (Nun), which his father gave him, was changed to Jesus (Joshua)? But since not only was his name altered, but he was also appointed successor to Moses, being the only one of his contemporaries who came out from Egypt, he led the surviving people into the Holy Land; and as he, not Moses, led the people into the Holy Land, and as he distributed it by lot to those who entered along with him, so also Jesus the Christ will turn again the dispersion of the people, and will distribute the good land to each one, though not in the same manner. For the former gave them a temporary inheritance, seeing he was neither Christ who is God, nor the Son of God; but the latter, after the holy resurrection, shall give us the eternal possession. The former, after he had been named Jesus (Joshua), and after he had received strength from His Spirit, caused the sun to stand still. For I have proved that it was Jesus who appeared to and conversed with Moses, and Abraham, and all the other patriarchs without exception, ministering to the will of the Father; who also, I say, came to be born man by the Virgin Mary, and I [*sic*] lives for ever. *For the latter is He after whom and by whom the Father will renew both the heaven and the earth; this is He who shall shine an eternal light in Jerusalem; this is he who is the king of Salem after the order of Melchizedek, and the eternal Priest of the Most High.*"⁹

Here Justin also discusses possessing the land formerly called Canaan and refers to the peace and prosperity discussed in

confession of their faith made by those who are charged with being Christians, though they know that death is the punishment awarded to him who so confesses. For if we looked for a human kingdom, we should also deny our Christ, that we might not be slain; and we should strive to escape detection, that we might obtain what we expect. But since our thoughts are not fixed on the present, we are not concerned when men cut us off; since also death is a debt which must at all events be paid" (*ANF*, I.166).

⁹ *ANF*, I.255; emphasis added; cf. *Dialogue*, 139. Is it clear if Jerusalem is in the millennium or eternal state or both?

Isaiah 65:17–25.¹⁰ In *Dialogue* 117 he speaks of the resurrection of all men and the eternal kingdom.¹¹ But *Dialogue* 80–81 speaks most particularly to the interests of millennial studies and is so clear on his millennial hopes that almost everyone claims Justin Martyr a chiliast. An extensive quotation follows for context.

And Trypho to this replied, “I remarked to you sir, that you are very anxious to be safe in all respects, since you cling to the Scriptures. But tell me, do you really admit that *this place, Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt; and do you expect your people to be gathered together, and made joyful with Christ and the patriarchs, and the prophets, both the men of our nation, and other proselytes who joined them before your Christ came? Or have you given way, and admitted this in order to have the appearance of worsting us in the controversies? ”*

Then I answered, “I am not so miserable a fellow, Trypho, as to say one thing and think another. I admitted to you formerly, that I and many others are of this opinion, and [believe] that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware; but, on the other hand, I signified to you that many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise. Moreover, I pointed out to you that some who are called Christians, but are godless, impious heretics, teach doctrines that are in every way blasphemous, atheistical, and foolish. But that you may know that I do not say this before you alone, I shall draw up a statement, so far as I can, of all the arguments which have passed between us; in which I shall record myself as admitting the very same things which I admit to you. For *I choose to follow not men or men’s doctrines, but God* and the doctrines [delivered] by Him. For if you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit this [truth], and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham,

¹⁰ Some see a difference of understanding as to the length of time in the land of Canaan between *Dialogue* 113 and 139 versus *Dialogue* 80–81 (cf., Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 21).

¹¹ “God shows shall be taken away from us, when He shall raise all men from the dead, and appoint some to be incorruptible, immortal, and free from sorrow in the everlasting and imperishable kingdom” (ANF, I.257).

and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians, even as one, if he would rightly consider it, would not admit that the Sadducees, or similar sects of Genistae, Meristae, Galilaeans, Hellenists, Pharisees, Baptists, are Jews (do not hear me impatiently when I tell you what I think), but are [only] called Jews and children of Abraham, worshipping God with the lips, as God Himself declared, but the heart was far from Him. But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on *all* points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, *and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.*¹²

"For Isaiah spake thus concerning this space of a *thousand years*: 'For there shall be *the new heaven and the new earth*, and the former shall not be remembered, or come into their heart; but they shall find joy and gladness in it, which things I create. For, Behold, I make Jerusalem a rejoicing, and My people a joy; and I shall rejoice over Jerusalem, and be glad over My people. And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, or the voice of crying. And there shall be no more there a person of immature years, or an old man who shall not fulfil his days. For the young man shall be an hundred years old; but the sinner who dies an hundred years old, he shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and shall themselves inhabit them; and they shall plant vines, and shall themselves eat the produce of them, and drink the wine. They shall not build, and others inhabit; they shall not plant, and others eat. For according to the days of the tree of life shall be the days of my people; the works of their toil shall abound. Mine elect shall not toil fruitlessly, or beget children to be cursed; for they shall be a seed righteous and blessed by the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will hear; while they are still speaking, I shall say, What is it? Then shall the wolves and the lambs feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent [shall eat] earth as bread. They shall not hurt or maltreat each other on the holy mountain,' saith the Lord." Now we have understood that the expression used among these words, "According to the days of the tree [of life] shall be the days of my people; the works of their toil shall abound" obscurely predicts a thousand years. For as Adam

¹² *ANF*, I.239; emphasis added.

was told that in the day he ate of the tree he would die, we know that he did not complete a thousand years. We have perceived, moreover, that the expression, "The day of the Lord is as a thousand years," is connected with this subject. And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was *John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem*; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place. Just as our Lord also said, "They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, the children of the God of the resurrection."¹³

The difficult determination in *Dialogue* 80–81 is *not* Justin's chiliasm (which almost all accept), but whether he considered those who did not believe in an earthly thousand-year reign of Christ as orthodox. It seems most conclusive to hold that Justin knew of true believers who held to chiliasm, and those that did not, though he does not believe the latter hold *fully* to true orthodoxy.¹⁴

¹³ *Ibid*; emphasis added.

¹⁴ This discussion was started above, but will be further analyzed here. For example, Walvoord notes that "chiliasm constitutes in the sec. century *so decided an article of faith* the Justin held it up as a criterion of *perfect orthodoxy*" (John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* [1953; repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979], 121, citing George Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, Vol. 1 [1952, repr., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1972], 480, Peter cites Semisch, *Herzog's Cyclopaedia*). This comes from Justin's statement in *Dialogue* 80. Semisch's interpretation of Justin seems fair to this point. Emboldened, Walvoord later on the same page writes, "Those [in the second century] who may have denied it [premillennialism] were classified as heretics, not simply for being opposed to premillennialism but for other reasons" (*Ibid.*). But what are these other reasons? How much were the heretical verdicts based on anti-premillennialism and how much on other 'false' doctrines? Walvoord does not tell us. Nor does he provide any evidence to support his claim that those who denied premillennialism in the second century were branded heretics. Apparently he is basing this on Peters' contention that a "not" has been

removed from the *Dialogue with Trypho* 80 manuscripts (see note on Peters above under Polycarp). If so Walvoord's synopsis is misleading. How do later premillennialists handle this quote from Justin Martyr? Hannah is characteristic. He affirms Justin's belief in an earthly millennial kingdom "inaugurated by the Second Advent and ... centered in a renewed Jerusalem (*Dial.* 113)... and affirms Justin's belief in a thousand years followed by another judgment and the eternal state from *Dialogue* 81" (John Hannah, "History of Doctrine Notes" [History of Doctrine notes: Dallas, TX: Theological Seminary, 1990]. But he says nothing of Justin calling others heretics who do not hold his exact eschatological view. Crutchfield says much concerning Justin, and addresses the contended *Dialogue* 80 passage (Crutchfield, "Early Church Fathers — Part IV," 395, citing from Dressler's *The Fathers of the Church* instead of *ANF*, I.) This translation reads: "I did point out that there are many pure and pious Christians who do *not* share our opinion" regarding the millennium (emphasis added). Crutchfield emphasizes Justin's admission that the most orthodox held to millenarianism and that those orthodox in all doctrines but the millennium were "flawed in their faith" but he does not call them heretics (Ibid.). Turner, also favoring premillennialism, quotes *Dialogue* 80 in total including the section where Justin acknowledges that "on the other hand, I signified to you that many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise." Yet he too emphasizes Justin's view "that all Christians who are 'right-minded on all points' believe likewise: there shall be a resurrection of the saints, who shall then dwell 1000 years in a rebuilt, adorned, and enlarged Zion" (Charles Millard Turner, "Primitive Premillennialism: A study in Patristic Chiliasm from the Apostolic Fathers to Irenaeus," <www.welcometobibleverses.org/my-articles/charles_book/Tableof_contents.htm> [accessed 1 March 2008], end of chapter II). He says nothing of an amended manuscript to bolster his position. D.H. Kromminga, the historic-premillennialist, says Justin Martyr and Irenaeus' "chiliasm is beyond question. Both admit, [however,] *that their own chiliastic views were not shared by all Christians of their time.* It is, therefore, simply a perversion of the historical facts, when modern Premillenarians claim that the ancient Church was prevailingly or almost exclusively chiliastic" (*The Millennium in the Church* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1945], 43; emphasis added). See Ibid., 44–46, for a forthright analysis of *Dialogue* 80. There Kromminga places the cause of the misinterpretation and mishandling of Justin's *Dialogue* 80 at the feet of Peters, citing *The Theocratic Kingdom*, I.480.

