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From the Editor's Desk

Dear Reader,

It is my pleasure to devote this spring issue of the *JMAT* to the papers that were presented at the Council for Dispensational Hermeneutics (CDH) by traditional dispensationalists from across the country. CDH was hosted by Baptist Bible Seminary at Clarks Summit University on September 13-14, 2017. This year's theme covered Charles Ryrie's third point of his dispensational *sine qua non*, the glory of God. I believe that your mind and soul will be enriched by these presentations.

To provide a background for the work and purpose of the CHD, I sat down with my good friend and CDH founder and director, Dr. Mike Stallard.

Mark: *What was your vision for CDH when you founded it 10 years ago?*

Mike: My motivation for starting CDH was to establish a forum where traditional dispensationalists could meet together to discuss issues of hermeneutics and theological method. I left the 2007 Evangelical Theological Society meeting with the desire to explore topics related to dispensationalism further with like-minded pastors and theologians. My vision was to establish a forum where we could converse about the issues in an interactive way.

Mark: *Why was the "Glory of God" the Council's topic for this year?*

Mike: We have had several topics since our first year in 2008. The new covenant discussion in 2009 was our best-attended council. During the years of 2015-17, the Steering Committee decided to focus on the three facets often associated with Charles Ryrie's *sine qua non* as a definition of dispensationalism: (1) distinction between Israel and the church, (2) consistent literal interpretation, and (3) the doxological unifying theme of the Bible. This year's topic was the third point on the glory of God.

Mark: *What issues are important for dispensationalists today?*

Mike: The Council investigates hermeneutics, exegetical method, and the way we link passages from one part of the Bible to another. We value both the development of the argument as well as its presentation. That is, we want to effectively respond to newer views such as new covenant theology and progressive covenantalism. Additionally, it is important to stay informed with developments related to traditional covenant theology. Overall, we want to refine our traditional dispensational arguments, ensuring that our points are grounded within biblical theology and that they advance the cause of inductive Bible study.

Mark: *What is your vision for CDH for the next decade?*

Mike: The Council plans to have annual meetings in the USA on a three-year cycle: East Coast, Mid-Country, and West Coast. Additionally, we are working on the possibility of holding one-day conferences in other parts of the country annually. We are also considering holding international councils. We have already made contacts in Australia, where premillennialism is not popular among evangelical perspectives. We have plans to advance publications such as various digests for quick use by pastors and college/seminary professors, as well as continuing to utilize a pastors' panel at Council meetings.

Mark: *When and where will the next few Council meetings be held? What is next year's topic?*

Mike: The next annual Council will be held on September 19-20, 2018, at Southern California Seminary (SCS), which is supported by Shadow Mountain Community Church, whose senior pastor is Dr. David Jeremiah. SCS is a solid dispensational school whose academics are built around responsible dispensational interpretation. Our topic this year is "Dispensationalism and the Gospels." We are focusing on how dispensationalists argue their points in various issues involving all four Gospels.

Mark: *What is the criterion for membership in the CDH and how can one join?*

Mike: If anyone is interested in becoming a member of the Council, they can email me at mstallard@foi.org. Typically, membership is reserved for traditional dispensational teachers at Bible colleges and seminaries as well as academically-minded pastors of the same theological persuasion who want to support what we are doing. Membership receives a call for papers for our meetings and is eligible to submit paper proposals to the Steering Committee for each year's meeting. There is no limitation on who can attend the meetings; observers who hold contrary theological positions are welcome.

Currently, you can access the previous papers of the CDH at <http://our-hope.org/blog/council/>. A new website is currently in development and will be available soon. You can reach Dr. Mike Stallard at mstallard@foi.org.

At the *JMAT* we seek to serve our Savior, and you, our reader. I look forward to hearing from you.

Mark McGinniss, Ph.D.
Lead Editor

A Biblical and Theological Examination of the Glory of God

Bruce A. Baker

Ryrie's *Sine Qua Non*

“What marks off a man as a dispensationalist? What is the *sine qua non* of the system?”² In 1965, Charles Ryrie answered these questions in what is arguably his greatest contribution to the development of dispensationalism. In his book *Dispensationalism Today*, Ryrie listed for the first time his evaluation of the essentials (the *sine qua non*)³ of dispensationalism. These essentials were (1) A distinction between Israel and the church, (2) the use of a consistent literal hermeneutic, and (3) a doxological purpose of history.⁴ Ryrie's *sine qua non* gained almost immediate acceptance throughout dispensational circles⁵ and rapidly became the standard

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² Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, with a forward by Frank E. Gaebelain (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 43.

³ *Sine qua non* is a Latin phrase that strictly translated means “without which none” and is used to refer to the essential element or elements of something. Thus, according to Ryrie, the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism are those elements without which dispensationalism could not exist as a coherent theological system.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 43–47.

⁵ The immediate acceptance of Ryrie's *sine qua non* was due, at least in part, to the fact that these three propositions could be found individually in many previous dispensational writings. Walvoord's interaction with Ladd provides just one example: “The reviewer believes a more tenable position is that the larger purpose of God is the manifestation of His own glory. To this end each dispensation, each successive revelation of God's plan for the ages, His dealing with the nonelect as with the elect, and the glories of nature combine to manifest divine glory.... These issues have frequently been discussed from the dispensational point of view in

definition for dispensationalism as a system for the next twenty years.⁶ Blaising correctly observes, “The importance of this work for the self-understanding of late twentieth-century dispensationalism cannot be overstated.”⁷

Still, a weakness of Ryrie’s third point is in the area of definition.⁸ Even though Ryrie discusses at great length the importance of a doxological purpose of history,⁹ he uses only

Bibliotheca Sacra during the last ten years” (John F. Walvoord, “A Review of ‘Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God,’” *BibSac* 110 [1953]: 3–4.

⁶ These twenty years mark off the time from the original publication of the *sine qua non* to the advent of progressive dispensationalism in 1985. Forty-two years after Ryrie’s original publication, his belief in the importance of a doxological purpose of history had not changed: “The unifying principal of normative dispensationalism is doxological, or the glory of God, for the dispensations reveal the glory of God as He manifests His character in the differing stewardships given to man” (Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, rev. and exp. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 107.

⁷ Craig A. Blaising, “Dispensationalism: The Search for Definition,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 23.

⁸ Interestingly, Ryrie does not broach the subject at all in his *Basic Theology* (*Basic Theology: A Popular Systemic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* [Chicago: Moody, 1999]), an oversight he readily admits. See Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Transformed by His Glory* (Wheaton, IL.: Victor, 1990), 9.

⁹ It appears that Ryrie included the doxological purpose of history in his *sine qua non* primarily to draw a distinction between dispensationalism and other theological systems: “The covenant theologian, in practice, believes this purpose to be salvation (although covenant theologians strongly emphasize the glory of God in their theology), and the dispensationalist says the purpose is broader than that; namely *the glory of God*. Progressives have a Christological center, apparently to undergird their emphasis on the Davidic covenant and on Christ as the already reigning Davidic ruler in heaven” (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 48). But in drawing this distinction with covenant theology, it is possible that Ryrie overstates his case. Packer, for example, argues, “All serious Christian thinkers acknowledge that glorifying God is at once man’s divine calling and his highest joy, both here and here-after. Reformed theology goes

one sentence to define it. Although Ryrie expands upon this definition in *Transformed by His Glory*, nowhere does he provide a detailed exegetical basis for it.

An Historical Dispensational Understanding¹⁰

Ryrie understands the glory of God as follows: “The glory of God is manifesting God for who He is.”¹¹ “Glory concerns what people think about something or someone, and thus refers to the reputation the person or object has. The glory of God is what He seems to be, which in His case is what He really is. It is God seen in some or all of His characteristics.”¹²

Walvoord’s definition is similar. He defines the glory of God as “the manifestation of God’s infinite perfections.”¹³ This

beyond other views, however, in emphasizing [that] ... God’s goal in all that he does is his glory....” (“The Glory of God,” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright [Downers Grove, IL.: InterVarsity, 1988], 272). Likewise, Jonathan Edwards argues that the glory of God is “God’s end in his works” and the end “which God had ultimately in view in the creation of the world....” (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2 vols. [Peabody, MA.: Hendrickson, 2000], 1:116). Similarly, Piper argues that “God’s ultimate goal in all that he does it is to preserve and display his glory,” and reduces redemptive history to evidence for that claim (*Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* [Sisters, OR.: Multnomah, 1996], 255). Piper also writes, “Redemption, salvation, and restoration are not God’s ultimate goal. These he performs for the sake of something greater: namely, the enjoyment he has in glorifying himself” (*Ibid.*, 33).

¹⁰ I fully understand that a sample size of three is hardly determinative. This being said, in my search throughout dispensational writings, I discovered that although nearly everyone speaks of the glory of God, almost no one defines it.

¹¹ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 106.

¹² Ryrie, *Transformed by His Glory*, 18-19. In this definition, Ryrie echoes, at least in part, what seems to be a popular understanding concerning the glory of God. Packer, for example, defines God’s glory as excellence and praiseworthiness on display as well as honor and adoration expressed in response to this display (Packer, “The Glory of God,” 271).

¹³ John F. Walvoord, *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1990), 476.

definition is given in a discussion of the glorious resurrection bodies awaiting the believer. These bodies are glorious in that they “reflect God’s perfections.”¹⁴ So, like Ryrie, Walvoord limits the glory of God to the manifestation of who he is.

Upon reflection, however, limiting the glory of God to “the manifestation of God’s infinite perfections” may be too restrictive. For under this definition, it appears that God must be able to manifest himself to someone external to himself in order to be glorious. Put another way, this definition appears to depend upon a created order so that God might manifest his perfections. Thus, one would be forced to conclude that, prior to the creation of the existing order when only the Godhead existed, God’s infinite perfections existed, but his glory did not.

Chafer’s definition seems more complete. He regards the glory of God as “both essential or intrinsic and declarative.”¹⁵ Chafer argues that God’s glory is essential because it is “concentrated in Himself. It is because of what He is that glory belongs to Him and only Him.”¹⁶ “Regardless of any

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary P, 1947-48; repr., Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993), 7:172. It should be noted that this understanding of the glory of God is not limited to dispensational writers. Allen Ross, as just one example, argues that the word *glory*, when applied to the LORD, “is basically saying that *he is the most important or preeminent person* in this or any other universe. And when the Bible refers to the ‘glory of the LORD,’ it is usually referring to all the evidence of God’s preeminence” (*Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006], 47). Drawing a distinction between holiness and glory, Ross continues, “To speak of God’s ‘holiness’ is to say that there is no one like him, that he has absolute power and perfection; to speak of God’s ‘glory’ is to say that he is preeminent in existence and that the whole universe is filled with evidence of his importance and sublimity” (Ibid., 48). Similarly, Herman Bavinck defines “the glory of the LORD” as “the splendor and brilliance that is inseparably associated with all of God’s attributes and his self-revelation in nature and grace, the glorious form in which he everywhere appears to his creatures” (*Reformed Dogmatics*, trans., John Vriend, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 2:252).

¹⁶ Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 7:173.

recognition of it on the part of creatures, God is Himself a glorious being.”¹⁷

In contrast to the essential glory of God, the declarative glory of God “is that which His creatures may accord to Him.”¹⁸ In one respect, all of the created order declares “a certain degree of that glory,”¹⁹ although not all of creation does so willingly.²⁰ Still, it should be noted that the essential glory of God demands the declarative glory of God from his creation. To fail to declare the essential glory of God is “rebellion within God’s universe which the Son of God will judge in time to come.”²¹

Biblical Evidence

The only legitimate way to develop a definition of the glory of God is to investigate the biblical evidence. This section will examine the evidence from the OT and NT separately.

OT Evidence

The OT uses כְּבוֹד to express the idea of glory. This word has at its root the idea of heaviness²² and therefore, by extension, abundance, honor²³ and glory.²⁴ The word כְּבוֹד has a

¹⁷ Ibid., 7:172.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 7:173.

²⁰ “Only fallen angels and members of this fallen race withhold glory from God” (Ibid., 7:172-73).

²¹ Ibid., 7:173.

²² The idea of glory as heaviness may be seen in the wordplay of Isaiah 17:4, where a loss of glory and a loss of weight are compared: “Now in that day the glory of Jacob will fade, and the fatness of his flesh will become lean” (Leslie C. Allen, “Glory,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham P, 2016). Unless stated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible.

²³ It has been suggested that the Latin *gravis* (heavy, grievous, serious) is semantically analogous to כְּבוֹד (C. John Collins, “כְּבוֹד,” in *NIDOTTE* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997], 2:577).

²⁴ F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: 1907), s.v. כְּבוֹד.

wide semantic range and may be used in a variety of ways. It is used, for example, to refer to wealth (Gen 31:1), the honor given to men (Gen 45:15), and the splendor of nations (Hos 10:5). It is used to describe things such as chariots (Isa 22:18) or forests (Isa 10:18), as well as places, such as Lebanon (Isa 35:2) or the temple (Hag 2:3, 9). This being said, כְּבוֹד has two specialized uses. It is used as a technical term for the manifest presence of the glory of the LORD and as a self-referential term when God describes his own glory.²⁵

God's Manifest Presence

The phrase “manifest presence” is intended to be a general term describing those ways in which God makes his glory particularly evident.²⁶ It is true, of course, that God makes his glory known to all people at all times through what he has made (Ps 19:1-4; cf. Rom 1:18-21).²⁷ The seraphim cry out to one another, “the whole earth is full of His glory” (Isa 6:3). This being said, even though God is continuously present and continuously revealing his glory, it remains true that “God will also be especially present at certain times; God is believed to be everywhere present, yet God will also be especially present in certain places.”²⁸

²⁵ Collins, *NIDOTTE*, 2:579.

²⁶ In contrast to this general understanding, Terence Fretheim presents a “continuum to describe the more specific modes of divine presence. God’s accompanying presence could be placed on one end, God’s theophanic presence (appearance) on the other, with God’s tabernacling presence (and perhaps others) at intermediate points. One might speak of a greater intensification of presence as one moves across the continuum toward that which is more and more specific, articulate, tangible, and formful” (*The Suffering of God* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984], 61).

²⁷ Fretheim describes this as God’s “structural presence” and argues that this truth is foundational to understanding the more “specific and concrete ways” in which God reveals himself. “Without this as the given, or being neglectful of this as the given, the idea of a God who is present can be perceived only as an interruption of the natural order, or as radically discontinuous from life in creation generally” (Ibid.).

²⁸ Ibid., 61-62.

Not only is God “especially present in certain places,” but God also manifests his glory in various ways. One way is through what might be called a physical force, or perhaps (more crudely) a pressure. It is difficult to know how to adequately label this phenomenon, but its reality cannot be denied. In Exodus 40:35, after the erection of the tabernacle, we are told that “Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because... the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” This same situation occurred at the dedication of Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 8:11; 2 Chron 5:14; 7:2). To be clear, we are not told what *exactly* barred entrance in these cases. The secondary cause in 2 Chronicles 5:14 is the cloud, but it is clear that the glory of the LORD was the primary cause. Still, whether it was the inability to see or disorientation caused by the cloud, there was something about the glory of the LORD that kept people at a distance.

Another aspect of the glory of the LORD is visual. For example, the phrase “the glory of the LORD” (כְּבוֹד הַיְהוָה)²⁹ is first used in Exodus 16:7, where Israel is promised that they would “see the glory of the LORD.” The next morning, “they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud” (Exod 16:10). Although it would be incorrect to equate the cloud with the glory of the LORD,³⁰ one may still conclude that the glory of the LORD contains a visual component, in that Israel would “see” and the LORD “appeared.” What should be noticed, however, is that this visual component is more often than not left undefined,³¹ even though the accompanying cloud seems to be constant. Put another way,

²⁹ This phrase often includes suffixes and is occasionally written with כְּבוֹדֵי as the genitive (Collins, *NIDOTTE*, 2:581).

³⁰ Exodus 14:19 records the angel of God withdrawing from the front of Israel’s army and moving to the position of rearguard. The pillar of cloud also moves to the same position, but is listed as a separate entity from the angel of God. Also, a careful reading of Exodus 16:10 shows that the glory of the LORD appeared “in” the cloud, not “as” a cloud.

³¹ See, for example, Exodus 16:7, 10; 40:34, 35; Lev 9:6, 23; Numbers 14:10, 21; 16:19, 42; 20:6; 1 Kings 8:11; 2 Chronicles 5:14; 7:1-3; Isaiah 35:2; 40:5.

we are told that the people see the glory of the LORD in the midst of the cloud, but we are not told what they see.³²

Interestingly, this pattern is broken by the prophet Ezekiel, who attempts to tell his readers exactly what the glory of the LORD looks like. In Ezekiel 1:4, once again we see the cloud enveloping the glory of the LORD. This cloud has fire within it and a bright light around it. Ezekiel 1:26-28 describes one sitting upon “something resembling a throne” who had “the appearance of a man.” From the waist up he had the appearance of glowing metal with fire all around it, and from the waist downward “something like fire” and “a radiance around him.” This radiance had the appearance of a rainbow on a rainy day. Finally, we are told, “Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD” (Ezek 1:28). As we work our way through the other nine references to the glory of the LORD in Ezekiel, this seems to be the default definition.

Delitzsch provides an interesting rationale as to why the glory of the LORD should have “the appearance of a man.” Commenting on Isaiah 3:8, Delitzsch argues that the glory of God “is invariably the fiery, bright *doxa* which reveals Him as the Holy One.”³³ But what is meant by “the eyes of his glory?”³⁴ He answers, “The glory (*chabod*) of God is that eternal and glorious *morphe*³⁵ which His holy nature assumes, and which

³² This is not always the case, however. In Exodus 24:17, the people of Israel perceive the glory of the LORD as a consuming fire. Still, whether one understands the cloud in verse 16 to cover the glory of the LORD only (see George Bush, *Commentary on Exodus* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1993], 367) or to cover both the glory and the mountain (C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament*, trans. J. Martin et al., 25 vols [Edinburgh: 1857-1878; repr. 10 vols., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975], 1:161), once again it is evident that the glory of the LORD and the cloud are not the same.

³³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary*, 7:135.

³⁴ *Ibid.* “For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen, Because their speech and their actions are against the LORD, To rebel against His glorious presence” (literally, “the eyes of his glory” עֵינֵי כְבוֹדוֹ).

³⁵ Delitzsch’s point that the glory of God is expressed in a particular form (μορφή) should not be taken to mean that כְבוֹד and μορφή are synonymous. Daniel Fabricatore makes a compelling argument that μορφή

men must picture to themselves anthropomorphically, because they cannot imagine anything superior to the human form.”³⁶ Assuming this to be true, it appears that God fashions the visible component of his manifest presence so that it best communicates his infinite perfections to finite man.

Still, this does not explain the necessity of the cloud so often associated with the glory of the LORD. In Exodus 33:18, Moses requests that God would show him his glory. In response, God allows Moses to see his goodness and to hear his name proclaimed. “‘But,’ he said, ‘you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live’” (Exod 33:20). This is an interesting statement for at least two reasons. First, God associates his glory with his face, which is a euphemism for his person. Second, God indicates the mortal danger involved with seeing his person on full display. This danger is so absolute that God places Moses in a cleft of the rock and then places his hand over Moses as he passes by. Therefore, it appears that the manifestation of God’s presence must include some safety mechanism for the preservation of those to whom God is revealing himself. While one cannot be certain, it appears that this may be the function of the cloud. By veiling the glory of the LORD, those witnessing God’s self-revelation are preserved.³⁷

is a broad term that may include the concept of glory, but should not be limited to it: “Μορφή isn’t exactly equal to any of the other Greek terms mentioned, yet it has a sufficiently large semantic range to encompass them all. In other words, if Paul wanted to say that Christ was the very glory (δόξα) of God, and if he wanted to say that Christ was the very nature (φύσις) and essence (οὐσία) of God, or the very image (εἰκών) of God then what word could he use to imply or encompass all of this? He could use the word μορφή. Now Paul does not mean all these things by his use of μορφή; it is rather that μορφή has the potential to express, in any given context, either φύσις, οὐσία, εἰκών, ὁμοίωμα, or δόξα” (*Form of God, Form of a Servant: An Examination of the Greek Noun μορφή in Philippians 2:6-7* [Lanham, MD: UP of America, 2010], 153).

³⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary*, 7:136.

³⁷ Likewise, it seems probable that it is the cloud that keeps people out of the tabernacle and the temple when the glory of the LORD is revealed. This understanding would be in keeping with 2 Chronicles 5:14: “... the

Glorify as a Means of Self-Reference

The standard Hebrew lexicon lists the suffixed form “my honour” (“my glory,” קְבוֹדִי) as “poet. of the seat of honor in the inner man, the noblest part of man.”³⁸ Thus, when God states that he will consecrate the tabernacle with “my glory” (Exod 29:43), he is using a self-referential term to refer to the glory inherent in his being. In other words, he will be there, which means his glory will be there. It should be noted, however, that this inherent glory is not so transcendent as to be non-observable. We see, for example, a connection between “my glory” and “my signs which I performed in Egypt” in Numbers 14:22. Similarly, God’s “salvation in Zion” is called “my glory for Israel” in Isaiah 46:13. Again, when God proclaims he will show his glory in “my servant, Israel” (Isa 49:3), he is stating that he will do works through his servant that will cause his name to be praised.

One should also observe that this self-referential term may also be used of the praise given to God by his creation as in Isaiah 42:8 where “my glory” and “my praise” are parallel to one another. Likewise, in Isaiah 43:7, God speaks of those he has created “for my glory.” This seems to be an obvious reference to his perfections being displayed in those he has redeemed. Finally, Isaiah 66:18-19 speaks of God gathering the nations, even those that have not heard of his glory, so that he may declare his glory among them.

Conclusion for OT Evidence

When one takes this information as a whole, it appears that the glory of the LORD is a visible representation of his presence made manifest with a special intensity. This visual representation is designed to best communicate who God is to finite human beings. God’s glory is something that he possesses

priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.” Again, although the glory of the LORD is the primary reason they cannot enter, it appears that the cloud is the actual mechanism that restrains them.

³⁸ BDB, s.v. קְבוֹד.

in himself, but also something recognized by his creation so that the entirety of his creation declares it in one way or another.

NT Evidence

In the NT, δόξα is the word used to describe the glory of God.³⁹ The standard Greek lexicon defines δόξα as (1) “the condition of begin bright or shining, *brightness, splendor, radiance* (a distinctive aspect of Hb. כְּבוֹד),” (2) “a state of being magnificent, *greatness, splendor,*” or (3) “honor as an enhancement or recognition of status or performance, *fame, recognition, renown, honor, prestige.*”⁴⁰ Aalen argues that this word “suggests something which radiates from the one who has it, leaving an impression behind.”⁴¹

Interestingly, when δόξα came in contact with the Bible, its basic meaning changed. In secular Greek, δόξα meant opinion or conjecture. But neither of these meanings is found in the either the LXX or the NT.⁴² Instead, the LXX transfers the concept of כְּבוֹד to δόξα, which usage the NT adopts.⁴³ It should be no surprise, therefore, that there is considerable overlap between the OT’s use of כְּבוֹד and the NT’s use of δόξα.

For example, just as with כְּבוֹד, δόξα may be used to describe honor to men (1 Thess 2:6) or the splendor of nations (Matt 4:8). Similarly, as כְּבוֹד is used in the OT to describe the

³⁹ S. Aalen, “Glory,” in *NIDONTT*, ed. Colin Brown, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-1985), 2:44. In contrast, man’s honor is usually represented by the Greek τιμή (Ibid., 2:49).

⁴⁰ Walter Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek – English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000), s.v. δόξα.

⁴¹ Aalen, *NIDONTT*, 2:44.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 2:45. Aalen argues that when כְּבוֹד is used of God, “it does not mean God in his essential nature, but the luminous manifestation of his person, his glorious revelation of himself.” Ibid. As has been pointed out, this statement seems too limited.

manifest presence of God, so δόξα is used in the NT to describe the manifest presence of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

This link is clearly established in John 12:41. In this passage, John quotes from Isaiah 6 to describe the unbelief of the Jewish populace of Jesus' day. John justifies his application of this quotation by saying, "These things Isaiah said because he saw His [i.e., Jesus'] glory, and he spoke of Him [i.e., Jesus]." In the context of Isaiah 6, what Isaiah saw was the Lord seated on a throne, lofty and exalted, surrounded by seraphim who called to one another, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." Taking these passages together, we find compelling evidence that the $\kappa\upsilon\omicron\varsigma\omicron\varsigma$ of the LORD and the δόξα of Jesus are the same.⁴⁴

One should also not miss other NT evidence that bolsters this conclusion. For the NT strongly implies that the Father and the Son exhibit the same glory. The author of Hebrews states that Jesus is "the radiance of His [i.e. God's] glory and the exact representation of His [i.e. God's] nature" (Heb 1:3). In an apparent allusion to Psalm 24:8-10,⁴⁵ Paul calls Jesus "the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor 2:8).⁴⁶

Additionally, at his second coming Jesus will "come in the glory of His Father" (Matt 16:27), yet will also come "in His

⁴⁴ This relationship is also hinted at in John 17:5: "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." Grammatically it could be argued at the glory of Christ and the glory of the Father could be separate and distinct. The same argument could be made with regard to John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." Taken within the context of the Gospel of John, however, this clearly is not the case.

⁴⁵ "Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, And lift them up, O ancient doors, That the King of glory may come in! Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory."

⁴⁶ John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, ed. John S. Feinberg, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 461-62.

glory” (Matt 25:31).⁴⁷ Jesus testified that he did not glorify himself but that “My Father ... glorifies Me” (John 8:54). Lazarus’s sickness was “for the glory of God, so that the Son of God maybe glorified by it” (John 11:4). Jesus prayed, “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (John 17:5). When Stephen gazed into heaven he saw “the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55).

Now at this point readers must be careful to grasp what this does, and does not, mean. Just because *קְבוֹד* and *δόξα* are synonymous does not mean that the representation of God’s glory in the OT is exactly the same as the representation of God’s glory in Jesus Christ. Clearly there are significant differences. What this does mean, however, is that it is legitimate to take general principles concerning God’s glory derived from either testament and synthesize these principles into a unified definition.

The Glory of God as Visible Phenomena

Just as in the OT, the manifest presence of God’s glory in the NT is primarily something that is seen. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter and his companions “saw His [Jesus] glory” (Luke 9:32). In a scene reminiscent of the OT, “a cloud formed and *began* to overshadow them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. Then a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My Son, My Chosen One; listen to Him’” (Luke 9:34-35). During this incident, Peter, James, and John hear the voice of God the Father from the center of a cloud. Although not explicitly stated in the text, it seems certain that some visual component of the glory of the Lord was present, for prior to hearing the voice they were afraid as they entered the cloud. In

⁴⁷ There is some evidence that the holy angels also share this glory. The Son of Man will come “in His glory, and [the glory] of the Father and of the holy angels” (Luke 9:26). While it is beyond the scope of this study to fully discuss what is meant by the inclusion of “the holy angels” in this verse, one suspects that the glory of the holy angels is similar to that of the glorified believer, in that it is a glory bestowed upon them by the graciousness of God.

Matthew's account, he does not describe the glory of the Lord, but does indicate that the cloud was "bright" (Matt 17:5). There is also a visual component to Jesus' revealed glory, as it is something that the disciples "saw." What they saw was Jesus' bodily appearance lit up with a dazzling brightness: "His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light" (Matt 17:2). Aside from this singular event, there is no other recorded instance of Jesus' glory being revealed in a similar manner. This being said, one should not conclude that Jesus' glory is never again revealed visually, but only that it is never again revealed visually *in the same way*.

Acts 7:55 reports that immediately prior to Stephen's martyrdom, Stephen "gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Once again, although there is no description of what Stephen saw, the glory of God in this instance was clearly visible.

The Glory of God as Light

There is good evidence that the brightness seen on the Mount of Transfiguration is one aspect of the glory of God. As mentioned above, BDAG's first definition for δόξα is "the condition of begin bright or shining, *brightness, splendor, radiance* (a distinctive aspect of Hb. דָּבָר)." ⁴⁸ This linking of brightness and glory is easily demonstrated by a quick examination of those instances where δόξα is used in parallel with other words signifying light.

For example, Revelation 21:11 describes the glory of God as the brilliance (φωστήρ) of a precious stone. In Philippians 2:15,⁴⁹ φωστήρ is used to describe the light of a star. Revelation 21:23 reveals that the eternal city "has no need of

⁴⁸ BDAG, s.v. δόξα.

⁴⁹ "So that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear (mg. *shine*) as lights (mg. *luminaries, stars*) in the world," See *ibid.*, s.v. φωστήρ.

the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined (ἐφώτισεν) it, and its lamp (λύχνος) is the Lamb.”⁵⁰

Based on this evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude that, although visible light is not the glory of God, the glory of God may be manifested as a visible, bright light. This being said, we must be careful not to go too far. For this is not the only way that the glory of God may be made manifest.

The Glory of God and Power

One way that the glory of God may be revealed is through the possession of his perfections. In the NT, this may be seen in the linkage between God’s glory and power. For example, in Colossians 1:11, Paul prays that believers would be “strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might....” The eternal punishment that awaits those who do not obey the gospel includes being “away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power” (2 Thess 1:7).⁵¹

A careful reading of these texts indicates that it is not the use of God’s power, but the possession of it, that is described as glorious. Understanding that God’s omnipotence is only one aspect of his perfections, it seems unlikely that this attribute alone is glorious while the others are not. Therefore, it seems fair to conclude that one may extend the expression of God’s glory to all of his perfections, both individually and corporately.

This being said, we must also recognize that the use of these perfections also brings God glory. In Revelation 4:11, the twenty-four elders fall down before the throne to state that God is worthy to receive glory and honor and power because he created all things and because of his will they exist. This reference, however, is slightly different than the ones

⁵⁰ This same concept of “glory” as “light” may be seen in Revelation 18:1, where the earth is illumined (ἐφωτίσθη) with the glory of an angel.

⁵¹ In Revelation 19:1, glory and power are once again linked. During the great tribulation, after the fall of Babylon, a great multitude in heaven shouts, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.” In this instance, however, it appears that glory and power are separate attributes that receive praise.

mentioned above. In this instance, God is due glory by the created order because of what he has done. It is not referring to the intrinsic glory he already possesses. Still, one may legitimately argue that the mandate to give God glory stems from the fact that he already possesses that glory. In other words, the created order's obligation to ascribe glory to God is just the extension of the obligation to tell the truth. The truth about God is that he is glorious; therefore his creatures have an obligation to say that.

God's Manifest Presence in Jesus Christ

Even though Jesus' glory was revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration as light, in nearly every other instance Jesus' glory is revealed through his works. For example, when Jesus turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana, John testifies that Jesus "manifested His glory" (John 2:11). Witnesses to Jesus' raising of Lazarus saw the glory of God (John 11:4). In Jesus' high priestly prayer, Jesus prays, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4).

Of course, the greatest work of Jesus during his first advent was his death and resurrection. When the time came for his passion, Jesus prayed, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You" (John 17:1) and "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5). Jesus was raised from the dead "through the glory of the Father" (Rom 6:4). His resurrected body is a "glorious body" (Phil 3:21). Paul calls the good news of Jesus Christ "the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor 4:4) and "the glorious gospel" (1 Tim 1:11).

Still, one must realize that the glory of Christ is not ultimately or finally exhibited in his death and resurrection. His ascension, present ministry in heaven, as well as his future return and coming kingdom all display his glory. According to the Scripture it was "necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory" (Luke 24:26). At his ascension, Jesus was "taken up in glory" (1 Tim 3:16). At his second coming "the Son of Man will come with power and

great glory” (Matt 24:30). During the millennial kingdom, Jesus will sit on a glorious throne (Matt 19:28).

Conclusion for NT Evidence

The NT’s teaching on the glory of God harmonizes with the data collected from the OT. This is not surprising when one considers (1) that the LXX and NT usage of δόξα is derived from the OT use of כְּבוֹד and (2) that the כְּבוֹד of the LORD and the δόξα of Jesus are the same.

Just as in the OT, the manifest presence of God’s glory in the NT is primarily something that is seen. This is true in Stephen’s vision of heaven as well as in the person of Jesus Christ. Although sometimes this glory is revealed as a light, more commonly it is expressed in the works of the Lord Jesus.

Additionally, through the study of God’s glory expressed through his omnipotence, it was concluded that the mere possession of that attribute is considered glorious. Therefore, it seems fair to conclude that one may extend the expression of God’s glory to all of his perfections, both individually and corporately.

Aalen observes that, “Just as in the OT, [in the NT] glory is partly linked with God’s action (Rom 6:4) and is partly an attribute of his being.”⁵² Put another way, the NT teaches that the glory of God is both intrinsic and declarative. It is intrinsic in that God possesses it apart from any recognition by his creation and declarative in that it is displayed for his creation to see through his works.

Theological Considerations

Virtually all theologians would agree, at least at some level, that the glory of God includes the manifestation of his person. Thus, Ryrie’s definition of the glory of God— “The glory of God is manifesting God for who He is”⁵³—would not generally be disputed, at least as far as it goes. The question is whether it

⁵² Aalen, *NIDONTT*, 2:47.

⁵³ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 106.

goes far enough. For the unstated assumption in this definition is that a created order must be present for this manifestation to take place.⁵⁴

G. T. Shedd provides a case in point. He would agree with Ryrie at one level: “The glory of God means such a manifestation of the Divine perfections as leads creatures to worship and adore.”⁵⁵ This being said, Shedd provides the following caveat: “The essential glory of God, that is, his glory as it exists per se, is not intended in this definition. This is the same, whether there be a creation or not; whether there be worship or not.”⁵⁶

The Non-Necessity of the Created Order

According to Shedd, the necessity of the created order for God’s glory to exist cannot logically be true, for it moves the final end of God’s actions from the Creator to what he has created.⁵⁷ This would mean that “the superior would be subordinated to the inferior.... It would be a maladaptation of means to ends.... The infinite would exist for the finite.... The creature in *any* aspect cannot be regarded as the last end, any more than the first cause of all things.”⁵⁸

Berkhof argues in a similar manner. If the eternal purpose of God is to glorify himself, then by necessity this cannot be dependent upon the created order. “The glory of God is the only end that is consistent with His independence and sovereignty. Everyone is dependent on whomsoever or whatsoever he makes his ultimate end. If God chooses anything in the creature as His

⁵⁴ This assumption may be seen in Ryrie’s expanded definition: “Glory concerns what people think about something or someone, and thus refers to the reputation the person or object has. The glory of God is what He seems to be, which in His case is what He really is. It is God seen in some or all of His characteristics” (Ryrie, *Transformed by His Glory*, 18-19).

⁵⁵ William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969), 1:357.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1:357-58.

final end, this would make Him dependent on the creature to that extent.”⁵⁹

A Trinitarian Solution

If the created order is not necessary for God to be glorious, does this mean that the understanding of God’s glory as revelation must be abandoned? Not necessarily. Berkhof argues for a Trinitarian solution: “Though God undoubtedly reveals His goodness in creation, it is not correct to say that His goodness or love could not express itself, if there were no world. The personal relations within the triune God supplied all that was necessary for a full and eternal life of love.”⁶⁰ This love relationship within the Trinity, which is independent of the created order, is easily seen in Scripture.

Three times in John 17:20-26 Jesus speaks of the Father’s love for him (17:23, 24, 26). Of particular import is verse 24, which states that the Father loved the Son “before the foundation of the world.” This indicates that a love relationship between the Father and the Son existed prior to the created order. If the Father loved the Son from eternity past, it is inconceivable that this love relationship did not exist between all three members of the Godhead.

⁵⁹ Lewis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th rev. and enlarged ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 136. “It would seem to be perfectly self-evident that God does not exist for the sake of man, but man for the sake of God. God only is Creator and the supreme Good, while man is but a creature, who for that very reason cannot be the end of creation. The temporal finds its end in the eternal, the human in the divine, and not *vice versa*” (Ibid.). Strong makes the same case: “His own glory is the only end which consists with God’s independence and sovereignty. Every being is dependent upon whomsoever or whatsoever he makes his ultimate end. If anything in the creature is the last end of God, God is dependent upon the creature. But since God is dependent only on himself, he must find in himself his end” (Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology* [Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907], 399).

⁶⁰ Berkhof, *Theology*, 136.