Justin, unlike modern dispensational premillennialists equates the church with Israel. He replaces Israel with the church and sees a clear advent and time of judgment *prior* to an earthly millennium, with a final judgment and the eternal state consummating it. Justin undoubtedly believed there would be a millennium and earthly reign of Christ. But it is a wonder why so few question his exegesis of Isaiah 65:17, where he equates the new heaven and earth with the thousand-year reign of John's Apocalypse. Perhaps this explains why Crutchfield states,

The fourth and final dispensation in Justin's outline of human history is the period from Christ, to presumably the eternal state. While it is certain that Justin looked for a distinct thousand-year millennial reign of Christ on earth, he did not discuss it in dispensational terms. He seems rather to have simply include it under the dispensation of Christ.¹⁵

The postmillennialist, Daniel Whitby specifically quotes the questioned section of Justin's *Dialogue* 80 thusly: "But then again, I have intimated to you, that many Christians of a pure and pious judgment do not own this (I speak of Christians of a pure and pious judgment)" and then continues the quotation discussing those he views as heretical, finally summarizing Justin's view of three groups: "1. Of heretics, that were *κατα παντα βλαφημοι*, entirely blasphemous of the God of Israel, and deniers of the resurrection of the flesh, and consequently of the millennium 2. Of Christians who were *κατα παντα ορθογνωμονες*, "in all things orthodox," who owned both the resurrection of the flesh, and the millennium: and Justin Martyr being of this opinion 3. Of many Christians of a pure and pious judgment, who did *not* own this millennium" (Daniel Whitby, *A Treatise on the True Millennium* [N.p.: 1846], 1119, emphasis added). Even Chafer seems to accept this summarization from Whitby (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4 [Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947-1948], 275; Peters, *Theocratic Kingdom*, 1.482 Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1972], 482-83, who is citing Whitby, *Treatise on Tradition and Treatise on the Millennium*). Apparently Walvoord does not look to this latter part of Peters, nor to his Chafer's *Systematic Theology* when writing this portion of *The Millennial Kingdom*, or he simply disagrees with him.

¹⁵ Crutchfield, "Early Church Fathers—Part IV," 390 and cf. Justin, *Dialogue*, 45.

Apparently Justin lumps the millennium with the eternal state, not because he did not see them as distinct, but because Christ reigns over both. But his blurry interpretation of Isaiah 65:17 as the millennium rather than the eternal state (cf. Rev 21:1) matches that of dispensational premillennialists.¹⁶ Kromminga, commenting on Justin's interpretation of Isaiah 65:17, laments that the language of a new heaven and new earth "might have warned Justin of the probability that the entire passage refers to no millennium but to the eternal state; but they do not withhold him from understanding the passage of the millennium."¹⁷ Walvoord helps to sift through the issues, commenting, "While even modern premillenarians might not accept the details of Justin's interpretation, the notable fact is that he clearly states the essentials of premillennialism—the second advent, followed by a thousand-year reign and the separating of the resurrections before and after the millennium."¹⁸

¹⁶ For example, John Martin comments on Isaiah 65:17 from a dispensational premillennial perspective equating the new heaven and earth with the millennium: "In these verses the Lord described the millennial kingdom, which is seemingly identified here with the eternal state (new heavens and a new earth). In Revelation, however, the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1) *follow* the Millennium (Rev. 20:4). Most likely Isaiah did not distinguish between these two aspects of God's rule; he saw them together as one. After all, the Millennium, though 1,000 years in duration, will be a mere pinpoint of time compared with the eternal state" (John Martin, "Isaiah" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983, 1985], 1:1120).

¹⁷ Kromminga, *Millennium in the Church*, 59.

¹⁸ Walvoord, *Millennial Kingdom*, 121.

With which aspects might modern premillenarians take exception to Justin's chiliasm? For one, he makes no distinction between Israel and the church. On this note Schaff explains, "Justin's exegesis of the Old Testament is apologetic, typological and allegorical throughout. He finds everywhere references to Christ, and turned it into a text book of Christian theology. He carried the whole New Testament into the Old without discriminating, and thus obliterated the difference."¹⁹ In this regard Justin appears a strange bedfellow of modern premillennialists, who see literal interpretation as a dispensational sine qua non. Nevertheless, Crutchfield finds solace. While affirming Schaff's position above, he also points out that Justin held an "implied belief in the literal interpretation of prophecy" and its practice.²⁰ Essentially, Crutchfield argues that Justin employed a literal hermeneutic for OT passages about the millennial kingdom. But for Justin the covenant promises passed from Israel—the physical seed of Abraham—to "a non-physical (i.e., Gentile), spiritual seed of Judah ... quarried out of the bowels of Christ ... (Isaiah 62:1-4)."²¹ Crutchfield concludes,

For Justin, and others who followed, national Israel was permanently cut off because of its faithlessness and rejection of Christ. Thus believers of the church age now constitute the new Israel in a figurative sense as God's chosen people. And according to Justin, as the redeemed of God and the true spiritual seed of

¹⁹ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 2 (1910; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 721.

²⁰ Crutchfield, "Early Church Fathers—Part IV," 378.

²¹ Ibid., 380, referencing Justin, *Dialogue*, 123. Perhaps Justin's most sustained argument for the church essentially replacing Israel is found in *Dialogue*, 123-125. For a book-length treatment of this shift to Christian chiliasm, which is often termed "replacement theology," see Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel and the Church: The Origins and Effects of Replacement Theology* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2004).

Abraham, they, along with the saints of other ages, are heirs of promise.²²

Therefore, Justin definitively held to a belief in the millennium but for the church who now equals Israel in God's eyes.

Melito of Sardis (d. ca. 190)

As bishop of Sardis, he wrote prolifically, including a discourse *On the Pasch* (related to Easter, resurrection, and Passover of Christ) around 160. Perhaps he wrote this against the pseudo-prophecy of the Montanists, though Tertullian spoke highly of him. He had enough literary acumen to write an *Apology* addressed to Emperor Marcus Aurelius, "written probably at the outbreak of the violent persecutions in 177, which, however, were of a local or provincial character, and not sanctioned by the general government.... He [also] wrote a commentary on the Apocalypse."²³ Thus some commentary on the millennial kingdom could be expected.

About *On the Pasch* Daley writes, "This richly typological meditation on the paschal mystery focuses its attention almost exclusively on the meaning of the death of Jesus for the present Christian community ... and ... shows no direct concern for the specifically eschatological dimension of Christian faith."²⁴ Yet, Walvoord cites Peters as placing Melito in the premillennial

²² Crutchfield, "Early Church Fathers—Part IV," 383. Kromminga sees Justin's chiliasm as moderate since he does not include a national conversion or restoration of Israel or a glory for Israel separate from the church (*Millennium in the Church*, 57).

²³ Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, II.738–39.

²⁴ Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 15. Eusebius mentions only the eschatological promise of resurrection (*Church History*, IV.13, 26; V.25). Such interpretation is customary by Daley.

camp as affirmed by Jerome and Genadius.²⁵ Crutchfield, who provides the wanting references from Jerome (*Commentary on Ezekiel* 36) and Genadius (*De Dogm. Eccl.*, Ch. 52), suggest that “such testimony, especially when given by one like Jerome who was not friend of the millenarians cannot be minimized.”²⁶ And what is that testimony of Jerome? As the source remains unavailable to this researcher, it must stand on Crutchfield’s and Peters’s endorsement from Jerome and Gandius that Melito held to some kind of chiliasm.

Tatian (ca. 165)

Tatian the disciple of Justin²⁷ wrote an apologetic *Address to the Greeks* just after 165.²⁸ Tatian’s general eschatology supports the theory of the soul’s immortality in *Address to the Greeks* 13.²⁹ But in his extant works he surprisingly says nothing about the millennium, and no church historian reviewed offers any citing to the contrary.³⁰ Turner comments,

²⁵ Walvoord, *Millennial Kingdom*, 120–21. He provides no additional support.

²⁶ Crutchfield, “Early Church Fathers—Part IV,” 400.

²⁷ Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 22.

²⁸ *ANF*, II.65–81.

²⁹ *ANF*, II.70.

³⁰ Walvoord tacitly accepts the same assessment from W. H. Rutgers, but then confuses the matter by adding “Rutger’s evidence that chiliasm found no favor is that a whole century rolled by with no voice lifted against it.” Walvoord then unadvisedly states, “If Peters is right, there were many premillennialists in [the second century] era including ... Tatian” (Walvoord, *Millennial Kingdom*, 43, citing Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, I.495–96). But this reader searched in vain for any such evidence in Tatian’s writings. Walvoord repeats the same list including Tatian again without any evidence beyond that from

W. G. T. Shedd, finding what he considered no traces of millenarianism in...Tatian..., concluded: "The inference from these facts then, is a that this tenet was not the received faith of the church certainly down to the year 150."³¹

Turner answers Shedd's amillennial contention regarding the apologists' chiliasm.