Because of God's basic simplicity, God's perfections and his person are functionally synonymous. As Bavinck explains,

On the whole their [Christian theologians'] teaching has been that God is simple, exalted above all composition, and that there is no real distinction between his being and his attributes. Every attribute is identical with God's being. He *is* what he *has*.... Whatever God is he is completely and simultaneously. By means of this doctrine of God's simplicity Christian theology was kept from falling into the error of regarding God's attributes as separate from and more or less independent of his essence."⁶¹

What this means in practical terms is that if one attribute was eternally enjoyed within the Godhead, then all the attributes are eternally enjoyed within the Godhead. Put another way, the revelation of all of God's perfections has been a perpetual revelation within the Godhead. He has constantly revealed and enjoyed his own perfections throughout all eternity.

A Proposed Definition

If one understands the glory of God as fundamentally "the revelation of God's perfections," then the glory of God is an eternal glory, independent of his creation, for this revelation has eternally existed within the Godhead. As a result, God's eternal purpose is dependent upon nothing outside of himself. At the same time, God reveals himself to all of his creation through his deeds in a way that may be best understood. This being said, although the simple definition of "the revelation of God's perfections" is technically accurate, this definition is likely to be misunderstood without further clarification.

Therefore, the following definition is proposed: *The glory of God is his revelation of his own perfections, both eternally within the Godhead and temporally in all creation.* This definition concisely summarizes the biblical evidence reviewed

⁶¹ Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*, trans. William Hendriksen (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 121.

above, avoids the theological pitfall of making God dependent upon his creation, and stands firmly within the dispensational tradition, combining the insights of both Ryrie and Chafer.

This author understands that this article is not the final word on the subject. But it is hoped that this definition may be a starting place for a larger discussion within dispensationalism on a topic that has been largely ignored. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

The Glory of God and Dispensationalism: Revisiting the *Sine Qua Non* of Dispensationalism

Douglas Brown

In 1965 Charles Ryrie published *Dispensationalism Today*. In this influential volume, Ryrie attempted to explain, systematize, and defend the dispensational approach to the Scriptures. His most notable contribution was arguably the three *sine qua non* of dispensationalism. First, a dispensationalist consistently keeps Israel and the church distinct. Second, a dispensationalist consistently employs a literal system of hermeneutics (i.e., what Ryrie calls “normal” or “plain” interpretation). Third, a dispensationalist believes that the underlying purpose of the world is the glory of God.²

The acceptance of Ryrie’s *sine qua non* of dispensationalism has varied within dispensational circles. In general, traditional dispensationalists have accepted the *sine qua non* and used them as a starting point to explain the essence of dispensationalism.³ In contrast, progressive dispensationalists have largely rejected Ryrie’s proposal and have explored new ways to explain the essential tenants of

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² C. C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 43-47.

³ See, for example, R. Showers, *There Really Is a Difference*, 12th ed. (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 2010), 52, 53; R. McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity*, vol. 1 (Allen Park, MI: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 112-15; C. Cone, ed., *Dispensationalism Tomorrow and Beyond: A Theological Collection in Honor of Charles C. Ryrie* (Fort Worth: Tyndale Seminary P, 2008), *passim*.

dispensationalism.⁴ Despite criticisms leveled by progressive dispensationalists, Ryrie reaffirmed the *sine qua non* when he revised and expanded his book in 2007.⁵ It is remarkable that for over fifty years dispensational advocates continue to affirm, debate, and dispute Ryrie's *sine qua non* of dispensationalism.

This study is primarily concerned with Ryrie's third essential aspect, the glory of God. On balance, dispensational scholarship has focused more on the other two distinctives, the distinction between Israel and the church and a consistent literal hermeneutic. E. E. Johnson correctly observes, "In this author's view dispensationalists have not always given adequate attention to the glory of God in their teaching on dispensationalism. Yet the Bible repeatedly focuses on this aspect of God's program."⁶ I have divided this study into three parts. First, I will explain the controversy surrounding the glory of God as a distinguishing mark of dispensational thought. Second, I will attempt to develop an outline for a biblical theology for God's glory based on Scripture. Third, I will draw some conclusions about the validity of using the glory of God as a unifying principle for dispensationalism.

⁴ C. A. Blaising and D. L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism: An Up-to-Date Handbook of Contemporary Dispensational Thought* (Wheaton, IL: Bridgepoint, 1993), 9-56; see especially endnote 8, pp. 304-305; R. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 19-29; J. S. Feinberg, "Systems of Discontinuity," in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. J. S. Feinberg (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988), 67-85; M. Vlach, *Dispensationalism: Essential Beliefs and Common Myths* (Los Angeles: Theological Studies P, 2008), 13-31.

⁵ C. C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, rev. and exp. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 45-48.

⁶ E. E. Johnson, "A Biblical Theology of God's Glory," *BibSac* 169 (2012): 403. Stanley Toussaint remarks, "Of these three [*sine qua non*], undoubtedly the most important is the distinction between Israel and the church" "Israel and the Church of a Traditional Dispensationalist," in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism: A Comparison of Traditional and Progressive Views*, ed. H. W. Bateman IV (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 227.

The Controversy Concerning God's Glory within Dispensationalism

A short historical overview is in order to help understand the controversy related to the glory of God and dispensationalism.⁷ Classical dispensationalists such as C. I. Scofield and L. S. Chafer taught that God had two separate redemptive purposes for Israel and the church. Israel was seen as the earthly people of God through whom God would fulfill an earthly redemption. The church was seen as the heavenly people of God through whom God would fulfill a heavenly redemption. These two divine purposes were eternally separate and helped to explain why God instituted different dispensations. Critics from covenantal theology, such as O. T. Allis, charged dispensationalists with undermining the unity of the Bible and Reformed theology, especially the covenant of grace and Westminster Confession.⁸ For Allis and other covenant theologians, the unifying theme of redemptive history is soteriological, grounded in the covenant of grace.

In response to these criticisms, dispensational scholars searched for a unifying theme within the dispensational theology. John Walvoord, who formerly was Presbyterian, responded to these charges by affirming that there is one overarching purpose of Scripture—the glory of God:

All the events of the created world are designed to manifest the glory of God. The error of covenant theologians is that they combine all the many facets of divine purpose in the one objective of the fulfillment of the covenant of grace. From a logical standpoint, this is the reductive error—the use of one aspect of the whole as the determining element.⁹

⁷ See the helpful summaries by C. A. Blaising, “Contemporary Dispensationalism,” in *SWJT* 36 (1994): 5-10; and “Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists, Part 2,” *BibSac* 145 (1988): 266-69.

⁸ O. T. Allis, “Modern Dispensationalism and the Unity of Scripture,” *EvQ* (1936): 22-35.

⁹ J. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Findlay, OH: Dunham, 1959), 92.

Ryrie followed Walvoord's lead and incorporated the glory of God into his *sine qua non* of dispensationalism.

Decades later, controversy continues to swirl around the proposal that the glory of God is a distinguishing mark of dispensationalism. Herb Bateman IV summarizes the criticisms under two questions. He asks, "First, do all dispensationalists agree that the self-glorification of God is the unifying theme of Scripture?"¹⁰ Bateman notes that prior to Walvoord and Ryrie there was a lack of consensus among classical dispensationalists such as Chafer, who evidently proposed no overarching principle. In addition, contemporaries of Ryrie argued for other unifying principles. For example, Alva McClain and Dwight Pentecost made the arguments that the unifying theme of Scripture is the mediatorial kingdom and theocratic kingdom of God respectively.¹¹ To this list, one should add progressive dispensationalists. Blaising states, "[F]or progressive dispensationalism, the kingdom of God is the unifying theme of the history of divine revelation, and Jesus Christ is the apex of that kingdom, the agent and mediator through whom it is brought to fulfillment, and the focal point of divine revelation."¹²

The second question Bateman raises is "whether the doxological principle is a unique or distinguishing feature of dispensationalism."¹³ To this inquiry, he responds negatively as well. In other words, are dispensationalists the only theologians who see God's glory as the ultimate purpose for creation? Covenant theologians enjoy a rich heritage of celebrating the glory of God. One could look to the Westminster Shorter

¹⁰ H. W. Bateman IV, "Introduction: Dispensationalism Yesterday and Today," in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism: A Comparison of Traditional and Progressive Views*, ed. H. W. Bateman IV (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 36.

¹¹ A. J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1992), 4-5; J. D. Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1964), 433.

¹² C. Blaising, "Contemporary Dispensationalism," 12. So Robert Saucy, *Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*, 27-29.

¹³ Bateman, "Dispensationalism Yesterday," 36.

Catechism¹⁴ or Jonathan Edwards's treatise *The End for Which God Created the World*. Ryrie (and Walvoord) knew, however, this as well and even acknowledged that covenant theologians recognize the ultimate end of God's glory.¹⁵

The doxological principle in dispensationalism, however, is part of a much larger discussion than merely recognizing God's glory. It relates to one's philosophy of history. Ryrie articulates three elements needed to establish a philosophy of history: (1) "a proper concept of the progress of revelation in history; (2) the unifying principle; and (3) the ultimate goal of history."¹⁶ Ryrie does a commendable job explaining the differences between not only covenant theology and dispensationalism, but also between progressive dispensationalism and traditional dispensationalism as they relate to their philosophies of history.¹⁷ Their views of progressive revelation are different, their unifying principles are different, and their ultimate goals are different as well.

Before attempting to outline the biblical theology of God's glory, one more topic needs to be discussed, namely, the problem of finding a unifying center. Both systematic and biblical theologians have long recognized the difficulty of finding one center that provides an adequate foundation for all other truth.¹⁸ James Hamilton describes a biblical theological center as follows:

¹⁴ Question 1: "What is the chief end of man?" Answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever."

¹⁵ For example, see Ryrie's comments about Charles Hodge and William G. T. Shedd (*Dispensationalism*, 108).

¹⁶ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 21.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 20-23, 103-9. See also Showers, *There Really Is a Difference*, 49-52.

¹⁸ James Hamilton, "The Glory of God in Salvation through Judgment: The Centre of Biblical Theology?" *TynBul* 57 (2006): 59-62; G. F. Hasel, "The Problem of the Center in the OT Theology Debate," *ZAW* 86 (1974): 65-82; R. McCune, *A Systematic Theology*, 1:135; C. Blomberg, "Unity and Diversity of Scripture," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and B. S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 66-69.

This centre of the Bible's theology acts as the centre of gravity for all of its other themes, it undergirds biblical wisdom, and it presents itself as the apex of the purposes of the God who speaks and acts from creation and redemption to judgement and consummation. . . . Moreover the centre of biblical theology is the theme which all of the Bible's other themes serve to exposit.¹⁹

The Case for a Dispensational Understanding of God's Glory

Attempting to develop a biblical theology of God's glory is an immense undertaking. Such an endeavor is complicated by the fact that we are finite and God is infinite, so there is always more about God to know and to learn. Even for all of eternity the redeemed will grow in their understanding of the glory of God. Pentecost comments, "A finite mind could no more comprehend His glory that one can compress the ocean into a bucket. All eternity will be spent learning more and more about how great, how good, and how glorious God is."²⁰ So the following is just a start of a biblical theology of God's glory, especially as it relates to dispensationalism. The outline progresses through seven premises that build upon one another.

1. Premise: God is a glorious God.

What exactly is the glory of God? Christians speak frequently about God's glory and glorifying God, but few have considered what it is. Unfortunately, many systematic theologies do not directly discuss the issue.

Perhaps the best place to start is with the terms most frequently used for glory in the Old and New Testaments. In the OT, the Hebrew term *kābôd* (used 376 times along with its derivatives) is used most frequently of God's glory.²¹ When it is used in a context not directly related to God, *kābôd* can refer to (1) a weight or burden (1 Sam 4:18; Isa 2:24); (2) possessions

¹⁹ Hamilton, "Glory of God in Salvation," 59, 61.

²⁰ J. D. Pentecost, *The Glory of God* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1978), 97.

²¹ J. N. Oswalt, "943 קָבֹד," *TWOT*, 427.

(Gen 31:1) or impressive appearance (Gen 45:3); (3) splendor, magnificence (Hag 2:3); and (4) distinction, respect, or a mark of honor (1 Kgs 3:13; Prov 26:8).²² When used in relation to God, *kābôd* refers to the manifestation of his being. J. N. Owalt comments,

Over against the transience of human and earthly glory stands the unchanging beauty of the manifest God (Ps 145:5). In this sense the noun *kābôd* takes on its most unusual and distinctive meaning. Forty-five times this form of the root relates to a visible manifestation of God and whenever ‘the glory of God’ is mentioned this usage must be taken account of.²³

R. B. Gaffin Jr states that “the phrase ‘glory of the LORD’ (*k^ebôd yhw^h*) occurs frequently in the OT; it is virtually a technical term (e.g., Exod. 16:7; 1 Kgs. 8:11; Ps. 63:2). God’s glory is His visible and active presence.”²⁴

The most common NT term related to God’s glory is *doxa* (used 166 times in the NT). In secular Greek *doxa* is most frequently used to refer to one’s “opinion” or “view”; surprisingly this usage is absent from biblical Greek (both the LXX and NT).²⁵ The Septuagint translators shaped the biblical use of *doxa* when they used it to translate *kābôd*. In the NT, *doxa* has four basic meanings: (1) the condition of being bright or shining, *brightness, splendor, radiance* (Acts 7:55); (2) a state of being magnificent, *greatness, splendor* (Mark 6:29); (3) honor as enhancement or recognition of status or performance, *fame, recognition, renown, honor, prestige* (2 Pet 1:17); and (4) a transcendent being deserving of honor, majestic being (2 Pet 2:10).²⁶ The two key ways NT writers use *doxa* in relation to God is either to display his visible radiance or to uphold and

²² William Lee Holladay and Ludwig Köhler, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 151.

²³ J. N. Oswalt, “943 קָבוֹד,” *TWOT*, 1:427.

²⁴ R. B. Gaffin, Jr., “Glory,” in *NBDT*, 507.

²⁵ *EDNT*, 1:345; *LSJ*, 444.

²⁶ *BDAG*, 256-58.

spread his reputation and honor.²⁷ At times, it is hard to distinguish which meaning a particular author is using in any given context.

The glory of God goes beyond lexical studies. How do we understand the glory God theologically? Several theologians make a helpful distinction between the intrinsic and extrinsic glory of God.²⁸ The intrinsic glory of God relates to the very essence or being of God. Glory is not merely an attribute of God; rather it is the sum total of all his attributes. John Walvoord defines God's glory as "the manifestation of God's infinite perfections."²⁹ J. Dwight Pentecost concurs, "The glory of God is the sum total of all His perfections as revealed to men."³⁰ Scripture presents many of God's attributes and works as glorious because they reflect the intrinsic glory of God. God is a glorious God. The extrinsic glory of God relates to the manifestation or revelation of God's intrinsic glory. Wayne Grudem defines God's glory as "the created brightness that surrounds God's revelation of himself." He further comments, "It is very appropriate that God's revelation of himself should be accompanied by such splendor and brightness, for this glory of God is the visible manifestation of the excellence of God's

²⁷ See the very helpful summary in R. Bauckham, *The Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), Kindle Edition.

²⁸ See the survey in C. W. Morgan, "Toward a Theology of the Glory of God" in *The Glory of God*, ed. C. W. Morgan and R. A. Petterson, *Theology in Community* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 165-67. So also J. MacArthur Jr., *God: How to Know and Glorify Him* (Panorama City, CA: Word of Grace Communications, 1982), 56-62; J. D. Hannah, *How Do We Glorify God?* Basics of the Faith Series (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2000), 10-11. L. S. Chafer distinguishes between the essential (i.e., intrinsic) and declarative aspects to "the boundless glory of God" (*Systematic Theology*, vol. 7 [Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948], 172-73).

²⁹ J. F. Walvoord, *The Prophecy Knowledge Handbook* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1990), 476.

³⁰ J. D. Pentecost, *Glory of God*, 123.

character.”³¹ Many scholars link the display of God’s glory to his presence, both in the world and among his people (John 1:14).³² In many respects, the Bible’s story line is the progressive revelation of God’s extrinsic glory.

2. Premise: The ultimate goal of all creation is the glory of God.

Romans 11:36 states, “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen.” This doxology (along with many other doxologies in the Bible) captures the key purpose of why God created the world—for his own glory. The three prepositional phrases in this verse describe the comprehensive scope of God’s purpose. “From Him” (*ek autou*) explains that God is the creator. God made the universe and everything in it. “Through Him” (*di autou*) explains that God is the sustainer. By His eternal power and wisdom, God sustains the universe and directs its course. “To Him” (*eis auton*) explains that God himself is the goal of creation. This telic use of the preposition *eis* reveals that the universe is inherently God-centered. He is the first and last cause of “all things” (*ta panta*).³³ This theological reality cannot be overemphasized. A God-centered approach to theology radically affects how one understands and applies Scripture. The doxological conclusion of Romans 11:36, “To Him be the glory forever,” summarizes the proper response all creation should have towards the one true God. Ephesians 1:3-14 confirms that every facet of God’s eternal plan (1:11) is ultimately accomplished “to the praise of God’s glory” (1:6, 12, 14). J. D. Hannah states it this way: “What is the chief end or purpose of God? Why did God create the world and mankind? I answer: God’s chief end is to be known in all his glory.”³⁴ H. C. Thiessen and V. D. Doerksen concur:

³¹ W. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 220, 221.

³² R. B. Gaffin Jr., “Glory,” in *NBDT*, 507-09.

³³ See similar ideas in Colossians 1:16 and 1 Corinthians 8:6.

³⁴ J. D. Hannah, *How Do We Glorify God?*, 11.

Though God sincerely seeks to promote the happiness of his creatures and to perfect the saints in holiness, neither of these is the highest possible end. The end is his own glory. All his works in creation (Ps. 19:1–6; Prov. 3:19), preservation (Neh. 9:6; Rev. 4:11), providence (Ps. 33:10f.; Dan. 4:35; Eph. 1:11), and redemption (1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:10f.) have this end in view.³⁵

A God-centered view of reality is what John Piper calls a “continental divide in theology. If you really believe this, all rivers of your thinking run toward God. If you do not, all rivers run toward man. The theological and practical implications are innumerable.”³⁶

This view of reality raises a theological paradox that is interesting to unwind. Is God selfish or sinful for seeking his own glory?³⁷ The answer to this question rests ultimately in the perfections of God’s essence and character. If the God of the Bible is the one true God, then for him to seek some other end outside himself would be absurd. God is the highest entity in the universe and has infinite value. There is nothing greater to seek. For God to create the world for himself demonstrates the reality that he is indeed God. If God called creation to seek something other than his own glory, he would be calling people to idolatry. In contrast, calling people to recognize and understand his glory is an act of love and is in no way selfish or sinful.

3. Premise: God wants every creature to glorify him.

If God is a glorious God, and he has created the world for his own glory, the next logical question is, how does one glorify

³⁵ H. C. Thiessen and V. D. Doerksen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 82. See also pp. 100, 103, 111, 118, and 126.

³⁶ J. Piper, *God’s Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998), 141 n. 21.

³⁷ See Jonathan Edwards, “The End for Which God Created the World” in *God’s Passion for His Glory*, 168-76; J. D. Hannah, *How Do We Glorify God?*, 15, 16.

God? Christians speak of glorifying God on a regular basis. Yet the true meaning of this familiar phrase seems lost to the contemporary church.

Let us first consider what glorifying God cannot mean. First, glorifying God does not mean that God is deficient of glory. Second, glorifying God does not mean that God is part of creation. Third, glorifying God does not mean that God is dependent upon creation. To the contrary, God is eternally perfect, and his glory is neither deficient nor incomplete. Chafer states, “As for that glory which is called intrinsic or essential, it may be observed that, regardless of any recognition of it on the part of creatures, God is himself a glorious being.”³⁸ In addition, God is completely separate from and transcendent above creation. God is not dependent upon creation for anything—he is self-existent. Psalm 115:3 states, “Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.” Therefore, no creature can add to or diminish God’s intrinsic glory. This raises another paradox related to God’s glory. On one hand, God’s glory is perfect and complete; on the other hand, God still receives glory and praise from creatures. Both concepts are true. The genuine reception of praise and honor does not diminish God’s full and complete intrinsic glory.³⁹

Now let us consider positively what glorifying God does mean. The Greek verb *doxazō* (used sixty-one times in the NT) has two basic meanings: (1) to influence one’s opinion about another so as to enhance the latter’s reputation, *praise, honor, extol*; and (2) to cause to have splendid greatness, *clothe in splendor, glorify*.⁴⁰ In the NT, the second meaning of “glorify” is an activity reserved exclusively for God (Acts 3:13, Rom 8:30). Only God can cause one to have splendid greatness. The first definition, however, captures the main thrust of how creatures can glorify God—to influence people’s opinion about God so as to enhance his reputation throughout the world. Scripture articulates this concept in passages such as Matthew

³⁸ Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 7:172.

³⁹ See C. W. Morgan, “Towards a Theology of the Glory of God,” 167-69.

⁴⁰ BDAG, 258.

5:16, “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” First Peter 2:12 echoes the same theme: “Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”

Three principal activities comprise the biblical idea of glorifying God. First, glorifying God involves primarily the *revelation* of the one true God. When God reveals himself, he is glorified. When people come to know God, God is glorified.

Second, glorifying God involves the spread of the *reputation* of the one true God. When the true reputation of God spreads and people begin to honor and respect him, God is glorified. One way the spread of God’s reputation occurs in Scripture is through the spread of God’s name. When God called Moses, Moses’ task was to remind the nation of God’s name: “God also said to Moses, ‘Say this to the people of Israel: “The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.” This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.’” In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus’ first request is that God’s name would be hallowed throughout the world (Matt 6:9).

Third, glorifying God relates to the *pleasure* of the one true God. Hannah asserts,

To state it succinctly, God is only pleased with that which is in perfect agreement with his perfections. God is only glorified in himself either in beholding his innate triune perfections with his own being or observing himself through his creation. Truly pleasing God from the creature’s perspective means being like God in moral and spiritual qualities.⁴¹

Therefore, whatever pleases God is also what glorifies him. Here are just a few things that please God: the spread of the gospel; the salvation of the lost; the sanctification of believers;

⁴¹ Hannah, *How Do We Glorify God?*, 26.

the bearing of spiritual fruit; and the genuine offer of praise, thanks, and worship.

4. Premise: Glorifying God is bound to God's self-disclosure.

Foundational to glorifying God is the self-disclosure of God.⁴² As Paul Enns explains, "Revelation is thus God's disclosure to man, in which He reveals truth about Himself that man would not otherwise know."⁴³ God has chosen to reveal himself through various means. First, God has revealed his glory through *general revelation* to all humanity. God has revealed his glory in creation (Ps 19:1-6). Psalm 19:1 states, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork." In Romans 1, Paul explains that creation reveals the invisible attributes of God, including his eternal power and divine nature, so that all of humanity is without excuse (Rom 1:19-21). Those who reject God foolishly "exchange the glory of God" for idolatry (Rom 1:23). God also reveals himself generally through the conscience (Rom 2:14, 15) and through divine providence (Acts 14:15-17; Matt 5:45).

Second, God has revealed his glory in *special revelation*. The scope of special revelation is narrower than general revelation since not all people may receive the message. It is special because it reveals more information about God and his will for humanity through a variety of means (Heb 1:1). Salvation is possible only through special revelation (Rom 10:17). We will focus on just two avenues of special revelation: the word of God and the Son of God. Scripture was inspired by God and is capable of equipping believers for every good work (2 Tim 3:16). It is through the pages of Scripture that we learn of God, his glory, and his eternal plan. John Piper states, "The whole Bible, properly understood, has this divine purpose to communicate or display the glory of God. And this pervasive

⁴² See esp. J. Hamilton, "The Glory of God in Salvation through Judgment," 57-84 and Pentecost, *The Glory of God, passim*.

⁴³ Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1989), 186.

aim of the Scriptures to glorify God, in what they teach and how they teach it, reveals the handiwork of God in the writing of the Bible.”⁴⁴ Jesus Christ is the climax of God’s revelation (John 1:1, 18; Heb 1:1-4). God manifested his glory in Jesus’ First Advent (John 1:14) and will manifest it again in the Second Advent (Matt 24:30).

5. Premise: God has chosen to reveal his glory progressively and systematically through redemptive history (i.e., through every dispensation).

Under the previous premise, I asserted that God reveals his own glory. Under this premise, I am asserting that God reveals his glory progressively and systematically throughout redemptive history. Dispensationalists recognize that God has chosen to reveal himself progressively in each dispensation. A proper view of progressive revelation is foundational to the proper understanding of Scripture. Ryrie summarizes the issue well:

Progressive revelation views the Bible not as a textbook on theology but as the continually unfolding revelation of God given by various means throughout the successive ages. In this unfolding there are distinguishable stages of revelation when God introduces new things for which man becomes responsible. These stages are the economies, stewardships, or dispensations in the unfolding of His purpose. Dispensationalism, therefore, recognizes both the unity of His purpose and the diversity in the unfolding of it.⁴⁵

Throughout the dispensations, God specifically reveals more about his glory. The following are just a few highlights of the progressive revelation of God’s glory. This survey takes special note of God’s display of brightness and light as well as

⁴⁴ J. Piper, *A Peculiar Glory: How the Christian Scriptures Reveal Their Complete Truthfulness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 195.

⁴⁵ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 39.

explicit statements about his own glory.⁴⁶ As already noted, creation declares the glory of God and his invisible attributes (Ps 19:1-6; Rom 1:19-23). God created humanity in his own image and crowned them in glory (Gen 1:26-28; Ps 8:3-5; Heb 2:5-9). The LORD revealed his own glory and name to Moses at the burning bush (Exod 3). On Mount Sinai when God gave the law, God revealed his glory to his servant Moses (Exod 33-34). Both the apostles John and Paul allude to this famous event in the life of Moses when they compare the glory under the law to the glory of the new covenant (John 1:14-18; 2 Cor 3:13-18). Throughout the exodus and wilderness wanderings God's presence was with the Israelites through the Shekinah glory—a cloud by day, a pillar of fire at night, and a cloud of glory within the tabernacle (Exod 40:34-38; Lev 16:2). The glory of the LORD filled the first temple until the days of Ezekiel (1 Kgs 8:10-14; Ezek 9-11). God displayed his glory repeatedly in his judgment of the nations and of Israel (Exod 14:4, 17). At least three OT prophets had the privilege of seeing prophetic visions of the glory inside the very throne room of God—Isaiah (Isa 6), Ezekiel (Ezek 1), and Daniel (Dan 7).

In the NT God revealed his glory in the life and ministry of Jesus. The incarnation of Jesus showed the glory of God (John 1:14). Jesus is the light of the world (John 1:4; 8:12; 9:5). The brightness of God's glory lit up the night sky when the angels announced Jesus's birth to the shepherds (Luke 2:8-14). The miracles of Jesus displayed the glory of God (John 2:11; 9:1-4; 11:4, 40). The transfiguration of Jesus gave Peter, James, and John an eyewitness account of the glory of Jesus, which was veiled during his first advent (Matt 17:1-13; 2 Pet 1:16-18). The passion and death of Jesus revealed God's glory as Jesus was lifted up (John 13:31, 32). After Jesus' resurrection and ascension, God restored the glory of Jesus (John 17:5; Acts 2:32, 33; 13:13-15; Heb 2:5-9). The church displays the glory of God in many different capacities (Eph 1:22, 23; 3:20, 21; 1

⁴⁶ See similar surveys in Gaffin, "Glory," 507-11; C. W. Morgan and R. A. Petterson, eds., *The Glory of God*, Theology in Community (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), *passim*; J. Edwards, "The End for Which God Created the World," 183-251; Pentecost, *Glory of God*, *passim*.

Cor 10:31). The church's gospel ministry is characterized by a greater glory than that under the Law (2 Cor 3). Both Paul and John saw visions of the glorious throne room in heaven (2 Cor 12:1-4; Rev 4-5). Paul identifies the rapture of the church as the "appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). The second coming of Christ will display the glory of God before the entire world (Matt 24:30). All will acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus and witness his exaltation (Phil 2:9, 10). Jesus will manifest the glory of God throughout the millennial kingdom (Isa 24:23).

6. Premise: The climax of God's glorification in human history will occur at the second coming and during the millennium.

The climax of God's glorification in human history is the second coming of Christ and the reign of Christ during the millennium. The millennium is the final dispensation; it represents the culmination of progressive revelation and goal of eschatology. Ryrie calls the millennium the eschatological goal of dispensationalism. The unifying theological principle is doxological; but the goal of history is Christ's rule on earth in the kingdom. Ryrie states, "Concerning the goal of history, dispensationalists find it in the establishment of the millennial kingdom on earth . . . [T]hey insist that the display of the glory of the God who is sovereign in human history must be seen in the present heavens and earth."⁴⁷

Scripture anticipates and predicts this future display of God's glory in many places. Here are just a few examples. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus articulates the future coming kingdom when he prays, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:9-10). The only time and place God's name will be hallowed is when God's kingdom is established on earth. Disciples of Jesus are to pray for the coming of Christ and the future millennium. In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus explains that the Son of Man's return will be glorious: "For as

⁴⁷ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 21.

the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man” (Matt 24:27). He continues, “Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matt 24:30).⁴⁸ The manner of Christ’s second coming is radically different from that of the first coming. Jesus’ first advent was marked by humility, coming as a babe in the manger. Jesus’ second advent is marked by a glorious and powerful display of might, descending from heaven with the hosts of the redeemed (Rev 19:11-16). After the second coming, Christ will rule on earth for 1,000 years (Rev 20:1-7). His dominion will be the entire earth; all humanity will submit to Christ’s glorious rule (Ps 2:6-9; Ps 110; Dan 7:14). Addressing the conditions of the millennial kingdom, Walvoord states, “The kingdom will be a glorious kingdom, in which the glory of God will find full manifestation.”⁴⁹

7. Premise: The ultimate completion of God’s glorification before all creation will occur only as he fulfills the national promises to Israel in the millennium.

Recognizing Christ’s earthly rule as the climax of God’s revelation of his glory is essentially a premillennial position. It is not distinctively dispensational, since historic premillennialists would agree to the same premise. So what makes a dispensational understanding of God’s glory different? What is distinctive about dispensationalism? The main difference is that dispensationalists see the millennium as the restoration of the theocratic kingdom to the nation of Israel. At

⁴⁸ See Matthew 16:27; Matthew 24:64; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; Revelation 1:7.

⁴⁹ J. D. Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1964), 488. Showers notes, “The Scriptures repeatedly associate the glory of God with His sovereign rule” (*There Really is a Difference*, 50).

this point, a dispensational explanation of the kingdom of God might be helpful.

God's kingdom program is one of the most important themes in Scripture. Dispensationalists have consistently seen different aspects to God's rule.⁵⁰ First, God rules sovereignly over all creation at all times. This aspect of God's kingdom is the *universal kingdom* of God. The Scriptures reflect God's universal rule in verses such as Psalm 103:19, "The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all" and Psalm 145:13, "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations." God's omnipotent rule over creation is unshakeable despite the enemies of God.

Second, God will rule beyond time as we know it into eternity. This aspect of God's kingdom is the *eternal kingdom*. In eternity, God will vanquish all the enemies, both on the earth and in the angelic realm. God will completely reverse the curse of sin on creation as he creates a new heaven and new earth (Rev 22).

Third, God at various times has manifested his rule on the earth through a mediator or representative. This aspect of God's kingdom is the *theocratic* or *mediatorial kingdom*. The theocratic rule of God started in Eden with Adam as God's image bearer (Gen 1:26-28). Adam's sin and subsequent fall ruined humanity's mediatorial rule over creation and allowed Satan to implement his kingdom (Gen 3). God instituted his theocratic rule again with the nation of Israel at Sinai (Exod 19). Though limited in scope and imperfect in its implementation, Israel's theocracy lasted from Sinai until the

⁵⁰ See, for example, A. J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1992); J. D. Pentecost, *Thy Kingdom Come* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1990); A. G. Fruchtenbaum, *Israelology: The Missing Link in Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 1994), 604-611; Showers, *There Really is a Difference*, 155-67. Dispensationalists continue to debate the relationship of the church to the kingdom. Although this issue is worthy of consideration, it is not essential to the argument in this paper. For a basic introduction to the issues, see the essays by S. D. Toussaint and J. L. Burns in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism*.

departure of the presence of God's glory at the time of the exile (Ezek 10). The reinstatement of God's theocratic rule on earth will take place at Christ's second coming and the establishment of the millennium (Matt 25:31). As the God-man, Jesus Christ will restore humanity's rightful place to rule over creation (Ps 8; Heb 2:5-9). As the Messiah, Jesus will rule over God's theocratic kingdom over all nations of the earth from David's throne in Jerusalem (2 Sam 7:14; Isa 11:1-5). The millennium will restore the nation of Israel's kingdom for 1,000 years (Rev 20).

The establishment of Israel's theocratic kingdom will fulfill the covenants God has made with Israel: the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1-3), the Palestinian covenant (Deut 30:1-10), the Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:16), and the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34). All of the promises and prophecies God made with Israel will come to fulfillment during the millennium. Only through the completion of God's program with the nation of Israel will God's full measure of glory be manifest. Isaiah 24:23 states, "Then the moon will be confounded and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts reigns on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and his glory will be before his elders." Christ will rule in Jerusalem, and he will radiate forth glory so bright that the moon and sun will fade by comparison (see also Isa 30:26). Isaiah 65 is an exemplary passage in which God promises to restore the nation of Israel with abundant blessing. This was Paul's hope and expectation for Israel in Romans 9-11. He succinctly states that "all Israel will be saved" (Rom 11:26). Showers summarizes this expectation well:

The dispensations progressively move history toward the fulfillment of its God-intended climax. In the final "dispensation of the fullness of times" (Eph. 1:9-10), God will fully glorify Himself by crushing Satan and his kingdom (Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:1-3), restoring His own Kingdom rule to earth through Jesus Christ (Rev. 11:15; 20:4-6), and reversing the tragic consequences of man's rebellion (Mt. 19:28; Acts 3:19-21).⁵¹

⁵¹ Showers, *There Really Is a Difference*, 51.

Both the OT and NT are full of similar promises and prophecies about Israel. All of these expectations reflect the wisdom and sovereignty of God to the praise of his glory. Any other theological or hermeneutical system that fails to acknowledge the fulfillment of God's covenants, promises, and prophecies to Israel diminishes God's glory. Only a dispensational understanding of the millennium captures the full expression of God's glory within human history.

Conclusion: The Case for a Dispensational Understanding of God's Glory

The glory of God is a great theme throughout Scripture and a watershed issue among theological systems. All genuine Christians, regardless of their theological system, should recognize the doxological purpose of God and its implications for scholarship and the church. The glory of God affects hermeneutics, biblical, systematic, and practical theology, and, of course, Christian living. I would like to draw a few conclusions based upon this study.

First, the Scriptures clearly teach that the glory of God is the overarching purpose of God. God is a God of glory. His glory is intrinsic to his essence, and it is the first and last cause of why God created the world. God has progressively revealed and expressed his glory throughout each dispensation. The ultimate end of all humanity is to glorify God by recognizing and reflecting his glory.

Second, the doxological purpose of creation is a shared belief among theological systems. Dispensationalists need to do a better job recognizing that other theologians with other theological systems (such as covenant theology and progressive covenantalism⁵²) do uphold God's glory as creation's chief end. The doxological purpose of creation is not unique to dispensationalists. This point has been a source of much confusion both within and outside dispensational circles. This is

⁵² S. J. Wellum and B. E. Parker, eds., *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016).

why virtually all progressive dispensationalist and even some traditional dispensationalists have abandoned the glory of God as a defining mark of dispensationalism. Since the glory of God is not unique to dispensationalism, it is assumed that it cannot be a *sine qua non* of the system. But is this abandonment necessary? I would argue, “No.” Dispensationalism should retain the glory of God as its unifying principle.

Third, the dispensational view of God’s glory is unique. What distinguishes a dispensational view of God’s glory from other theological systems is the complete manifestation of God’s glory in the millennium—that is, the theocratic kingdom restored to national Israel. Any theological system that undermines the completion of God’s program with Israel diminishes God’s glory. This argument has the advantage of uniting dispensationalists, especially those who see kingdom as the unifying principle of Scripture. God’s glory and the kingdom are thematically united in God’s purposes. This is a mediating position. My hope is that it could help dispensationalists present God and his glory to future generations and help unite the movement.

Soli Deo Gloria as Pinnacle of Dispensationalism's *Sine Qua Non*

Christopher Cone

In 1957, Charles Ryrie wrote an article published in *Bibliotheca Sacra* entitled, “The Necessity of Dispensationalism.”² In the article, Ryrie emphasized the concepts he later referred to as the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism,³ and in particular he focused on the goal of history as being centered on God’s glory: “the differing dispensations reveal the glory of God as He shows off His character in the different stewardships culminating in history with the millennial glory.”⁴ Ryrie’s later iteration of the *sine qua non* (“without which not”) culminated with “the underlying purpose of God”⁵ as “the total program of glorifying Himself.”⁶ Despite Ryrie’s emphasis on the centrality of God’s doxological purpose, few later dispensational thinkers have echoed the doxological purpose as a necessary and distinctively dispensational theme. It is not unusual for dispensational thinkers to acknowledge God’s glory as the highest end, yet Ryrie stands nearly alone in his assertion of God’s glory as *uniquely necessary* for dispensational thought.

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² Charles C. Ryrie, “The Necessity of Dispensationalism,” *BibSac* 114, no. 455 (July 1957): 243–54.

³ Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1965), 43.

⁴ Ryrie, “Necessity of Dispensationalism,” 248.

⁵ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 46.

⁶ *Ibid.*

It seems clear enough that the consistent application of the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic would uncover both the Israel-church distinction *and* the centrality of the doxological purpose. If this be the case, then the significance of including the two conclusions as part of the *sine qua non* is based not on their methodological usefulness, but rather on their explanatory value. The three elements are not altogether methodological. In fact, only one of the three components is methodological. In addition to that methodological factor, one is theological, and the other is teleological.⁷ The *methodological* distinctive of dispensational thought is a hermeneutic one (the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic consistently applied). The *theological* distinctive (the Israel-church distinction) is an explanatory litmus test so significant in its practical implications that there may be no single greater theological difference between the dispensational and reformed systems. It is, however, the *teleological* distinctive that undergirds the theological distinctive. Recognizing the doxological purpose through exegetical examination (governed by literal grammatical-historical hermeneutics) highlights a number of theological keys, including the demand for the Israel-church distinction. If Ryrie is correct, the dispensational order of process would follow this pattern:

- (1) Exegete the Scriptures applying a consistently literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic.
- (2) Recognize the glory of God as God's highest end, and that end which governs all other ends.
- (3) Understand key theological distinctions (including the notable Israel/church distinction) observable through the application of a literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic and *confirmable* in light of the doxological purpose which permeates Scripture.

⁷ The order of the three elements were not particularly important in Ryrie's thinking. In a private conversation he confirmed verbally to me that there was no particular reason he listed them in the order he did. Inclusion of the three were vital, as was their flow, but the order (in which they were listed) was not.

The three elements of Ryrie's *sine qua non* flow from methodological, to teleological, to theological, and ultimately from methodological to explanatory. The flow of these three is sufficient to draw a fairly comprehensive and definitive contrast between dispensational and Reformed thought.

Although there is a rich heritage in reformed theology of acknowledging the centrality of the doxological purpose, there has also been a subtle drift toward a more soteriological focus. In contrast to Ryrie's brand of *sine qua non*-based dispensational thought, modern day reformed theology seems practically centered on a redemptive purpose rather than on a doxological one. It is within the distance covered by this drift that Ryrie finds perhaps the greatest contrast *in conclusions* between dispensational and reformed understanding: dispensational thought sees God's glory as *necessary* for understanding the different administrations and economies described in Scripture, while the reformed understanding of Scripture is simply not dependent on the doxological theme. In Ryrie's estimation, simply recognizing a literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic and thus arriving at a complete distinction between Israel and the church is not sufficient to distinguish between dispensational and reformed thought. The great theme of *soli Deo gloria* (to God [be the] glory) is a pivot point that underscores the contrast between the two systems. In light of the reformers' emphasis on *soli Deo gloria* and subsequent drift toward a more soteriological center, if Ryrie is correct about the necessity of the doxological center and its uniqueness to the dispensational understanding, then when it comes to *soli Deo gloria*, dispensationalism is the truer descendant of the Reformation heritage. In this, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, that implication is a significant reminder of the orthodoxy and value of dispensational thought to Christian understanding.

***Soli Deo Gloria* in the Biblical Data**

Cataloging the activities of God as recorded in Scripture provides perspective on God's purpose in engaging those activities:

The major works of God revealed in Scripture all serve the doxological purpose.... This doxological purpose is at the center of God's revelation to man, and there is therefore no higher purpose for man but to glorify God ... this doxological purpose is not only man's highest calling, but is the intended design of all that is.... The aim, therefore, of Biblical theology is to communicate the truth about God, to the extent to which God has revealed Himself in Scripture, and for His own doxological purpose. Rightly understanding then the primacy of the doxological design is a necessity without which no consistent and coherent theology can result.⁸

David ascribes to God greatness of deeds, and recognizes that all the nations will worship him (Ps 86:9–10). John narrates a still-yet-future song that will celebrate all the nations fearing him and glorifying his name (Rev 15:4). In a general sense, God's identity and his deeds are worthy of praise. His glory is well deserved. Still, Christians are not left with only a general understanding of his doxological purpose as his highest end, as the Scriptures provide numerous specific examples. In each of these activities of God, his own glory is identified as the highest purpose.

God predestines and calls for the purpose of his glory (Eph 1:4–6). In fact, it was through his glory—or as an expression of it, that he calls believers to salvation (1 Pet 1:3). The ministry of Christ was for his glory and the Father's (John 13:31–32). The earthly ministry and plan of salvation executed by Christ was for his and the Father's glory (John 17:1–5). God is glorified in fulfilling his promises to his people (2 Cor 1:20). Jesus is glorified in the equipping of his people (Heb 13:21). Creation itself declares his glory (Ps 19:1–6). One of the reasons given for the worthiness of God to receive glory is that he is the Creator (Rev 4:11). God is glorified by his truth (Rom 3:7). His name is glorified in saving, helping, and forgiving his people (Ps 19:9). God is glorified in Christ's accepting of his people (Rom 15:7). He is glorified in his entire plan (Rom

⁸ Christopher Cone, *Prolegomena on Biblical Hermeneutics and Method*, 2nd ed. (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Seminary P, 2012), 15–16.

16:25–27). Christ redeems for his glory (Eph 1:7–12). The Holy Spirit seals for his glory (Eph 1:13–14). The demonstration of mercy unto salvation is for his glory (1 Tim 1:15–17). He is glorified in his people's sanctification (2 Tim 4:18). His strengthening of his people is for his glory (Jude 24–25). He is to be glorified in all the actions of his church (1 Cor 10:31). Thankfulness for grace is purposed for the glory of God (2 Cor 4:15). The fruit of righteousness is for the glory of God (Phil 1:11). His working in his people is for his glory (2 Thess 1:11–12). He is glorified before all time, now, and forever (Jude 24–25). He is glorified in the suffering of his people (1 Pet 4:16). He is glorified when his disciples bear fruit (John 15:8). He will be glorified when every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:11). He is glorified in illness (1 Sam 6:5; John 9:1–3). He is glorified in healing (Luke 17:11–18). He is glorified in death (John 21:19). He is glorified in resurrection (John 11:4). He is glorified in judgment (Rev 14:7). He is glorified in the deliverance of Israel (Isa 60:21, 61:3). He is glorified in the fulfilling of his covenants and the summing up of all things (Isa 25:1–3, 43:20; Luke 2:14; Rom 4:20, 15:8–9; 2 Cor 1:20; 2 Pet 1:3–4; Rev 19:7). And in case these specific statements are not convincing enough, Peter states that God is glorified in all things (1 Pet 4:11). Inarguably, through the lens of the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic, the doxological purpose is central in Scripture, as Ryrie suggests.

***Soli Deo Gloria* in Other Notable Dispensational Perspectives**

Although Ryrie does not specifically spell out the primacy of the doxological purpose in his *Basic Theology* to the extent he did in *Dispensationalism Today*, he does note that one of the four primary purposes of the knowledge of God (theology) is “to generate true worship of God (Rom 11:33–36).”⁹ Of course, many other dispensational thinkers agree with Ryrie that God's primary revealed focus is doxological, but few suggest that the idea is central to dispensational theology.

⁹ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1982), 26.

One who agrees with Ryrie regarding the importance of *solī Deo gloria* is John Walvoord, who critiques reformed/covenant theology as “unduly restrict[ing] the larger purpose of God to soteriology.”¹⁰ Walvoord adds his own understanding that

a more tenable position is that the larger purpose of God is the manifestation of His own glory. To this end each dispensation, each successive revelation of God’s plan for the ages, His dealing with the nonelect as with the elect, and the glories of nature combine to manifest divine glory. There is provided a unity to the plan of God which does not require merging Israel and the church or the present form of the kingdom of God with the future Messianic kingdom.¹¹

Walvoord focuses on the unity of the Scriptures through the doxological purpose, rather than through artificial relationships necessitated by a particular understanding of the redemptive center. Walvoord’s simple explanation underscores an aspect of necessity for the doxological purpose in dispensational understanding that is not present in reformed thought—it provides the unifying theme of the Bible.

In contrast to Walvoord’s understanding of unification, Lewis Sperry Chafer suggests that “the true unity of Scripture is not discovered when one blindly seeks to fuse these opposing principles [law and grace, as in the theological covenants of covenant theology] into one system, but rather it is found when God’s plain differentiations are observed.”¹² For Chafer, it is the dispensations themselves that unify Scripture. Chafer also recognizes that any

plan of interpretation, which in defense of an ideal unity of the Bible, contends for a single divine purpose, ignores drastic contradictions and is sustained only by occasional or accidental

¹⁰ John F. Walvoord, “A Review of ‘Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God,’ by George E. Ladd,” *BibSac* 110, no. 437 (January 1953): 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

¹² Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Dispensationalism* (Fort Worth, TX: Exegetica, 2015), 51.

similarities—is doomed to confusion when confronted with the many problems which such a system imposes on the text of Scripture.¹³

In this context, Chafer is not supportive of a grand narrative or singular purpose of God, though he does acknowledge that in this age, God's divine purpose is "a complete demonstration of grace."¹⁴ Further, Chafer suggests that "the dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved, which is Judaism; while the other is related to heaven with heavenly people and heavenly objectives involved, which is Christianity."¹⁵ Chafer does not discuss the doxological purpose or the glory of God as God's end, and in most of the discussion regarding purpose and objectives, either salvation or the kingdom are in view. Chafer provides evidence that even prominent dispensational thinkers sometimes were not focused on *soli Deo gloria*.

Citing George Peters's recognition of a kingdom center,¹⁶ Dwight Pentecost views the unifying purpose of God in Scripture as pertaining to the kingdom,¹⁷ specifically fulfilled in Christ: "Thus the ages are the time periods within which God is revealing His divine purpose and program as it centers in the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁸ Pentecost follows Chafer in considering that "the divine purpose in the outcalling of the church is to display the infinity of His grace."¹⁹ Pentecost also agrees with Chafer in expressing concerns regarding improperly identifying a unity in God's purpose: those who "emphasize the unity of God's purpose from the fall of man until the eternal state ... fail to make any distinction between God's program for Israel and

¹³ Ibid., 52.

¹⁴ Ibid., 70.

¹⁵ Ibid., 103.

¹⁶ George N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1952), 1:176, quoted in J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1965), 49.

¹⁷ Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 484.

¹⁸ Ibid., 130.

¹⁹ Ibid., 133.

that for the church.”²⁰ Like Chafer, and unlike Ryrie, Pentecost does not sense a need to identify a unified purpose of God in Scripture. Instead, the distinct and diverse aspects of God’s kingdom plan²¹ as expressed in Christ are thematically unified enough to make Scripture cogent. Pentecost does not ignore the doxological purpose entirely. He quotes Dennett in recognition of God’s achieving his glory in the pursuit of his purposes.²² Pentecost identifies those purposes specifically as realizing redemption and manifesting God’s sovereignty.²³

Clarence Larkin in *Dispensational Truth* primarily refers to *glory* as it relates to Christ, and not in any sense of doxological purpose. Although the subtitle of Larkin’s work is *God’s Plan and Purpose in the Ages*, there is virtually no discussion of any particular purpose. Larkin does recognize that without the fall, “the Universe would never have had the supreme spectacle of His forgiving love and redemptive grace as revealed on Calvary.”²⁴ Larkin identifies God’s purpose in this dispensation as “to gather out a ‘People for His Name,’ called THE CHURCH, composed of both Jew and Gentile.”²⁵ For Larkin it seems that a unified purpose is elusive, as he points to the future “ages of the ages” and admits that “what the ‘Ages of the Ages’ shall reveal of the Plan and Purpose of God we do not know, but if we are His we shall live to know, and possibly take part in their development.”²⁶ Larkin also acknowledges that it is “the purpose of God to set up a Kingdom on this earth.”²⁷ Larkin seems to associate God’s purpose with Christ and his kingdom without specifically identifying any preeminent and overarching purpose of God.

²⁰ Ibid., 139.

²¹ Ibid., 142.

²² Edward Dennett, *Daniel the Prophet* (London: G. Morrish, 1919), 9, quoted in Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 316.

²³ Pentecost, *Things to Come*, 370.

²⁴ Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth or God’s Plan and Purpose in the Ages* (Glenside, PA: Clarence Larkin, 1918), 68.

²⁵ Ibid., 84.

²⁶ Ibid., 92.

²⁷ Ibid., 178.

C. I. Scofield in *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* does not discuss glory in the context of God's purpose, and his limited discussion of purpose is reminiscent of Chafer's in that statements of purpose are related to salvation, especially. Scofield notes,

God's purpose in promising to reward with heavenly and eternal honors the faithful service of His saints is to win them from the pursuit of earthly riches and pleasures, to sustain them in the fires of persecution, and to encourage them in the exercise of Christian virtues.²⁸

Early French theologian and contemporary of John Nelson Darby, Emile Guers (1794-1882), underscores three components of his theology, not vastly dissimilar to Ryrie's. As Mike Stallard puts it, Guers agrees with Ryrie directly on the two points of literalism and diversity of classes and privileges in the entire body of the redeemed (Guers's third point is the literal value of the word *day* in prophecy).²⁹ However, Guers does not identify God's purpose as doxological. Still, Stallard recognizes that, "the fact that Guers has written a book on the future of national Israel shows that he believes that God is doing more in history than individual redemption."³⁰

John Nelson Darby addresses the purpose of God being manifest in the heavenly glory of the church and the earthly glory of Israel.³¹ Rather than a precisely doxological purpose,

²⁸ C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Charleston, SC: Armor of God Ministries, 2010), 48, accessed August 1, 2017, http://www.armorofgodbooks.com/books/scofield/Rightly_Dividing_the_Word_of_Truth.pdf.

²⁹ Mike Stallard, "Emile Guers and Charles Ryrie: A Case Study of Continuity in the History of Dispensationalism Concerning Literal Interpretation" (paper presented at the Council on Dispensational Hermeneutics, Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN, September 14, 2016), 6–7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ J. N. Darby, "The Purpose of God," in *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, vol. 30, *Prophetic I* (Addison, IL: BibleTruth Publishers, n.d.), accessed August 1, 2017, <http://bibletruthpublishers.com/the-purpose-of->

Darby observes a more christological expression of doxology: “The good pleasure of the Godhead was that all its fullness should dwell and manifest itself in Christ. Such was the purpose of God”³² Still, God’s glory is ultimately displayed in Christ through the church: “For it [the church] will be the sphere and means of the display of the glory and blessing of Christ.”³³

Charles Baker, who advocates for a mid-Acts dispensationalism,³⁴ argues for the eternal purpose of God, and specifies that

God’s purpose and decrees are all just and good and that when the final decree is carried out all of God’s creation will unite in giving all glory and honor to God. God’s decrees, while they concern man, do not find their end in man, but in God. Whatever He has decreed, He has decreed for His own glory.³⁵

Henry Thiessen recognizes the centrality of the doxological purpose, saying,

Though God sincerely seeks to promote the happiness of his creatures and to perfect the saints in holiness, neither of these is the highest possible end. The end is his own glory. All his works in creation (Ps. 19: 1–6; Prov. 3:19), preservation (Neh. 9:6; Rev. 4:11), providence (Ps. 33:10f.; Dan. 4:35; Eph. 1:11), and redemption (1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:10f.) have this end in view.³⁶

Thiessen consistently applies the doxological purpose even in practical matters. In discussing, for example, the existence of evil, he asserts that God overrules evil for God’s purpose and glory and exhorts his readers that “the fact that God has turned

god/john-nelson-darby-jnd/collected-writings-of-j-n-darby-prophetic-1/1a62216.

³² Ibid., 468.

³³ Ibid., 484.

³⁴ Charles Baker, *A Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Grace Bible College, n.d.), xii.

³⁵ Ibid., 156–58, 162.

³⁶ Henry Thiessen, *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), 82.

evil into good ought to induce his children to trust him to do the same with the evil of the present generation.”³⁷ Although he makes no statement regarding the uniqueness of the centrality of doxological purpose to the dispensational understanding, Thiessen demonstrates that the doxological purpose of God matters in the believer’s practical application of Scriptural truth.

Arno Gaebelein suggests, “All the glorious manifestations of Jehovah recorded in the Word of God are the manifestations of ‘the Lord of Glory’... the focus of His Glory is the cross.”³⁸ Gaebelein does not identify an overarching purpose in this context other than to recognize “what a stupendous thought that He came from Glory to die for us so that He might have us with Him in Glory!”³⁹ He adds that “the revelation of His eternal purposes ... locates His kingdom on earth after ... the judgment of His second coming...”⁴⁰ Gaebelein’s focus is christological, with a view to Christ’s second coming and the culmination of Christ’s kingdom.

As evidenced in the particular perspectives highlighted above, there has historically been diversity in the viewpoints of dispensational thinkers as to whether there is actually a metanarrative, and if so, whether it is christological, soteriological, theocratic, or doxological. Ryrie’s particular conclusions seem nearly unique, echoed only by Walvoord—that there is an overarching purpose, and that purpose is the glory of God. In fact, Ryrie’s perspective is so unique among dispensationalists, that Craig Blaising critiques Ryrie’s view because of its uniqueness, first observing that the doxological purpose was not “a particularly distinctive feature of earlier

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 125.

³⁸ Arno C. Gaebelein, “The Lord of Glory,” in *The Lord of Glory: Meditations on the Person, the Work and Glory of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (New York: Publication Office “Our Hope,” 1910), accessed August 1, 2017, <http://www.wholesomewords.org/etexts/gaebelein/lordof1.html>.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Arno C. Gaebelein, “The Biblical Logic of Premillennialism,” in *Meat in Due Season: Sermons, Discourses and Expositions of the World of Prophecy* (New York: Arno C. Gaebelein, 1900), accessed August 1, 2017, <http://www.wholesomewords.org/etexts/gaebelein/meat4.html>.

dispensationalism.”⁴¹ Blaising observes, as has been catalogued above, “Other dispensationalists used salvation and redemption as unifying themes but defined them to include national and political salvation and even the redemption of the entire creation.”⁴² Although Blaising correctly notes that “Ryrie distinguishes dispensationalism from covenantalism as the difference between a doxological versus a soteriological perspective,”⁴³ Blaising misses a key point when he counters, “Most evangelicals, especially among the Reformed, would have agreed on the comprehensive doxological purpose of God.”⁴⁴ Blaising is correct, yet he does not address the aspect of the *necessity* of the doxological purpose as central in the theological systems, nor does he address the practical departure of reformed thinkers from the doxological center in favor of a soteriological one, as Ryrie underscores.

In short, dispensationalists have been inconsistent in articulating this point. This may be at least partly due to their building on the reformed redemptive platform and in some cases even the reformed theological methodology. Such inconsistency could have been avoided had dispensational thinkers built their system exclusively from the exegetical data (as Ryrie prescribes) rather than utilizing an integrative method of building on existing reformed doctrine with a dispensational eschatological and ecclesiological perspective.

The lesson we learn from Ryrie is to allow the text to direct us to the purpose of God as revealed within and to rely on that same text to provide the theological particulars. If we do that, our theology will resemble Ryrie’s far more than it will that of the other dispensationalists to whom Blaising refers and will be arguably much more biblical. Ryrie’s doxological recognition challenges exegetes to be consistent in their hermeneutic and to consider how applying the interpretive method consistently will

⁴¹ Craig Blaising, “Dispensationalism: The Search for Definition,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 27.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

unveil God's remarkable purpose and plan. Ryrie's *sine qua non* is a lesson in reform for dispensational thinkers, first and foremost, as Blaising's accusations of inconsistency ring true (even if his thesis falls flat). Still, the reformed camp is not without its own consistency problems. In fact, it is by borrowing from reformed methodology that dispensationalists have found inconsistency so comfortable.

***Soli Deo Gloria* in Contemporary Reformed Theology**

Charles Hodge recognizes the glory of God as the great end of all things,⁴⁵ saying that "the Bible declares the glory of God, an infinitely higher end, to be the final cause for which all things exist,"⁴⁶ but in practice he seems to elevate the redemptive plan to a nearly equal height. Hodge notes that

all the works of God declare his wisdom. They show, from the most minute to the greatest, the most wonderful adaptation of means to accomplish the high end of the good of his creatures and the manifestation of his own glory. So also, in the whole course of history, we see evidence of the controlling power of God making all things work together for the best interests of his people, and the promotion of his kingdom upon earth. It is, however, in the work of redemption that this divine attribute is specially revealed.⁴⁷

Louis Berkhof explains that the wisdom of God "implies a final end to which all secondary ends are subordinate; and according to Scripture this final end is the glory of God."⁴⁸ He adds that, "*The final aim is the glory of God* Even the salvation of men is subordinate to this. That the glory of God is the

⁴⁵ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1940), 1:425.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:423.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 1:394.

⁴⁸ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Banner of Truth, 1965), 74.

highest purpose of the electing grace is made very emphatic in Eph. 1:6,12,14” (emphasis added).⁴⁹ Berkhof is adamant that

the supreme end of God in creation, the manifestation of His glory, therefore, includes, as subordinate ends, the happiness and salvation of His creatures, and the reception of praise from grateful and adoring hearts.... His declarative glory is intrinsically of far greater value than the good of His creatures.... The glory of God is the only end that is consistent with His independence and sovereignty.⁵⁰

Still, in acknowledging this, Berkhof closely connects the glory of God with the soteriological purpose—nearly equating the two in practice: “The social gospel of our day likes to stress the fact that man is elected unto service. In so far as this is intended as a denial of man’s election *unto salvation and unto the glory of God*, it plainly goes contrary to Scripture.”⁵¹ He speaks of “the great redemptive purpose of God”⁵² and later refers to “the grace and glory of God in Christ.”⁵³ (It is worth noting that in the eight scriptural instances in which the two words *grace* and *glory* appear in close context [Ps 84:11; John 1:14; Rom 5:2; 2 Cor 4:15; Eph 1:6; Heb 2:9; 1 Pet 5:10; and 2 Pet 3:18], they are not so closely related as to be interchangeable, except in Psalm 84:11, where God is giving grace and glory, rather than describing his own grace and glory. In Ephesians 1:6, for example, the two are distinct, though one leads to another).⁵⁴

Berkhof tightly connects the purposes of election, noting that it

⁴⁹ Ibid., 125.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 148.

⁵¹ Ibid., 125; emphasis added.

⁵² Ibid., 167.

⁵³ Ibid., 278.

⁵⁴ This is a maneuver not unique to reformed theologians, as Chafer, for example, also focuses on the church as displaying “His glory and grace” (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *The Kingdom in History and Prophecy* [Chicago, IL: Moody, 1915], 115).

calls man to a certain end: *the great goal to which the Holy Spirit is leading the elect*, and consequently to the intermediate stages on the way to this final destiny. It is a calling to the fellowship of Jesus Christ, I Cor. 1:9; to inherit blessing, I Pet. 3:9; to liberty, Gal. 5:13; to peace, I Cor. 7:15; to holiness, I Thess. 4:7; to one hope, Eph. 4:4; to eternal life, I Tim. 6:12; and to God's kingdom and glory, I Thess. 2:12.⁵⁵

Notice, in this context, while Berkhof has previously established the priority of the doxological purpose, the teleological priority becomes somewhat unclear, as Berkhof closely connects God's glory to aspects of the redemptive plan. Still, Berkhof repeats, even after this context, the primacy of God's glory and the redemptive plan's subjectedness to it: "Whatever their proximate aim may be, their final aim is not the welfare of man, but the glory of God, which is the highest conceivable aim of man's life...."⁵⁶ But on the other hand, Berkhof notes that good works are necessary "as required by God ... as the fruits of faith ... as expressions of gratitude ... unto the assurance of faith ... and to the glory of God."⁵⁷ Although he periodically reminds the reader of the primacy of the doxological purpose, in other contexts that primacy is not so clear. In the body of Christ, Berkhof sees the glory of God "as manifested in the work of redemption."⁵⁸ Although the redemptive purpose is subject to the doxological one, in practical terms so much focus is on the redemptive aspect that the doxological focus is sometimes lost.

Now, it is important not to be unfair to Berkhof and present him as equating the glory of God with God's other attributes and activities—Berkhof is clear in his assertions that he does not equate God's glory with anything else. However, Berkhof illustrates the very subtle *practical* equating of God's glory with God's redemptive activities to the extent that the redemptive purpose is read back into passages, leading to

⁵⁵ Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 521.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 602.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 604.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 625.

supersessionism, for example. Some of these passages, which, if allowed to stand alone without the redemptive-priority theological lens, would contradict supersessionism and instead favor the Israel/church distinction.

Berkhof describes dispensational premillennialism as “a new philosophy of the history of redemption, in which Israel plays a leading role and the Church is but an interlude.”⁵⁹ It is notable that Berkhof sees the primary distinction between the two systems as found in their respective philosophies of redemption. He adds, “In reading their descriptions of God’s dealings with men one is lost in a bewildering maze of covenants and dispensations.... Their divisive tendency also reveals itself in their eschatological program.... [T]here will also be two peoples of God.”⁶⁰ In speaking of the eschatological aspect of the millennium as a literal expression of the kingdom of God, Berkhof asserts, “The theory is based on a literal interpretation of the prophetic delineations of the future of Israel and of the Kingdom of God *which is entirely untenable*” (emphasis added).⁶¹ Berkhof cites a number of writers (Fairbairn, Riehm, Davidson, Brown, Weldgrave, and Aalders) and notes that “the books of the prophets themselves already contain indications that point to a spiritual fulfillment.”⁶²

In raising this argument against dispensational premillennialism, it is worth noting that Berkhof states an antithesis to Ryrie’s *sine qua non*: the overarching principle is in the redemptive philosophy of history—the literal interpretation of OT prophecy is untenable—and the distinction between two peoples of God (Israel and the church) is not scriptural. Recall Ryrie’s implied process as discussed earlier:

- (1) Exegete the Scriptures applying a consistently literal (grammatical historical) hermeneutic.
- (2) Recognize the glory of God as God’s highest end, and that end which governs all other ends.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 787.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

- (3). Understand key theological distinctions (including the notable Israel-church distinction) observable through the application of a literal (grammatical-historical) hermeneutic, and *confirmable* in light of the doxological purpose that permeates Scripture.

Berkhof's flow of the three concepts would be as follows:

- (1) Understand the redemptive philosophy that governs the narrative.
- (2) Discover key theological concepts and relationships (including the theological covenants and the singular people of God).
- (3) Acknowledge a sometimes literal, sometimes allegorical hermeneutic that supports the redemptive philosophy and its specific findings.

In Berkhof's model, the teleological *is* the methodological which drives the hermeneutical and supports the theological. In Ryrie's model there is a stated attempt at applying the hermeneutic method and allowing the exegetical results to stand on their own merit. In Berkhof's model, the hermeneutic model is subject ultimately to the metanarrative of the redemptive plan.

Kevin DeYoung takes Berkhof's approach to its logical conclusion. In his article entitled "Your Theological System Should Tell You How to Exegete," he suggests, "No Christian should be interested in constructing a big theological system that grows out of a shallow and misinformed understanding of the smaller individual passages."⁶³ Although few Christians would disagree with such a pointed statement, the implications of what DeYoung means in his elaboration of that statement might be more problematic. DeYoung adds, "We come to the exegetical task ... with a way of looking at the world, with a

⁶³ Kevin DeYoung, "Your Theological System Should Tell You How to Exegete," *The Gospel Coalition* (blog), February 23, 2012, accessed August 1, 2017, <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2012/02/23/your-theological-system-should-tell-you-how-to-exegete/>.

system.”⁶⁴ He further explains how Christians can avoid the error of being “misinformed” when approaching the individual passages:

Without a systematic theology how can you begin to know what to do with the eschatology of Ezekiel or the sacramental language in John 6 or the psalmist’s insistence that he is righteous and blameless? As a Christian I hope that my theology is open to correction, but as a minister I have to start somewhere. We all do. For me that means starting with Reformed theology and my confessional tradition and sticking with that unless I have really good reason not to.⁶⁵

Essentially, in order to approach the individual passages correctly—such as Ezekiel’s eschatological pericopes, or John 6, or assertions of good and evil in the Psalms—a person must begin with reformed theology and the confessional tradition (i.e., the Westminster Confession). In beginning with a system of theology and then working toward exegesis, DeYoung is modeling Berkhof’s three-step process of starting with the grand teleology, moving to the theological particulars, and then applying hermeneutic methodology. DeYoung illustrates this specifically in his handling of the 144,000 in Revelation 7:4:

The 144,000 are not an ethnic Jewish remnant[they] represent the entire community of the redeemed,”⁶⁶ because “...it makes sense that God would seal all of His people, not just the Jewish ones ... the 144,000 are called servants of God. There is no reason to make the 144,000 any more restrictive than that ... the 144,000 mentioned later in chapter 14 ... is generic, everybody

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ DeYoung, Ibid.

⁶⁶ Kevin DeYoung, “Theological Primer: The 144,000,” *The Gospel Coalition* (blog), April 28, 2017, accessed August 1, 2017, <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2017/04/28/theological-primer-the-144000/>; Kevin DeYoung, “Who Are the 144,000 in Revelation?” *The Gospel Coalition* (blog), January 17, 2012, accessed August 1, 2017, <https://blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/kevindeyoung/2012/01/17/who-are-the-144000-in-revelation/>.

kind of language.... Are we to think that the 144,000 refers to a chosen group of celibate Jewish men? It makes more sense to realize that 144,000 is a symbolic number that is described as celibate men to highlight the group's moral purity and set-apartness for spiritual battle.... the number itself is stylized. It is not to be taken literally.... 144,000 is God's way of saying all of God's people under the old and new covenant.... The bottom line is that the number and the list and the order of the tribes are all stylized to depict the totality of God's pure and perfectly redeemed servants from all time over all the earth. That's what Revelation means by the 144,000.⁶⁷

DeYoung's approach is not an anomaly/exception, but is emblematic of contemporary and accepted Reformed methodology: his blogs are hosted by The Gospel Coalition, "a fellowship of evangelical churches in the Reformed tradition,"⁶⁸ and his hermeneutics book, *Taking God at His Word*, published by Crossway, is endorsed by David Platt, D. A. Carson, Matt Chandler, and John MacArthur.

In considering contemporary reformed methodology and the tension between doxology and redemption that results, one might wonder if these are inherited from the Reformation or if they are later additions. If they are organic to the Reformation, then it might be fair to recognize contemporary reformed theology and covenantalism as a true inheritor of the Reformation legacy. On the other hand, if the reformers prescribed something altogether different, we may discover that contemporary reformed theology is a departure from, rather than descendant, of the Reformation.

***Soli Deo Gloria* in the Reformation**

Leading up to the Reformation, Thomas Aquinas had been the most influential theological voice, representing the Roman Catholic worldview in an intricate balancing act with

⁶⁷ DeYoung, "Who Are the 144,000?"

⁶⁸ The Gospel Coalition, "Preamble," accessed August 1, 2017, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/about/foundation-documents>.

Aristotelian philosophy. In the hundreds of references to *purpose* in his *Summa Theologicae*, he sparingly refers to God's purposes. He acknowledges "the purpose of God to Whom it pertains to measure grace,"⁶⁹ and occasionally refers to "the purpose of the grace of God."⁷⁰ He recognizes that "God gives to each one according to the purpose for which He has chosen him."⁷¹ Although Aquinas affirms that "God and nature do nothing without a purpose,"⁷² he identifies only the purpose for the universe but says nothing specifically of *God's* purpose: "the entire universe, with all its parts, is ordained towards God as its end, inasmuch as it imitates, as it were, and shows forth the Divine goodness, to the glory of God."⁷³

Aquinas adds a notable practical application that later appears in the Westminster Confession, "Now our end is God towards Whom our affections tend in two ways: first, by our willing the glory of God, secondly, by willing to enjoy His glory. The first belongs to the love whereby we love God in Himself, while the second belongs to the love whereby we love ourselves in God."⁷⁴ Aquinas's inclusion of the prescription of enjoying God and his glory underscores that the relational and human aspect of doxological purpose was not a Reformation development, but was plainly stated prior. Initially, *solī Deo gloria* in the Reformation seemed more about departing from Catholic veneration and returning the focus to God, rather than seeking out a metanarrative. Still, the centrality of God's doxological purpose was evident in the reformers—especially in John Calvin.

John Calvin states early on in his *Institutes* that "the mark of sound doctrine given by our Saviour himself is its tendency

⁶⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 3.7.11. Micro Book Studio software. The numbers refer to the Part, Question, and Article.

⁷⁰ E.g., Aquinas, *Summa Theologicae*, 3.6.3, ad. 3 (reply to Objection 3).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 3.27.5, ad. 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 3.36.4, arg. 2, and 3.65.4, arg. 1.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3.65.2, arg. 3, co. (I answer to that)

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 2-2.83.9, arg. 5, co.

to promote the glory not of men, but of God.”⁷⁵ He adds that “the world ... was made to display the glory of God.”⁷⁶ Calvin asserts not only doxological purpose, but acknowledges God’s sovereignty in setting the parameters for the execution of that purpose, noting that “it belongs to God to determine what is most conducive to His glory.”⁷⁷ Calvin recognizes that the salvific plan is part of that doxological focus: “the purpose of the Lord in conferring righteousness upon us in Christ, was to demonstrate his own righteousness.”⁷⁸ Calvin views God’s glory as such a preeminent concept that “we never glory in him until we have utterly discarded our own glory.”⁷⁹ Although salvation is a great means of demonstrating the glory of God, Calvin suggests that the condemnation of sinners shows God’s glory also.⁸⁰ So pervasive is the doxological theme in Calvin’s understanding that he proclaims, “God as the Lord and governor of nature who ... at his pleasure, makes all the elements subservient to his glory.”⁸¹ Christ exhibits glory in his resurrection and in his kingdom and shares it with his Father.⁸² It is not until Calvin’s final mention of glory in *The Institutes* that he identifies any concept as remotely equal to the purpose of God’s glory. In that context he says that all articles of faith “must be directed to the glory of God and the edification of the Church.”⁸³ In light of the many contexts and oft repeated theme of doxological preeminence, it is unlikely that Calvin is in this last reference equating the edification of the church and the glory of God. On the contrary, to that point Calvin is unwavering throughout *The Institutes* regarding God’s glory as

⁷⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, accessed August 1, 2017, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.ii.viii.html>.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.5.5. The numbers refer to the book, chapter, and section.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.9.4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.13.1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.13.1.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.24.14.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 4.14.18.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 4.17.17.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, “One Hundred Aphorisms,” in *Institutes*, 4.76.

central. Although he does not discuss the doxological center as *necessary*, he states it repeatedly as factual.

Martin Luther's primary focus in his *95 Theses* was to challenge the prevailing culture of indulgences as a means of remission for sin. Luther's document left little doubt as to the prominence of God's glory in Luther's theological understanding. The sixty-second thesis celebrated the true treasure of the church as being the gospel of the glory and grace of God.⁸⁴

Despite the pronouncements of both Calvin and Luther regarding the lofty ranking of God's glory, it is fair to recognize there is a hint in both Luther and Calvin of equating the means (the intermediary purposes of God) and the end (the final purpose of God). Luther does not engage the topic as comprehensively as Calvin, and thus his allowance seems a bit more liberal, whereas Calvin's strong stance up until his final mention might cause one to read charitably and suggest there is in fact no hint of conflating the means with the end. It is evident—especially in Calvin's case—that the doxological purpose was recognized as preeminent by the time of the Reformation's apex. Calvin might even be read to view God's glory as a unifying principle of history, as he repeated the theme of all things serving the doxological purpose.