Estimates of the number of chiliasts among the Apologists vary just as greatly as the estimates of the number among the Apostolic Fathers. The post-millennialist Charles A. Briggs claims that only Justin Martyr was a chiliast among the Apologists. He asserts that no trace of chiliasm is to be found in the writings of (or in the later references to) Athenagoras, Theophilus, Tatian, Hermias, Melito, Apollinaris of Hierapolis, or the *Epistle to Diognetus*. Kromminga claims that it is a perversion of the facts to claim that the ancient Church, up to ca. 150 A.D., was prevailingly or almost exclusively chiliastic. Typically, some premillennial polemicists have employed this same argument from silence to arrive at the opposite conclusion. A. C. Gaebelein argues that it is wrong to infer from the silence of some of the Apologists that they were not millennialists. "Scholars like Tatian, Athenagoras and others," he says, "wrote specially against pagan mythology and philosophy and therefore omitted any reference to the Millennium." He argues that to interpret their silence as meaning that they did not believe

Peters' (Walvoord, *Millennial Kingdom*, 120). Yet Shedd (*A History of Christian Doctrine*, II.391); Daley (*Hope of the Early Church*, 22-23); Berkhof (*The History of Christian Doctrine*, 262); and Kelly (*Early Christian Doctrines*, 466, 470) and this researcher find no millennial reference in Tatian, though he does support the resurrection (*Address to the Greeks*, 6). Crutchfield wisely does not even include Tatian in his extensive writings supporting premillennialism in the early church fathers.

³¹ Turner, "Primitive Premillennialism," 8, citing Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, II.391, whose whole list here includes Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Tatian, Athenagoras, and Theophilus of Antioch.

in it, “as their colleagues did,” is unreasonable. Peters adds the following Apologists to his list of chiliasts: Justin Martyr, Melito, Tatian, and Apollinaris of Hierapolis. He then draws the conclusion, which has been previously cited, that through the end of the second century, no opposition to premillennialism is to be found, but, rather, that it was held by the leading Fathers of the Church.³²

As with previous Apologists, like Melito, it may be reasonable to accept Tatian as a chiliast, since he was under Justin’s discipleship. Nevertheless, neither the extant data, nor in this case patristic historians, support this assertion.

Athenagoras (c. 177)

Athenagoras, an Athenian philosopher and Christian wrote *A Plea for the Christians* to the Emperors Marcus Aurelius Anoninus and Lucius Aurelius Commodus³³ and *On the Resurrection of the Dead* around the year 177.³⁴ Some scholars question the attribution of *On the Resurrection* to Athenagoras.³⁵ His writings provide significant apologetic for the afterlife by reconstituted human bodies—though different from present bodies—either to eternal life or judgment.

As for Tatian, most church historians find no trace of discussions on the millennium in Athenagoras’ extant writings.³⁶ Walvoord protests the inclusion of Athenagoras in a list of

³² Turner, “Primitive Premillennialism,” 8–9.

³³ *ANF*, II.127–148.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, II.149–62.

³⁵ Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 22 and n. 4.

³⁶ Cf. Berkhof, *History of Christian Doctrine*, 262; Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 466; Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 23–24; Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, II.391.

second-century non-chiliasts. But when he counter-cites from Peters's list of Apologists—who he believes held to chiliasm—Athenagoras is *not* included.³⁷ Walvoord's protest may mislead some to think Athenagoras was decidedly chiliastic, but *not even* Peters claims him and a review of his writings leaves the debate open.

Theophilus of Antioch (115–181/188)

Theophilus was born a pagan (*Church History*, I.14) and owed his conversion to Christianity to the careful study of the Holy Scriptures. Eusebius (in *Church History*, IV.20) declares that Theophilus was the sixth bishop of Syrian Antioch from the apostles,³⁸ having become bishop in 168. He apparently wrote several works (presently not extant), one against Marcion³⁹ and another *Against the Heresy of Hermongenes* (*Church History*, IV.20.1), among others.⁴⁰ He wrote his remaining and only extant work, titled *Theophilus to Autolytus*⁴¹ probably around 180 to a non-Christian friend.⁴²

Marcus Dods says, "Theophilus comes down to us only as an apologist intimately allied in spirit to Justin and Irenaeus."⁴³

³⁷ Walvoord, *Millennial Kingdom*, 43, citing Peters, *Theocratic Kingdom*, I.495–96. A review of the latter also reveals no reference to Athenagoras.

³⁸ *ANF*, II.88.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, II.87.

⁴⁰ Cf. Crutchfield, "Early Church Fathers—Part IV," 401.

⁴¹ *ANF*, II.89–121.

⁴² Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 24.

⁴³ *ANF*, II.87.

With such associations, interesting millenarian references might be expected. In book one he encourages his friend Autolycus to consider the reality of the Christian God. Essentially, he evangelizes his friend. In book two he compares Greek philosophy and poetry with (primarily) OT teachings, finding the former wanting. He spends a great deal of time explaining chronology and events in the book of Genesis and refers to the ancient Hebrews as “our forefathers who sojourned in Egypt” (*to Autolycus*, 2.10–3.21, esp. 3.21). This is surprisingly positive regarding the Jews in light of the prevalence of replacement theology in the second century. Yet, nothing particularly chiliastic manifests itself.

Turner pines regarding the loss of much of Theophilus’ writings: That

this corpus of anti-heretical literature has perished ...[is] especially unfortunate for the student of patristic chiliasm, because the Gnostic eschatology was diametrically opposed to millenarianism. Any anti-Gnostic writer who took up the question of eschatology almost as a matter of course, would have revealed his sentiments concerning the resurrection, the judgment, the end of the world, the prophecies, etc., all of which are intimately intertwined with the question of the Millennium. From the approach taken in refuting Gnostic eschatology, then, the writer would almost inevitably have displayed his millennial views.⁴⁴

Unfortunately such comments do not help to reveal Theophilus’ documents nor their content regarding chiliasm. Crutchfield goes a step further. First he acknowledges that “no premillenarian names Theophilus among second-century proponents of that doctrine,” but then he raises evidence that he held to the year-day theory in *to Autolycus* 3.28.⁴⁵ Furthermore,

⁴⁴ Turner, “Primitive Premillennialism,” start of chapter III.

⁴⁵ Crutchfield, “Early Church Fathers—Part IV,” 402. This is not technically correct. That chapter actually discusses historical chronology from Adam to the present totally 5698 years, without any

Crutchfield's source (Danielou), arguing for Theophilus' chiliasm, admits that Theophilus makes "no direct allusion either to the seven millennia nor to millenarianism." Yet Danielou still develops a scenario to claim him as millenarian. Though Crutchfield questions his source's account, he then concludes that Danielou's assessment is probably correct.⁴⁶ But the chronological calculations Danielou assesses in Theophilus by no means demand that Theophilus held to a day-year theory and even granting that, it does not demand adherence to chiliasm. Even Danielou admits this.⁴⁷

mention of a day is as a thousand years to the Lord. Perhaps it is better to say his chronology is consistent with the year-day theory.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 401.

⁴⁷ Crutchfield in a former article writes, "It is worthy of note that almost every ante-Nicene father who held to the year-day theory was also a defender of millennialism" (Crutchfield, "Early Church Fathers and the Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part I—Setting the Stage: The Participants and Theological Principles in the Debate," *Conservative Theological Journal* 2, no. 4 [March 1998]: 26). Such a blanket statement makes it difficult for his conclusion not to follow, as for example here with Theophilus. But in a footnote Crutchfield admits several exceptions to his blanket statement. "The notable exceptions are Papias and Tertullian. In Papias' case, owing to the fact that only the barest fragments of his writings have survived, there is much about his views that we do not know. The same can be said course for Nepos and Coracion for whom we have no extant writings. With regard to Tertullian, since he barely addressed the subject, it is difficult to say why he ignored a view so prominently held by his millenarian predecessors. The only reference we have found to this tradition in Tertullian's writings is one concerning "an *hebdomad* or sevenfold number, as an auspice of our resurrection, and rest, and kingdom (*A Treatise on the Soul* XXXVII)" (Ibid.). But this is a large concession indeed, particularly as regards Tertullian (c. 160–225) a Latin father and contemporary of Hippolytus. Crutchfield's efforts to link the two by noting that Theophilus' chronology reflects that of others (e.g., Hippolytus) who were proponents of both the year-day theory and millenarian concepts also falls short. First, evidence for Hippolytus's chiliasm is weak. Second, to argue for a link to Hippolytus seems

Crutchfield is on steadier ground when he concludes “At the very least it may be said that there is nothing in Theophilus which is contrary to the year-day and millenarian beliefs of his day and of those preceding.”⁴⁸

Irenaeus (120–202)

Irenaeus served as bishop of Lyons in southern France after Ponthius’ martyrdom.⁴⁹ Many consider him one of the most important Christian writers of the second century. He labored intensely to understand and expose the manifold heresies of his day, a fact most evident from his monumental work *Against Heresies*.⁵⁰ Some consider him the last of the apologists and others, the first of the theologians.

anachronistic for Theophilus died when Hippolytus was 21 or 28, well before he held the role of Presbyter in the Roman church. Perhaps, in affirming Danielou’s contention that Theophilus was chiliastic, Crutchfield raises his guard against the amillennial claim that if an early church father did not explicitly teach chiliasm, he was against it (i.e., amillennial).

⁴⁸ Crutchfield, “Early Church Fathers—Part IV,” 402. Though he likely means proceeding since he only refers to Hippolytus. It is curious why Crutchfield makes these connections with Hippolytus and not Tertullian as both were Latin contemporaries.

⁴⁹ *ANF*, I.307–309.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, I.315–567. Newton tells us that in “his primary work Irenaeus gave his theology as statements of the Christian faith to refute the heresies of Valentinus (the Gnostic) and Marcion. For Irenaeus the authority of “the faith” is established through the direct line of elders in the church back to the apostles. This authentic message of the church confirms the Christian Bible. He was the first to state four Gospels as canon. To these he also added a list of apostolic writings, quoting all as “Scripture” along with the Old Testament. In his argument for the direct line of elders, he was the first to list the succession of Roman bishops as an example of this line, and thus he opened the way for later church officials to elevate the bishop of Rome.

In *Against Heresies* 1.10.1 Irenaeus summarizes the universal church's statement of faith, emphasizing that

although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the Churches which have been planted in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world.⁵¹

In this *regula fidei* he mentions nothing of the millennium. But this does not imply that the millennial doctrines were unimportant to Irenaeus.⁵² Because he grew up in Asia Minor under the preaching of the apostolic father Polycarp, his writings are almost invariably included in any analysis of early church chiliasm. For example, in *Against Heresies* 5.32 he writes a strong argument that the earthly kingdom was mixed Jew/Gentile. And in *Against Heresies* 5.25.3 he speaks of the end times:

Irenaeus opposed the Gnostic attitude toward creation by affirming both creation and redemption as the acts of God. From the beginning, the "One Creator God" worked through his "two hands," the Son and the Spirit, without intermediary angels. He considered the Atonement as a "recapitulation" made by Christ—that is, his going over the ground again in obedience where Adam and man failed. To this biblical thought he added the theme "the Virgin Mary is the obedient Eve." As others in the second century, Irenaeus taught an earthly millennial kingdom at the second coming of Christ. Irenaeus was more Pauline than the apostolic fathers. He was also more biblical and less philosophical than the Greek church fathers who came later. Although a contemporary with the apologists and their work, Irenaeus was the first to write as a theologian for the church" (J. Newton, "Irenaeus" in *Who's Who in Christian History*).

⁵¹ ANF, I.331 (= *Against Heresies* 1.10.2).

⁵² Though it may imply that he did not consider it a significant doctrine to teach catechumens.

Daniel too, looking forward to the end of the last kingdom, i.e., the ten last kings, amongst whom the kingdom of those men shall be partitioned, and upon whom the son of perdition shall come, declares that ten horns shall spring from the beast, and that another little horn shall arise in the midst of them, and that three of the former shall be rooted up before his face. He says: "And, behold, eyes were in this horn as the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and his look was more stout than his fellows. I was looking, and this horn made war against the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came and gave judgment to the saints of the most high God, and the time came, and the saints obtained the kingdom." [Dan 7:8, etc.] Then, further on, in the interpretation of the vision, there was said to him: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall excel all other kingdoms, and devour the whole earth, and tread it down, and cut it in pieces. And its ten horns are ten kings which shall arise; and after them shall arise another, who shall surpass in evil deeds all that were before him, and shall overthrow three kings; and he shall speak words against the most high God, and wear out the saints of the most high God, and shall purpose to change times and laws; and [everything] shall be given into his hand until a time of times and a half time," [Dan 7:23, etc.] that is, for three years and six months, during which time, when he comes, he shall reign over the earth. Of whom also the Apostle Paul again, speaking in the second [Epistle] to the Thessalonians, and at the same time proclaiming the cause of his advent, thus says: "And then shall the wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the presence of His coming"; whose coming [i.e., the wicked one's] is after the working of Satan, in all power, and signs, and portents of lies, and with all deceivableness of wickedness for those who perish; because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And therefore God will send them the working of error, that they may believe a lie; that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but gave consent to iniquity [2 Thess 2:8].⁵³

⁵³ Ibid., I.553. Cf., *Against Heresies* 5.25.5 where he writes, "From all these passages are revealed to us, not merely the particulars of the apostasy, and [the doings] of him who concentrates in himself every satanic error, but also, that there is one and the same God the Father, who was declared by the prophets, but made manifest by Christ. For if

This section speaks about what comes *just before* the end times and the second advent. It must be remembered that Irenaeus mentions these things to confirm that there is one God and not many emanations of gods, as the Gnostics believed—one God who will overcome the whole world. *Against Heresies* 5.26.1 covers Irenaeus' handling of John's Revelation 17:12 and more from Daniel 5.26.1–2.

And since an end shall take place, he says: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven raise up a kingdom which shall never decay, and His kingdom shall not be left to another people. It shall break in pieces and shatter all kingdoms, and shall itself be exalted *for ever*. As thou sawest that the stone was cut without hands from the mountain, and brake in pieces the baked clay, the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold, God has pointed out to the king what shall come to pass after these things; and the dream is true, and the interpretation trustworthy." [Dan 2:44–45] 2. If therefore the great God showed future things by Daniel, and confirmed them by His Son; and if Christ is the stone which is cut out without hands, who shall destroy temporal kingdoms, and introduce *an eternal one*, which is the resurrection of the just; as he declares, "The God of heaven shall raise up *a kingdom which shall never be destroyed*,"—let those thus confuted come to their senses, who reject the Creator (*Demiurgum*), and do not agree that the prophets were sent beforehand from the same Father from whom also the Lord came, but who assert that prophecies originated from diverse powers."⁵⁴

what Daniel prophesied concerning the end has been confirmed by the Lord, when He said, "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, which has been spoken of by Daniel the prophet" [Matt 24:15] (and the angel Gabriel gave the interpretation of the visions to Daniel, and he is the archangel of the Creator (*Demiurgi*), who also proclaimed to Mary the visible coining and the incarnation of Christ), then one and the same God is most manifestly pointed out, who sent the prophets, and made promise of the Son, and called us into His knowledge" (Ibid., I.554).

⁵⁴ Ibid., I.555; emphasis added.

Here he makes no clear reference to a millennial or earthly kingdom. Instead, he calls Christ's kingdom eternal three times. In the next chapter (*Against Heresies* 5.27.1) again he makes no mention of a millennium but only of the kingdom which is contrasted with eternal damnation.⁵⁵ It may be argued that this is a reference to the second resurrection (and judgment), but no clear reference was given earlier to a first resurrection.

But then he hints at some millennial references. In *Against Heresies* 5.28.2 Irenaeus ties the number 666 (Rev 13:14) with the number 6 "as a summing up of the whole of that apostasy which has taken place during six thousand years."⁵⁶ And in the following verses (5.28.3-4) he writes,

For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says: "Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; and God rested upon *the seventh day from all His works*" [Gen 2:2]. This is an account of the things formerly created, *as also it is a prophecy of what is to come*. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years [2 Pet 3:8]; and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year. 4. And therefore throughout all time, man, having been moulded at the beginning by the hands of God, that is, of the Son and of the Spirit, is made after the image and likeness of God: the chaff, indeed, which is the apostasy, being cast away; but the wheat, that is, those who bring forth fruit to God in faith, being gathered into the barn. And for this cause tribulation is necessary for those who are saved, that having been after a manner broken up, and rendered fine, and sprinkled over by the patience of the Word of God, and set on fire [for purification], they may be fitted for the royal banquet. As a

⁵⁵ "[A]nd to call the lambs into the kingdom prepared for them, but to send the goats into everlasting fire, which has been prepared by His Father for the devil and his angels [Matt 25:33, etc.]" (Ibid., I.555-556).

⁵⁶ Ibid., I.557.

certain man of ours said, when he was condemned to the wild beasts because of his testimony with respect to God: "I am the wheat of Christ, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God."⁵⁷

Here then is found the year-day chronological scheme along with affirmation of a seventh day rest "as also it is a prophecy of what is to come." But he does not continue this topic that could naturally turn to a discussion of the millennium. Instead, after teasing with the phrase "fitted for the royal banquet," he turns to Shadrach, et. al.

Nevertheless, Irenaeus does unpack an explicit statement regarding the millennium where he writes in *Against Heresies* 5.30.4:

But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and *then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that "many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [Matt 8:11].*⁵⁸

Ryrie quotes this passage, but then links it directly with *Against Heresies* 5.32.3, which will be discussed below.⁵⁹ But in the original context Irenaeus stops his kingdom discussion again and does not immediately explain further about this hallowed seventh day and what it means to restore "to Abraham the promised inheritance" (though from his reference to Matthew

⁵⁷ Ibid; emphasis added.

⁵⁸ Ibid., I.560; emphasis added.

⁵⁹ Charles C. Ryrie, *The Basis of the Premillennial Faith* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1953), 22.