After Luther and Calvin, *The Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Confession of Faith* declared in 1647 that the chief end of man was "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."⁸⁵ Although the Catechism did not address the chief end of God, the *Westminster Confession* of 1646 noted that

God the great Creator of all things does uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence, according to His infallible foreknowledge, and the free and

⁸⁴ Martin Luther, "95 Theses (1517)," Martin Luther, accessed August 1, 2017, <http://www.luther.de/en/95thesen.html>.

⁸⁵ "Westminster Shorter Catechism (1647)," Christian Classics Ethereal Library, accessed August 1, 2017, <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/anonymous/westminster1.i.i.html>.

immutable counsel of His own will, *to the praise of the glory of His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy* [emphasis added].⁸⁶

The Shorter Catechism is in this subject matter more reminiscent of Thomistic theology than of Calvin's, as it primarily reflects the end of man, rather than the end of God, whereas Calvin speaks a great deal more to the issue of God's own end. In light of this, it seems that the key contribution of the Reformation in regards to *soli Deo gloria* was a return to an idea not prominent in Catholic thinking—that it was not only the highest end of all creation to glorify God, but that it *was God's own purpose* to glorify himself. The other aspects of universal highest ends and human doxological ends, including the prescription of man's enjoyment of God and his glory, were all carryovers from earlier theologies. The real Reformation heritage was in the recognition of God's own doxological metanarrative as central.

The *Soli Deo Gloria* Exchange and the Reformed Legacy Revitalized in Dispensational Thought

If there has been historically in reformed thought such a high view of God's doxological purpose, then how did the redemptive center gain such prominence to the point that Ryrie would view God's doxological purpose as one of only three definitive distinctives of dispensational thought differentiating it from reformed understanding?

Jonathan Edwards helps us understand how the move from God's glory as the highest end to a greater focus on the redemptive center is possible within a theological framework that claims to position the doxological purpose as the ultimate one. Edwards asserts the glory of God is the supreme and

⁸⁶ "The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)," 5.1, The Center for Reformed Theology and Apologetics, accessed August 1, 2017, http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/.

ultimate end of all of God's works.⁸⁷ Yet, importantly he understands that *part of the glory of God* is God's manifesting of that glory. Edwards writes,

[The glory of God] includes the *exercise* of God's perfections to produce a proper *effect*, in opposition to their lying eternally dormant and ineffectual: as his power being eternally without any act or fruit of that power; his wisdom eternally ineffectual in any wise production, or prudent disposal of anything, etc. The *manifestation* of his internal glory to created understandings. The *communication* of the infinite fullness of God to the creature. The creature's high *esteem* of God, love to him, and complacency and joy in him; and the proper *exercises* and *expressions* of these.⁸⁸

It is in this point that Edwards begins to combine the end with the means. He recognizes that these means (exercise, manifestation, communication, and expressions, for example) seem to be a plurality, yet he explains how they are actually part of the singular primary goal. He carefully considers that, "These at first view may appear to be entirely distinct things: but if we more closely consider the matter, they will all appear to be one thing, in a variety of views and relations. They are all but the *emanation of God's glory*."⁸⁹ Edwards does this by distinguishing between God's internal, external, and essential glory, but yet by asserting that in order for one to be fulfilled they must all be fulfilled. Consequently, the means of God's glorification *is* part of God's glorification, and thus seems to have equal import as part of the end itself. Edwards notes that,

What has been said may be sufficient to show, how those things, which are spoken of in Scripture as ultimate ends of God's works, though they may seem at first view to be distinct, are all plainly to be reduced to this *one thing, viz. God's internal glory or*

⁸⁷ Jonathan Edwards, "The End for Which God Made the World," in *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 1 (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), Christian Classics Ethereal Library, accessed August 1, 2017, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/works1.iv.html>.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.2.7. The numbers refer to the part, chapter and section.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

fullness existing in its emanation. And though God in seeking this end, seeks the creature's good; yet therein appears his supreme regard to himself.⁹⁰

In God's seeking his own glory he must seek his creature's good. Thus, Edwards's idea can be understood to convey that redemption *is in a sense equated* to the glory of God:

But if strictness of union to God be viewed as thus infinitely exalted; then the creature must be regarded as nearly and closely united to God. And viewed thus, *their interest must be viewed as one with God's interest*; and so is not regarded properly with a disjunct and separate, but an undivided respect ... if by reason of the strictness of the union of a man and his family, their interest may be looked upon as one, how much more so is the interest of Christ and His church...? (emphasis added).⁹¹

Simply put, Edwards understands that God's and God's people's interests are so aligned as to be one and the same. Thus, it can be said that the chief end of man is to glorify God, and it could also be said that God's chief end is his redemptive purpose—as the two purposes (doxological and redemptive) are essentially synonymous.

Martin Luther's summary of his own encounter with salvation shows a view similar to Edwards's, even if not as precisely explicated. Luther recounts that in his study of Scripture he found that "other terms had analogous meanings, e.g., the work of God, that is, what God works in us; the power of God, by which he makes us powerful; the wisdom of God, by which he makes us wise; the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God."⁹² In this narrative statement, Luther

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Martin Luther, "Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Works," trans. Andrew Thornton, from the "Vorrede zu Band I der Opera Latina der Wittenberger Ausgabe. 1545," in *Luthers Werke in Auswahl*, ed. Otto Clemen, 6th ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967), 4:421–28, accessed August 1, 2017, <https://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/luther/preflat-eng.txt>.

conveys that he views salvation as analogous to the glory of God. The two are at least so interrelated that they can be understood conceptually as one. What Luther hints at even during the Reformation, Edwards provides and explains thoroughly.

Edwards's and Luther's redempto-centric maneuver show how the Reformation heritage of *solī Deo gloria* could be gently reconfigured to de-emphasize (at least in a practical sense) the doxological purpose as central in God's plan. In that reconfiguration there is a return to a more Thomistic approach of emphasizing the salvific purpose of God, certainly not in contradiction of God's doxological purpose, but perhaps in ignoring it. Thus, within the Reformation there was present the seedling that would soon overshadow the newly refined doxological understanding that Calvin had so effectively elucidated. Edwards especially shows that the newly reemphasized redemptive approach was more theologically rooted in Aristotelean thinking than in exegetical discovery. This departure from Calvin's Reformation legacy, especially, would leave a gap in reformed thinking that would later be filled by a renewed emphasis on *solī Deo gloria* by Ryrie and other similarly inclined thinkers.

Conclusion

Ryrie's recognition of the primacy of God's doxological purpose as a central and necessary tenet of orthodox theology represents a brilliant return to a vital principle that was understood well by the reformers, but in practice was quickly relegated to a status secondary to the redemptive purpose of Thomism. The Reformation heritage of *solī Deo gloria* invites Protestants to follow the doctrine to its logical conclusion—a conclusion that Ryrie recognized and reinvigorated by his inclusion of God's doxological purpose in the *sine qua non*: God does all things for the expression of his own glory and demands that his creation does the same.

Once the importance of the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic is understood as first principle, the centrality of *solī Deo gloria* may be perceived with clarity in Scripture, and

therefore, the centrality of *solī Deo gloria* in faith and practice. Although the consistent application of the literal grammatical-historical hermeneutic is the methodological necessity of the *sine qua non* and the distinction between Israel and the church is a premiere theological distinctive discernible from that hermeneutic method, it is the centrality of the doxological purpose that is indeed the philosophical pinnacle of the dispensational triad. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

Israel's Relationship with the Glory of God in Psalms

Mark McGinniss

Charles Ryrie identifies the third *sine qua non* of dispensationalism as the glory of God. One area he notes where the glory of God is realized is in God's purpose for the Jewish people.² However, Ryrie does not detail specifically the relationship between the glory of God and his people, Israel.³

Since it has long been recognized that the book of Psalms is a microcosm of the theological message of the OT, this observation allows for a legitimate and somewhat manageable study of the nature of Israel's relationship with the glory of God within the Psalms as a possible synopsis of the entire OT.

Identifying Terms

The concept of the "glory of God" does not always appear in the Psalms simply as כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים; indeed, throughout the Psalms it appears in a number of diverse ways.⁴ It is כְּבוֹדִי, "my glory," as predicate nominative of LORD (Ps 3:4). There is כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים, "glory of God" (19:2), and מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד, "king of glory" (24:7-10). "Your glory," כְּבוֹדְךָ, appears on a number occasions: "your glory" refers to the LORD's glory which resided at the temple (26:8), is seen in the temple (63:2), is over all the earth (57:6, 12 and 108:6), and is also feared by all the kings of the earth (102:15). There is

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² Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism: Revised and Expanded* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 95.

³ In his *Dispensationalism: Revised and Expanded*.

⁴ I am looking for phrases that include "glory," כְּבוֹד, and connection with God.

also אֱלֹהֵי־כְבוֹד, “the God of glory” (29:3); כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ, “the glory of his name” (66:2); שֵׁם כְּבוֹדוֹ, “his glorious name” (72:19); עַל־דֶּבַר כְּבוֹד־שְׁמֶךָ, “according to the word of the glory of your name” is a motivation for help from God (79:9), and “but to your name give glory,” כִּי־לְשִׁמְךָ תֵּן כְּבוֹד (115:1). The concept also appears as לְשִׁכֹּן כְּבוֹד בְּאַרְצֵנוּ, “that glory may dwell in our land” (85:10). כְּבוֹדוֹ, “His glory,” finds its antecedent, LORD, in the preceding verse (96:3), is seen by all (97:6), is above the heavens (113:4), and when Zion is built, the LORD shall appear in בְּכְבוֹדוֹ, “his glory” (102:16). It is also evident in כְּבוֹד יְהוָה, “the glory of the LORD” or “the glory of Yahweh” (104:31; 138:5). Although it is generic, “they exchanged אֶת־כְּבוֹדָם, “their glory” “for an ox that eats grass” (106:20), it clearly refers to Yahweh. Lastly, it is found in phrases related to kingdom: “the glorious splendor of your majesty,” כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתֶךָ, הָרַר כְּבוֹד הוֹרֵךְ (145:5), “glory of your kingdom” (145:11), At וּכְבוֹד הָרַר מַלְכוּתוֹ, “and the glory of the majesty of your kingdom” (145:12).

Recognizing that the LORD deserves glory, the people are commanded to ascribe כְּבוֹד, “glory,” among other qualities to the LORD (Ps 29:1-2; 96:7, 8). Verse 9 observes that everything in the temple, אָמַר כְּבוֹד, “says glory.” Asaph was assured that after his earthly life of being guided by the LORD’s counsel and hand, כְּבוֹד תִּקְחֵנִי, “you will take me to glory” (73:24). Since Asaph was always with the LORD (73:23), glory must be a place of the LORD’s abode after this life.⁵

⁵ This paper will concentrate on these verses in the Psalter: Psalm 3:4; 19:2; 24:7-10; 26:8; 29:1-2, 3, 9; 57:6, 12; 63:3; 66:2; 72:19; 73:24; 79:9; 85:10; 96:3; 97:6; 102:16f; 104:31; 106:20; 108: 6; 113:4; 115:1; 138:5; 145:5, 11-12. Although כְּבוֹד is used in 48 verses in Psalms (based on a BibleWorks7 search), it does not always refer to God. For instance, Psalm 4:3 refers to David’s glory, כְּבוֹד.

Identifying “Glory’s” Placement in Individual Books of the Psalms

There seems to be fairly even distribution of the concept of the “glory of God” across the Psalter.

Book 1 (Ps 1-41)	Pss 3, 19, 24, 26 and 29	5 Psalms
Book 2 (Ps 42-72)	Pss 57, 63, 66 and 72	4 Psalms
Book 3 (Ps 73-89)	Pss 73, 79, and 85	3 Psalms
Book 4 (Ps 90-106)	Pss 96, 97, 102, 104 and 106	5 Psalms
Book 5 (Ps 107-150)	Pss 108, 113, 115, 138, & 145	5 Psalms

“Glory” in Book 1

In this psalm of lament (Ps 3:4) David identifies Yahweh as כְּבוֹדִי, “my glory.” Ross observes, “This word, (כְּבוֹד, s.v. Ps 19:1) is commonly used to describe God as the most important person in existence.”⁶ Unlike the metaphor “you are a shield about me,” כְּבוֹדִי, “my glory,” is a poetic intensification of the one who not only protects him by being his shield but is David’s “most important person in existence” since he is the lone one whom David is trusting to deliver him from his adversaries.⁷ כְּבוֹדִי, “my glory,” is a direct reference to the LORD himself.

The next reference is the classic divine revelation text of Psalm 19:

הַשָּׁמַיִם מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד־אֱלֹהִים
וּמַעֲשֵׂה הַרְקִיעַ מְגִיד הַקְּדוֹשׁ

The heavens declare the glory of God,
And the works of his hands proclaim the firmament.

⁶ Allen Ross, *A Commentary on Psalms 1-41* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2012), 222. Ross continues to suggest that glory here may refer to the glory God gave David as king. This seems a stretch since “my glory” in the second colon is parallel to the second person independent pronoun and Yahweh in the first.

⁷ The “but you are” in 4a is an ellipsis in 4b to add הַמַּלְאָכִים רִאשֵׁי “and the one who lifts my head.”

Based on the parallelism of these lines⁸ it is apparent that the glory of God are the created works of God's hands that David observed as he contemplated the majesty of the universe. Whether it is day or night, all the crafted elements of the heavens are evidences of the glory of God (i.e., the works of the divine creator). Just like the sun that shines on all and none can escape its heat (19:7), none can escape living under the bright proofs of the glory of God.

The third appearance of the divine glory is Psalm 24. In this praise poem there are five occurrences. Each is identical: מֶלֶךְ הַקְּבוֹד, "king of glory." (24:7, 8, 9, 10a, 10c). Since the LORD is creator and owner of the entire earth, it reasons that he is the earth's and Israel's rightful king. As Israel's king he is the one who leads his people in victorious battle against his enemies (24:8). The twice repeated rhetorical question, מֶלֶךְ הַקְּבוֹד מִי זֶה, "who is this, the king of glory?" (vs 8, 10), is not seeking to ascertain his identity but functions as a self-evident exclamation. The first rhetorical question, "Who is this, the king of glory?" calls for response: "He is the LORD strong and mighty, The LORD strong in battle" (8). The reply to the second rhetorical question, מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַקְּבוֹד, "who is he, this king of glory?", is intensified by the fronting of his identity in the line, "Yahweh of hosts, he is the king of glory," מֶלֶךְ הַקְּבוֹד הוּא יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הוּא. For those who had witnessed Israel's victory over her enemies, they would have realized that their success in battle was because of Yahweh, the king of glory.

The fourth appearance of the glory of God occurs in Psalm 26:8:

⁸ I am employing a combination of Kugel's and Alter's understanding of parallelism. Kugel understood parallelism as "A line, what's more B line." Alter saw an intensification from line A to line B. So to read this full line poetically: "The heavens declare the glory of God (what's more or what is specified) "And the works of his hands proclaim the firmament."

יְהוָה אֶהְבֵּתִי מֵעוֹן בְּיַתְדֶךָ
וּמִקְדוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדֶךָ

Yahweh, I love the habitation of your house
And the dwelling place of your glory.

Although the genitive of the second line is unidentified specifically *וּמִקְדוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדֶךָ*, from the parallelism of the previous line it is clear that the dwelling place of *כְּבוֹדֶךָ*, “your glory,” is certainly the sanctuary where God had chosen to localize his presence among his people, Israel. This residence was special for David because he loved to be with God. Dwelling in the company of God’s glory meant he enjoyed God’s localized presence and was not in the assembly of the wicked (26:4-5). It was not the material of the tabernacle that made it a desirable place to dwell for David. The parallelism of the lines indicates that what made this “house” special was because “your glory” had chosen there to dwell.⁹ It is as Ross comments, “The evidence of the divine presence dwelling there (that) made it a glorious place.”¹⁰

The fifth psalm referring to the “glory of God” appears is Psalm 29. In this song the concept appears in three distinct manners. The first (vss 1b-2a) is a twofold imperative for the people:

הִבְדוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז,
הִבְדוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמֹו

Ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength.
Ascribe to Yahweh glory to his name.

The four lines of verses 1 and 2 are probably a tetra-colon that describe: the recipient and actors (1a); what elements are ascribed to Yahweh (1b); the reason for ascribing glory to

⁹ Note the specification and intensification from “your house” in 8a to “your glory” in 8b and the parallel placement of both noun phrases at the end of each line.

¹⁰ Ross, *Psalms 1-41*, 616.

Yahweh (2a); and the result of these three lines comes back to the characters in the first line (2b), Yahweh and the “sons of God.” These “sons of God” are to worship Yahweh in holiness.¹¹ As Ross observes, “Proclaim the glory and strength of God in praise, i.e. give God the credit he deserves.”¹²

The second occurrence in this psalm is 29:3:

קוֹל יְהוָה עַל-הַמַּיִם
אֱלֹהֵי-הַכְבוֹד הַרְעִים
יְהוָה עַל-מַיִם רַבִּים

The voice of Yahweh is over the waters
God of glory thunders
Yahweh is over the many waters.

This praise psalm focuses on קוֹל יְהוָה, “the voice of Yahweh.” In the introductory tri-colon it is clear that “the God of glory” is Yahweh and it is his majestic and powerful voice that is evidenced over “many waters.” In an exhibition of great power (i.e., a thunder and lightning storm vs 4-9), the God of glory is to be given glory. This awesome exhibit of the power of God over and through nature “actually displays his glory.”¹³

The third occasion of the divine כְּבוֹד is in the last line of the tri-colon of verse 9:

וּבְהִיכָלָו כָּלוּ אָמַר כְּבוֹד

And in his temple everyone says, “Glory.”

Since this psalm reveals God’s glory through his control and power over all of nature even outside of Israel (vv 5-6), it does not seem to reference the temple or tabernacle. With the mention

¹¹ Lines 1b and 2a may be the chiasmic middle of this tetra-colon, which centers on glory.

¹² Ross, *Psalms 1-41*, 655.

¹³ Ibid.

of Yahweh sitting as king over Noah's flood,¹⁴ "his temple" seems to signify Yahweh's heavenly abode.¹⁵ Thus, all the beings that inhabit "his temple" naturally are obligated to give glory to God.

"Glory" in Book 2

In Book 2, four psalms refer to the divine glory. The first is the individual lament of Psalm 57. It is a twice-repeated refrain (vv 6, 12):

רוּמָה עַל-הַשָּׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים
עַל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדְךָ

Be exalted over the heavens, O God,
Over all the earth your glory.

This confident request is sandwiched almost inexplicably between two of David's desperate complaints (vv 4 and 6). Being literally surrounded by his foes, David implores God to allow his glory (i.e., his divine power to deliver him) to be evident to all. Exactly what David had in mind in this demonstration of power is uncertain. However, it seems to be meant as a motivation; once his enemies had seen such power, they would cease their attack. Tate comments, "The prayer expresses the desire for a saving manifestation of glory and power of the divine presence in the heavens and over the earth."¹⁶

The second refrain functions simultaneously as a conclusion to the last stanza and the entire psalm (v 12). Here the prayer seems to be a response to the divine *hesed*, אֱמֶת, "faithfulness," as demonstrated in David's life. In the first refrain "your glory" is unspecified. However, in this concluding verse it may be that the poetic heightening of God's *hesed* to the heavens and his faithfulness to the clouds points to the defining and displaying of "your glory." God's glory is seen over all the earth

¹⁴ *BDB*, 550.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 421.

¹⁶ Tate, *Psalms 51-100*, WBC 20 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 79.

as Israel recognizes God's great hesed and faithfulness in the midst of their own personal suffering at the hands of their enemies. Here כְּבוֹדְךָ, "your glory," is equivalent to הִפְדֶּיךָ, "your hesed," and אֱמֻנָתְךָ, "your faithfulness."

The second occurrence in Book 2 is Psalm 63:3. Although Psalm 63 is a psalm of confidence, verse 1 begins in a minor key. David seems to be in a desperate spiritual situation where he yearns for God's intervention in his life. David describes his soul's situation in a picturesque metaphor of a desert traveler longing for water in a land where there is none.

However, this had not always been the case for David's soul. There were times when God had been very present in his life:

כֵּן בְּקֹדֶשׁ חֲזִיתִיךָ
לְרֵאוֹת עֲזֶיךָ וְכְבוֹדֶיךָ

Thus in the sanctuary I have beheld you,
To see your strength and your glory.

In the past when David had been in the sanctuary, he was able to see evidence of God by seeing evidences of his strength and glory manifested in some unspecified way.¹⁷ David's soul longs for a repeat of this experience.

In this psalm there is no direct indication what "your glory" actually is. While it is paired with "your strength," it cannot be the same thing as strength. Although hesed has been paired directly with glory in the previous psalm, there is no apparent linkage with its use in verse 3. From this verse alone "your glory" is a manifestation of God himself to David through an experience of his strength and glory while in the sanctuary.

The third occurrence for Book 2 is the anonymous Psalm 66. The first stanza begins with a fourfold command for Israel to praise God. In the second command Israel is told to

¹⁷ Recognizing "A line, what's more B line" shows that David is not looking for a physical manifestation of God but a demonstration of God in his might and glory.

זָמְרוּ כְבוֹד־שְׁמוֹ
שִׁימוּ כְבוֹד תְּהִלָּתוֹ

2a Sing the glory of his name

2b Set glory on his praise.

In this psalm verses 1 and 2 may function as a tri-colon and with “God” in the previous line (66:1). When an Israelite sang the “glory of his name,” he was telling of the awesome works of God himself. In this psalm his works included the drying of the sea at the Exodus (v 6), his rule over the nations (v 7), his keeping of his people (9), his refining (vv 10-12), and his answered prayer (vv 16-20). All these divine events motivated a call to praise for this psalmist and reveal the glory of his name in God’s actions on Israel’s behalf.

The fourth occurrence of divine glory in Book 2 is Psalm 72:19. In this last stated psalm of David, God and his works are once again linked to “his glorious name”:

וּבְרִיךְ שֵׁם כְבוֹדוֹ לְעוֹלָם
וַיִּמְלֵא כְבוֹדוֹ אֶת־כָּל הָאָרֶץ
אָמֵן וְאָמֵן

Blessed be his glorious name forever
And be filled with his glory the whole earth
Amen, amen.

Verse 20 expresses the desire that Yahweh’s name (i.e., his character and actions on behalf of Israel) be spoken of well and that the whole earth be filled with כְבוֹדוֹ. The reason for this blessing is because God has installed his righteous king in the land and there is peace and fertility (vs 1-17). With God’s king reigning over all nations (vv 8-11), כְבוֹדוֹ would be seen in his righteous actions of ruling all and its attendant blessings for all. This request for the whole earth to be filled with his glory concludes the psalm collection of David and the second book of the psalter.

“Glory” in Book 3

Three psalms reference the glory of God in this book. The first is a wisdom psalm (Ps 73). In this poem Asaph contrasts the life and death of the righteous and wicked. For the wicked they are destined for destruction and to be despised by Yahweh (vv 18-20). For the righteous they are assured of God's presence as he grasps their right hand (v 23) and guides them (v 24a) and **וַאֲחֵר כְּבוֹד תִּקְחֵנִי**, “and afterward receive me to glory.” While there is much discussion as to what is glory in this verse, there is no reason not to see glory as God's abode in heaven where Asaph is certain he will be after death. Since Asaph states he is always with Yahweh (v 23a) and his guidance (v 24a) on this earth, then “afterwards” must refer to a time after his dwelling on this globe. Since this psalm contrasts the life and final destination of the wicked and righteous, seeing glory as heaven, the final destination for the righteous, has contextual support. It makes sense that heaven would be a place of glory since there is glory wherever God localizes his presence.

The second psalm that speaks of glory is a communal lament by Asaph. In this psalm the poet makes his request for deliverance from foreign enemies and forgiveness of sin, which brought on an invasion (79:9):

עַל־דְּבַר כְּבוֹד־שְׁמֶךָ

According to the word of the glory of your name.

God's glory is at stake because his people, Israel, and his temple have been invaded. Although the people are suffering greatly, it is God's glory and his character that had been injured as well (v 10). Asaph appeals to God based on “the word of the glory of your name” to intervene for his desperate people. For God to deliver and forgive his wayward people of their sin that caused such misery and death and to repay the nations is to reveal to the world God's glory (cf. Prov 25:2).

The final psalm that references “glory” in Book 3 is one from the sons of Korah (85:10). Like the previous psalm of Asaph, the setting seems to be the aftermath of captivity and exile. Although not a request as in the previous psalm, the confident statement of

God’s rescue being near to those who fear him (v 10a) echoes a similar situation: this downtrodden people are in desperate need for God’s deliverance as expressed in his forgiveness of their transgression that caused such a great calamity. If the people fear God (v 10a) and not turn back to their folly (v 9), then he would once again be pleased to dwell among his people in their land:

לִשְׁבֹן כְּבוֹד בְּאַרְצֵנוּ

In order for glory to dwell in our land

The lamed preposition on the infinitive construct, לִשְׁבֹן, (v 9b) offers the motivation for the previous line. The introductory “surely,” אַךְ, of 9a makes forgiveness and God’s dwelling (i.e., his glory) in the land with his people, a divine but conditional promise (i.e., if his people will fear him).

“Glory” in Book 4

The first psalm in Book 4 that speaks of “glory” is Psalm 96. In this anonymous psalm of praise Israel is to act as the international evangelist:

סִפְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ
בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים נִפְלְאוֹתָיו

Rehearse for the nations his glory

For all the peoples his extraordinary deeds (96:3)

The parallelism between these lines points to נִפְלְאוֹתָיו, “his extraordinary *deeds*” being a specification of כְּבוֹדוֹ, “his glory.” Based on the context his extraordinary deeds seem to refer to the salvation mentioned in the previous verse (2). Thus God’s glory is evident as his people share with others his deliverance on their behalf.

Once the nations are told of these marvelous divine deeds the psalmist implores the peoples to

הָבֹהַ לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים
הָבֹהַ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז
הָבֹהַ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ

Ascribe to Yahweh families of the peoples
Ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength
Ascribe to Yahweh glory *to* his name

In a possible echo of Psalm 29 but with a broader audience of “families of the peoples,” this tri-colon builds to the climax of giving Yahweh’s name glory. The reason for this praise of his name (his nature, character, and actions) is due to his present reign, the stability of the earth under his reign and his coming equity judgment of all peoples (v 10).

The second “psalm of glory” (97) is written in the shadow of Psalm 96. Just as that psalm concludes with the anticipation of Yahweh’s coming to judge, Psalm 97 paints a vivid picture of the divine presence approaching the earth to judge (vv 2-5). This dramatic scene causes the psalmist to declare,

הַגִּידוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם צְדָקָתוֹ
וּרְאוּ כָּל־הָעַמִּים כְּבוֹדוֹ

The heavens declare his righteousness
And all the peoples see his glory (97:6)

In isolation this verse seems to be an echo of Psalm 19. However, based on the theophany of verses 2-4 what the heavens declare and all peoples perceive is Yahweh’s glorious appearing. Because he is righteous and glorious, idol worshippers should be ashamed (v 7). However, the righteous will rejoice in his divine judgments and reign over all (vv 8-9).

Ross observes that glory may refer to “the brilliant aspect of nature that surrounds God’s presence, attesting to his importance; but more specifically it refers to his intrinsic nature as the most important person ever.”¹⁸ Glory should not be limited to either/or.

¹⁸ Allen Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: 90-150*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic), 155.

In this psalm God’s glory refers to his presence (vv 2-4), his nature (vv 4b-6; 9, 12) and his actions (v 10b, c).

The third psalm in Book 4 is the individual lament of Psalm 102. The setting of this psalm seems to be the exile where the nation of Israel (v 14) and her people suffer under the wrath of God (vv 10-11). In his request the psalmist desires that God demonstrate compassion on Zion (v 13) by rebuilding her (v 16). The physical restoration of the city would cause the nations to fear Yahweh’s name.

In response to Yahweh’s rebuilding Zion,

וְכָל־מַלְכֵי הָאָרֶץ אֶת־כְּבוֹדְךָ

And all the kings of the earth your glory (16).¹⁹

While “your glory” is parallel to “the name of the LORD,” it is not until the next verse that we discover the kings’ motivation to fear the divine glory (v 17):

נִרְאָה בְּכְבוֹדוֹ

He, himself, will appear in his glory

The reason for fear is not only God’s rebuilding of his city but his personal appearance and subsequent habitation in her. There is coming a day when all the kings of the earth will see Yahweh in his glory in his holy city.

The fourth psalm of glory in Book 4 is a hymn of praise for God’s creation (Ps 104). After rehearsing in elevated detail God’s magnificent act of creation, the poet expresses his heart’s desire:

¹⁹ The verb יָרָא to fear, in the first line (16a) has probably been dropped due to the psalmist’s use of ellipsis in the second line (16b) in order to add “kings of the earth.”

יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם
 וְשִׂמְחַת יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׂיו

Let the glory of Yahweh endure forever
 Let Yahweh rejoice in his works.

For the psalmist, God's creation of all, his sustaining of every aspect of creation, and his reign over all its members moves the poet to recognize that these all point to God's glory. Since his glory is so evident, the psalmist prays that this display of glory endures forever. Allen remarks, "He expresses a hope that his glorious power will never cease to be revealed in the natural world."²⁰ With this ever-present evidence of the divine glory all men should recognize God's greatness and bless him (104:31).

The last occurrence of glory in Book 4 appears in the final psalm. Psalm 106 is a historical review of Israel's rebellion and God's deliverance of his people. In the midst of rehearsing Israel's checkered past, the psalmist reminds his readers of that wretched time when Israel "made a calf in Horeb and worshipped a molten image" (106:20):

וַיִּמְרוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדָם
 בַּחֲבִיטֵי שׂוֹר אֲכָל־עֵשֶׂב

And exchanged their glory
 For an image of an ox that eats grass.

While "their glory" is unidentified specifically in this verse, it is certain that God was their glory as evident by his great power and kindness to save them from Egypt (vv 6-12). When the people forgot these divine works of deliverance (v 13), they also forgot God, their savior, who wrought them (v 21). It was he who did great works on their behalf (vv 21b-22). However, the people craved a physical manifestation of God. The image they chose lacked divine glory since it was a construct of their own hands

²⁰ Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, WBC 21 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 34.

and dependent on God himself for its food.²¹ It neither contained nor displayed any glory in itself.

“Glory” in Book 5

The last book in the psalter contains five chapters that are associated with the divine glory. In a return to a psalm of David, Psalm 108:6 is a near repetition of Psalm 57:6. However, Psalm 57 is a lament because of his enemies, and Psalm 108 a song of praise because of God’s expected victory over them:

רוּמָה עַל-שָׁמַיִם אֱלֹהִים
וְעַל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדְךָ

Be exalted over the heavens, O, God
And over all the earth your glory.

The placement of “God” and “your glory” in the last position of their respective lines points to the identification of “your glory” as God himself. The use of the merism “over the heavens” and “over the earth” shows that David desires God’s presence be recognized to all because of his *hesed* and truth (v 5). However, this demonstration of God in his glory will be specifically evident when David (his beloved) is delivered (v 7). God’s glory is manifested when he works on behalf of his beloved.

The second occurrence is the first of the *Hallel* psalms, a descriptive hymn of praise, Psalm 113. Verse 4 rehearses in a similar manner כְּבוֹדְךָ, “his glory,” to a previous psalm (v 108). However, this time it is a statement of fact and not a request:

רָם עַל-כָּל-גּוֹיִם יְהוָה
עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדְךָ

Exalted over the nations is Yahweh
Over the heavens his glory.

²¹ Ross, *Psalms 90-150*, 288.

David's request for God's glory to be exalted over the heavens in Psalm 108 becomes a reality in this psalm. This exaltation seems to be the basis for the threefold "praise" commands of verses 1-3. This ending praise is due to his glory being over not just the nations of this earth but over the highest heavens he created. Ross explains,

The word 'glory' (s.v. Ps. 19:1) in this passage means all the supernatural manifestations of his presence. He who sits enthroned in the highest heavens is surrounded by brilliant and radiant light and all of it means that there is no one more important than he, no one more honorable, no one more powerful.²²

This exalted position of Yahweh introduces the rhetorical question that expects a negative answer in verse 5:

מי כִּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
הַמְגִבִּיהִי לְשָׁבַח

Who is like Yahweh, our God
He who sits exalted?

The glory of Yahweh is manifested in his exalted position above all nations. What is more, his person is recognized in his lofty position above the heavens and all its inhabitants, both natural and supernatural.

The third reference to "glory" in Book 5 appears in the opening of Psalm 115:

לֹא לָנוּ יְהוָה לֹא לָנוּ
כִּי-לְשִׁמְךָ תֵּן כְּבוֹד
עַל-חֲסִדֶּךָ עַל-אֱמֻנָתְךָ

Not to us, Yahweh, not to us
But to your name give glory
On account of your *hesed* and your faithfulness

²² Ibid., 392.

It appears the psalmist is concerned that Israel would be given glory if God were to answer their complaint (v 2). The singer protests strongly and declares with the adversative וְ, that glory belongs to Yahweh and not Israel. The foundation of Yahweh’s name receiving glory is because of “your hesed and your faithfulness.” Yahweh’s hesed and faithfulness would again be evident once God manifested himself to the nations by blessing his people (vv 12-15).

God’s actions on behalf of his people cause them and presumably the nations (v 2) to give his name glory (i.e., to give him the credit). Yahweh’s glory is demonstrated as he acts on behalf of his people.

The fourth incidence of divine glory in Book 5 is a psalm of thanksgiving by David. In this poem כְּבוֹד יְהוָה, “glory of Yahweh,” will be recognized by “all the kings of the earth” sometime in the future (v 4). By hearing the words of Yahweh (v 4), they will be moved to “sing of the ways of Yahweh” (v 5). These “pagan” kings offer praise to God because the ways of Yahweh which manifest his glory:

וַיִּשְׁירוּ בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוָה
כִּי גָדוֹל כְּבוֹד יְהוָה

They will sing of the ways of Yahweh
Because great is the glory of Yahweh

The structure of these lines clearly matches “the ways of Yahweh” with “the glory of Yahweh” across the two lines. The parallelism reveals the specification that “the glory of Yahweh” is revealed to all the kings of the earth when they recognize “the ways of Yahweh.”

Although one may be tempted to surmise (outside the psalm’s context) what “ways of Yahweh” these kings will praise, the וַיִּשְׁירוּ of the next verse explicitly identifies his ways:

כִּי־רָם יְהוָה
 וְשַׁפֵּל יִרְאֶה
 וְנִבְהַ מִּמְרָחֵק יִדְעַ

Though Yahweh is exalted
 Yet the lowly he sees
 But the haughty from a distance he knows

While Yahweh certainly sees all who are humble, contextually the “lowly” probably refers to David (vv 2, 7). It seems the kings will praise Yahweh as they see him who is so highly exalted deliver such a lowly one as David. At the same time they see Yahweh ignoring the proud (v 6c). In this case God’s specific acts on David’s behalf (and against the haughty) are manifestations of his glory.

The fifth and final occurrence of glory in Book 5 is the last of the David psalms in the psalter. This poem of praise contains three references to glory (145:5, 11-12):

תָּרַר כְּבוֹד הַדָּבָר
 וְדַבַּרְי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה

The splendor of the glory of your majesty.
 And your extraordinary ways I will enthusiastically
 proclaim²³

Based on parallelism both of structure and meaning, “the splendor of the glory of your majesty,” is displayed in “your extraordinary ways.” Contextually these “ways” are defined as “your works,” “mighty acts” (v 4), “power of your awesome acts,” the evidence of his “gracious and merciful” character as demonstrated in his hesed and goodness to all (vv 8, 14-20) and his enduring kingdom (vv 12-13).

The last two references are combined in a possible tetra-
 colon of verses 11-12:

²³ HALOT 2:1320. שִׁיחַ is defined as “loud, enthusiastic, emotionally laden speech.” BDB suggests “muse, complain or talk of” for שִׁיחַ (867).

כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יִאֲמְרוּ
וְגִבּוֹרָתְךָ יִדְבְּרוּ:
לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבָנֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרָתְךָ
וְכְבוֹד הַדָּר מַלְכוּתְךָ:

11a The glory of your kingdom they will say

11b And your strength they will speak

12a To make known to the sons of man his strength

12b And the glory of the splendor of your kingdom

In some ways the “the glory of your kingdom” is exhibited by “your strength.” However, is this manifestation of strength demonstrated in establishing the kingdom, maintaining the kingdom, his rule in the kingdom, or its endurance through the ages or some other aspect of the kingdom? Although readers may not know “the what,” the manner in which the godly ones will bless Yahweh is by their “telling” of the strength and glory of his kingdom (v 12).²⁴

Israel’s Relationship with the Divine Glory

Book 1

Israel’s relationship with the divine glory is a personal one as evidenced by David’s use of the first person pronoun כְּבוֹדִי, “my glory.” Although others were denying God’s activity in his life (3:3), David clung to his glory (i.e., God) as the only person for his defense and deliverance. This divine glory is not only personal but also universal. All who view the created order had an opportunity to comprehend the divine glory on magnificent display (Ps 19). This glory is personal, universal, and national. As creator and owner of the entire earth and all that it contains, Yahweh is both the earth’s and Israel’s rightful king. As such, he is the one who leads his people in victorious battle against his enemies (24:8). When Yahweh was not securing Israel’s

²⁴ Strength and glory of Yahweh’s kingdom is exhibited at least in its enduring through all times (145:13) and his righteous care for his subjects (145:14-20).

victories, he localized his presence among Israel in the sanctuary (26:8). Within the processes of nature, God's glory is exhibited in the thunder and lightning storm (29:3). Based on such intimate and obvious displays of the divine glory, Israel was invited to ascribe to Yahweh glory (29:1-2), that is, give him credit for all of these demonstrations of his glory because the rest of creation already does (Ps 29:9).

Book 2

On the personal level David once again appeals to the demonstration of the divine glory in delivering him from his enemies. However, unlike Psalm 3 David desires that all the earth would see the divine glory on display through his hesed and faithfulness through delivering him (Ps 57: 6, 12). On the national level God's glory is displayed once again at the sanctuary (63:3) and through his works on behalf of and through the nation of Israel (Ps 66). On the international scene with God's king reigning over all nations (72:8-11), his glory, כבודו, would be seen over all the earth.

Book 3

In Book 3, glory for Asaph is a destination with Yahweh after his life on earth is completed (Ps 73:24). Glory is also displayed as God forgives his people and deals with Israel's enemies (79:9). In Psalm 85 the sons of Korah recognize that the divine glory will once again dwell in the land among his people if the people will fear God and turn from folly (85:9-10). With the exile as the background for their circumstances in the last two of these "glory" psalms, the divine glory is exhibited during his people's desperate times.

Book 4

Book 4 opens with the command for Israel to be the evangelist by ascribing glory of God's extraordinary deeds on behalf of Israel to all the nations (96:3). These accomplishments seem to refer to his reign. Psalm 97 speaks of his glory exhibited

to all to see his personal coming and judgment. The next psalm maintains the international audience as they perceive God's rebuilding of Jerusalem and his presence in his holy city (102:16). The creation psalm (104) offers the wish that the glory of Yahweh as exhibited in his created order should be forever (104:1). Psalm 106 rehearses the exact starting place for Israel's captivity, her idolatry and exchange of her glory for another of much less glory (106:20).

Book 5

A psalm of David expresses the desire for all "your glory" to be exhibited over the heavens (108:7). Psalm 113 takes the jussive of the previous psalm and makes it a declarative: there is none like Yahweh (113:4). In the third glory psalm God's actions on behalf of his people cause them and presumably the nations (115:2) to glorify his name. Yahweh's glory is revealed as he acts on behalf of his people. In Psalm 138 "pagan" kings offer praise to God because Yahweh's ways to Israel manifest his glory (138:4). The strength and glory of Yahweh's kingdom is proclaimed by his godly ones (145).

Glory of God through the Book of Psalms

There has been no compositional theory of the Psalms as a whole that has won the scholarly day. Outside the recognition of chapters 1 and 2 playing the introduction for the book of Psalms and chapters 145-150 the conclusion, the purpose and flow of its composition are still up for debate. So the observations concerning glory in this section are few and tentative. I offer those that seem most evident.

(1) Many, but not all the psalms that reference glory were written by David. Only Book 3 evidences no glory references by him and this same Book notes the least number of occurrences.

If Book 3 concerns the “Assyrian Crisis”²⁵ or “Devastation”²⁶ of Israel in general, this makes sense.

(2) Although God's glory is certainly evident to all, the international audience seems to become more pronounced towards and in Book 5.

(3) The sanctuary is recognized as a place of glory in Books 1 and 2. However in Book 3 the future hope of God's glory dwelling is in the land without reference to the sanctuary. Book 4 reiterates the hope of the glory dwelling in a rebuilt Jerusalem without mention of a sanctuary and Book 5 has no specific mention of the sanctuary or city, only a kingdom.

(4) Although the glory of the kingdom is not absent from earlier books, (God's rule through his king is seen in Book 2 [Ps 72]), it is explicit in Book 5 (Ps 145). If there is any type of progressive historical threads in the book of Psalms, having an explicit mention of the kingdom and its universal reach in the final book seems natural.

(5) The glory of God is evident in lament psalms as well as praise. There is a movement away from the employment of the lament genre as one moves to Book 5 and the kingdom.

(6) Although God's glory is present in his personal manifestation in Book 1 and 2, it disappears in Book 3 and is a future hope in Book 4 and 5.

(7) The glory of God in Psalms gives evidence that Ryrie is certainly correct that “salvation, for all its wonder, is but one facet of the multifaceted diamond of the glory of God.”²⁷ Only one psalm that references “glory” mentions Israel's redemption at the exodus event (Ps 106) and glory does not refer to the salvific aspect of the event.

(8) Although God's glory is certainly seen in his creation, Israel is the central focus where the divine glory is manifested to the world. Without an Israel, God's glory lacks a stage on which to shine.

²⁵ Gerald Wilson as cited by Paul House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), 405.

²⁶ O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering their Structure and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015), 52.

²⁷ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, 94.

Israel's Relationship with the Glory of God

As a microcosm of the OT we can extrapolate that the Psalms demonstrate that God could be an individual Israelite's glory and Israel was always in the presence of God's glory at the sanctuary where he localized his presence in the land and as he joined them in battle against their enemies. They enjoyed his glory under his creation that displayed that glory and were recipients of his works on their behalf that exhibited his glory. There is a coming future when all Israel will live, work, and play under the glorious reign of his kingdom from Jerusalem.

From these psalms God's glory is displayed in his person, his presence, his creation, his works on behalf of Israel (especially his *hesed* and faithfulness), and his reign. As a good evangelist, Israel is to share this knowledge and experience with others, as they themselves recognize and credit him for his person, presence, creation, work, and reign. All the nations that hear and believe Israel's testimony will join her in giving Yahweh the glory due his name. In one sense God's glory is incomplete without his relationship to his people, Israel forever.

Prophetic Hope in the Writings of Arno C. Gaebelein: A Possible Demonstration of the Doxological Purpose of Biblical History

Mike Stallard

Arno C. Gaebelein was a leading fundamental, dispensational Bible teacher in the early half of the twentieth century.² He served as one of the associate editors of the Scofield Reference Bible and left us thousands of pages of material in his writings. The theological content of these many writings emphasized three things: inspiration of the Bible, the centrality of Christ at a personal level, and eschatological issues. It is fairly easy to determine a precise statement of the central interpretive motif or integrating idea in Gaebelein's thought. Bible inspiration can be ruled out simply because it does not integrate the content of Gaebelein's theology, although it does provide a hermeneutical basis. The centrality of Christ is clearly stated. However, the sheer weight of discussion of eschatology, with its various emphases, speaks as forcefully as many direct statements. Nonetheless, it is possible to merge the theological statements about the centrality of Christ with eschatology to produce one statement clarifying the integrating theme of Gaebelein's theology. This can be done through the concept of *prophetic hope* which finds its fulfillment in the second coming of Christ. Thus, the central interpretive motif of

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² This paper was originally delivered in December 1997 at the Pre-Trib Study Group in Dallas, Texas. This was a slightly modified version of a section of the writer's PhD dissertation. The topic of this paper fits the current discussions and so is repeated. Only minor modifications have been made, but nothing substantive has been altered from the original presentation.

Gaebelein's theological formulations can be stated as **prophetic hope centered in the personal second coming of Jesus Christ**. That this theme truly integrates Gaebelein's theological system will be seen by an examination of the individual and multiple expressions of prophetic hope which he outlined. However, it may be possible to see in these expressions, taken as a whole, the idea of a multifaceted program of creation and redemption centered in Christ and leading to the glory of God. That is, unity from diversity can be seen in the light of this doxological purpose to biblical history as the greatness of the sovereign God is displayed.

The Outline of Biblical Revelation

It is clear that Gaebelein emphasized the theme of redemption with respect to the multifaceted program of God that he saw outlined in the Bible. The scheme begins in the Old Testament with the presentation of the four great subjects of revelation. It culminates in the New Testament with the outworking of redemption with respect to each of these subjects. Gaebelein saw this biblical outline of revelation in the plan of redemption as yielding proof for the doctrine of premillennialism:

There is one more line of Scripture proof we would suggest. The Bible presents four great lines of revelation in the outworking of the divine purpose of redemption, viz.: *Creation*; the *Gentiles* or nations; *Israel*; the *Church*. This is the Old Testament order in its historical unfolding. The New Testament reverses the order and presents first the calling and destiny of the Church; then follows the restoration of the kingdom to Israel under the sway of Messiah's sceptre on David's throne; next the calling of the Gentiles or nations, and last the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption. Acts xv:13-18, gives the divine order of events. Each of these lines runs its predicted course of mingled imperfection and pain and suffering until the time of consummation – "the dispensation of the fulness of times" – at the second coming of Him in whom "all things" shall head up (Ephes. i:10). There is no peace, no rest from suffering, no glory for any of

these four great subjects of revelation till Christ comes again in power and great glory.³

Yet, in spite of this multitrack outline of what Gaebelein believed God was doing, he did not see this as devoid of unity. While discussing the inherent problems with postmillennialism, he remarked that

Its [postmillennialism's] serious mistake is, that it confounds the accommodation and application of Scripture with the true interpretation, which in Bible study must have always the first place. Delitzsch well said, "Application is not interpretation. Application is manifold; interpretation is the very opposite, it is unitous. By the method of application the promises made to Israel are evaporated; in true interpretation Israel is given its rightful place in the purposes of God."⁴

In other words, Gaebelein believed that unity existed as each of the four great subjects of revelation were allowed to have their rightful, yet distinctive, place within the panorama of God's multifaceted purposes. This is not far from saying that Gaebelein believed that the sovereign plan of God could not be understood or God given his due until this valid interpretation was acknowledged.

The Expressions of Prophetic Hope

There are five major ways in which Gaebelein discussed the idea of *prophetic hope*. The method of presentation will adhere to the chronological order in which each element of hope is realized in his dispensational scheme flowing primarily from NT realization. One must always keep in mind that, in each case, this hope can only be fully realized when Jesus comes again.

³ Arno C. Gaebelein, *Meat in Due Season: Sermons, Discourses and Expositions of the Word of Prophecy* (New York: Arno C. Gaebelein, n.d.), 19-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 36. It is not clear in Gaebelein's quotation of Delitzsch where the comments of Delitzsch end and Gaebelein's pick up again.

The Hopelessness of the Present Age

The first area, while not technically a matter of positive hope, serves as an introduction to the four manifestations of hope that Gaebelein believed would take place in the future. The fact that hope exists implies that in the present there must be conditions that need to be changed. For Gaebelein, the present church age was characterized by such an unwanted environment.

In a series of five books beginning in the turbulent times of the 1930s, Gaebelein outlined for his readers a dark picture for the world. In *Conflict of the Ages* (1933), he portrayed the historic development of the mystery of lawlessness which was, in his mind, close to pushing the world to the precipice. His work *World Prospects* (1934) held out final hope for Israel, the Gentiles, and the church, but not until a time of great darkness and difficulty.

Over half of the pages in the next book of the sequence, *Hopeless, Yet There is Hope* (1935), were devoted to a description of the bleak condition of the twentieth century due to war, financial chaos, and the rise of communism. *As It Was—So Shall it Be* (1937) compared the time before Noah's flood to the present hour. Finally, the optimistic book, *The Hope of the Ages* (1938), described the present absence of kingdom-hope and noted that only by the second coming of Christ can this void be filled with lasting hope. A small booklet titled *What Will Become of Europe* (1940), published during the beginning days of World War II, observed that "there is no nation which does not tremble."⁵ All that appeared from a human perspective on the horizon was darkness, distress, and destruction.⁶

For Gaebelein, the problem with the human race could always be identified with the existence of sin.⁷ Specifically, he emphasizes two major areas of concern. First, the present age is characterized by an increasing persecution of the Jews. After the

⁵ Arno C. Gaebelein, *What Will Become of Europe? World Darkness and Divine Light* (New York: Our Hope, 1940), 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁷ Arno C. Gaebelein, *The Conflict of the Ages, the Mystery of Lawlessness: Its Origin, Historic Development and Coming Defeat* (New York: Publication Office "Our Hope," 1933), 23.

destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the subsequent scattering of the Jews throughout the nations, Gaebelein observed that “the fires of persecution burned fiercely in almost every century.”⁸ This persecution would culminate one day in the great tribulation or time of Jacob’s trouble when the nation would go through its darkest hour.⁹

The second major characteristic of the present age was the increasing moral and religious declension.

Morally the world sinks lower and lower. Christendom is turning more and more away from the supernatural, the foundation of true Christianity, turning from the spiritual to the material, giving up the message of power for social improvements. . . . The faith as revealed in God’s infallible Book is abandoned; apostasy is seen everywhere. World conversion, the world accepting Christianity? What mockery! The nations of the world were never as far away from accepting Christ as Saviour and recognize Him as Lord as in 1938.¹⁰

Both apostasy within Christendom, associated with moral decline, and the persecution of the Jews were understood by Gaebelein as a fulfillment of prophecy. Both called for a cry of hope, the former from the genuine Christian and the latter from the Jewish people. The divine line of revelation, for Gaebelein, began with creation, continued with God’s work with the nations, took a turn with God’s choosing of Israel, and culminated in the

⁸ Arno C. Gaebelein, *World Prospects, How is it All Going to End? A Study in Sacred Prophecy and Present Day World Conditions* (New York: Publication Office “Our Hope,” 1934), 46.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 49-59. Gaebelein seems to use the expression “Great Tribulation” to refer to the entire seven-year period of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks. Many pretribulationists would be uncomfortable with this, preferring to see the great tribulation as referring to the last three and one half years of that period based upon Jesus’ statement in Matthew 24:21. It may be that Gaebelein is simply being non-technical with his usage.

¹⁰ Arno C. Gaebelein, *The Hope of the Ages* (New York: Publication Office “Our Hope,” 1938), 170-71. One wonders what Gaebelein’s analysis would have been had he seen the fifty or so years since he made that statement.

highest revelation of the church.¹¹ The fulfillment of hope for each takes place progressively in reverse order so that the first manifestation of hope is found in the church.

The Blessed Hope and the Rapture of the Church

Gaebelein believed strongly that the first manifestation in history of the fulfillment of prophetic hope would be the rapture of the church. This was the “blessed hope” of Titus 2:13 which was to be looked for expectantly by true Christians. It was a common topic in the pages of Gaebelein’s magazine, *Our Hope*, especially the aspect of pretribulational timing, with more outside writers invited to address it than perhaps any other single issue.¹² This hope was the catching up of NT believers to be with Christ. It included both those who had died in Christ and believers alive at the moment of the rapture. One aspect of the rapture that often received attention was its imminency. Gaebelein defined imminency with these words:

Now the word ‘imminency’ or ‘imminent’ means that an event is impending, the matter in question is liable to occur at any moment. When we speak of the imminency of the coming of the Lord we

¹¹ Gaebelein, *Meat in Due Season*, 19-23.

¹² Some examples would be Arno C. Gaebelein, “Opening Address,” *Our Hope* 8 (September 1901): 93-96; “Notes on Prophecy and the Jews,” *Our Hope* 8 (November 1901): 294-95; “The Patient Waiting for Christ,” *Our Hope* 8 (January 1902): 345-46; “Editorial Notes,” *Our Hope* 8 (February 1902): 394-95; “Who Will Be Caught Up When the Lord Comes,” *Our Hope* 8 (February 1902): 408-17; “Editorial Notes,” *Our Hope* 9 (August 1902): 116-21; “Editorial Notes,” *Our Hope* 9 (October 1902): 225-27; “Will There be a Partial Rapture?” *Our Hope* 44 (August 1937): 100-104; John Nelson Darby, “What Saints Will Be in the Tribulation?” *Our Hope* 8 (May 1902): 597-605; Charles Campbell, “The Interval Between the Lord’s Coming For Us, and His Coming With Us,” *Our Hope* 9 (August 1902): 81-92; G. L. Alrich, “The Imminency of the Coming of Our Lord Jesus,” *Our Hope* 9 (August 1902): 167-74; and I. M. Haldeman, “The Two Distinct Stages of the Coming of the Lord,” *Our Hope* 9 (January 1903): 418-19. Many others could be cited. Most of the articles here appeared during the height of the controversy with Robert Cameron, a controversy that helped to end the Niagara Bible Conference movement.

understand by it that the Lord may come at any moment. This is the meaning of imminent.¹³

In light of the fact that Jesus could come for the church at any moment, no signs were expected to herald his coming in advance.¹⁴ The significance of this doctrine for Gaebelein is clear when he warned that to do away with it was to rob the rapture of its “glory and power.”¹⁵

The second aspect of the rapture of the church is its pretribulation timing. Another way of describing this doctrine is to note that the church would not go through the great tribulation. The coming of Christ in the air to receive the church is a separate event from his coming to the earth to set up his kingdom seven years later. Gaebelein gave several reasons for his view with the discussions at times being extremely tedious. However, the following arguments appear to be the major support for a pretribulation rapture as taught by Gaebelein. First, he argued that the rapture had to come before the start of the great tribulation because the coming of the Lord for the church was imminent.¹⁶ Second, there were exegetical reasons for pretribulationism. In 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (“For God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ”), there is a promise from God that church believers will not suffer the wrath of God during the great tribulation. The

¹³ Arno C. Gaebelein, “Editorial Notes,” *Our Hope* 9 (October 1902): 225. See also Arno C. Gaebelein, “Editorial Notes,” *Our Hope* 39 (August 1932): 76-77.

¹⁴ Arno C. Gaebelein, “Notes on Prophecy and the Jews,” *Our Hope* 8 (November 1901): 295.

¹⁵ Gaebelein, “The Patient Waiting for Christ,” 345. See also Gaebelein, “Opening Address,” 96.

¹⁶ Arno C. Gaebelein, “The Attempted Revival of an Unscriptural Theory,” *Our Hope* 41 (July 1934): 24-25. This argument stems from an understanding that watching for the coming of Christ, as Scripture exhorts, would be meaning-less without imminency. Gaebelein commented: “Looking for that blessed Hope [Titus 2:13] can mean only one thing, that daily we should look for Him and for His promised coming, not for death, but for Himself. But how is this daily looking possible if He cannot come at any moment?” (24).

context of the book indicated to Gaebelein that the start of the day of the Lord or tribulation period is in mind.¹⁷ Another passage (Rev 3:10) promised that the church would be kept from the “hour of temptation” which was interpreted to be the great tribulation of the latter days.¹⁸

Third, the most frequent argument used by Gaebelein in the rapture debate was the fact that the great tribulation or time of Jacob’s trouble, was exactly that, a period designated for Jacob’s offspring, the Jews. Here the absolute distinction between Israel and the church prohibits the involvement of the church in a Jewish event. Gaebelein, in a representative remark, noted,

All passages which have to do with the great tribulation prove that it is Israel’s time of sorrow (Jer. xxx; Mark xiii:14-22; Rev. vii:1-14; Dan. xii:1; Matt. xxiv). “Jacob’s trouble,” not the Church’s trouble. Christ saved us from wrath to come and will deliver us from that hour of trial that shall try them that dwell on the earth. When this takes place the Church will be far above the storm (John iii:36; 1 Thess. v:9; Rev. iii:10).¹⁹

¹⁷ Arno C. Gaebelein, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (New York: Our Hope, n.d.), 116-19. For a more recent approach with similar argumentation, see Zane C. Hodges, “The Rapture in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11,” in *Walvoord: A Tribute*, ed. Donald K. Campbell (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 67-79.

¹⁸ Arno C. Gaebelein, *The Return of the Lord* (New York: Publication Office “Our Hope,” 1925), 101. For perhaps the best description of how this passage plays a role in the rapture debate, see W. Robert Cook, *The Theology of John* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 168-72. The exegetical arguments of Gaebelein with respect to 1 Thessalonians 5 and Revelation 3:10 appear to be the strongest and are based, in large measure, on grammatical-historical interpretation.

¹⁹ Arno C. Gaebelein, “The True Church: Its Translation Before the End,” *Our Hope* 38 (September 1931): 184. See also “Editorial Notes,” *Our Hope* 39 (August 1932): 78. This method of arguing is a use of a dispensational-theological hermeneutic. The distinction between Israel and the church becomes the switch which helps to determine an interpretation. There are two problems (although they can be overcome) with using this argument that Gaebelein was not careful to address. First, as seen earlier, he included the OT saints in the rapture of the church. An alert nondispensationalist might ask if the heavenly people can be mixed, what

The third aspect of the rapture of the church was found in the blessings which constituted the realization of the hope. First, the blessed hope pointed toward the resurrection of all saints who have died and the glorification of the bodies of those saints alive at the time of the rapture.²⁰ Second, the church will receive rewards at the judgment seat of Christ in heaven during the earthly great tribulation.²¹ Third, the church saints will become rulers with Christ during the millennial kingdom. While living in heaven, they will be priests and kings who will reign and judge the world and angels.²² Thus, the blessed hope of the rapture of the church is summed up in the encompassing truth that “the Church’s glorious prospect is the eternal fellowship with the Son of God.”²³

The Hope of the National Restoration of Israel

It can readily be observed that Gaebelein’s use of literal interpretation concentrated often on that portion of the Scriptures which prophesied the national restoration of Israel in the millennium. This literal promise provided hope for the nation, a hope that was a living hope.²⁴ One of the greatest evidences of that hope was the desire, stated during Passover ceremonies, to be in Jerusalem the next year. “And this has been going on

keeps the earthly people from being mixed in the tribulation? That is one reason that contemporary dispensationalists have come to view the resurrection of OT saints at the end of the tribulation. Second, Gaebelein included the Gentiles in the tribulation (*The Revelation: An Analysis and Exposition of the Last Book of the Bible* [New York: Publication Office “Our Hope,” 1915], 59). Since distinctions between Israel and the nations are made, why not between Israel and the church? This shows that the particular distinction between Israel and the church had priority for Gaebelein over all other distinctions.

²⁰ Gaebelein, “True Church,” 184-85.

²¹ Gaebelein, “Unscriptural Theory,” 24. This aspect of the blessed hope was considered by Gaebelein the greatest incentive for holy living (*Return*, 118).

²² Gaebelein, *Return*, 118.

²³ Gaebelein, *World Prospects*, 166.

²⁴ Gaebelein, *Hopeless*, 156.

generation after generation, century after century, during the darkest ages, during the times when satanic powers attempted their complete extermination. ‘This year here—next year in Jerusalem.’ The Jewish Hope is a never dying Hope. Israel is the nation of Hope.”²⁵ In addition, this hope was not known by other nations.²⁶

According to Gaebelein, the basis for this national hope was clearly outlined in prophetic Scripture: “The foundations of the Hope of Israel, that never dying Hope, are the two promises; the promise of the Messiah and the promise of the land in the dimensions as given in the [Abrahamic] covenant.”²⁷ In this way, the future restoration of Israel is tied to the coming of Messiah, which from a Christian perspective, meant the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Although the focus of this hope is on the unique relationship between God and the Jewish people, it is also the basis of hope for other nations. Gaebelein observed,

And the people Israel have been thus preserved because the other great promise of Hope and Glory, the promise of the land, their national restoration, spiritual regeneration, and the promise of future blessing to “all the families of the earth” will have to be fulfilled. Such is Israel’s Hope, and, when it is reached, it will mean *the Hope* and *blessing* for all the world.²⁸

The realization of the national restoration of Israel with its overflowing blessings upon other nations awaits fulfillment when Jesus, Israel’s Messiah comes again.

The Hope of the Nations

Hope for the nations of the world was seen above as a side effect of the restoration of Israel. Gaebelein outlined the history of God’s dealings with the Gentile nations beginning with

²⁵ Ibid., 157.

²⁶ Ibid., 160.

²⁷ Ibid., 162.

²⁸ Ibid., 165.

Israel's own apostasy and resultant judgment via the Babylonian captivity.²⁹ The setting aside of "Israel as a nation in government and dominion" started with Nebuchadnezzar.³⁰ The book of Daniel yields the prophetic account of the history of the dominion of the Gentiles during a period known as the times of the Gentiles.³¹

However, this period of Gentile supremacy was only temporary. Again, following closely the prophecies in Daniel (especially chapters two and seven), Gaebelien noted the future defeat of Gentile domination culminating in the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth.³² This was preceded by the seven-year time of Jacob's trouble which also included the wrath of God poured out on Gentiles.

However, during this time many Gentiles will come to know the Lord, mainly due to the witness of the Jewish remnant which also follows him.³³ However, this is not the great hope of the Gentiles. At the coming of Christ at the end of the tribulation, the conversion of the world will take place:

But there are other nations; though missionaries went and brought them the message of salvation, as nations they were hardly touched by the Gospel. Millions upon millions never heard it. Humanly speaking, as conditions are today they would never hear that Gospel of Grace. There is not the remotest chance of the conversion of these great nations of Asia, Africa and other parts of the world.

Now these nations, such as China, Japan and the millions of India and the millions living in Africa, will heed this Gospel of the Kingdom, they believe, and then turning away from their idols and their false system will learn righteousness. The great revival comes to the unevangelized masses of the heathen world. Out of them comes the great multitude; though they suffer in the great

²⁹ Gaebelien, *World Prospects*, 101-8.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 108.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 109-23.

³² *Ibid.*, 124-42.

³³ *Ibid.*, 151.

tribulation, they come out of it victoriously and enter as saved nations the earthly Kingdom of our Lord.³⁴

Gaebelein associated this conversion with the judgment of the nations found in his interpretation of Matthew 25:31.³⁵ As with the national hope of Israel, the ultimate realization of this hope of the nations occurs when Jesus returns to earth.

The Hope for Renewal of Creation

Gaebelein marveled at the wonder of God's creation. However, the existence of sin in the universe led to another less beautiful facet of nature.

What about the other side? Cyclones and tornadoes sweep over God's fair creation, working a terrible destruction. Earthquakes devastate many regions of different continents; volcanoes emit their streams of hot lava inflicting sufferings on man, beast, and vegetation. There are droughts and dust storms which turn the most fruitful lands into a hopeless wilderness. Ferocious animals attack man, poisonous snakes and insects claim many thousands of human victims. . . . There is a terrible blight upon all creation. Did a kind and loving Creator create such things for His own pleasure and glory?³⁶

As in the case of the church, Israel, and the nations, only the intervention of God could correct the situation and give cause for hope.

Gaebelein expected a reversal of the fortunes of creation in a literal fashion. Two key passages were Isaiah 11:6-9 and Romans 8:19-22. The first passage predicted a time when wolves would dwell in peace with sheep and, among other changes, children would be able to play with and around what used to be dangerous animals. Gaebelein's literal interpretation is indicated by his rhetorical question: "Who authorizes the expositor to say that

³⁴ Ibid., 153-54.

³⁵ Ibid., 154.

³⁶ Gaebelein, *Hope of the Ages*, 68.

these words have not a literal meaning but they must be understood allegorically and given a spiritual interpretation.”³⁷

Gaebelein believed that “the hope of Creation” was evinced in the second passage (Rom 8:19-22). There, the Pauline picture is one of the entire creation groaning and longing for the day when the sons of God (believers) will be manifested.³⁸ The theme of hope dominates the context of this passage and takes in not only creation, but the church (Rom 8) and the hope of Israel and the Gentiles (Rom 9-11).

When will the hope of a renewed creation be realized? In the context of a commentary on the crown of thorns, Gaebelein highlighted the answer:

That crown of thorns is emblematic of creation’s curse. Not science with its inventions and discoveries can arrest or even ameliorate the curse of sin. Only One can remove it. He is Creation’s Lord who paid the price of redemption and whose redemption power can alone deliver groaning creation. But it will never come till He comes again, no longer wearing the crown of mockery, but crowned with many diadems.³⁹

Renewal of creation will then be the last hope to come to fruition when Jesus comes again.

Significance for the Doxological Purpose of Biblical History

In *Dispensationalism Today* (1965), one of the most important books on dispensationalism written in the twentieth

³⁷ Ibid., 69. This literalism with respect to the restoration of creation is also evident in passages such as Zechariah 14:1-4. There the topographical changes in the Mount of Olives are taken literally in Gaebelein’s exposition (*Studies in Zechariah*, 8th ed. [New York: Publication Office “Our Hope,” 1911], 140-46. However, he is not consistent throughout the passage. Later in verse eight, living waters flow out of Jerusalem into the Mediterranean and Dead Seas (149-50). The association is made with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit as mentioned in the description of John 7:38-39.

³⁸ Gaebelein, *Hope of the Ages*, 69-71.

³⁹ Ibid., 75.

century, Charles Ryrie taught us that there were three essential principles which distinguish between a dispensationalist from a nondispensationalist.⁴⁰ The **first** in his presentation was a distinction between Israel and the church. The **second**, which formed the basis for the first, was consistent literal interpretation. Prophetic portions of the Bible should be interpreted using grammatical-historical interpretation just like historical and other sections of the Bible should be viewed. The **third** essential principle was what we are referring to here as the *doxological purpose of biblical history*. Ryrie said it this way:

A third aspect of the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism . . . concerns the underlying purpose of God in the world. The covenant theologian in practice makes this purpose salvation, and the dispensationalist says the purpose is broader than that, namely, the glory of God. To the dispensationalist the soteriological or saving program of God is not the only program but one means God is using in the total program of glorifying Himself. Scripture is not man-centered as though salvation were the main theme, but it is God-centered because His glory is the center.⁴¹

Ryrie expanded this thought in a later chapter in which he answers the charge from covenant theologians that dispensationalists had no unifying principle to their theological system. In fact, in the thinking of covenant theologians, dispensationalism could be compared to higher criticism's parceling out of the Bible into different unrelated sections.⁴² These covenantalists saw individual redemption as the unifying principle of the Bible. Ryrie noted that many of these nondispensationalists acknowledged the glory of God as the ultimate theme, but in practice that theme was addressed only from a soteriological rather than a fully doxological vantage point.⁴³

⁴⁰ Charles Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 43-47.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 98-105.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 103-4.

This third essential principle of dispensationalism has largely been ignored for several years by both covenant and dispensational theologians. One such recent and thoughtful dismissal of Ryrie's third point was worded this way by Craig Blaising:

It would be difficult to identify this perspective as a particularly distinctive feature of earlier dispensationalism. Most evangelicals, especially among the Reformed, would have agreed on the comprehensive doxological purpose of God. Ryrie's insistence on this point can be seen as a calculated response to covenantalist criticisms that dispensationalism (Scofieldism) divides up the salvific unity of the Bible. Ryrie distinguishes dispensationalism from covenantalism as the difference between a doxological versus a soteriological perspective. The fundamental issue was whether or not the divine purpose is broader than the salvation of individual souls and the spiritual communion of the church. The proposed doxological unity was supposed to embrace these broader purposes, which include Israel's national and political future. But in spite of its categorical breadth, divine self-glorification does not seem particularly useful for explaining changes within history. At Niagara, the unity of the dispensations was found in the person and history of Jesus Christ. Scofield saw history in terms of human failure, a notion that Ryrie dismisses as secondary and inappropriately anthropocentric. Other dispensationalists used salvation and redemption as integrating themes but defined them to include national and political salvation and even the redemption of the entire creation.⁴⁴

The last couple of years this writer has revisited this issue and has come away with the conviction that there is a core of truth to Ryrie's observation, although much remains to be said in this area. In fact, there are several questions that could be raised with respect to Blaising's response to Ryrie in the above quotation.

⁴⁴ Craig Blaising, "Dispensationalism: The Search for Definition," in *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 27. See also Craig Blaising, "Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists," *BibSac* 145 (1988): 267-69.

First, Blaising has acknowledged that the covenantalists have in their approach often emphasized the glory of God. However, we showed that Ryrie had done the same, pointing to Hodge's and Shedd's theologies.⁴⁵ What Ryrie has noted is that the *practice* of covenant theologians yields the conclusion, not their statements: "But covenant theology makes *the means* of manifesting the glory of God the plan of redemption. Thus, *for all practical purposes*, covenant theology uses redemption as its unifying principle."⁴⁶ Appeals to certain statements affirming that one's theology is unified by the theme of God's glory may simply not be sufficient on either side. For example, it is clear that Gaebelein's statements focus on the word *redemption*, but his overall outline leaves open the possibility of a broader interpretation.

Second, it seems that Ryrie may not merely be responding to charges that dispensationalism has divided up the salvific plan of God and destroyed biblical unity. Such attacks upon dispensationalists have taken many forms and a response to them is certainly part of what has happened historically.⁴⁷ However, what may lie behind the statements of Ryrie and other dispensationalists who are in agreement with him is, in fact, a reaction to the false theology flowing from the theological covenants which govern covenant theology.⁴⁸ The covenant of works and the covenant of grace are theological constructs which govern all of biblical history for the covenant theologian. Especially, the covenant of grace, which has been operative since the fall in Genesis 3, provides a kind of unifying program based upon individual election. It is this focus on individual election that does not really fit the emphasis of OT biblical history with its focus on national and community promises. Consequently, the covenant theologian is uncomfortable in that domain and his reading of the OT text is colored by his reading of the NT where

⁴⁵ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 104.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ John Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), 149-69.

⁴⁸ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 177-91.

he does feel comfortable with his focus on individual election.⁴⁹ The dispensationalist is not necessarily denying individual election. He is rejecting the idea of making it the central interpretive motif for the entire Bible. It is this rejection that may be at the heart of Ryrie's third point in the essentials of dispensationalism.⁵⁰

Further, it is possible to see the doxological purpose to biblical history as a corollary to the distinction between Israel and the church. Although the multitrack approach to biblical history as cited in Gaebelein's fivefold presentation above is clear, the primary distinction in the list is that between Israel and the church. Simply put, the dispensationalist is open to the diversity which the biblical text yields because of his belief in a great sovereign God who can coordinate multiple tracks in his will and way. By implication the covenant theologian may not be so open to such diversity since he has a tendency to unify every aspect at the point of individual election.

Third, Blaising's comments point to a discussion of the *usefulness* of the doxological purpose as an integrating principle. In this he is only right to a point. He shows that some dispensationalists have integrated their theology around redemption as a category. Their category is just broader than most covenantalists and perhaps not broader than other theologians. In the end he feels, there really is not a lot to argue about. Gaebelein's example seems to cut both ways on this issue. It is true that Blaising's reminder about the Niagara Bible Conference focus on a Christological center is instructive especially as we look at Gaebelein who was certainly a child of

⁴⁹ This present writer deals with the basic mistakes of theological method found in covenant theology in "Literal Interpretation, Theological Method, and the Essence of Dispensationalism," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 1 (Spring 1997): 5-36.

⁵⁰ It must be admitted that this third point distinguished dispensationalism from covenant theology but may not distinguish it from other forms of nondispensationalism. It may also be true that some covenant theologians have tried to develop their theological system with the glory of God in mind as part of an integrating grid. However, the common approach to covenant theology with its focus on individual redemption via election can certainly be responded to with Ryrie's third point.

the Niagara movement. Gaebelein surely talked about biblical history as God's plan of redemption through Christ.

Yet the stress on redemption tied to Christology should not rule out other emphases. Gaebelein believed that God had a plan for lost men and for angels⁵¹ as well. In his discussion on angels, which highlights the issue of God's glory, Gaebelein betrayed a possible way of thinking about the many things that God does: "If man is God's only creature, gifted by Him with powers to search out His creation, to admire His works and to praise Him for them, how little is the praise and glory He gets from His creatures!"⁵² In other words, if the plan of God involves only mankind, then one's view of the glory of God should be diminished. Couple this with his earlier statement about the need to understand the distinctive place of each of the four great subjects of the Bible (creation, the nations, Israel, and the church) in order to fathom the purposes of God. It is easy to imagine Gaebelein believing that the loss of these distinctions would somehow diminish the glory of God.