8:11, it is evident that Irenaeus saw both Jews and Gentiles in this kingdom). Instead, Irenaeus turns his attention to the preservation of our bodies by the resurrection, for his battle was not against non-chiliasm but against Gnostics.

Nevertheless, the two topics are related in Irenaeus' mind, and he returns to the earthly kingdom in *Against Heresies* 5.32.1:

Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature ... and it is necessary to tell them respecting those things, that it behooves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards. For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, in that they should reign.⁶⁰

Irenaeus affirms a *restored earthly* kingdom from Romans 8:19 ("the earth groans until now...") and a reigning of humans in it and a judgment after it. This Irenaeus sees as linked to God's promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham (*Against Heresies* 5.32.2): "Thus, then, the promise of God, which He gave to Abraham, remains steadfast."⁶¹

Irenaeus references Genesis 13:13, 14, 17, 15:13; 23:11; Acts 7:5; and Hebrews 11:13 before saying,

⁶⁰ *ANF*, I.561.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

If, then, God promised him [Abraham] the inheritance of the land, yet he did not receive it during all the time of his sojourn there, it must be, that together with his seed, that is, those who fear God and believe in Him, he shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For his seed is the Church, which receives the adoption to God through the Lord, as John the Baptist said: "For God is able from the stones to raise up children to Abraham." Thus also the apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians: "But ye, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise." And again, in the same Epistle, he plainly declares that they who have believed in Christ do receive Christ, the promise to Abraham thus saying, "The promises were spoken to Abraham, and to his seed. Now He does not say, And of seeds, as if [He spake] of many, but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." And again, confirming his former words, he says, "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith are the children of Abraham. But the Scripture, fore-seeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, declared to Abraham beforehand, That in thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham." Thus, then, they who are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham, and these are the children of Abraham. Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed, that is, those who are justified by faith, do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just. For God is true and faithful; and on this account He said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."⁶²

Is this replacement theology? Crutchfield believes so.⁶³ Diprose refers to Irenaeus' applying Isaiah 26:19; Ezekiel 37:12-14; 36:24-25; and Jeremiah 23:6-7 to the church and concludes, "He bases his exegesis on the assumption that the Old Testament should be read in light of what we have called

⁶² ANF, I.561.

⁶³ Crutchfield, "The Early Church Fathers and the Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part V—Dispensational Concepts in the Polemicists: Irenaeus," *Conservative Theological Journal* 3, no. 8 (April 1999): 82.

replacement theology, which he apparently considered to be a part of orthodox Christian thought.”⁶⁴ But are these overstatements in light of Irenaeus’ earlier comments about there being one covenant not two, or better “one out of two” in *Against Heresies* 4.7–9? Irenaeus is not a replacement theologian, but an “addition theologian.” Battling Gnosticism, Irenaeus does not want to emphasize discontinuity but continuity between the OT God and the NT God. This does not mean Irenaeus believed the church started with Abraham, but that both Jews and Gentiles—whoever are the seed of Abraham by faith—share in the kingdom promises.⁶⁵

In *Against Heresies* 5.33.2 Irenaeus unpacks further his understanding of the *earthly* kingdom promises with very tangible blessings:

And again He says, “Whosoever shall have left lands, or houses, or parents, or brethren, or children because of Me, he shall receive in this world an hundred-fold, and in that to come he shall inherit eternal life.” For *what are the hundred-fold [rewards] in this world, the entertainments given to the poor, and the suppers for which a return is made? These are [to take place] in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes.*⁶⁶

The seventh day appears for Irenaeus as an earthly kingdom. In *Against Heresies* 5.33.3–4 Irenaeus ties the promised blessings of Jacob, to the promised future millennial kingdom:

⁶⁴ Diprose, *Israel and the Church*, 77–78.

⁶⁵ Cf. Crutchfield, “Early Church Fathers—Part V,” 33. who agrees that Irenaeus did not believe the church began with Abraham.

⁶⁶ ANF, I.562 (emphasis added).

The blessing of Isaac with which he blessed his younger son Jacob has the same meaning, when he says, "Behold, the smell of my son is as the smell of a full field which the Lord has blessed." But "the field is the world." And therefore he added, "God give to thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, plenty of corn and wine. And let the nations serve thee, and kings bow down to thee; and be thou lord over thy brother, and thy father's sons shall bow down to thee: cursed shall be he who shall curse thee, and blessed shall be he who shall bless thee." If any one, then, does not accept these things as referring to the *appointed kingdom*, he must fall into much contradiction and contrariety, as is the case with the Jews, who are involved in absolute perplexity. For not only did not the nations in this life serve this Jacob; but even after he had received the blessing, he himself going forth [from his home], served his uncle Laban the Syrian for twenty years; and not only was he not made lord of his brother, but he did himself bow down before his brother Esau, upon his return from Mesopotamia to his father, and offered many gifts to him. Moreover, in what way did he inherit much corn and wine here, he who emigrated to Egypt because of the famine which possessed the land in which he was dwelling, and became Subject to Pharaoh, who was then ruling over Egypt? *The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth:* as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times, and say: The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand dusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, "I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me." In like manner [the Lord declared] that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear should have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds ... of clear, pure, fine flour; and that all other fruit-bearing trees, and seeds and grass, would produce in similar proportions ...; and that all animals feeding [only] on the productions of the

earth, should [in those days] become peaceful and harmonious among each other, and be in perfect subjection to man.

4. And these things are bone witness to in writing by Papias, the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp, in his fourth book; for there were five books compiled (συντεταγμένα) by him. And he says in addition, "Now these things are credible to believers." And he says that, "when the traitor Judas did not give credit to them, and put the question, 'How then can things about to bring forth so abundantly be wrought by the Lord?' the Lord declared, 'They who shall come to these [times] shall see.'" When prophesying of these times, therefore, Esaias says: "The wolf also shall feed with the lamb, and the leopard shall take his rest with the kid; the calf also, and the bull, and the lion shall eat together; and a little boy shall lead them. The ox and the bear shall feed together, and their young ones shall agree together; and the lion shall eat straw as well as the ox. And the infant boy shall thrust his hand into the asp's den, into the nest also of the adder's brood; and they shall do no harm, nor have power to hurt anything in my holy mountain." And again he says, in recapitulation, "Wolves and lambs shall then browse together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the serpent earth as if it were bread; and they shall neither hurt nor annoy anything in my holy mountain, saith the Lord." I am quite aware that some persons endeavour to refer these words to the case of savage men, both of different nations and various habits, who come to believe, and when they have believed, act in harmony with the righteous. But although this is [true] now with regard to some men coming from various nations to the harmony of the faith, nevertheless in the resurrection of the just [the words shall also apply] to those animals mentioned. For God is not in all things. And it is right that when the creation is restored, all the animals should obey and be in subjection to man, and revert to the food originally given by God (for they had been originally subjected in obedience to Adam), that is, the productions of the earth. But some other occasion, and not the present, is [to be sought] for showing that the lion shall [then] feed on straw. And this indicates the large size and rich quality of the fruits. For if that animal, the lion, feeds upon straw [at that period], of what a quality must the wheat itself be whose straw shall serve as suitable food for lions?⁶⁷

⁶⁷ ANF, I.562–63; emphasis added.

Despite such lengthy treatment of the millennial kingdom, Irenaeus is not yet finished. In *Against Heresies* 5.34.1–4 and 5.35.1–2 he gives two more chapters and exposition of numerous passages to the same theme.

1. Then, too, Isaiah himself has plainly declared that there shall be joy of this nature at the resurrection of the just, when he says: “The dead shall rise again; those, too, who are in the tombs shall arise, and those who are in the earth shall rejoice. For the dew from Thee is health to them.” And this again Ezekiel also says: “Behold, I will open your tombs, and will bring you forth out of your graves; when I will draw my people from the sepulchres, and I will put breath in you, and ye shall live; *and I will place you on your own land*, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.” And again the same speaks thus: “These things saith the LORD, *I will gather Israel from all nations* whither they have been driven, and I shall be sanctified in them in the sight of the sons of the nations: *and they shall dwell in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob*. And they shall dwell in it in peace; and they shall build houses, and plant vineyards, and dwell in hope, when I shall cause judgment to fall among all who have dishonoured them, among those who encircle them round about; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God, and the God of their fathers.” *Now I have shown a short time ago that the church is the seed of Abraham; and for this reason, that we may know that He who in the New Testament “raises up from the stones children unto Abraham,” is He who will gather, according to the Old Testament, those that shall be saved from all the nations*, Jeremiah says: “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say, The LORD liveth, who led the children of Israel from the north, and from every region whither they had been driven; He will restore them to their own land which He gave to their fathers.”

2. That the whole creation shall, according to God’s will, obtain a vast increase, that it may bring forth and sustain fruits such [as we have mentioned], Isaiah declares: “And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every prominent hill, water running everywhere in that day, when many shall perish, when walls shall fall. And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, seven times that of the day, when He shall heal the anguish of His people, and do away with the pain of His stroke.” Now “the pain of the stroke” means that inflicted at the beginning upon disobedient man in Adam, that is, death; which [stroke] the Lord

will heal when He raises us from the dead, and restores the inheritance of the fathers, as Isaiah again says: "And thou shalt be confident in the LORD, and He will cause thee to pass over the whole earth, and feed thee with the inheritance of Jacob thy father." This is what the Lord declared: "Happy are those servants whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching. Verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down [to meat], and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the evening watch, and find them so, blessed are they, because He shall make them sit down, and minister to them; or if this be in the second, or it be in the third, blessed are they." Again John also says the very same in the Apocalypse: "Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection." Then, too, Isaiah has declared the time when these events shall occur; he says: "And I said, Lord, how long? Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses be without men, and the earth be left a desert. And after these things the LORD shall remove us men far away ..., and those who shall remain shall multiply upon the earth." Then Daniel also says this very thing: "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of those under the heaven, is given to the saints of the Most High God, whose kingdom is everlasting, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." And lest the promise named should be understood as referring to this time, it was declared to the prophet: "And come thou, and stand in thy lot at the consummation of the days."

3. Now, that the promises were not announced to the prophets and the fathers alone, but to the Churches united to these from the nations, whom also the Spirit terms "the islands" (both because they are established in the midst of turbulence, suffer the storm of blasphemies, exist as a harbour of safety to those in peril, and are the refuge of those who love the height [of heaven], and strive to avoid Bythus, that is, the depth of error), Jeremiah thus declares: "Hear the word of the LORD, ye nations, and declare it to the isles afar off; say ye, that the LORD will scatter Israel, He will gather him, and keep him, as one feeding his flock of sheep. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and rescued him from the hand of one stronger than he. And they shall come and rejoice in Mount Zion, and shall come to what is good, and into a land of wheat, and wine, and fruits, of animals and of sheep; and their soul shall be as a tree bearing fruit, and they shall hunger no more. At that time also shall the virgins rejoice in the company of the young men: the old men, too, shall be glad, and I will turn their sorrow into joy; and I

will make them exult, and will magnify them, and satiate the souls of the priests the sons of Levi; and my people shall be satiated with my goodness." Now, in the preceding book I have shown that all the disciples of the Lord are Levites and priests, they who used in the temple to profane the Sabbath, but are blameless. Promises of such a nature, therefore, do indicate in the clearest manner the feasting of that creation in the kingdom of the righteous, which God promises that He will Himself serve.

4. Then again, speaking of Jerusalem, and of Him reigning there, Isaiah declares, "Thus saith the LORD, Happy is he who hath seed in Zion, and servants in Jerusalem. Behold, a righteous king shall reign, and princes shall rule with judgment" And with regard to the foundation on which it shall be rebuilt, he says: "Behold, I will lay in order for thee a carbuncle stone, and sapphire for thy foundations; and I will lay thy ramparts with jasper, and thy gates with crystal, and thy wall with choice stones: and all thy children shall be taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children; and in righteousness shalt thou be built up." And yet again does he say the same thing: "Behold, I make Jerusalem a rejoicing, and my people [a joy]; for the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. Also there shall not be there any immature [one], nor an old man who does not fulfil his time: for the youth shall be of a hundred years; and the sinner shall die a hundred years old, yet shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them themselves; and shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them themselves, and shall drink wine. And they shall not build, and others inhabit; neither shall they prepare the vineyard, and others eat. For as the days of the tree of life shall be the days of the people in thee; for the works of their hands shall endure."⁶⁸

Admittedly, Irenaeus conflates Israel and the church more than dispensationalists like, but he does find a literal last-days earthly kingdom in the text. In *Against Heresies* 5.35.1–2 he argues from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Revelation that these passages describe an earthly millennial kingdom can not rightly be allegorized away. For Irenaeus this millennial kingdom will actually be established in an earthly Jerusalem.

⁶⁸ ANF, I.563–64.

1. If, however, any shall endeavour to allegorize [prophecies] of this kind, they shall not be found consistent with themselves in all points, and shall be confuted by the teaching of the very expressions [in question]. For example: "When the cities" of the Gentiles "shall be desolate, so that they be not inhabited, and the houses so that there shall be no men in them and the land shall be left desolate." "For, behold," says Isaiah, "the day of the LORD cometh past remedy, full of fury and wrath, to lay waste the city of the earth, and to root sinners out of it." And again he says, "Let him be taken away, that he behold not the glory of God." And when these things are done, he says, "God will remove men far away, and those that are left shall multiply in the earth." "And they shall build houses, and shall inhabit them themselves: and plant vineyards, and eat of them themselves." For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of Antichrist, and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one. For it is in reference to them that the prophet says: "And those that are left shall multiply upon the earth," And Jeremiah [this is actually in the apocryphal book of Baruch, chap. iv. 36-v] the prophet has pointed out, that as many believers as God has prepared for this purpose, to multiply those left upon earth, should both be under the rule of the saints to minister to this Jerusalem, and that [His] kingdom shall be in it, saying, "Look around Jerusalem towards the east, and behold the joy which comes to thee from God Himself. Behold, thy sons shall come whom thou hast sent forth: they shall come in a band from the east even unto the west, by the word of that Holy One, rejoicing in that splendour which is from thy God. O Jerusalem, put off thy robe of mourning and of affliction, and put on that beauty of eternal splendour from thy God. Gird thyself with the double garment of that righteousness proceeding from thy God; place the mitre of eternal glory upon thine head. For God will show thy glory to the whole earth under heaven. For thy name shall for ever be called by God Himself, the peace of righteousness

and glory to him that worships God. Arise, Jerusalem, stand on high, and look towards the east, and behold thy sons from the rising of the sun, even to the west, by the Word of that Holy One, rejoicing in the very remembrance of God. For the footmen have gone forth from thee, while they were drawn away by the enemy. God shall bring them in to thee, being borne with glory as the throne of a kingdom. For God has decreed that every high mountain shall be brought low, and the eternal hills, and that the valleys be filled, so that the surface of the earth be rendered smooth, that Israel, the glory of God, may walk in safety. The woods, too, shall make shady places, and every sweet-smelling tree shall be for Israel itself by the command of God. For God shall go before with joy in the light of His splendour, with the pity and righteousness which proceeds from Him."

2. Now all these things being such as they are, cannot be understood in reference to super-celestial matters; "for God," it is said, "will show to the whole earth that is under heaven thy glory." But in the times of the kingdom, the earth has been called again by Christ [to its pristine condition], and Jerusalem rebuilt after the pattern of the Jerusalem above, of which the prophet Isaiah says, "Behold, I have depicted thy walls upon my hands, and thou art always in my sight." [Isa 49:16] And the apostle, too, writing to the Galatians, says in like manner, "But the Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" [Gal 4:26]. He does not say this with any thought of an erratic Aeon, or of any other power which departed from the Pleroma, or of Prunicus, but of the Jerusalem which has been delineated on [God's] hands. And in the Apocalypse John saw this new [Jerusalem] descending upon the new earth [Rev 21:2]. For after the times of the kingdom, he says, "I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth fled away, and the heavens; and there was no more place for them" [Rev 20:11]. And he sets forth, too, the things connected with the general resurrection and the judgment, mentioning "the dead, great and small." "The sea," he says, "gave up the dead which it had in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead that they contained; and the books were opened. "Moreover, he says, "the book of life was opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in the books, according to their works; and death and hell were sent into the lake of fire, the second death" [Rev 20:12-14]. Now this is what is called Gehenna, which the Lord styled eternal fire. "And if any one," it is said, "was not found written in the book of life, he was sent into the lake of

fire." And after this, he says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and earth have passed away; also there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband." "And I heard," it is said, "a great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them; and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them as their God. And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, because the former things have passed away." Isaiah also declares the very same: "For there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; and there shall be no remembrance of the former, neither shall the heart think about them, but they shall find in it joy and exultation." Now this is what has been said by the apostle: "For the fashion of this world passeth away." To the same purpose did the Lord also declare, "Heaven and earth shall pass away." When these things, therefore, pass away above the earth, John, the Lord's disciple, says that the new Jerusalem above shall [then] descend, as a bride adorned for her husband; and that this is the tabernacle of God, in which God will dwell with men. Of this Jerusalem the former one is an image—that Jerusalem of the former earth in which the righteous are disciplined beforehand for incorruption and prepared for salvation. And of this tabernacle Moses received the pattern in the mount; and nothing is capable of being allegorized, but all things are steadfast, and true, land substantial, having been made by God for righteous men's enjoyment. For as it is God truly who raises up man, so also does man truly rise from the dead, and not allegorically, as I have shown repeatedly. And as he rises actually, so also shall he be actually disciplined beforehand for incorruption, and shall go forwards and flourish in the times of the kingdom, in order that he may be capable of receiving the glory of the Father. Then, when all things are made new, he shall truly dwell in the city of God. For it is said, "He that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And the Lord says, Write all this; for these words are faithful and true. And He said to me, They are done." And this is the truth of the matter.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ *ANF*, I.565–66.