Although in the end there may be only a difference in degree between covenant theology and dispensationalism on the matter of the glory of God, the difference does seem to exist. The dispensationalist sees biblical history as following a multiple-track scheme that highlights the glory of God as he fulfills his purposes of prophetic hope. Such a multiple-track approach simply cannot be handled by covenant theology. However, dispensationalists who want to affirm the third essential principle of Ryrie's *sine qua non* can demonstrate that the doxological purpose is undergirded with both redemptive and Christological threads. This is, in essence, what Gaebelein outlined for us. One of its side benefits is a theological warmth which prevents dispensational theology from being merely an academic enterprise.

⁵¹ Arno C. Gaebelein, *The Angels of God* (New York: "Our Hope" Publication Office, 1924).

⁵²*Ibid.*, 10.

The Christological Focus of Hope

The theme of prophetic hope expressed, in spite of the hopelessness of the present age, to the church, Israel, the Gentile nations, and creation is the thread that unites the theological system of Gaebelein.⁵³ It is not surprising then to find the name of his Jewish outreach ministry to be *The Hope of Israel Movement* or to note that the highly significant expository magazine which he edited for over half a century was named *Our Hope*.

However, this thread has a Christological focus. While the evangelical character of Gaebelein's theology shows that the benefits of God for the human race are grounded in the work of Christ on the cross, the Christological spotlight falls on the doctrine of the second coming.⁵⁴ In a chapter entitled "Hundreds of Questions But Only One Answer,"⁵⁵ the message is unblurred:

There is but one answer to all these questions concerning the promised hope for Israel, for the nations of the earth and for all creation. That answer is: The Lord Jesus Christ. He alone is the only answer, the completest answer, the never-failing answer to all our questions. But what do we mean when we give His ever blessed and adorable Name, the Name above every other name, as the only answer? We do not mean that the answer is a practical application of the principles of righteousness declared by the infallible teacher in the sermon on the mount. We do not mean the practice of what has been termed the golden rule. We do not mean a leadership of

⁵³ The consistency of Gaebelein's theology over the years can be seen by comparing the books mentioned above from the 1930s to an earlier article in *Our Hope*. See Arno C. Gaebelein, "The Coming of the Lord, the Hope of Israel, and the Hope of the Nations and Creation," *Our Hope* 8 (September 1901): 194-99. This article was actually the publication of an address given at the first Sea Cliff Bible conference

⁵⁴ Gaebelein viewed the atonement on the cross by Christ as the greatest event in human history while the second coming of Christ was the second greatest event (*Hope of the Ages*, 76). Yet the second coming is "the great hope, the only hope, for all the earth. . . . All waits for that coming event" (*ibid.*). It is the work of Christ in the second coming, rather than the first advent, which serves as the focus of the unifying theme of hope.

⁵⁵ Gaebelein, *Hope of the Ages*, 54-76.

Jesus. We do not mean that these questions will be answered by future spiritual revivals, nor do we mean that a blasted Western civilization, misnamed Christian, will influence heathen nations to accept Christianity and turn to God from their idols. The sorrowful fact is that what military Christendom has done and is doing, and the shameful failures of Western civilization, has been a curse to heathen nations.

What we mean, the only answer, the completest and never failing answer to all our questions, is The Glorious Reappearing of the Lord Jesus Christ. This future event will answer every question, solve every problem which humanity faces today, and all the existing chaotic conditions, and bring about that golden age of which heathen poets dreamed, which the Bible promises is in store for the earth.⁵⁶

In light of such an emphasis, it is no wonder that for many years the cover of *Our Hope* magazine had on it the words “The Lord Jesus Christ, Who is Our Hope.” The central interpretive motif, **prophetic hope through the second coming**, was best captured in a prayer that closed Gaebelein’s volume, *Hopeless, Yet There is Hope*: Even so Come, Thou Hope of the hopeless, Thou Hope of Israel, Thou Hope of the World, all Nations and Creation. Even so, Come Lord Jesus.⁵⁷

Conclusion

Arno C. Gaebelein believed in a sovereign God who controlled history. Predictions God had made came true because of his great power and plan. The “plan” is a multifaceted one which highlighted prophetic hope in the personal second coming of Jesus Christ as God’s redemptive plan is accomplished on several fronts. It may be possible to see in Gaebelein the makings of our understanding of the doxological purpose of biblical history. If so, then Ryrie’s third point in the essentials of dispensationalism may have some merit.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 71-72.

⁵⁷ Gaebelein, *Hopeless*, 193.

The Glory of God in the Book of Jude: A Defense of Ryrie's Third Point in the *Sine Qua Non* of Dispensationalism

Dan Wiley

In 1965, Charles Caldwell Ryrie published *Dispensationalism Today*, a text which is arguably the most significant contribution to the development of dispensationalism in the twentieth century.² In this important work, one written as an apologetic for dispensational thought,³ Ryrie presents (among other things) his case for the “*sine qua non*” of dispensationalism, or the absolute essentials of dispensationalism, which Ryrie identifies as (1) a distinction between Israel and the church, (2) the consistent use of literal

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² Lightner gives *Dispensationalism Today* the greatest possible compliment when he notes, “I don’t think you can adequately understand progressive dispensationalism or normative dispensationalism unless you use this book as a foundation.” See Robert Lightner, “Progressive Dispensationalism,” *Conservative Theological Journal* 4, no. 11 (April 2000): 47. See also Bruce A. Baker, “Israel and the Church: The Transcendental Distinction Within the Dispensational Tradition,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 57; Craig A. Blaising, “Dispensationalism: The Search for Definition,” in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, ed. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 23; Alistair W. Donaldson, *The Last Days of Dispensationalism: A Scholarly Critique of Popular Misconceptions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 2; Jonathan R. Pratt, “Dispensational Sanctification: A Misnomer,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 98.

³ Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 7, 9. See also Russel H. Bowers Jr., “Dispensational Motifs in the Writings of Erich Sauer,” *BibSac* 148, no. 591 (July 1991): 261; Larry D. Pettegrew, “Dispensationalists and Spirit Baptism,” *MSJL* 8, no.1 (Spring 1997): 36.

hermeneutics, and (3) the glory of God as the unifying theme of Scripture and history.⁴

Since the publication of *Dispensationalism Today*, both Ryrie's supporters and opponents have written numerous books and articles on the legitimacy of Ryrie's *sine qua non* as the acid test for dispensationalism.⁵ However, the final point, that of God's glory as the unifying theme of Scripture and history, has received a greater amount of rejection as a valid indicator of dispensationalism.⁶ At first glance, such rejection appears valid. Is the glory of God too broad to identify as the unifying theme of Scripture and history? How can Ryrie claim the glory of God as a distinguishing mark of dispensationalism when non-dispensationalists also value the glory of God? Do other possible unifying themes better fit the specifics of dispensationalist thinking? These criticisms have led some dispensationalists to dismiss the third point as a valid indicator of dispensationalism,⁷ while others seek to define dispensationalism in different terms altogether.⁸

⁴ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 43-47; See also Baker, "Israel and the Church," 57; Lightner, "Progressive Dispensationalism," 48.

⁵ Russel H. Bowers Jr., "Dispensational Motifs," 262.

⁶ Mike Stallard, "Literal Interpretation, Theological Method, and the Essence of Dispensationalism," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 33.

⁷ Blaising, "Developing Dispensationalism Part 2: Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145.579 (Jul 1988): 268. In his article, "Dispensational Motifs in the Writings of Erich Sauer," Bowers remarks that, due to a lack of discussion in Ryrie's contribution to the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. Walter A. Elwell [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984], s.v. "Dispensation, Dispensationalism," 321), some might believe that Ryrie dropped the third point of his *sine qua non*. However, in a personal conversation with Bowers, Ryrie reaffirmed his commitment to the third point. See Bowers, "Dispensation Motifs," 262. Although Bowers never directly links the absence of the third point in Ryrie's contribution with the criticisms mounted against it, it does make one wonder.

⁸ For example, Sweetnam argues that all three of Ryrie's points are not sufficient identifiers of dispensationalism. However, he then defines dispensationalism using five points: "1. A Commitment to Evangelical doctrine. 2. A commitment to a literal Biblical hermeneutic. 3. A

In *Dispensationalism Today*, Ryrie offers three defenses of his third point: (1) Scripture states that salvation is to the glory of God; (2) God has a plan for the angels that is not soteriological; and (3) God's kingdom program is not confined to salvific purposes.⁹ Although scholars have criticized Ryrie's third point, there exists very little academic writing interacting with Ryrie's defense of his third point and its biblical warrant. Such neglect is unfortunate and regrettable, for the defense of any theological statement finds its climax in its answer to the question, "Does the Bible support this theological statement?" This is not to say that no one has ever offered Scriptural support for Ryrie's third point,¹⁰ but such support is limited in favor of theological and theoretical discussions of Ryrie's third point, and much of that is critical.¹¹

recognition of distinction in manifestations of Divine dealing with mankind, which insists on the uniqueness and importance of both Israel and the Church in the Divine plan. 4. An expectation of the imminent return of Christ in the Rapture. 5. An emphasis on apocalyptic and millennial expectation." Ryrie's first two points are included, but notably absent from Sweetnam's list is Ryrie's third point. See Mark S. Sweetnam, "Defining Dispensationalism: A Cultural Studies Perspective," *Journal of Religious History* 34, no. 2 (June 2010): 196, 198.

⁹ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 103. Paul Weaver helpfully frames this argument as follows: "(1) Scripture itself points to the purpose of salvation as the glory of God; (2) all theologians recognize that God has plans for other created beings, not just humanity; (3) God's kingdom program, although it includes and requires the salvation of man, is not limited to it. See Paul D. Weaver, "The Theological Method of Charles Caldwell Ryrie," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 17, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 82. See also Thomas Baurain, "A Short Primer on Hermeneutics," *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 10, no. 31 (Dec 2006): 41; Jonathan R. Pratt, "Dispensational Sanctification: A Misnomer," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 99.

¹⁰ For a general defense of Ryrie's third point in the *sine qua non* of dispensationalism, see Elliot E. Johnson, "A Biblical Theology of God's Glory," *BibSac* 169, no. 676 (Oct 2012): 402-11.

¹¹ Most of the criticisms thrown at Ryrie's third point are either methodological or appeals to emotion rather than arguments drawn from the biblical text. For example, critics of Ryrie's third point argue that dispensationalists cannot use the glory of God as the unifying theme of

On a more positive note, the lack of biblical evaluation concerning Ryrie's third point creates many possible research opportunities. For example, one area of Scripture which has yet to receive treatment concerning this important discussion is the Epistle of Jude. Such a statement may come across as curious to the reader. Douglas J. Rowston famously titled his article on

Scripture because non-dispensationalists also recognize the glory of God. On one level this is methodological, for it is argued that dispensationalism cannot use a principle to distinguish itself from other methods if the other methods recognize that principle. On the other hand, it is also an appeal to emotion, for certainly covenant theologians would not appreciate the implication that dispensationalists recognize the glory of God "more" than covenant theologians (see, for example, Craig A. Blaising, "Developing Dispensationalism Part 2: Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists," *BibSac* 145, no. 579 [July 1988]: 268; Michael Vlach, "What is Dispensationalism?" in *Christ's Prophetic Plans: A Futuristic Premillennial Primer*, ed. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue [Chicago: Moody, 2012], 21).

Both arguments are invalid. If one argues that the glory of God is the unifying theme of Scripture and history, then by necessity one stands in contrast with those who hold to covenant theology and its insistence that salvation is the unifying theme of Scripture. The fact that covenant theologians recognize the glory of God is irrelevant because covenant theologians recognize the glory of God as playing a different role than salvation (one commits a category error if he fails to make this distinction). Furthermore, to argue that Ryrie's third point implies that covenant theologians hold to a lower view of God's glory is special pleading. With this logic, the dispensationalist should find offense with the assertion of covenant theology that the salvation of the elect is the central interpretive motif of Scripture, i.e., are covenant theologians claiming that they care more about the salvation of the elect than non-covenant theologians? The answer is a resounding "no," for the dispensationalist recognizes that the covenant theologian is not claiming that dispensationalists do not value salvation. It is also special pleading because, using the same logic that attempts to prevent the dispensationalist from using the glory of God as a unifying theme, i.e., one cannot use the glory of God because others recognize the glory of God, one could argue that covenant theologians cannot use salvation as a unifying theme because dispensationalists recognize salvation.

Jude “The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament,”¹² and between Jude’s short length, difficult and controversial content, and its reception and perception throughout church history, it is easy to understand such neglect.¹³ In relation to the current discussion, one might ask, “How does Jude offer data in defense of Ryrie’s third point?”

This paper accomplishes the following tasks. First, it explains how Jude defends the proposition that redemption is one of the means by which God glorifies himself. Second, it explains how Jude reveals that God has a distinct plan for the angels. Third, it explains how Jude presents case studies from the various dispensations to prove that the Lord, to preserve his glory and to administer his kingdom program, consistently judges apostasy throughout the dispensations and redemptive history, and thus provides a necessary unifying principle across the dispensational spectrum. Following the completion of these tasks, the reader will recognize that Jude’s epistle provides an effective defense of the dispensational understanding of the glory of God as the unifying theme of Scripture, for, as the content of Jude reveals, the glory of God is the end goal of God’s saving acts upon the recipients and the judgment of the apostates throughout the dispensations.¹⁴

¹² Douglas J. Rowston, “The Most Neglected Book in the New Testament,” *NTS* 21 (1975): 554-63.

¹³ See Daniel Wiley, “Contributing to the Faith Once Delivered: Jude, Systematic Theology, and an Appeal to Pastors,” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 77-109.

¹⁴ Throughout this paper, apostasy is defined as “knowing the truth, and then departing from it.” See C. I. Scofield, “Part 3: The Course and End of the Age,” *BibSac* 108, no. 429 (January 1951): 112.

Before proceeding, it is worth noting that covenant theologians will find little to disagree with regarding the exposition of Jude and its relevant passages, even if they do disagree with the conclusion. The purpose of this paper is not to critique covenant theology outrightly, but to demonstrate that dispensationalism, and particularly the glory of God as the unifying theme of Scripture, is compatible with Jude’s message, and thus Ryrie’s third point has biblical support.

The Glory of God as the End Goal of Salvation

Ryrie's first defense of the glory of God as the unifying principle of Scripture and history is his observation that salvation is a means to the end of God's glory rather than the end itself. For covenant theology, the unifying theme of Scripture and history is soteriological, that is, God's redemptive plan to save his elect.¹⁵ In contrast, Ryrie argues, "The plain statement of Scripture declares that salvation is to the praise of God's glory which simply means that redemption is one of the means to the end of glorifying God (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14). Salvation, for all its wonder, is but one facet of the diamond of the glory of God."¹⁶ Ryrie's references to Ephesians 1 provide solid evidence for Ryrie's position,¹⁷ and others have offered Scriptural proofs for the glory of God as the end goal of salvation.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ernest Pickering, "The Nature of Covenant Theology," *Central Bible Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1960): 2; Pickering "Dispensational Theology," *Central Bible Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 31; Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 18, 102.

¹⁶ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 103.

¹⁷ Cf. Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 204, 234, 245; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC 42 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 26; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 118, 123. Although none of the previous references defend dispensationalism *per se*, all three argue that God's glory is the end goal of God's saving acts.

¹⁸ For example, Cone makes the following Scriptural defense of Ryrie's first argument: "Here is present the third element of Ryrie's *sine qua non* of dispensationalism, namely that the underlying purpose of God in all of His creation is the glory of God - Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today* (Chicago: Moody, 1965), 46. This is in full agreement with the Biblical record as evidenced in Ps. 19:1; 21:5; 97:6; 106:47; 115:1; Is. 6:3; 43:7; 49:3; Jer. 33:9; Hab. 2:14; Jn. 17:1; 2 Cor. 4:15; 8:19; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; Php. 1:11; 2:11; Rev. 4:11; 5:12-13; 15:4. This is the doxological center: The glorification of God as the understood purpose for all things." See Christopher Cone, "Presuppositional Dispensationalism," *Conservative Theological Journal* 10, no. 29 (May 2006): 79.

The Epistle of Jude also contributes to Ryrie's position through its robust soteriology. That salvation is a primary theme of Jude will strike some as odd. As any good NT survey clarifies, the majority of Jude's text is devoted to warning its readers of apostate teaching and the fate awaiting apostate teachers.¹⁹ However, bracketing the body of Jude's apology against the apostates is four verses containing clear soteriological statements (vv 1, 3, 21, 24).²⁰ Two of these verses (vv 1, 24) provide Ryrie's first argument for his third point with solid biblical evidence.

The first of these two great soteriological statements is found in verse 1: "Jude, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ." Following Jude's introduction of himself as the author, he identifies his recipients as both τοῖς...κλητοῖς, "the called," and further clarifies "the called" as Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τετηρημένοις, "kept for Jesus Christ." Both the identification and its clarifying participle identify the eternal plan of God in salvation. As commentators rightly point out, to be "called" is not a reference to invitation, but rather to God's eternal elective decree through which men, as Schreiner notes, "Are powerfully and inevitably brought to faith in Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the gospel."²¹ Jude's

¹⁹ For example, see D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 688-89, 694; Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarborough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 354; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, Guthrie NT Reference Set (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 909-913.

²⁰ The two verses not reviewed in this paper are verse 3, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints"; and verse 21, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life." All English quotations of Scripture are taken from the New American Standard Version.

²¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2, Peter, Jude*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 429. See also Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*,

recipients were not merely invited into God's kingdom, but were selected by divine decree to be part of God's kingdom as part of God's eternal plan for the ages (cf. Acts 13:48; Eph 1:4; 2 Thess 2:13-14; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 1:1-2). This election is further described by use of two participles, ἠγαπημένοις, "beloved," and τετηρημένοις, "kept." The second of these two participles is most important for the current discussion. The phrase, "kept for Jesus Christ,"²² implies purpose. God is not saving Jude's recipients simply to save them, but to save them for a purpose, and that purpose is for Jesus Christ. As Gene Green notes, "Jude's emphasis ... appears to be not only on the ground of their calling ("beloved by God") but its goal and end ("for Christ Jesus")."²³ By identifying his recipients as "the called," Jude is not tipping his hat to their salvation, but is recognizing the Lord's purpose in their salvation.

WBC 50 (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 26; Gene Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 46-47; Douglas Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 222. Peters, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 37.

²² There is some disagreement on the translation of Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τετηρημένοις that could influence the current argument. Should one understand Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τετηρημένοις as a dative agent with a passive voice, i.e., "kept by Jesus Christ" as in the NIV and NLT, or as Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ τετηρημένοις is translated in the NASB, RSV, and others, "kept for Jesus Christ"? In the former, those who are chosen persevere because they are kept by the power and work of Jesus Christ (see Mark Webb, "What Difference Does it Make? – II," *Reformation and Revival* 3, no. 2 [Spring 1994]: 104), a position that emphasizes Christ's work in sanctification rather than perseverance as a means to the end goal of Christ's glory. In contrast, Green advocates for the latter and argues that (1) The dative agent with a passive voice is rare in the New Testament, and (2) The NT generally speaks of both believers and unbelievers as being "kept for" the last day (John 7:11-12; 1 Thess 5:23; 1 Pet 1:4-5; 2 Pet 2:9; 3:7; Jude 6, 13). See Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 48. See also Peter Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 38; Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 223.

²³ Green, *Jude and 2 Peter*, 48.

What does it mean to be “kept for Jesus Christ”? That statement is further explained in verse 24,²⁴ the second of the two soteriological verses in Jude, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.” Commentators have noticed the allusion to OT thought in this verse, which is fitting for an epistle that frequently draws from events recorded in the OT (cf. vv 5-7, 11). Specifically, Jude applies the OT theme of sacrifice to God’s saving acts upon his elect.²⁵ After the coming of Jesus Christ, believers, who are kept for Jesus Christ, are presented before God as sacrifices prepared for glory.²⁶ As Michael Green points out, “It sees the faithful Christians among his readers, after all the pressures of contending for the faith in a licentious age and permissive church, standing before God like perfect sacrifices in his heavenly sanctuary, in self-offering to the glory of God amidst the joyous jubilation of the redeemed.”²⁷ Although the primary objective of Jude’s letter is to call his recipients to defend the faith in the wake of apostate teaching (vv 3-4), the goal of Jude’s exhortation is not to defend the faith for the sake of

²⁴ Commentators rightly make a connection between verses 1 and 24. For example, Kraftchick, commenting on verse 1, argues, “God’s love also involves God’s protection: the believers are “kept safe,” i.e., established by God and maintained for the second coming when the ultimate consummation will occur (v.24).” See Stephen J. Kraftchick, *Jude & 2 Peter*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 28. See also Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 26; Daniel Keating, *First and Second Peter, Jude*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 220;

²⁵ The adjective ἀμόμους, “blameless,” is a cultic term that originally referred to the state of sacrificial offerings that God demanded (e.g., Exod 29:1; Lev 1: 3, 10; LXX) and came to signify the moral purity the Lord demanded from his worshippers (Ps 15:2; Prov 11:5; Eph 1:4; Heb 9:14). See J. N. D. Kelly, *Epistles of Peter and Jude* (London: A&C Black, 1969), 291.

²⁶ Robert L. Webb, “The Eschatology of the Epistle of Jude and Its Rhetorical and Social Functions,” *BBR* 6, no. 1 (1996): 142.

²⁷ Michael Green, *2 Peter & Jude*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 206.

defending the faith, but to defend the faith to preserve the recipients for their presentation before God. As Bauckham rightly concludes, “All Jude’s concerns in the letter, to combat the false teaching for the sake of the health of the church and the Christian obedience of its members, are finally aimed at this goal: that they should in the end be found fit to be a sacrificial offering to God.”²⁸

The significance of Jude’s words in relation to Ryrie’s first argument for his third point is evident. In the mind of Jude, the salvation of his “called” recipients is not the end, but the means to the end. This end is the glory of God, a glory he receives when the recipients are kept from the teachings of the apostates and stand before the Lord as a living sacrifice fit for a holy God.

The Glory of God as Displayed in the Destiny of the Angels

Ryrie’s second defense of the glory of God as the unifying principle of Scripture and history is the Lord’s distinct plan for the angels. To requote Ryrie a second time, “All theologians of whatever persuasion realize that God has a plan for the angels. It does not involve redemption, for the elect angels do not experience it and the nonelect angels cannot. And yet for the angels God has a distinct program—a distinct purpose, and it is not soteriological.”²⁹

Although Ryrie offers no Scriptural support for his argument in *Dispensationalism Today*, that angels follow a

²⁸ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 124. Farstad explains the imagery in Jude 24 in slightly different terms. Commenting on Jude 24 and sanctification, Farstad notes, “The ultimate in sanctification is being presented “faultless,” as to a monarch at court.” See Arthur L. Farstad, “We Believe in: Sanctification Part 5: Future Sanctification: Perfect, or Ultimate, Sanctification,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 7. Although the imagery is different in this explanation, the goal is the same: Glorified believers will stand before their Lord for the glory of their Lord.

²⁹ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 103.

distinct program in the decree of God is a biblical conclusion.³⁰ The cumulative witness of Scripture indicates that God does not offer a salvific program for the angels.³¹ Furthermore, that God has a unique program for the angels is also documented.³² Angels may not possess the same share of focus in the record of Scripture as that of man, but nevertheless the biblical witness

³⁰ In his work, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, Vern Poythress argues, “It is not fully relevant when some dispensationalists bring in the topic of God’s dealing with the angels. They say, ‘If God has separate purposes for angels, well then, he may have separate purposes for Israel and the church.’ But the angels were never united under Adam’s headship. They did not fall with Adam; neither are they redeemed from their sins by being united to Christ by faith. Hence the destiny of the angels does not confront us with the same types of questions” (Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, 2nd ed. [Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1994], 43). The problem with this argument is that it misses Ryrie’s point. Dispensationalists do not argue that a distinct plan for the angels indicates a distinction between Israel and the church, but rather that a distinct plan for the angels—a plan which does not include an effort to save fallen angels—demonstrates that God’s eternal purpose is not limited to soteriological concerns.

³¹ That the Lord does not offer a salvific plan for the angels is evident based upon the following points. First, Scripture plainly states that it is man, and not angels, who receive soteriological help from the Lord (Heb 2:16). Second, Scripture informs its readers that God does not spare angels when they sin (2 Pet 2:4). Third, eternal fire is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). That hell is not prepared for man suggests that man has the possibility of experiencing redemption, whereas angels do not. Fourth, it is even suggested that the angels do not even fully understand the concept of salvation (cf. 1 Pet 1:12). Scripture does describe some angels as “elect” (1 Tim 5:21), but in light of all the biblical data, the term “election” must be understood as God’s choosing of certain angels to remain safe from potential sin and fallenness (George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 238), or to participate in specific tasks (William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC 46 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000], 316), in contrast to God’s choosing of fallen angels to salvation.

³² For a brief comparison between the Lord’s program for the angels and that of man, see Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (1947; repr. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1976), 4:4-14.

reveals a program for the creation, present state, and destiny of angels that is distinct from that of man.

As with Ryrie's first argument for his third point, Jude also offers defense for Ryrie's second argument. According to Jude, men have one of two destinies: (1) Men can fall prey to apostate teachers and join in their fate, or (2) Men can be among the "called" of God and stand before him blameless. There is no third option in the mind of Jude concerning the destiny of men. At the same time, Jude offers hope for those who have fallen to apostate doctrine. In verses 22 and 23, Jude, speaking to the proper ministry to apostates and those affected by apostate teaching, proclaims, "And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh." In these two verses, Jude identifies three kinds of people who have fallen under the influence of the apostate teachers: (1) those who have been exposed to apostate teaching and are, consequently, struggling with their faith; (2) those who are nearly convinced of apostate teaching; and (3) those who have completely fallen for apostate teaching.³³ Although Jude has spent much space condemning the apostates, this concluding exhortation offers hope to those who have been influenced by such teaching, and it is fairly clear that Jude sees the possibility of restoration.³⁴ Bauckham, in reaction to these verses, concludes, "But [Jude] does not give up hope of their salvation: his readers are to continue to exercise Christian love towards them, even if prayer is the only practical means of doing so."³⁵

However, Jude never extends the possibility of restoration to the angels who committed apostasy. According to Jude 6, "And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness

³³ See Wiley, "Contributing," 104-5.

³⁴ As Leach bluntly notes, "Jude's priority with such brethren is both preservation and restoration." See Shawn Leach, "Keep Yourselves in the Love of God—A Study of Jude 20-23," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 24, no. 46 (Spring 2011): 57.

³⁵ Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 118.

for the judgment of the great day.” This passage contains two major interpretive issues: (1) What was the “domain” of these angels,³⁶ and (2) What does it mean to say that they “abandoned their proper abode.”³⁷ Scholars have written many articles on both issues, and readers are advised to consult those documents for further study. Having said that, Jude 6 reveals two important and uncontroversial points relevant to the subject at hand. First, these angels are δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις, “in eternal bonds.” Second, these angels are waiting for the κρίσιν μεγάλης ἡμέρας, “judgment of the great day.” It is difficult to misinterpret the imagery Jude lays before his readers: because of the actions of these angels, they are now imprisoned and awaiting the future judgment. In keeping with the rest of Scripture,³⁸ Jude never presents a scenario in which fallen angels could repent. The sentence of these angels is final, and although they are presented by Jude to remind his readers that even angels cannot avoid judgment, their fate differs from those affected by apostate teaching, who, according to Jude have an opportunity to turn to the Lord.

This is not the only reference to angels in Jude’s epistle. In verse 10, Jude writes, “But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you!’” This account, which is also recorded

³⁶ The first issue involves the status of these angels: Does ἀρχή mean “domain” in reference to their position of authority (J. Daryl Charles, “The Angels Under Reserve in 2 Peter and Jude,” *BBR* [NA 2005]: 45), or does ἀρχή mean “origin” with reference to the angel’s creation and their holy status (David W. Jones, “The Apostate Angels of 2 Pet. 2:4 and Jude 6,” *Faith and Mission* 23, no. 2 [Spring 2006]: 22)?

³⁷ The second issue involves the sin of these angels: Does τὸ ἴδιον οἰκητήριον refer to the original rebellion and fall of Satan’s angels, or is it a reference to the “sons of God” and their sin in Genesis 6? For a review of these questions, the key concerns, and some conclusions, see Jones, “Apostate Angels,” 26; Robert C. Newman, “The Ancient Exegesis of Genesis 6:2, 4,” *Grace Theological Journal* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1984):13-36.

³⁸ Wayne Grudem, “Christ Preaching Through Noah: 1 Peter 3:19-20 in the Light of Dominant Themes in Jewish Literature,” *TJ* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 14.

in the pseudepigraphal work the *Assumption of Moses* (and possibly Jude's source), documents a dispute between Michael and Satan, the latter accusing Moses of murder.³⁹ Jude's purpose in citing this account is an example of an argument from "greater to the lesser," for although the apostates spoke recklessly about angelic authorities (v 9), even Michael, an archangel, did not speak evil towards Satan, one whom most would think deserves such slander.⁴⁰

The observant reader of Jude notices a striking contrast between Satan and the fallen angels held in bonds: Satan, who is the example *par excellence* of apostasy,⁴¹ is not used by Jude as an example of apostasy, yet the angels of Jude 6, who are certainly much less significant than Satan, are used as a warning to Jude's readers of the consequences of apostasy. In fact, Satan is used as part of a rhetorical argument against the reckless slandering of angels by Jude's opponents. Of course, this does not mean that Jude views Satan as an example of holiness or goodness, as Michael's response to Satan clearly indicates. However, what is clear is that Satan, although an apostate himself, is not among the angels who are "in chains."

³⁹ This is in reference to Moses' murder of the Egyptian in Exodus 2:12. See Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, 61; Kelly, 264.

⁴⁰ As Painter and deSilva put it, "If Michael, himself an archangel (a higher order of being than the teachers), did not dare to pronounce judgment upon [Satan] for defamation (against Moses' character) or dismiss Satan's charges on his own authority (v. 9b), how much less should the intruders, being mere humans, presume to acquit themselves of the charges that the holy angelic ministers of the law would bring against their self-indulgent and insubordinate practices?" See John Painter and David A. deSilva, *James and Jude*, Paideia: Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 205.

⁴¹ As Ryrie bluntly states, "It is quite obvious that Satan is an apostate. He knew the truth and deliberately departed from it (Isa 14:12-15)." See Ryrie, "Apostasy in the Church," *BibSac* 121, no. 481 (January 1964): 47. Satan is also associated with the "great apostasy" in the last days, as he empowers the "man of sin" who leads the world in this apostasy. See Henry Cowles, "On 'The Man of Sin,' 2 Thess. 2:3-9," *BibSac* 29, no. 116 (October 1872): 624-25.

Why would Jude use the angels as an example of apostasy instead of Satan? Satan certainly had a reputation among the Jews of the Second Temple period as a great enemy of God,⁴² and thus would make excellent fodder for Jude resounding condemnation. Unfortunately, the text never reveals the answer to this question.⁴³ The only possible solution is that Jude understands Satan to be a key player in God's program for the ages.⁴⁴ Although it is certain that Jude would describe Satan as an apostate, Satan plays a different, but equally important, role in the mind of Jude. For Jude, Satan stands as an authority that even Michael would not usurp with rash commentary.⁴⁵ Although Jude never identifies the entirety of this role, it is clear—based upon the negative tone set by the *Assumption of Moses*, Michael's response to Satan, and Jude's use of this event to condemn his opponents—that Satan's role is not one which leads to salvation.

⁴² For example, the Qumran community believed that both unfaithful Israelites and pagans were under the evil influence of Satan [Mohan Uddin, "Paul, the Devil and 'Unbelief' in Israel (With Particular Reference to 2 Corinthians 3-4 and Romans 9-11)," *TynBull* 50, no. 2 (1999): 273].

⁴³ Some argue that Satan is not an angel. See William G. Bellshaw, "The New Testament Doctrine of Satan," *Grace Journal* 9, no. 3 (Fall 1968): 29-30. Thus it is not appropriate to include him in a discussion of Ryrie's second point concerning the angels. However, even if Satan is not an angel, he still has an origin, purpose, and destiny like the angels, and thus this only proves Ryrie's point that God's program for the ages is greater than man's concerns.

⁴⁴ For a summary of Satan's works and his role as a servant of God, see Sydney H. T. Page, "Satan: God's Servant," *JETS* 50, no. 3 (September 2007): 449-65.

⁴⁵ Wiley notes, "That Michael would refuse to accuse Satan is at first a rather strange observation. However, this conclusion does not conflict with scriptural truth. Elsewhere in the Bible, evil angels are given positions of authority (e.g., Dan 10:13; Eph 6:12), and although man struggles with such authorities, he is never given the license to blaspheme these evil angels" (Wiley, "Contributing," 98). See also John Walvoord, "Is Satan Bound? Part 1," *BibSac* 100, no. 400 (October 1943): 501-2.

The Glory of God as Displayed Through the Judgment of the Apostates

Ryrie's final defense of his third point is the diversity of purpose within the administration of God's kingdom program. Ryrie notes, "If one is a premillennialist (not even necessarily of the dispensationalist variety) he recognizes that in the kingdom program God has a purpose which, though it involves salvation, is not confined to redemption. Obviously, God has other purposes in this world besides the redemption of mankind."⁴⁶ Dispensationalists recognize that God's kingdom program is multifaceted, and such diversity is normally identified as the result of the distinction between Israel and the church and God's distinct program for Israel.⁴⁷ However, the kingdom program of God is even not limited to either salvation or the Lord's plan for the Jewish people, for the Epistle of Jude adds a third element of the program, that of judgment.

Commentators have rightly recognized the kingdom focus of Jude. For example, Davids, commenting on the theology of Jude, notes, "Jude is an extremely short letter, so the first thing one must say about its theology is that since it comes from the

⁴⁶ Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 103.

⁴⁷ For example, David Olander argues, "The fact that all the biblical covenants are effectively with Israel (not the church) marks a complete distinction between Israel and the church with completely separate programs. Scripture is very clear on this and it is actually quite simple. This is really the *sine qua non* of classic or traditional dispensationalism. This is as true today as it was when God planned His kingdom program centered in the nation Israel from eternity. God's program centered fully in and with Israel not the church. God's kingdom program if understood correctly shows unity of purpose and design for *all* creation (Eph. 1:10). The kingdom is far more than salvation or Christological. It becomes this if the biblical covenants are not kept in first place pointing toward Messiah's kingdom and God's glory. And this must be, for the most significant design and purpose God has given concerning man will ultimately be in the kingdom of His Messiah which will be given to Jesus as the son of man (Dan. 7:13-14; Mat. 6:33) not as the Son of God. All this points to the doxological purposes of God's entire program with creation" [David Olander, "The Importance of the Davidic Covenant," *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 10, no. 31 [December 2006]: 58-59].

Jesus movement we must assume that most of his theology is held in common with that movement, that is, the expectation of the kingdom of God, come in Jesus of Nazareth and coming to fruition in the future.”⁴⁸ The most obvious kingdom element of Jude is the return of Christ (14-15, 24), when, according to Davids, “refers to the coming of Christ to usher his true followers into the full experience of his reign.”⁴⁹ However, the return of Christ in Jude’s letter must be interpreted through its purpose and in its context. According to Davids, Jude’s purpose is “to bring proper order to his addresses,”⁵⁰ and such order is manifested through “judgment.”⁵¹

Judgment as part of God’s kingdom plan is most evident in Jude 14-15, “*It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.’*” More will be said on this passage later, but for the moment it is important to recognize that this passage, which records the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, does not promise a glorious meeting between believers and their Lord as recorded in other passages—a meeting believers anxiously wait for (cf. 1 Cor 1:7; 1 Thess 1:9-10; Titus 2:12-14; Phil 3:20; 1 Pet 4:13). Instead, it identifies a key goal of Christ’s return: the judgment of apostasy.

It is important to remember that Jude 14-15 is not an isolated statement concerning the return of Jesus Christ and his judging of apostasy. Instead, it serves as part of a larger apologetic against apostasy, an apologetic that attacks Jude’s present opponents by drawing from OT examples of the Lord’s judgment. One implication of this apologetic is that the final judgment of apostasy at the second coming and inauguration of the kingdom is simply the consummation of the pattern of the

⁴⁸ Davids, *Letters of Second Peter and Jude*, 29.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

Lord's judgment of apostasy throughout redemptive history.⁵² The judgment of apostasy throughout history proves that God's kingdom program of the ages is not simply a matter of saving men (as important of an element as it is), but also involves the equally important matter of judgment, and just as God chose not to accomplish his kingdom objective of salvation instantaneously following the fall,⁵³ so also does God administer judgment, not all at once, but throughout redemptive history and through each manifestation of his kingdom program.⁵⁴

In his attack upon the apostates, Jude draws from the record of six people or events referenced in the OT. These references to famous historical apostasies act as examples of prophetic

⁵² Wellum makes the following statement concerning God's judgment leading up to the inauguration of the kingdom: "The rightful rule of God over the entire creation is now rejected by the human race. Sin is essentially rebellion against the claims of the King, and, so, we now stand under God's judgment of death. In this important way, the OT makes a distinction between the sovereignty of God over the entire creation and the coming of his *saving reign* in the context of a rebellious creation. Thus, on the one hand, the kingdom of God will exclude all sin and rebellion. On the other hand, it will include all that is redeemed according to God's gracious will. Eventually, when all sin and evil is put down, we will see the fullness of God's kingdom." See Stephen J. Wellum, "Reflecting on the Kingdom of God," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 3.

⁵³ Robert Gonzalez Jr., "Where Sin Abounds: The Spread of Sin and the Curse in Primeval History," *Reformed Baptist Theological Review* 5, no. 1 (January 2008): 5.

⁵⁴ Fruchtenbaum identifies five facets of God's kingdom program. The first is the "universal kingdom," which refers to God's rule over all creation and history. The second is the "spiritual kingdom," which belong to all those who have experienced the new birth. The third is the "theocratic kingdom," which is God's rule over Israel. The fourth is the "messianic" or "millennial kingdom," which is that kingdom which the Messiah will come to rule over in the future. The fifth is the "mystery kingdom," which reigns between Christ first and second comings. See Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, "Israelology, Part 2 of 6," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 5, no. 3 (July 1999): 33-39. Excluding the first example, which is more general, Jude's examples of apostasy specifically involve the last four manifestations of God's kingdom program.

typology,⁵⁵ meaning that the apostates of Jude's letter and their ensuing condemnation become a fulfillment of the historical apostasies of the OT.⁵⁶ These six types stretch across the various dispensations,⁵⁷ yet, in the mind of Jude, their end is the

⁵⁵ J. Daryl Charles, "The Use of Tradition-Material in the Epistle of Jude," *BBR* 4, no. 1 (1994): 2.

⁵⁶ That the historical examples act as typology is exemplified in Jude 4: "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ." The meaning of the phrase οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι εἰς τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα, "those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation," is hotly disputed. However, the solution that most closely fits the purpose and context of Jude sees his OT references as prophecies predicting the condemnation of the apostates. This view provides the best explanation of πάλαι, "long ago," as a reference to the OT, and offers a link between this proclamation of judgment upon the apostates and the historical examples of apostasy following this condemnation. As Moo notes, "The simplest explanation [of Jude 4] ... is that Jude introduces the evidence for the false teachers' condemnation that will adduce in the rest of the letter. He makes his case by citing from the Old Testament (vv.5-8, 11), from Jewish traditions (vv.9, 14-16), and from the teaching of the apostles (vv.17-18. In all of these sources, he says, the 'condemnation' of these false teachers has long been established" (Moo, *2 Peter, Jude*, 230).

⁵⁷ As is commonly understood, the number of dispensations is not essential to dispensational belief. Traditionally, dispensationalists identify seven dispensations: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace, and Millennium. If this organization is maintained, the Jude references apostasy in five of the seven dispensations. Although examples of apostasy in the dispensations of Innocence and Human Government are absent from Jude's epistle, their absence should not defeat the thesis of this paper for two reasons: (1) As Ryrie himself points out, the number of dispensations is not an essential identifying characteristic of dispensationalism (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 50-57; see also Lightner, "Theological Perspectives on Theonomy Part 1: Theonomy and Dispensationalism," *BibSac* 143, no. 569 (January 1986): 34], which means that one could theoretically redefine the dispensations and thus have Jude include examples of apostasy from more dispensations [for example, Philip Heideman removes the dispensation of human government, an arrangement which would cover all of Jude's examples of apostasy save one from the dispensation of Innocence; see Philip Heideman,

same, and thus the Lord's consistent plan to judge apostasy serves as a warning to apostates in the present age.⁵⁸

“Dispensational Theology,” *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 4, no. 3 (July 1998): 41-42; and (2) It seems rather illogical to argue against the thesis of this paper on the grounds that Jude fails to mention examples from the dispensations of Innocence (a dispensation in which there would be little chance of apostasy), and Human Government (a dispensation that covers only three chapters of Scripture). The main point is that the Lord consistently judges apostasy as part of his kingdom program rather than how many dispensations the examples are drawn from.

⁵⁸ That such consistency of judgment exists across the dispensations as part of God's kingdom program is helpful in providing an apologetic for dispensationalism. Critics of dispensationalism argue that the distinctions resulting from its methodology, and particularly its recognition of dispensations, compartmentalizes the Bible and destroys its unity. For example, Broadwater remarks, “But we fear that the dispensationalist method of interpretation does violence to the unity of the scriptures and to the Sovereign continuity of God's purposes.” See Billy Broadwater, *Exposing the Fallacies of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture: A Biblical Examination of Christ's Second Coming* (Bloomington: WestBow P, 2014), 58; see also Anthony Am Hokema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 195; Mal Couch, *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996), 95]. This view is even understood by unbelievers, as Hood, Hill, and Williamson note, “Over the course of the previous 350 years of Protestant Christianity, the most common method of interpreting the Bible was the covenantal view, which emphasized the unity of all scripture.... Dispensationalism, however, instead of stressing the continuity between the Old and New Testaments, emphasized the discontinuity between the two by setting forth a series of separate ‘dispensations,’ each governed distinctly by God” (Ralph W. Hood Jr., Peter C. Hill, and W. Paul Williamson, *The Psychology of Religious Fundamentalism* [New York: Guilford P, 2005], 58). In response, dispensationalists argue for both continuity and discontinuity as God's program moves from dispensation to dispensation (Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 98-100). The judgment of apostasy serves to double-role as one aspect of that continuity and unity while also demonstrating that God's kingdom program is not limited to salvation.

Cain in the Dispensation of Conscience

The first example of apostasy referenced by Jude in accordance to biblical chronology is that of Cain. Describing the apostates, Jude laments, “Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain.” Jude does not elaborate on what he means in his argument that the apostates have “gone the way of Cain,” but simply assumes that his readers understand the context. Waltke points out that Jude identifies Cain with unreasoning animals (cf. v 10).⁵⁹ An unreasoning animal seeks to satisfy its own desires rather than think critically about a situation, and this rationale perfectly describes Cain.

Scholars have debated the reasons for the Lord rejecting Cain’s offering.⁶⁰ This debate aside, the text suggests that Cain was given instructions concerning the worship of the Lord yet did not follow them (for whatever reason), for when God rejected Cain’s offering, the Lord reasoned with him (Gen 4:6-7). However, instead of taking the Lord’s advice by offering a sacrifice fitting for the Lord, Cain became even more envious and killed his brother Abel. As a result, Cain and his family were completely cut off from the Lord.⁶¹ The record of his descendants ends with the account of Lamech and his vowing of revenge (vv 23-24), and Cain’s family is never mentioned against in the biblical record. In the NT, Cain is used as an example of evil (1 John 3:12) and contrasted with his brother Abel, who is identified as a “righteous man” (Heb 11:4).

What is the significance of Cain, his apostasy, and ensuing judgment? First, scholars recognize that God’s kingdom program is not simply about salvation, but separating those who

⁵⁹ Bruce Waltke, “Cain and His Offering,” *WTJ* 48, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 371.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of the rejection of Cain’s offering and its significance in the text, see Alan J. Hauser, “Linguistic and Thematic Links Between Genesis 4:1-16 and Genesis 2-3,” *JETS* 23, no. 4 (December 1980): 300; Waltke, “Cain,” 363-72.

⁶¹ See Richard L. Hester, “On Being a Marked Person Genesis 4:1-16,” *Faith and Mission* 4, no. 1 (Fall 1986): 80; Thomas A. Howe, “Calling Upon the Name of the Lord Genesis 4:26,” *Christian Apologetics Journal* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 80-81.

do not belong in that kingdom, and including Cain.⁶² Second, scholars also recognize that Cain's apostasy essentially established another "kingdom,"⁶³ and the establishment of another "kingdom" implies that an original kingdom already existed, one in which the apostate Cain could not belong. Finally, scholars recognize that God continued his kingdom program through the line of Seth, Adam's third son (Gen 4:25-26). Maarten Paul makes this interesting observation concerning Cain, apostasy, and God's purposes:

The book of Genesis may be summarized as a theological account of creation and the origin of the people of Israel. A unifying theme appears to be that, in spite of man's sin and apostasy, God remains faithful and provides new starts time and again. When Abel is killed, God continues with Seth. Cain and his descendants are mentioned in passing, yet the story remains focused on the main line proceeding from Seth to Noah.⁶⁴

By going the way of Cain, Jude's apostate opponents have not considered the consequences of their foolish actions. Although the apostates are among Jude's recipients,⁶⁵ just as Cain walked among Adam's family, like Cain, they will be removed. That the removal of apostates is part of God's kingdom program has been established long ago.

Sodom and Gomorrah in the Dispensation of Promise

The second example of apostasy is that of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude writes in verse 8, "Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after

⁶² Sidney Greidanus, "Preaching Christ from the Cain and Abel Narrative," *BibSac* 161, no. 644 (October 2004): 387-97.

⁶³ Gonzalez, "Where Sin Abounds," 13-18.

⁶⁴ Maarten J. Paul, "Genesis 4:17-24: A Case-Study in Eisegesis," *TynBull* 47, no. 1 (1996): 144.

⁶⁵ This is suggested by Jude 4 and 12. The latter is likely a reference to a partaking of the Lord's supper. See Davids, *Letters of 2 Peter and Jude*, 68-70.

strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.” It goes without saying that the nature of Sodom and Gomorrah’s sin is a controversial topic in today’s theological discourse. Yet, in the context of Jude, there is an even more pressing question: How can one identify the infamous cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as “apostates”? Can Sodom and Gomorrah truly be listed alongside men such as Cain, a man who possessed intimate knowledge of God yet rejected God, or the angels who shared an even more intimate relationship with God?

Some scholars have argued that the cities were destinations of ministry for God’s chosen people. According to biblical chronology, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed only 450 years following the flood, and thus Shem would have still been alive at this point. He would stand as a living testament to the Lord’s judgment, and with other key figures in the Genesis narrative, including Abraham, Lot, and Melchizedek, could proclaim God’s truth to the doomed cities.⁶⁶ Although the Genesis narrative never mentions a ministry of Shem or preaching efforts of Abraham, Lot, or Melchizedek, it is certainly true that the cities experienced the glory of the Lord. Both beheld the Lord’s work as Abram, his household servants, and his allies saved Lot and Sodom and Gomorrah from the hands of Chedorlaomer (Gen 14:13-16). Both also observed Melchizedek the priest of Salem offer worship to the Lord (vv 18-20). Even the king of Sodom offered restitution to Abram (vv 17, 21-24). It is certainly a stretch to say that Sodom and Gomorrah were part of God’s kingdom, but nevertheless the cities and their populace were familiar enough with God’s chosen patriarch and the worship of the Lord, thereby possessing enough knowledge of God’s kingdom program to be put in a place of decision.

⁶⁶ Martin Luther, who was probably influenced by an earlier Jewish exegesis, argued that Abraham, Shem, Lot, and Melchizedek attempted to call Sodom and Gomorrah to repentance. See Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, “The Compassionate God of Traditional Jewish and Christian Exegesis,” *TynBull* 58, no. 2 (2007): 198.

As the popular account goes, the cities rejected the Lord's sovereignty and performed wickedness (18:20), and thus the cities were destroyed (19:24-25). The most important remark concerning the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah is that the cities are marked as a δειγμα, or "example," of πυρὸς αἰωνίου, "eternal fire."⁶⁷ This statement implies plan and purpose on God's part.⁶⁸ Just as Jude's readers will stand in the presence of God without spot, so will those who turn from the Lord face eternal judgment.

Korah, Balaam, and Israel in the Dispensation of Law

The third, fourth, and fifth examples Jude uses come from the wilderness wandering during the dispensation of law. Speaking of Israel, Jude writes, "Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe" (v 5) and of Korah and Balaam he writes, "Woe to them! For ... pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah" (v 11). These three events are familiar to those who know the OT well.

All three apostasies take place during the dispensation of law, a time in which the Lord was establishing his theocratic kingdom through the nation of Israel. The grace bestowed upon the nation of Israel as God's covenant people did not come without obligation. As Moses writes in Deuteronomy 7:7-11,

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of

⁶⁷ That the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah served as an example of judgment was recognized prior to the writing of Jude. For example, see 2 Maccabees 2:5.

⁶⁸ Bauckham notes, "[The judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah] serves as proof of divine punishment for later generations" (Bauckham, *Jude*, 2 Peter, 54).

slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face. Therefore, you shall keep the commandment and the statutes and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them.

The Mosaic law established both covenant blessings to those who kept the law and covenant curses to those who broke the law. As the word records, certain Israelites did not follow the Lord and his authority and thus were removed from the theocratic kingdom. As to their relationship to Jude's opponents, Bateman asserts, "Whereas the wilderness community rebelled against God's leading by rejecting Moses, who wanted to lead God's people into the land of Canaan (v. 5b), Jude's rebels rebelled against God's leading by rejecting Jesus as Messiah (vv. 4, 8b), who came to inaugurate God's kingdom rule."⁶⁹

The Opponents of Christ in the Dispensation of the Millennium

Up until this point, Jude's references have referred to past examples of judgment. However, in addition to Jude's references to the past, he points to the future by way of Enoch's prophesy concerning the return of the Lord.⁷⁰ In verses 14 and 15, Jude writes,

⁶⁹ Herbert W. Bateman IV, "Rebellion and God's Judgment in the Book of Jude," *BibSac* 170, no. 680 (October 2013): 458.

⁷⁰ This prophecy of Enoch is recorded in the pseudepigraphal work of 1 Enoch (1:9). For explanation's concerning Jude's use of this non-canonical text, see Walter M. Dunnnett, "The Hermeneutics of Jude and 2 Peter: The Use of Ancient Jewish Traditions," *JETS* 31, no. 3 (September 1988): 287-92;

Προεφήτευσεν δὲ καὶ τοῦτοις ἑβδομος ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ Ἐνὼχ λέγων· Ἴδου ἦλθεν κύριος ἐν ἀγίαις μυριάσιν αὐτοῦ, ποιῆσαι κρίσιν κατὰ πάντων καὶ ἐλέγξει πάντας τοὺς ἀσεβεῖς περὶ πάντων τῶν ἔργων ἀσεβείας αὐτῶν ὧν ἠσέβησαν καὶ περὶ πάντων τῶν σκληρῶν ὧν ἐλάλησαν κατ' αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἀσεβεῖς.

It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Although the OT does not record this prophecy, it is likely that Enoch received this prophecy during his deep communion with God.⁷¹ Enoch's prophecy provides a striking defense of the Lord's consistent plan to judge apostasy throughout the dispensations. In fact, out of all Jude's types, Enoch's prophecy is the most revelatory of this plan for the following three reasons.

First, in its historical context (Gen 5:18-24), Enoch prophesied against the people of his day concerning the Lord's future judgment upon the ungodly.⁷² Although the flood is not mentioned in Enoch's prophecy, reason dictates that the wickedness accumulated during the days before the flood (cf. 6:1-6) prompted Enoch's prophetic ministry. This reality proves that the Lord's plan for judgment is both ancient and normative.

⁷¹ Waltke notes, "It is not dishonest to think that the prophecy preserved in *First Enoch* is a true prophecy. Jude's point is to show that this prophecy is *very* old. It was given to Enoch, the seventh from Adam in the genealogy preserved in Gen 5. The text says he walked (and so conversed) with God. Is it not plausible that while walking with Enoch and teaching him, God prophesied that he was coming with myriads of his holy ones in his final judgment on the wicked?" See Bruce K. Waltke, "Revisiting Inspiration and Incarnation," *WTJ* 71, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 93.

⁷² Rolland McCune, *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity* (Detroit: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009), 121.

Second, as to its prophetic nature, Enoch's prophecy points to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev 19:11-13). Whatever significance Enoch's prophecy had in the day it was spoken, there is no doubt that this prophecy had the ultimate intent of warning the people of the future day of judgment when Christ will return to establish His kingdom.⁷³ This reality proves that the Lord's plan for judgment is not only ancient, but has a future consummation.

Third, as it is purpose in the epistle of Jude, Jude applies Enoch's prophecy to his opponents. Of course, this leads to the question: How can Jude rightly apply a prophecy that was spoken in a context separated by thousands of years and pointed to the final judgment of apostasy at the Lord's return? The answer is that Jude applies the prophecy typologically, meaning "these *kinds* of men." In this way, Enoch's prophecy condemned Jude's opponents even though the prophecy was not spoken in Jude's day nor directly referred to Jude's opponents. Although Enoch was not directly speaking to the apostates, his prophecy applies to them because the Lord judges apostasy in a specific way.

The ultimate significance of Jude's quotation of Enoch is that God is in the business of judging apostasy. Although the prophecy ultimately points to a final day of judgment at the return of Christ, its preaching within history and application to the apostates in Jude's day reveals that God's judgment in the last day is just the consummation of a program of judgment that the Lord established from the beginning. Clearly, God's kingdom program is not limited to salvation.

The Apostates in the Dispensation of Grace

All of Jude's examples, both in dispensations prior to the dispensation of grace and following the dispensation of grace, are not documented to simply provide a historical survey of the Lord's specific acts of judgment. Instead, Jude has the deliberate purpose of warning his readers, and in turn the

⁷³ William F. Kerr, "Apostasy According to Jude," *Central Bible Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1959): 19.

church as a whole, in the present dispensation of grace. Jude surrounds the apostates with undeniable testimony to the Lord's consistency in God's plan of judgment. Bateman summarizes Jude's conclusion well: "Anyone who rebelled against God experienced His divine ire. Jude wanted his readers to remember that God was impartial when He judged rebellion, no matter who rebelled against Him, whether Jew, celestial being, or Gentile urbanite."⁷⁴ Jude may include encouragement to his readers concerning their salvation, but that encouragement forms the outlier of Jude's ultimate purpose, which is to warn his readers in this dispensation about the Lord's plan to judge apostasy.

Excursus: Jude 25

One potential difficulty for the thesis of this paper is found in Jude 25: μόνῳ θεῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν δόξα μεγαλωσύνη κράτος καὶ ἐξουσία πρὸ παντὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος καὶ νῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν, "to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen." This doxology appears to place δόξα, "glory," alongside μεγαλωσύν, "majesty," κράτος, "power," and ἐξουσία, "authority," as equal "attributes" of God. Therefore, is it possible that Jude does not understand God's glory as the ultimate end towards which all things find their end, but rather one of multiple ends?

In response, it is unlikely that Jude identifies δόξα as one of four ends based upon Jude's doxology. μεγαλωσύνη, κράτος, and ἐξουσία are used by Jude only in verse 25, yet δόξα is found in two other verses, with the previous verse being the most significant.⁷⁵ Here, as noted and defended above, Jude states the ultimate end of man's salvation is that man might "stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy."

⁷⁴ Bateman IV, "Rebellion and God's Judgment," 469.

⁷⁵ Δόξα is also used in Jude 8, but this reference is not of God's glory but that of a certain class of angels and thus is irrelevant to the current issue.

Jude does not say that man might stand in the presence of His μεγαλωσύνη, κράτος, or ἐξουσία. Since the salvation of Jude's recipients is a main concern of Jude (if not the main concern of Jude), to say nothing of the great importance of salvation in God's divine decree (as covenant theologians rightly argue), this is hardly an insignificant point. Although it is impossible to fully read the mind of Jude, it is almost certain that Jude would have included these other doxological points in verse 24 if they were also to the end of man's salvation. In contrast, it is just as likely that Jude includes μεγαλωσύνη, κράτος, and ἐξουσία in his doxology (note that it is called a *doxology*) as expansions of Jude's doxology rather than "co-equal" ends of all things. Anything beyond this is reading an argument into the text that is not present in the text.

Conclusion

From the above review, it is evident that Jude's content supports the overarching theme of Scripture as designated by dispensationalists. The epistle of Jude stands as a reminder that God's program for the ages includes a salvific element, but is much broader in scope. The salvation of Jude's readers is not the end in itself but the means by which they would be presented before God as a living sacrifice. This plan of salvation is not extended to the angels, nor is it the entirety of God's kingdom program. Although it might be extreme to identify Jude as a dispensationalist, his thought is certainly compatible with Ryrie's third point.

Dispensationalists and nondispensationalists may rightly critique the wording of Ryrie's third point, but nevertheless the Scriptures offer evidence for the glory of God as the unifying theme of the Bible and history. How that is expressed as a distinctive and integral part of dispensational theology will no doubt be the focus of research in years to come.

Imprisoned for the Glory of God: Considering Ryrie's Third Aspect of the *Sine Qua Non* of Dispensationalism in Paul's Prison Letters

Wayne Slusser

“To God be the glory” is a phrase often used by evangelicals to express honor and/or praise to God.² Although this phrase may be more of a spoken cliché at times rather than truly giving honor to whom honor is due, Charles Ryrie saw it as an essential aspect of dispensationalism. In fact, he writes “the unifying principle of normative dispensationalism is

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² Frederick W. Danker provides four main definitions for the term δόξα: (1) the condition of being bright or shining, brightness, splendor, radiance; (2) the state of being magnificent, greatness, splendor; (3) honor as enhancement or recognition of status or performance, fame, recognition, renown, honor prestige; and (4) a transcendent being deserving of honor, majestic being (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. Based on Walter Bauer's *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, 6th ed., ed. Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, with Viktor Reichmann and on Previous English Editions by W. F. Arndt, F. W. Gingrich, and F. W. Danker [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2000], 256-58).

Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida categorize δόξα in the following semantic domains: features of objects (glorious – 79.18); physical events and states (brightness – 14.49); power, force (manifestation of power characterized by glory – 76.13); status (honor or respect in relation to status – 87.4) and (high status or rank – 87.23); supernatural beings and powers (supernatural powers – 12.49); and geographical objects and features (regions above the earth – 1.15) (*Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1 [New York: United Bible Societies, 1989]).

doxological, or the glory of God, for the dispensations reveal the glory of God as He manifests His character in the differing stewardships given to man.”³

Paul’s letters are *addressed to churches* or individuals from the first century, as well as *intended for* specific occasions related to the original recipients.⁴ Basically, his letters responded to a need or issue existing within a church to correct or clarify doctrinal beliefs and exhort correct behavior, thereby encouraging the readers as they faced everyday life.⁵ Paul’s letters follow the normal pattern of the Hellenistic letters of his day.⁶ The typical pattern of the Hellenistic letter contains a

³ Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, rev. & exp. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 93-94. He also states that the overall purpose to God’s program is God’s own glory; that is, in and through his dealings with mankind, glorifying himself is the underlying purpose of God in the world.

⁴ Gordon D. Fee, Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 60. Also see William Arp’s discussion regarding interpreting and preaching epistles (“Preaching the Epistles,” *Journal Of Ministry & Theology* 17, no. 1 [Spring 2013]: 57-78).

⁵ Paul was concerned with the life situation of his readers, but treated each situation as unique and important; thus, the structure and content of his letters vary. Marion L. Soards adds, “Paul wrote to address specific, problematic situations that existed in particular churches. He sought through letters to extend his influence in order to assure desired results, so that in every communication Paul always strives to build up the congregation addressed” (“The Life and Writings of Paul,” in *The New Testament Today*, ed. Mark Powell [Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1999], 88). William H. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr. agree: “Epistles are also the most ‘occasional.’ In other words, the authors wrote the epistles for specific occasions to address individual audiences who were facing unique problems” (*Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* [Nashville: Word, 1993], 352).

⁶ William Doty writes, “I argue . . . that in his letters a genre or subgenre was created, and that our task is that of identifying the stages and steps in generic construction. Instead of arguing that there is one clearly identified Pauline form, I argue that there is a basic understanding of structure by which Paul wrote, but that this basic understanding could be modified on occasion, and that the basic understanding itself was

threefold division: an opening, a main body of the letter, and a closing. As one studies Paul's letters, it seems clear that he adopted the Hellenistic letter patterns of his day.⁷ Understanding the letter format provides two advantages for the interpreter. First, the letter format provides clues to identify the structure so that the interpreter can locate the major letter sections (e.g., introduction, thanksgiving, body, etc.). Second, it assists the interpreter to identify possible relationships between the sections. For example, the thanksgiving section (typically introduced with a form of the verb, εὐχαριστέω – "I give thanks") provides topics that Paul will develop later in the letter.

However, as theologians or scholars study and interpret Paul's letters, they will quickly see that he subtly altered the structure and content of a typical Hellenistic letter for his own purposes. These alterations reflect the unique Christian character of his letters. His focus was the original audience and how he could best relate to them. Due to the fact that each of Paul's letters are occasional, the interpreter must seek to understand the structure,⁸ situation, community, and

something that came into being only gradually" (*Letters in Primitive Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973], 21).

⁷ For a primary discussion on the relationship between Hellenistic letter patterns and the patterns of Pauline writings see Peter T. O'Brien, "Letters, Letter Forms," *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 550-53. For supplemental reading concerning this relationship see Ronald Russell, "Epistle as a Literary Form," in *The New Testament in Literary Criticism*, comp. and ed. Leland Ryken (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1984), 75; Craig L. Blomberg, "The Diversity of Literary Genres in the New Testament," in *Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues*, ed. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 279-85; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 11-19; Stanley K. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Library of Early Christianity 5 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 20-57; Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity*, 1973.

⁸ Rather than examining Paul's letters according to their epistolary character (e.g., Hellenistic letter patterns), some scholars interpret Paul's letters based on a rhetorical analysis. See Frank W. Hughes, "The Rhetoric

circumstances being addressed. Therefore, it seems both important and necessary to consider Paul's prison letters, each one in its own right, to best discover how and why Paul uses δόξα ("glory") while he was imprisoned for the sake of the gospel of Christ.

of Letters," in *The Thessalonians Debate: Methodological Discord or Methodological Synthesis*, ed. Karl P. Donfried and Johannes Beutler (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 199-215.

There are, however, some problems to interpreting Paul's letters through ancient rhetorical categories. First, there seems to be somewhat of a problem in mixing the genre of speech and letter writing. Although both genres were readily used, they served two different purposes. Paul's letters are not speeches to be read in the courts or to serve as a persuasive device. Second, those who advocate a rhetorical approach assume Paul was learned in the ancient form of rhetoric of his day through the ancient rhetorical handbooks. This claim is not supported. There is no concrete evidence that Paul was trained in the rhetoric of his day. Third, the fathers of the early church, who had received rhetorical training, did not interpret Paul's letters from the perspective of rhetorical theory. Further discussion on this third point can be found in P. H. Kern, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 167-203. The three points and others can be read in further detail in Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 69-77; Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 73-82; and Schreiner, *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles*, 2nd ed., 19-30. Stanley Porter rejects the use of rhetorical devices in interpreting Paul. He writes, "There is, therefore, little if any theoretical justification in the ancient handbooks for application of the formal categories of the species and organization of rhetoric to analysis of the Pauline epistles" (Stanley E. Porter, "The Theoretical Justification for Application of Rhetorical Categories to Pauline Epistolary Literature," in *Rhetoric and the New Testament: Essays from the 1992 Heidelberg Conference*, ed. S. E. Porter and T. H. Olbricht [Sheffield: Academic, 1993], 115-16).

O'Brien in conclusion states, "Paul's letters, then, ought not to be interpreted 'through the grid of the ancient rhetorical rules', and the notion that 'this method better than any other holds the hermeneutical key that will unlock the true meaning of the apostle's writings' is seriously flawed It is more appropriate that attention be directed to the apostle's own internal method of argument" (*Letter to the Ephesians*, 79-80).

In Paul's prison letters, he uses the term δόξα eighteen times.⁹ This article examines these eighteen uses with a twofold effort. First, to discover Paul's intent within the argument of each prison letter; that is, answering the question, what is its meaning (structure and syntax)? Second, to locate the position of these uses within the structure of Paul's prison letters; answering, how is it related to the letter as a whole (synthesis)? In other words, when Paul uses δόξα what does it mean and why is it there?

Ephesians

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is one of those books of the NT that causes Christian believers to reflect on the glory of God because of his gracious doings on their behalf (e.g., God's calling, 1:3-6; the Son's redeeming, 1:7-12; the Holy Spirit's sealing, 1:13-14). Several scholars have classified Ephesians as one of the most influential documents ever written in the Christian church. It is considered the "quintessence of Paulinism."¹⁰ Brown claims, "Only Romans could match Ephesians as a candidate for exercising the most influence on Christian thought and spirituality."¹¹ At the same time, it is important to note that Paul wrote Ephesians to address matters that relate to believers in first-century Ephesus.

It has been traditionally understood that Ephesians was written to the believers in Ephesus of Asia Minor.¹² However, it

⁹ Only the noun form of δόξα is used in the prison letters; not the verb form δοξάζω ("I glorify"). The word δόξα does not occur in Philemon; only in Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

¹⁰ F. F. Bruce, "St. Paul in Rome. 4. The Epistle to the Ephesians," *BJRL* 49 (Spring 1967): 303.

¹¹ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 620.

¹² Scholars who hold to Ephesus as the destination for Ephesians include Clinton E. Arnold, Harold Hoehner (who mentions that this position is gaining support by Gnilka, Conzelmann, and Lindemann), and Ralph P. Martin. Harold Hoehner summarizes Ephesus as "a very influential city in Paul's day. Its influence both as a secular and religious center emanated to the other parts of the Roman Empire. It seems that Paul

is not inconceivable that there were other churches in the area for which this letter was intended.¹³ Ephesians is a letter that urges believers, based on their union with Christ, to change their inner being and character in a radical way. It is a combination of theology (chaps. 1-3) and exhortation (chaps. 4-6). Paul, in a rather eloquent way, discusses God and his work, Christ and the gospel, life with God's Spirit, and the right way to live.¹⁴ One of the more comprehensive statements about Ephesians is given by Peter O'Brien. He states,

[Paul] writes Ephesians to his mainly Gentile Christian readers, for whom he has apostolic responsibilities, with the intention of informing, strengthening, and encouraging them by assuring them of their place within the gracious, saving purpose of God, and urging them to bring their lives into conformity with his divine plan of summing up all things in Christ. Paul wants to “ground, shape and challenge” his readers in their faith. In other words, the main purpose of his letter is *identity formation*.¹⁵

Simply put, Ephesians exhorts its readers to walk worthy of God's calling. Paul uses $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ and its relationship to God,

selected strategic cities from which the influence of the gospel would spread to the surrounding areas. Many cities such as Ephesus were places where the cross-pollination of ideas was present” (*Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002], 89). Klyne Snodgrass, on the other hand, agrees with the suggestion that Ephesians is a circular letter to be read in more than one place (*Ephesians, The NIV Application Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 21).

¹³ Hoehner states that Paul was in Ephesus on his third missionary journey and probably ministered for about two and a half years. He probably established many churches both in the city and in the outlying village areas (*Ephesians*, 79). Snodgrass speaks to this probability regarding multiple churches to whom Ephesians is addressed. He writes, “We may safely assume that the letter was a general letter to Gentile believers in southwestern Asia Minor and that it became identified with Ephesus as the most important city between Rome and Antioch. It is also possible that Ephesus was one of several cities to which the letter went” (*Ephesians*, 21).

¹⁴ Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 18.

¹⁵ O'Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 57.

Christ, and believers, to emphasize that it is God's grace that favors the believer now and forever. Seven uses of δόξα occur either in the anthem of praise (1:3-14) or prayer (1:15-23 and 3:14-21) sections; while one use (3:13) is a historical reflection of Paul's sufferings that leads to his prayer in chapter three.

Structure

The first three uses are in Paul's anthem of praise, or eulogy section (a declaration of the blessedness of God).¹⁶ This eulogy is Paul's way to encourage the Ephesian believers to offer praise to God by declaring God's blessedness (1:3) and establishing three grounds for it (1:4-6, 7-12, 13-14). Each of the grounds focuses on a member of the Trinity and each concludes with the refrain εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ ("to the praise of his glory," vv 6, 12, 14).¹⁷ There is a progression and explanation of God's eternal plan and purpose of the salvation blessings (e.g., election or call of the Father, redemption through the Son, and sealing by the means of the Holy Spirit). Paul's emphatic purpose for this section is simply to show the Ephesian believers that God's purposes in Christ and through the Holy Spirit deserve both meditation and adoration. Through this outpouring of adoration, Paul hopes to stimulate a response by reminding them of God's blessing on their life through their redemption.

The following two uses (1:17 and 1:18) occur in Paul's first prayer in chapter one (1:15-23), containing the thanksgiving.¹⁸

¹⁶ Peter O'Brien calls this section of praise the *berakah*; extended eulogies or sections of blessing. These eulogies resemble some OT examples of blessings such as Psalm 41:13; 72:18, 19; 106:48 ("Ephesians I: An Unusual Introduction to a New Testament Letter," *NTS* 25 [1978-79]: 504-16).

¹⁷ William J. Larkin, *Ephesians: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2009), 4.

¹⁸ Paul begins the paragraph with Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ γὰρ ("Wherefore, I also" or "For this reason, I also") linking it back to the preceding paragraph (1:3-14). Scholars have characterized this section as one of the most formal elements in the Pauline letter. David W. Smetana for example, says that it "is indeed a miniature letter itself. It acts as a table of contents, giving a

While the thanksgiving formula is in verse 16,¹⁹ Paul introduces the thanksgiving section in verse 15 with a causal participle ἀκούσας τὴν καθ' ὑμᾶς πίστιν (“after hearing of your faith”), giving the reason Paul gives thanks.

The thanksgiving section signals three major themes of the letter. In verse 17, Paul introduces the content of the prayer using a ἵνα clause; while verse 18 introduces the purpose of the prayer εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι ὑμᾶς (“that you might know”). What Paul wants the believers to know is introduced by three interrogative clauses.²⁰ In both verses Paul utilizes δόξης to point the reader to praise the *glorious* qualities or attributes of God.

The final three uses of δόξα (3:13, 16, and 21) occur in relation to Paul’s second prayer. The use in 3:13 indicates the situation of Paul (sufferings) and the benefit for believers (salvation – δόξα ὑμῶν – “your glory”). This leads to Paul’s prayer (3:14-21). The other uses, 3:16 & 21 assist the reader in understanding the basis for glorifying God.

Paul, therefore, uses two prayers. The first prayer connects with the eulogy (1:3-14), which praises the blessedness of God, and the second prayer responds to the theological message of

summary of what is to come, and is in essence a digest of the whole letter” (“The Thanksgiving Sections’ Correlation with the Content of the Prison Epistles” [Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1984; repr., Theological Research Exchange Network, 001-0316, microfiche], 5); see also Roetzel, *Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*, 4th ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1998), 56-58.

¹⁹ This normal pattern includes the verb εὐχαριστέω (“I give thanks”). Other thanksgiving sections in Pauline writings include Romans (1:8ff.), 1 Corinthians (1:4ff.), Philippians (1:3ff.), Colossians (1:3ff.), 1 Thessalonians (1:2ff.), 2 Thessalonians (1:3ff.), Philemon (4ff.). If the pastorals are included then 1 Timothy 1:12ff. and 2 Timothy 1:3ff. open with χάριν ἔχω rather than εὐχαριστέω.

²⁰ The three things the Paul wants the believer to know are (1) τίς ἐστὶν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς κλήσεως αὐτοῦ (“what is the hope of his calling”), (2) τίς ὁ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις (“and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,”), and (3) καὶ τί τὸ ὑπερβάλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ εἰς ἡμᾶς τοὺς πιστεύοντας (“and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us who believe”).

2:1-3:13,²¹ which declares praise (δόξα) to God for his character and qualities. Using these two prayers, Paul calls on the Father to give wisdom and strength that the believers might know the power of their salvation to live for him.

Syntax

Paul uses the refrain εἰς ἔπαινον δόξης αὐτοῦ (“to the praise of his glory”) throughout the eulogy section to emphasize the believer’s praise toward the Father; that is, the glory of the Father.²² In the three occurrences, vv 6, 12, and 14, Paul uses the genitive case to attribute this quality to God. The use in verse 6, however has another substantive τῆς χάριτος (“the grace”) following δόξης.²³ Here Paul’s emphasis is on an aspect of God’s glory; that is, his grace, therefore making the object of praise God’s grace.²⁴ It is God’s gracious act on behalf of people that saves them (1:3-6).