No church father provides so clear a description of the millennium as Irenaeus. So Grier the amillennialist admits that Irenaeus “taught an earthly millennium, but a millennium whose benefits were exclusively for the saved and in which the wicked and unregenerate have no part. Irenaeus speaks of opposers of his millenarian views who held to the catholic faith,” but Grier gives no references for this.⁷⁰ And, as has been shown, these saved into the millennial kingdom for Irenaeus are both Jew and Gentile. Ladd, the historic premillennialist also affirms Irenaeus, was “a thoroughgoing premillenarian, the first, in fact, to give us a premillennial system of interpretation; but he did not believe in an any-moment coming of Christ and a rapture of the Church before the Tribulation and coming of Antichrist.”⁷¹ Kromminga, another historic-premillennialist, however, does see a reference to rapture in *Against Heresies* 5.20.4:

And therefore, when in the end the Church shall be suddenly caught up from this, it is said, “There shall be tribulation such as has not been since the beginning, neither shall be” [referring to Mathew 24:21]. For this is the last contest of the righteous, in which, when they overcome they are crowned with incorruption.⁷²

But he sees this as occurring *after* the tribulation and just prior to the millennium, which seems to match the context of Mathew 24:21 as well.⁷³

⁷⁰ W. J. Grier, *The Momentous Even: A Discussion of Scripture Teaching on the Second Advent* (1944-45; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1970), 26.

⁷¹ George Eldon Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* (1956; repr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 25. Ladd backs this up with several sections of *Against Heresies* (5.26.1; 5.27.4; 5.30.4; 5.35.1), and understands Irenaeus to hold to a return of Christ after a 3.5 year tribulation to judge Satan and establish the millennial kingdom with his saints.

⁷² *ANF*, I.558.

⁷³ Kromminga, *Millennium in the Church*, 93.

Admittedly Irenaeus refers to a thousand-year reign only by means of the year-day concept in *Against Heresies* 5, and he apparently does not quote Revelation 20:1–6 in his support of the millennium, though he quotes many other passages to that end. In book one of *Against Heresies* he does not mention the earthly kingdom in his summarized statement of faith. Instead he waits until book 5, after 20 chapters on general resurrection to teach his doctrine of the kingdom, which he calls the blessed Sabbath or seventh day. But he does not refer to the final judgment of Satan⁷⁴ and seems to sometimes blur the distinction between the earthly millennial kingdom and the eternal state. In this light, Crutchfield rightly affirms that

while Irenaeus did not seem to consider the millennium to be a separate dispensation *per se*, he is nevertheless a firm believer in premillennialism. No previous church father presented a fuller expression of that doctrine. Irenaeus taught that at the conclusion of the six thousand years of human history, Christ will come to raise the righteous dead (first resurrection). He will then reign with the saints of all ages for a thousand years.⁷⁵

Thus, Crutchfield—stating that “Christ will reign with the saints of *all* ages”—confirms this author’s contention that it is overstatement to call Irenaeus a replacement theologian. Irenaeus like other early church fathers *adds* the church to the promises of Israel rather than replacing Israel with the church.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Or perhaps he does from Revelation 20:11–16.

⁷⁵ Crutchfield, “Early Church Fathers—Part V,” 44.

⁷⁶ Crutchfield seems to want to state it both ways where he writes “As noted previously, Irenaeus believed that the church supplanted Israel and thus became the spiritual seed of Abraham. It is nevertheless clear, both here and elsewhere, that Irenaeus envisioned a point participation in the promised inheritance. He maintained ‘that the promises were not announced to the prophets and the fathers alone, but to the Churches untited to these from the nations...[*Against Heresies*, 5.32.1]’” (Ibid., 46).

Historic-premillennialist Kromminga sees Irenaeus as “an outspoken chiliast ... [but] a far different type of chiliasm from that which the later Tertullian adopted and adapted from the earlier Montanist prophets.”⁷⁷ Kromminga also sees some inconsistencies in Irenaeus’ accepting OT passages regarding the kingdom belonging to both Israel and the church, while in other places he “balks at the allegorization of geographical designations and, in fact, of all designations of physical objects in the prophesies of the glorious future of the kingdom of God.”⁷⁸ Yet, Kromminga does a good job of remembering the context in which Irenaeus wrote—battling the Gnostics—and therefore a Jewish interpretation would have dulled the keen blade of his sword in his antignostic warfare, if it would not actually have turned that sword against himself by reducing the unity of the Scriptures and distributing their truth and message and applicability over the various dispensations. Such treatment of the Bible is itself only a short step removed from the Gnostic dismemberment of the Bible.⁷⁹

Whitby, the postmillennialist, shows how not only Justin, but also Irenaeus, affirms other acceptable views beyond his chiliasm, quoting in the Latin from *Against Heresies* 5.32.1.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Kromminga, *Millennium in the Church*, 89.

⁷⁸ Kromminga, *Ibid.*, 91. He cites *Against Heresies*, 5.35.1 where Irenaeus refers to Isaiah 6:11, 12; 13:9; 26:10; and 65:21 as examples.

⁷⁹ Kromminga, *Millennium in the Church*, 93.

⁸⁰ Whitby, 1118 col b. “Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [orthodox persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God’s dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom which is the commencement of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of the divine nature.” Crutchfield comments that “Irenaeus stated in even stronger terms than Justin, that this premillennial doctrine is ‘traditional orthodoxy’ (Crutchfield, “Early Church Fathers—Part V,” 47, echoing

Whitby will not deny Irenaeus' chiliasm and merely tries to classify him as allowing for other views. Then he tries to reduce modern readers' estimations of Irenaeus by referring to Eusebius' low view of Papias "a man of slender judgment" (*Church History*, 3.39) and then linking Irenaeus with Papias. Whitby furthermore suggests that Irenaeus does not claim his chiliasm from the apostle John but instead from Papias.⁸¹ But this is blatantly disingenuous since Irenaeus quotes extensively from the Bible to support his chiliasm and only once (*Against Heresies* 5.33.4) from a questionable passage from Papias.⁸² And another questionable quotation from the Jewish apocryphal Baruch is also noted in *Against Heresies*, 5.35.1. Even Kromminga, however, admits that Irenaeus never appears to support his millennial doctrine with a quotation from Revelation 20:1–6,⁸³ and this may be Whitby's point.

Daley, the amillennialist, rightly sees a two-stage resurrection in Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 5.32.1): "It behooves the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated, and that the judgment should take place afterwards."⁸⁴ For Kromminga, other chiliasts have not given enough attention to Irenaeus' reason for belief in the millennium: "the progressive

Kelly's words [J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 469]].

⁸¹ "As for the pretended tradition from the apostle John, touching this doctrine ..." (Whitby, 1119).

⁸² Cf. Crutchfield's similar discussion in "Early Church Fathers—Part V," 44.

⁸³ Kromminga, *Millennium in the Church*, 94. He states his theory for why this is here. But Irenaeus does in *Against Heresies* 5.35 quote from many other parts of Revelation 20 (vv. 11, 12–14, 15, etc.).

⁸⁴ Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 31; ANF, I.561.

perfection of the saints,"⁸⁵ or as Daley correctly sees the millennium in Irenaeus as preparation for the eternal state.⁸⁶ Therefore, Irenaeus' chiliasm cannot be denied and is linked with his soteriology (or more specifically his view of sanctification).

⁸⁵ Kromminga, *Millennium in the Church*, 96.

⁸⁶ Daley, *Hope of the Early Church*, 31.

Song of Songs. Paul J. Griffiths. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos P, 2011. lviii + 182 pages. \$32.99.

As the newest addition to the Brazos Theological Series, this commentary continues the series's goal of understanding and interpreting scripture on the basis of the Nicene Creed (xiv). In light of this goal the series has not employed writers who are "biblical scholar(s) in the conventional, modern sense of the term" but who are experts and knowledgeable "in using Christian tradition" (ibid.): "It is the conceit of this series of biblical commentaries that theological training in the Nicene tradition prepares one for biblical interpretation, and thus it is to theologians and not biblical scholars we have turned" (ibid.). The theologian for this commentary is Catholic theologian, Paul J. Griffiths, the Warren Professor of Catholic Theology at Duke University Divinity School.

Although this theological series seeks to be ecumenical (xv), Griffiths's Catholicism, his use of the Latin Vulgate, his appeal to the Catholic sacraments, and his "Mary" readings in this volume narrow significantly its appeal to a broader audience. This is not an oversight by the author. He intends his interpretation to be "a single note in a millennia-long symphony in which Jewish, Orthodox, and Protestant voices have essential parts to play even though they are not much sounded here" (xxxiv). This is a disappointment because when Griffiths listens to the voice of the Song itself without the dissidence of a preconceived theological interpretation, he brings some keen insight.

The commentary has an introduction (48 pages) that askews much of the "normal" discussion one would expect. Griffiths spends twelve pages explaining his choice of the Vulgate and another, eleven pages with his translation from the Latin. The rest of the introduction offers his understanding of the number of "voices" he hears in the Song and his reading strategy. According to the author the reader should hear three different readings at the same time of this love poem. The commentary proper divides the Song into smaller parts of "no more than two sentences" (liv). His approach to these portions

is four-fold: (1) he offers his translation, (2) notes the “echoes” from the rest of the scripture, (3) discusses the text as theology (iv), and (4) applies the text to the reader.

On the “surface” of the Song, Griffiths hears but three voices in the Song: the unnamed male lover, the female lover, and the daughters of Jerusalem. He acknowledges that there is no narrative story line and the use of dialogue draws the reader into the exchange (xxxv). He also recognizes that the couple is always eager “to replace separation with presence” (26) and this theme remains constant throughout the poem. For Griffiths Solomon is not the author and “in spite of the grandeur, he remains marginal to a literal reading of the Song” (xxxvii).

Under the surface of the text Griffiths hears much more. Besides a literal reading of the Song that understands that “human love and more specifically human sexual desire remain the Song’s first topic (23), Griffiths adds both an allegorical reading and a “Mary” reading.

The reason for the additional “readings” is for the Song to have theological value. To have such value it needs to be read as “scriptural book” (xlvii). To be a scriptural book it must speak about the Lord (lvii). Thus following “the unanimous witness of Jewish and Christian commentators before the modern period ... the unnamed characters of the Song are figures” (xxxviii): “The male lover figures the Lord” (9). Seeing no contradiction between the two distinct entities, Griffiths figures the female beloved as both Israel and the church at the same time; thus his use of the term “Israel-church” (xl). This allegorical reading is not meant to supplant the literal reading but to preserve both readings: “On this allegorical view, the human beloved and the eroticism of the text vanishes, is neutered and absorbed. Better, certainly more fully Christian, is to read in such a way as to preserve both the text’s figures and what they figure” (xxxix; cf. 40). But not only does the female lover figure Israel-church, she also figures Mary, the mother of Jesus, “she whom the Lord has most desired and with whom he has entered into the greatest intimacy” (xxxviii).

For instance in commenting on 1:14, Griffiths notes that the “mention of the breasts as a synecdoche for female beauty, sexual attractiveness (Ezek. 16, 23; Hos. 2) and capacity to feed

and nurture children (Job 3:12; Ps. 22:9; Isa. 28: 9; Joel 2:16) is almost universal and is certainly present elsewhere in scripture” (39). He then states, “this commentary, in a small way, is intended to exemplify what the Song here recommends, a repeated sucking at scripture’s breasts” (40). And following his third reading strategy, since Mary nourished Jesus through her breasts and Jesus sought their nourishment, this figure shows “not our desire for the Lord ... but the Lord’s desire for the nourishment we can provide him” (ibid.).

Griffiths’s allegorical reading may have been the majority view for Jerome, Origen, and Gregory, but currently his commentary is a minority view. Also, his “deeper” reading of Mary as the female beloved (and his veneration of Mary) throughout the Song will limit the usefulness of this commentary to Roman Catholics. Only the most devoted to the Song outside of Catholicism will wade through these supposed “deep” readings to benefit from Griffiths’s “surface” and literal reading of the Song.

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Flashes of Fire: A Literary Analysis of the Song of Songs. Elie Assis. New York: T & T Clark, 2009. 292 pages. \$130.00.

In his book *Flashes of Fire: A Literary Analysis of the Song of Songs*, Elie Assis has offered a new hypothesis about the cohesiveness of the structure and the meaning of the Song of Songs. Recognizing the difficulties scholars have faced concerning the arrangement of the Song, he proposes a re-examination to see if he can detect “any underlying pattern in the structure of the book and whether the order of the poems in the book has significance” (16). For Assis the identification and placement of individual poems within the Song are crucial for understanding the significance of the entire composition.

The outline of Assis’s book follows his suggested structure for understanding the Song as a unified lyrical poem. After a brief conversation concerning the present state of the study of the structure of the Song and introduction to his form critical approach, Assis divides the Song into five distinct units and within those units are various number of poems. Unit 1 1:2-8 contains three poems; Unit II 1:9-2:17, four poems; Unit III 3:1-5:1, five poems, Unit IV 5:2-6:3, three parts of one poem and Unit V eight poems. Thus, there are twenty-one poems in this one Song. All of the units “end with an attempt to establish a rendezvous” (32). A summary, bibliography, and index of references and authors close out this book.

After identifying the structure Assis conducts a detailed literary analysis of each of the poems within the context of each larger unit. In each chapter he discusses the boundaries and structure of each poem and provides its genre and a literary analysis of the poem. At the end of each unit he offers an overview of the unit and discusses the connection between the individual poems in each unit.

While Assis believes the book is not a narrative, he suggests that the book’s five units move from Initial Courtship, Second Courtship, Climax, Ebbing of Love, and Resolution. This flow shows the development of the “emotions shared by the lovers” (16). Assis believes that the structure helps the interpreter to identify meaning. The key theme that appears through the

entire work and binds the work as a complete song is, for Assis, rendezvous. He recognizes that rendezvous is the desire of the two lovers throughout and their absence from one another is only resolve (and needs to be resolved) by a rendezvous. For him, “the main theme of the Song of Songs is the longing for contact” (22). This contact is achieved by their rendezvous.

Assis does not spend much time discussing the authorship. He states, “The issue of authorship does not contribute to an understanding of the composition” (29). However, he does recognize the literary importance of Solomon in the work itself. Although the Song is not about Solomon, nor does he speak in the poem, he is presented satirically in chapter eight (31).

While Assis’s form critical structure proposal may not win over many Song scholars, he does recognize the structural theme of the interplay between absence and rendezvous. Some may quibble over his genre choice of “rendezvous,” but this couple yearns to be in contact with each other throughout the book no matter the term that is used to describe their longing. While I would disagree with Assis’s dissection of the major units into individual poems, I did appreciate his desire to understand how each section of each individual unit fits together.

Although Assis states that he does not hold to a narrative plot line for the Song, his description of the major units sounds much like a plot (although he does understand that the book really has no ending). While I do understand his need to label his major units and demonstrate how this book moves from 1:2 to 8:14, his suggestion (Courtship to Resolution) is not new and is unconvincing.

Though the reader may not agree with all of Assis’s conclusions or interpretations, Assis is well read and current on the scholarship of the Song. For those interested in the Song, this book is a profitable (if not costly) resource.

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Unprotected Texts: The Bible's Surprising Contradictions About Sex and Desire. Jennifer Wright Knust, New York: HarperOne, 2011. 352 pages. \$25.99

When a book about the Bible is reviewed by *USA Today* (4/12/2011) and *Newsweek* (2/6/2011), and that book is about sex in the Bible, it naturally draws my attention. Unfortunately it does not live up to its title. Based on Knust's hermeneutic, her book does not turn out to be much of a surprise. Since Knust rejects authorial intent and single meaning of a biblical text, she is able to read "against the grain" and create supposed contradictions. But the "contradictions" are of her own making, not a product of the biblical text. While she desires to move past the "harmful messages of Biblezines ... toward a larger understanding of what the Bible does have to say about bodies, sex and gender" (21), her lack of single meaning leaves the reader to wonder what part of the Bible should one follow as it concerns bodies, sex, and gender!

Jennifer Wright Knust is "a Bible scholar, an ordained American Baptist pastor and professor of Religion at Boston University" (10). Her motivation for this book is her "tiredness of watching those who are supposed to care about the Bible reduce it to stories and its teachings to slogans" (ibid). While I understand her fatigue, her revealing of so many so-called biblical "contradictions" makes me wonder why any one would take the Bible seriously or even take time to read it. Knust's premise is that "the Bible fails to offer girls—or anyone—a consistent message regarding sexual morals and God's priorities" (5).

While this volume is easy to read and she herself is well-read, Knust rejects almost every sexual biblical norm that would provide a consistent theological message concerning sex for a modern audience. Her reason for such a rejection is that in our past history the church misread the Bible concerning slavery (11-13), and it stands to reason that the church has misread the rest of the Bible on sexual standards and practices as well. Knust admits that the Bible will not "determine our sexual ethics," but rather we ourselves must decide (21).

To that end Knust sides with Jezebel (16-17), holds that the Song of Songs celebrates sex outside of marriage (23, 32), suggests that Ruth and Boaz had sex on the threshing floor (36, 39); believes that David had a homosexual relationship with Jonathan (42); notes that the “Bible offers no viable solution to our marriage dilemmas” (i.e., same sex marriage [48, 56]); proposes that the Israelites spies of Joshua’s time were derelict in their duties and instead of spying out the land, spied out a house of ill-repute and slept with Rahab (134-36); and states that the sin of Sodom was not that the men of the city wanted to rape the men who visited Lot, but the sin was actually that the men of Sodom wanted to rape angels (162). Concerning this same pericope, she writes, “The notion that the story of Sodom involves a moral judgment against homosexuality is not the least bit obvious” (164). She further believes that “ancient Israelites had no hope of eternal life” (188) and “the descendants of Abraham believed that they would live on though their progeny alone” (189).

Knust concludes that “the Bible is often divided against itself” and “it is up to the readers to decide what a biblically informed and faithful sexual morality might look like” (245).

If the reader is left to determine for him or herself what is a “faithful sexual morality,” and the Bible cannot be trust to be an objective standard for sexual ethics, it would seem that we are on our own and everyone is left to determine “what is right in their own eyes.” One wonders if Knust would see the parallel between her conclusion and the last chapters of the book of Judges; or would she simply write off Judges 21:25 as another contradiction.

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