²¹ The three paragraphs (2:1-10, 11-22, 3:1-13) contain theology. Paul discusses details related to the hope of his calling, passing from death to life (2:1-10); the riches of his inheritance, strangers to fellow heirs (2:11-22); and the greatness of his mighty power, as it strengthened Paul in his ministry and as he instructs them concerning the mystery of the church (3:1-13).

²² Clinton Arnold states, “Paul leads his readers to the conclusion that the only proper way to respond to the incredible favor and love God shows to his people is by rendering praise to him, magnifying his glory” (*Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010], 84).

²³ Frank Thielman indicates that Paul’s use of a “string of genitives slow the discourse and emphasize the grandeur or gravity of the thought. . . . Here God took pleasure in his primordial decision to adopt believers as his children, and he did this so that they might praise him for the magnificence of his grace” (*Ephesians*, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010], 53).

²⁴ See Arnold, *Ephesians*, 84; Larkin, *Ephesians: A Handbook*, 8-9; Benjamin L. Merkle, *Ephesians: Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016), 21-22; O’Brien, *Letter to the Ephesians*, 104-05. Contra Hoehner who states the object of praise is God’s glory: “It is praise to God’s essential being, his glory, for his

In verses 12 and 14, the emphasis shifts to God's glory as the object of praise. Specifically, in verse 12, Paul says that believers were made heirs, in order that they will praise his glory for the great plan of redemption through Jesus Christ (1:7-12). And in verse 14, Paul desires the readers to praise God's glory because he has sealed believers through the Holy Spirit (1:13-14).²⁵ Therefore, the theocentric character of the passage (1:3-14), the work of the Trinity bringing about blessings of salvation, ought to have as the ultimate goal a note of praise; hence Paul's use of the refrain "to the praise of his glory." It seems that Hoehner's definition of glory throughout this eulogy section as "the reflection of the essence of one's being, the summation of all of one's attributes"²⁶ captures Paul's intent.

In verses 17 and 18, Paul uses δόξης in his first prayer (1:15-23) as an attributive genitive. As attributive, it specifies "an *attribute* or innate quality of the head substantive."²⁷ In verse 17, Paul uses δόξης to describe a quality or characteristic of the Father (πατήρ), the fact that he is *glorious*. Thielman states that he is glorious because he is the origin and defining example of glory.²⁸ In verse 18, Paul uses another string of genitives, ὁ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης τῆς κληρονομίας αὐτοῦ ("the riches of the glory of his inheritance"), much like the

graciousness as seen in his acts of electing and predestinating" (*Ephesians*, 201-02).

²⁵ The genitive, δόξης, in vv 12 and 14 is taken as an objective genitive; that is, the readers [someone] praises his [God's] glory.

²⁶ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 200. Christopher W. Morgan states, "In saving us, God displays his grace; and in displaying his grace, he brings glory to himself" ("Toward a Theology of the Glory of God," in *The Glory of God* ed. Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010], 158).

²⁷ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 86.

²⁸ Thielman states, "The glory that God displays is the splendor or brightness that is often characteristic of God's power, authority, and honor in the OT and that he graciously shares with his people. As the benediction has shown, it is for the praise of God's glory (1:12, 14), shown especially in his grace (1:6), that God has made his people heirs (1:12) and provided them with a future inheritance (1:14)" (*Ephesians*, 95).

construction in verse 6, to once again slow the discourse and emphasize the glorious nature of God's inheritance. It is God's glory, then, that is manifested among the believers; his inheritance. It is the inheritance that God will give to his people. Paul's prayer therefore, establishes God the Father as the one who gives (1:17), and does so as the glorious Father. God the Father is the source of all glory and power enlightening the eyesight of his readers. Verse 18 specifies what the believer is to know; that is, they are his and there is a future salvation for them.

The final three uses in Ephesians, occur in relation to Paul's second prayer (3:14-21). The use of δόξα in verse 13 is the only place in Ephesians where its referent is not God; rather it is the believer. Here Paul explains that his sufferings, the fact that he is in prison, promote the believer's salvation/eternal life. In other words, the believer's salvation *is* the glory.²⁹

In verses 16 and 21, Paul's second prayer, he desires that his readers are strengthened to know Christ's presence and love. The source and capacity (inexhaustible amount) in which this strengthening is to take place is by God's might, a representation and manifestation of the glory of God. Hoehner concludes, "In essence, he asks God to grant that forthcoming request according to the wealth of his essential being."³⁰ Paul concludes his second prayer with a doxology where the ascription of glory (δόξα) belongs to God, and God alone.³¹ Glory is to be ascribed to God in and through the church, it is to be exclaimed by those "in Christ," and God's glory will have no end.

²⁹ Thielman states, "Paul's suffering for his readers is their glory because his faithful proclamation of the gospel, in spite of the suffering that his faithfulness entails, has led to their salvation (1:13) and to a partial experience of the 'glory' that one day will be theirs in full" (*Ephesians*, 222). Hoehner succinctly writes, "His [Paul's] imprisonment was the glory which they enjoyed because they were now creatures in Christ" (*Ephesians*, 470).

³⁰ Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 477-78.

³¹ Larkin indicates, "δόξα here refers to the honor and praise due him" (*Ephesians: A Handbook*, 66).

Synthesis

Paul begins and ends the first half of Ephesians (1:3-3:21) in similar fashion, ascribing praise and honor to God the Father. Other than the use of δόξα in 3:13, the seven other uses point to a manifestation of the display of an attribute of God's character (e.g., grace, wealth, and power) on behalf of believers and their new life in Christ, including salvation and sanctification. Therefore, giving opportunity for believers to ascribe credit to God alone for their new life and its blessings.

Philippians

Paul's letter to the Philippians is personal. There are three basic ideas that help to summarize the thought of the letter. First, he expresses his gratitude to the Philippian church for the generous gift he received through their emissary Epaphroditus. Second, he challenges the Philippians to remain faithful both to a life that is representative of living out the gospel and a life faithful in sharing the gospel. Third, he addresses the issue of harmony and unity. The letter is written much like a conversation, where a shift in topics occurs often. Although shifts in topics provide some difficulty in establishing the structure of Philippians, the Greco-Roman letter structure of Paul's day is still evident throughout.

The letter's theme is often captured using the word *joy*. Though it is true that joy is one component, or topic, mentioned throughout the letter, it is probably better to see Philippians as a letter of encouragement for its readers to stand firm in the gospel and united in love; that is, live in light of the present and future hope of the gospel which produces joy and unity in all circumstances.

Much like Ephesians, Paul's use of δόξα relates to God, Christ, and believers. However, there is also a use that points to unbelievers. The uses of δόξα still communicate that God, and God alone, is to be ascribed praise and honor by all. There are six uses of δόξα throughout the letter. Three uses conclude various sections of the letter that clearly show God is deserving of praise (1:11; 2:11; 4:20). Two uses show the relationship between the wealth of God and Christ for the benefit of the

believer (3:21; 4:19); while the last use (3:19), relates to unbelievers.

Structure

Paul's first use of δόξα concludes the thanksgiving section (1:3-11) of his letter. This customary section in first-century letter writing finds Paul giving thanks to God because of the gospel partnership that he and the Philippian church share (1:3-8). Paul also prays that the partnership would continue; namely their love would characterize the church's behavior each day (1:9-11). The second use also concludes an important section of Paul's letter; that is, the early Christian hymn (2:5-11) that honors and highlights Christ's humility and servanthood.³² In both uses of δόξα, Paul's intention is to highlight and ascribe praise and honor to God.

The third and fourth uses of δόξα are in a section of warning (3:1-21). This section is part of the body of the letter. The use in 3:19 is the single use in Philippians that refers to unbelievers, those enemies of the cross of Christ, that are attempting to lead astray the faithful believers of the church of Philippi. According to Paul, the other use in 3:21 describes the future state of the believers' body, especially in contrast to those whose mindset is set on earthly things (cf. 3:19).

The last two uses (4:19, 20) are found in Paul's concluding section (4:10-20). Here he is grateful for the generosity provided by the Philippian church. In 4:19, δοξῆ indicates the location of God's riches; whereas δόξα in 4:20 serves as Paul's doxology to ascribe honor to God himself.

³² Both an explanation of the structure and classification of 2:5-11 as a hymn is beyond the scope of this paper. However, much ink has been spilled to unpack this section of the Philippian letter. See the following commentaries for bibliography and possible explanations: G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 118-33; Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, rev. ed., WBC 43 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 92-98; and Peter T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 186-87.

Syntax

Paul concludes two sections of his letter using a prepositional phrase of purpose that begins with εἰς (“for,” or “to”). First, his thanksgiving and prayer section is concluded by ascribing a doxological praise to God, 1:11 – εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον θεοῦ, (“for the glory and praise of God”).³³ This is similar to the wording in Paul’s anthem of praise and prayer found in Ephesians (cf. Eph 1:6, 12, 14; 3:21). The reader however, must keep in mind that Paul’s use here, and elsewhere, is not out of habit; rather it is intentional. D. A. Carson reflects on its purpose; that is, “his [Paul’s] prayer is offered up ‘to the glory and praise of God’ (1:11). . . . These are gospel prayers. That is, they are prayers offered to advance the work of the gospel in the lives of the Philippian believers. And, by asking for gospel fruit in their lives, the *ultimate* purpose of these petitions is to bring glory to the God who redeemed them.”³⁴ In Philippians 1:11 Paul states that

God is the ultimate finality of the Christian life, and as such he alone is to be honored and praised by all. In exactly the same way that the life of Jesus and its influence on humankind were ordained for the glory of the Father (cf. Phil. 2:11), so the life of the Philippian community and its influence on its environs are also ordained for the glory and praise of God.”³⁵

Second, Paul’s infamous Christian hymn illustrating the humility and servanthood of Christ also concludes with a purpose clause, 2:11 – εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς, (“for the glory of God the Father”). The hymn clearly points to Christ’s humiliation as a servant; a servant who is obedient all the way

³³ Joseph H. Hellerman states, “Both δόξα and ἔπαινος functioned semantically in the context of Rome’s honor culture, where public recognition and acclamation served as preeminent social commodities” (*Philippians*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2015], 35).

³⁴ D. A. Carson, *Basics for Believers: An Exposition of Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 22.

³⁵ Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 34.

to the death on a cross. This last phrase summarizes the hymn; that is, “Paul carries the themes of status, honor, and prestige through to the end of the narrative, where, through the exaltation of Jesus, God finally receives the public recognition that is his due.”³⁶

The use of δόξαν, both in 1:11 and 2:11, conclude Paul’s thought. The first (1:11) concludes Paul’s prayer. It is a prayer on behalf of the Philippian community. His doxological expression gives God the credit for the Philippians’ status as new creations, as they continue daily abounding in love, with pure motives and blameless service, and be filled with the fruit of righteousness. The second use concludes Paul’s hymn (2:11). His universal confession that Jesus Christ is Lord leads to the crediting of honor and prestige to God as the Father. Therefore, the daily acts of love by the Philippian believers and the humble service of Christ ultimately give honor to God.

As Paul continues his letter, he offers necessary warnings to the Philippian church regarding those who oppose Christ and the gospel (3:1-21). The use of δόξα in 3:19 is a nominative subject describing the opponents: unbelievers.³⁷ The opponents flaunted their social status; or they *gloried* in their activities. Carson states, “They are endlessly drawn to creature comforts. They please themselves; their god is located no higher than their belly.”³⁸ They valued things that are not worthy of honor; quite frankly, what they valued, was downright shameful. These opponents are “enemies of the cross of Christ” and the Philippians were to imitate Paul.

Paul insists, rather, that the Philippians adopt the mentality that their position, their place of citizenship, is in heaven. And

³⁶ Hellerman, *Philippians*, 125. See BDAG, 257-58. Danker classifies the use in Philippians 1:11 and 2:11 under honor as enhancement or recognition of status or performance, fame, recognition, renown, honor, prestige.

³⁷ Hellerman states, “The church in Philippi was one among a number of nonelite religious associations in the colony that shared meals together as part of their regular meetings. The pagan gatherings were known to involve gluttony and immorality, including sexual license” (*Philippians*, 219-20).

³⁸ Carson, *Basics for Believers*, 92.

as a response, their lives are to represent and function as a community of heavenly citizens here on earth. In short, the Philippians are “to emulate those who eagerly await Jesus’ return, not those whose mind is on earthly things.”³⁹ It is Jesus who will then change the citizens’ body to “conform to his body of glory” (3:21).⁴⁰ Paul uses δόξης to contrast the present condition of the Philippian opponents with the future heavenly condition of the Philippians themselves. The opponents’ earthly focus runs contrary to the heavenly minded expectation for the Philippians’ earthly life; especially in light of their future physical existence to be changed by Christ.

Paul’s last two uses of δόξα are in his concluding thoughts to the Philippian church, 4:19 and 4:20. The concluding thoughts primarily speak of Paul’s gratitude for their generosity. Due to the Philippians’ gift, Paul’s thoughts are that God will supply/meet all the needs that they have, just as they have met his. Paul’s careful use of the preposition κατά (“according to”) indicates that the Philippians’ needs will not only be met because they are coming *from* God’s wealth, but more importantly, *in proportion to* his wealth. The phrase ἐν δόξῃ (“in glory”) follows τὸ πλοῦτος (“the riches”), indicating where God’s riches are found; that is, “they exist ‘in the sphere of God’s glory,’ where God ‘dwells’ in infinite splendor and majesty.”⁴¹

³⁹ Ibid., 95.

⁴⁰ O’Brien, *Epistle to the Philippians*, 464. He sees it as a genitive of quality, as does William Varner, *Philippians: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2016), 89. Contra Hellerman, “the body belonging to his prestigious condition” (*Philippians*, 225). Hawthorne and Martin state, “Christ’s body of glory; i.e., they too will be spiritual bodies—not bodies consisting of spirit merely but bodies with a new determining or motivating force. They will be bodies brought forth and determined by divine, heavenly power. As a consequence, it will be possible to say of these bodies—these transformed people, rather—they are imperishable and immortal, models of glory and power” (*Philippians*, 233-34).

⁴¹ Hellerman, *Philippians*, 270. Varner claims, “This usage follows the example of the word in the LXX where it is often a synonym for God himself” (*Philippians: A Handbook*, 110).

In 4:20, Paul once again (cf. Eph 3:21) ascribes credit that is due to God, and due to God alone. Hawthorne and Martin indicate “when people give glory to God or burst out in a doxological refrain, as here, they are not adding to God something that is not already present but are actively acknowledging or extolling God for what he already is.”⁴²

Synthesis

Paul uses forms of δόξα to conclude three different sections of his letter (1:11; 2:11; 4:20); each of which insist the credit, honor be given to God. God deserves the credit for three things: (1) the Philippians’ salvation, and therefore a life that continues to represent this change, (2) Christ’s exaltation, and (3) God’s position, he is forever magnificent and splendid. He is due this honor because he meets the Philippians’ needs according to his wealth, and they will one day possess a glorious body. The use of δόξα in 3:19 expresses the unbeliever’s version of honor; it brings about shame. Like Ephesians, the manifestation of the display of God’s character (e.g., grace, wealth, and power) on behalf of believers and their new life in Christ, including salvation and sanctification, is Paul’s focus.

Colossians

Paul’s letter to the Colossian church seems to place an emphasis on Christ. Although there is some form of what appears to be a set of *false teachings* (cf. 2:4, 8), Paul does not clearly describe the kind or content of these teachings. However, as Douglas Moo claims, “We hear Paul’s response to the issues at Colossae as communicated to him by Epaphras. But we do not have direct access to the other side of the conversation. In this case, the crucial conversation partner is not the Colossians themselves but the false teachers.”⁴³ This

⁴² Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 274.

⁴³ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 49.

makes the circumstances behind the text, the context, difficult to ascertain.

It appears that Paul is dealing with a set of teachings where he deems it necessary to point the Colossian church “to the centrality of Christ and the finality of his authority.”⁴⁴ Again, there are some statements regarding the false teachings throughout Paul’s letter, most significantly in 2:8-23, but the specificity is just not there.⁴⁵ Perhaps Morna Hooker is correct in her article that Paul is not addressing any particular teachings; rather simply issuing warnings to the Colossian church regarding some potentially damaging teachings that could harm the church.⁴⁶ As a result, I think Moo has the best approach; that is, Christ is central and supreme. For the Colossians, and by application, every believer, Christ meets every spiritual need and it is not necessary to yield to alternative spiritual teachings.⁴⁷ As a result, Paul urges believers to live out their faith in Christ by worshipping him and abandoning a life of idolatry, building up God’s people, and witnessing to the community.

The Colossians are encouraged to live out their faith because the work and status of Christ affords them this privilege. Once again, similar to the use in Ephesians and Philippians, Paul’s use of δόξα relates to God, Christ, and believers. There are four uses of δόξα in this letter. The first is in Paul’s thanksgiving/prayer section (1:11). The following three uses are found in two different locations of the letter 1:27

⁴⁴ David W. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 25.

⁴⁵ See Moo’s discussion on the direct and indirect statements regarding the potential *content* of the false teaching to which Paul speaks (*Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 50-60). See also Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, WBC 44 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), xxx-xxxviii.

⁴⁶ Morna D. Hooker, “Were There False Teachers in Colossae?” in *Christ and Spirit in the New Testament: Studies in Honor of Charles Francis Digby Moule*, ed. Barnabas Lindars and Stephen S. Smalley (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973), 315-31.

⁴⁷ Moo, *Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 52-53.

(2x) and 3:4. All three uses communicate the benefits believers have as a result of their indwelling relationship with Christ.

Structure

Similar to the structure in Ephesians and Philippians, Paul uses δόξα in his opening thanksgiving (1:11). He is praying to God that the Colossians' walk will be worthy and pleasing to the Lord, and he includes God's attributive role in this process. Paul's following two uses of δόξα occur in the same verse (1:27), both pointing to benefits for the believer. This section (1:15-2:5) is a lengthy extension of Paul's prayer, and therefore, provides the reader with an *atypical* opening of the letter.⁴⁸ In this section, Paul explicates Christ's work (1:15-23) and explains his stewardship of the gospel ministry that God has entrusted to him (1:24-2:5). The fourth and final use of δόξα is in 3:4. This use of δόξα is part of Paul's transitional paragraph (3:1-4) that both reflects on Christ as the focal point of the preceding chapters and looks forward to the application and outworking of a relationship with Christ.

Syntax

Paul prays to God on behalf of the Colossians. The content of his prayer, 1:9–ἵνα of content (“that . . .”) is followed by the purpose, 1:10–περιπατῆσαι–inf. of purpose (“to walk”) that then leads to four adverbial participles that describe characteristics of walking worthy and pleasing to the Lord.⁴⁹ As Paul communicates these things, he stresses God's power that is in every believer in order to walk worthy; specifically, it is τὸ

⁴⁸ I agree with Moo's assessment that Paul's opening section is beyond the typical limits of his introductions found in other letters. There is a complex and lengthy focus on Christ (*Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 175).

⁴⁹ Murray J. Harris, *Colossians and Philemon: Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2013), 28; Constantine R. Campbell, *Colossians and Philemon: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2013), 7-9.

κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ (“*God’s glorious might*”).⁵⁰ This parallels the use of δόξης in Ephesians 1:17 and seems to emphasize the same characteristic in both places; that is, God’s power, authority, and honor. It is God’s weighty, overwhelming presence that is signified here. Harris comments on the phrase τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ as it follows the prepositions ἐν (“with”) and κατὰ (“through”). “The ἐν phrase denotes that with which the Colossians are empowered and the κατὰ phrase, that through which they are empowered: God’s glorious strength (κράτος, -ους, τό) imparts the power with which they are endowed or empowers them with a full measure of power.”⁵¹

As Paul continues this section of the letter, two more uses of δόξης appear (1:27). Paul’s intent here is to make known God’s mystery; that is, the inclusion of the Gentiles into his plan, his people. He utilizes δόξης twice to describe those within God’s plan, τὸ πλοῦτος (“the riches”), inclusion of Jews & Gentiles, and the future of God’s plan. The first use of δόξης in verse twenty-seven is parallel to the use in Eph 1:18, τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς δόξης, (“the riches of glory”), and is used adjectivally to describe God’s riches; that is, they are glorious.⁵² O’Brien describes glorious here as “the wealth of God pointing to the lavish bestowal of his blessings in Christ . . . the immense greatness of the mystery.”⁵³

⁵⁰ Taken here as a qualitative or attributive genitive, “glorious might” or “majestic power.” Contra Moo, who due to his understanding, views δόξης to be more closely God-focused instead of relegating it to our English adjective function, states, “It might, then, be preferable to take the genitive as possessive: the strength that God supplies his people is in accordance with (and is the expression of) his own intrinsic glory” (*Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 98).

⁵¹ Harris, *Colossians and Philemon*, 29.

⁵² In his commentary, Moo continues to encourage readers not to weaken δόξης to a mere adjective. He insists that δόξης connotes the presence of God, not simply descriptive of God (*Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*), 156-57.

⁵³ O’Brien also contends that perhaps Paul employed δόξης (splendor) “to emphasize that this wonderful mystery partook of the character of God himself” (*Colossians, Philemon*), 86. Campbell contends “In the OT (LXX), the ‘glory’ and ‘riches’ of God are frequently held together (Gen

The second use of δόξης in verse 27 describes the future of those who are included in God's plan; those included in the mystery, the Gentiles. Paul identifies them with their representative Christ. As a result, they have hope. Moo states, "Christ fully represents us. It is because of this that we can have *the hope of glory*, that is, the certainty that we will experience final glory. . . . Paul reminds us again that hope is tied to Christ, and to Christ alone."⁵⁴ It is an emphasis to a promise of a perfect life, or an assurance of all things right. Due to this privilege, O'Brien says that, "The wealth of God was lavished in a wonderful way. Christ therefore, was in them . . . indwelling in them,"⁵⁵ thus incorporating them into the community of Jesus.

The final use of δόξη (3:4) assists in the theological transition from the believer's positional sanctification (Col 1-2, indwelling of Christ) to progressive sanctification (Col 3-4, living out of Christ in one's life). These verses (cf. 3:1-4) "reflect Paul's conviction that the life and destiny of the believer are inextricably bound up with Christ."⁵⁶ What is clear is that the believer's identification with Christ will one day be manifest (3:4). What significance does the prepositional phrase ἐν δόξει ("in glory") play in this context? When Christ is revealed as the Son of God, the sons of God will also be revealed (cf. 2 Thess 1:10). The final emphasis of Paul in verse 4 is the future manifestation in glory for the believer; a sharing in Christ's likeness (cf. Phil 3:20).⁵⁷ Pao notes that it "becomes a significant anchor for the Colossians as they seek to be faithful to the gospel in which they are called."⁵⁸ It is Paul using this context to motivate the Colossians toward Christlikeness, for one day they will be like him.

31:16; 1 Kgs 3:13; 1 Chr 29:28; Esth 1:4; 10:2; Ps 111:3; Prov 3:16; 8:18; 22:4)" (*Colossians and Philemon*, 25).

⁵⁴ Moo, *Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 159.

⁵⁵ O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 87.

⁵⁶ Moo, *Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 251.

⁵⁷ The dative use of δόξει most likely refers to the state of glory for the believer. Contra Campbell, manner ("in a glorious manner") (*Colossians and Philemon*, 50).

⁵⁸ Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, 216.

Synthesis

Paul uses forms of δόξα to emphasize aspects of Christ and his role with the Colossians. His Christology throughout the letter points to the sufficiency that is found in him for the believer's standing, current growth, and future glorification. It is God's power, through Christ, that Paul prays would be used to strengthen the Colossians in their current walk (1:11). The wealth of God graciously lavished on the Gentiles provides them with a right-standing in Christ, ultimately awaiting as a confident hope (1:27). Lastly, Paul motivates the Colossians with the reality that one day they will perfectly share in Christ's likeness (3:4). Life for the Colossians, therefore, ought to represent this change in position, their new life in Christ. As a result, God is due honor because he sufficiently meets the Colossians' needs according to his wealth.

Observations Regarding Paul's Use of δόξα

Paul captures the glory of God in two distinct senses, his actions and his being. He does so while imprisoned for the glory of God. Paul's proclamation of the gospel benefited his readers' standing before God; ultimately for God's glory. Paul utilizes δόξα throughout the prison letters to emphasize God and the manifestation of his workings (his actions), while he admonishes his readers to reflect on the goodness of God (his being). Believers benefit from the glory and goodness of God; that is, their salvation, sanctification, and glorification are dependent upon and described by the acts of God, accomplished through Christ and by means of the Spirit.

What God does (his actions)

Paul uses δόξα to display what God does, or is doing, in the lives of his people. This is a manifestation of an attribute of his character (e.g., grace, wealth, and power). God is the source of power, authority, and honor (Eph 1:17; 3:16) that enlightens the eyesight of believers, by giving them knowledge, and strengthens the believer's inner man. God possesses majestic

power (Col 1:11); his weighty, overwhelming presence, empowers the believer to walk worthy and pleasing to him.

Therefore, God deserves the credit for the believers' status as new creations (salvation). God displays his grace in saving the believer (Eph 1:6, 12, 14; Col 1:27a), displays his wealth by blessing and meeting the needs of his people (Eph 1:18; Phil 4:19), and displays his status/prestige in sending the Son to the cross, resurrecting him, and exalting him (Phil 2:11). This universal confession that Jesus Christ is Lord leads to the crediting of honor and prestige to God as the Father.

Who God is (his being)

Paul uses $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ to reflect on who God is, for this benefits the lives of his people. Believers ought to appropriately ascribe credit to God. They are privileged to worship, or give honor and praise that is due him (Eph 3:20; Phil 4:20). The display, or expression of the life of the Christian community that abounds daily in love (sanctification) has as its goal the offering of praise to God. This is a reflection of his being, all of who he is. Ultimately, this provides Christians with the privilege to ascribe credit to God alone (Phil 1:11).

Therefore, Christians actively acknowledge God for who and what he already is because he is the believer's source, strength, and hope. The believer has the confident assurance that he will one day possess a glorious body (Phil 3:21), and share in Christ's likeness (Col 3:4).

A Biblical and Theological Overview of God's Glory through the Institutions of Government and Church to Demonstrate the Not-Yet View of the Kingdom-Age

David Mappes

Traditional dispensationalists affirm the not-yet view of the messianic kingdom age. The future messianic kingdom entails the (1) personal, earthly presence of Messiah; (2) his personal political, kingly Davidic rule over Israel with world-wide governing political implications; and (3) his worldwide priestly ministry of spiritual renewal centered in Israel. The already-not-yet views of inaugurated eschatology emphasize that the messianic kingdom-age is here in some spiritual fashion, being identified with the church. This article explores the relationship between the present-age church ministry and the governing, political ruling authorities to conclude that the messianic kingdom-age of political rule and worldwide spiritual transformation is not identified with the NT church.

The article overviews God's sovereign rule through intermediaries, the delegated role and authority of government, and the role and authority of the church. The article demonstrates differences between God's present sovereign kingly rule and his future earthly messianic kingdom-age through demonstrating distinctions between the role of government and the church.

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The Fulfillment of Genesis 3:15 and God's Sovereign Kingly Rule²

The Seed Promise and the Future Kingdom-Age

God's providential, universal rule and reign over mankind is described in Genesis 1-2. Prior to the fall into sin, mankind lived in direct relationship with God under a kind of untested theocratic rule as God appeared and communicated directly to Adam. Importantly, mankind was to serve as a vice-regent under the direct reign and in dependency of Yahweh. As Pentecost emphasizes,

God was recognized as sovereign and the sovereignty that belonged to God was delegated to man, who was to rule over the earth in an exercise of Yahweh's authority. In this theocracy Adam was seen to derive his authority from God and therefore, since he was called upon to be in submission [to Yahweh, Adam's] . . . rulership was God's [rulership].³

Yahweh's Edenic theocratic rule involved a perfect harmony of (1) God as direct ruler over mankind, (2) the realm of rule, and (3) man and woman ruling in response to Yahweh. Since God alone is completely autonomous and independent, when mankind acted independently to follow the serpent's word, he challenged and sought to usurp God's direct theocratic rule. This attempt of independent rule resulted in the fall of man to include the inability to properly image God and a forfeiture of direct access to Yahweh. God's rule would no longer be direct and immediate in the form of theocracy but rather mediated through his revelation—namely through the prophetic word of promise for final victory in Genesis 3:15—a seed from the woman would destroy the serpent. McClain correctly states,

² Adapted from "A Biblical and Theological Discussion of Traditional Dispensational Premillennialism," *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* (Spring 2013): 5-56; co-authored with Dr. H. Wayne House.

³ J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), 435.

Man's original dominion, being wholly derived and mediatorial in character, was to be exercised under the direction of God. It was just here that the first Adam dismally failed. . . . This failure of the first Adam, with reference to his mediatorial dominion, introduced into the stream of human history a hiatus which to the present hour has not at any time been wholly remedied.⁴

The promised future seed of the woman would bring complete, total, and final victory over the serpent and his seed. The seed of the woman would restore mankind to properly function as image bearers in direct relationship with Yahweh. Since the fall of man occurred in creation-time and the promise of victory occurred in creation-time, then the victory over the serpent and reversal of the curse must also occur in creation-time.⁵

The conflict portrayed in Genesis 3:15-16 between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman illustrate an extended, earthly, conflict resulting in final, earthly destruction of the serpent and his rule. The promise of victory through the singular seed of the woman then creates anticipation and expectation of a future, total, complete victory; this is the essence of messianism, which is later portrayed as Messiah's personal rule and restoration of mankind to God's direct theocratic rule. The remainder of Genesis and the Bible demonstrate the historical development of Yahweh calling out

⁴ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BHM, 1974), 43.

⁵ Non-dispensational Carl F. H. Henry correctly articulates the essential case for a millennial kingdom is based upon these tenants: "the Old Testament prophets speak so emphatically of a coming universal age of earthly peace and justice that to transfer this vision wholly to a transcendent superterrestrial kingdom is unjustifiable; (2) because the historical fall of Adam involves all human history in its consequences, it requires an historical redemption that extends as far as the curse is found' to complete Christ's victory over sin; (3) the most natural interpretation of Revelation seems to suggest an earthly millennial reign of Christ prior to the inauguration of God's eternal Kingdom" (Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* [Waco, TX: Word, 1983], 6:504).

the elect seed of the woman to personally crush the head of the serpent, thereby removing the curse and re-establishing God's direct theocratic rule. Throughout the OT, the future kingdom-age is directly linked to God's future, direct theocratic rule and restoration.

The OT prophets portray the future kingdom-age with Eden-like terminology (Isa 11:9; Ps 2:8) as occurring on earth that reverses the curse. Isaiah emphases, "And her wilderness he will make like Eden" (Isa 51:3). Ezekiel links fulfillment of his new covenant promise to Israel in declaring that desolate Israel will "become like the garden of Eden" (Ezek 36:35) and that the Lord himself will act on behalf of his name alone in fulfilling the prophecy (Ezek 36:22-38). Hosea writes that even the beasts of the field will all "lie down in safety" (Hos 2:18).

Messiah-God reigns in Jerusalem and exercises Davidic rule upon earth to re-establish his direct sovereign rulership to fulfill his promises. The Lord will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords over the entire earth (Zech 14:4, 9, 16; Ezek 37:24-25). National Israel will be redeemed and experience full, covenant rest according to OT prophecies (Jer 31:33-34; Zech 12:10; 13:1, 6, 9). The nation will be the Lord's messenger to the Gentile nations.

The kingdom-age, millennium government will be a theocracy (Zech 14:9) and though centered in Jerusalem, it will extend in authority throughout the entire earth (Mic 4:1-2; Dan 7:13-14, 27), resulting in world peace and immediate justice for sin (Isa 11:3-5). There will be peace and prosperity throughout the earth (Isa 2:4; 65:21-23; Amos 9:13-15; cf. Isa 9:4-7; Mic 4:3-4), and the curse will be almost removed, even leading to tranquility in the animal kingdom (Isa 11:6-9) with geological changes (Zech 14:4; Isa 11:15). The Lord's enemies including the heavenly hosts will be confined and imprisoned (Isa 24:21-22). Disease and deformity will be rectified and sickness virtually unknown (Isa 33:24) and long life will be common (Isa 65:20-22). Importantly, both sin and death will occur, so this future earthly kingdom-age (millennial kingdom) description cannot be confused with the eternal state (Isa 65:20). Joy and gladness of heart will prevail (Isa 25:8-9; 30:29; 60:15; 61:7). The millennial worship will be worldwide,

though it will also entail a unique place of worship in Jerusalem.

Christ indeed is the seed of the woman (Gal 4:4) who was struck on the heel in his death (John 13:1-3; 19:30), and then Christ struck a death blow to the serpent in Christ's resurrection and ascension to the Father (Col 2:14-15). However not all the provisions of the Genesis 3:15 promises are presently fulfilled. The curses continue to serve as a constant reminder to man and woman that (1) they need divine initiative and assistance to overcome evil; (2) the serpent's word of independent rule is indeed a lie; and (3) Yahweh's direct theocratic rule is not currently established.

Yahweh's unequivocal, unconditional word of promise to develop this future seed promise illustrates that his heavenly, kingly sovereign rule is different than the promised rule in the future messianic theocratic kingdom in which the seed promise is fulfilled. As Norman Geisler clarifies, "God's kingdom means God's *reign* and the various times, spheres, and purposes of his overall reign have taken on different forms."⁶ God's ongoing always-present sovereign rule in administering this Genesis 3:15 seed promise should not be confused with God's future theocratic rule. There is then a recognized difference between God's heavenly kingly reign in sovereignly bringing the seed promise to fulfillment vs. his actual future theocratic reign and rule. The Scriptures stress that until the kingdom-age is inaugurated, God sovereignly rules through imperfect and sometimes immoral intermediaries.

Overview of God's Sovereign Kingly Rule to bring Fulfillment of Genesis 3:15⁷

The Scripture writers portray God as the all Sovereign One throughout the Old and New Testaments. He is exercising his

⁶ Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Bethany House, 2005), 461; emphasis original.

⁷ Adapted from David Mappes, "The Christian and Civil Disobedience: A Biblical and Theological Overview," *Baptist Bulletin Digital Edition*, July/ August 2015, 79-85.

supremacy in orchestrating events to fulfill his sovereign decreed plan. God's decree is all-inclusive, meaning it includes everything that happens (Ps 115:3; Isa 14:24-27; Dan 4:34-37; Eph 1:11). After Nebuchadnezzar was humbled, he correctly reasoned that God's "kingdom endures from generation to generation" (Dan 4:34) and that "all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth" and that "no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" (4:36). Nebuchadnezzar acknowledges that God reestablished his rule as king of Babylon. When Daniel spoke to Belshazzar regarding Nebuchadnezzar, he said "the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and *that* He sets over it whomever He wishes" (Dan 5:21).

Jeremiah emphasizes that the LORD had made the earth and would "give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight [and that] I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and I have given him also the wild animals of the field to serve him" (Jer 27:5-6). In similar manner, Isaiah references Nebuchadnezzar, as he prophesies, "I am God, and there is no other; *I am* God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'" (Isa 46:9-10); Isaiah then references Nebuchadnezzar as he writes, "Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country [and] I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass [and] I have planned *it, surely* I will do it" (Isa 46:11).

Joseph exclaimed to his brothers that while they intended evil against him, "God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (Gen 50:21). And the Psalmist writes, "For not from the east, nor from the west, nor from the desert comes exaltation, but God is the Judge; He puts one down and exalts another (Ps 75:6-7).

Paul reaffirms God's sovereignty to entail national timelines and national boundaries as he argues that God "made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of

their habitation” (Acts 17:26). Even the normal day-to-day events are enveloped in God's sovereignty demonstrated by James rebuking Christians for not saying, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that” (Jas 4:13-16).

God's Sovereign Rulership through Subsidiary Authorities

God has designated various subsidiary or intermediary authorities in accomplishing his will. These intermediaries have limited, though delegated, authority from God to accomplish their designated tasks. Three primary authorities in the NT include the family, the government, and the church (and by implication individuals in the government, church, and family). Each has delegated authority from God to accomplish specific tasks. Importantly God's rule through these intermediary authorities is not equivalent to the future kingdom-age prophecies. Since the future messianic kingdom-age entails the political/governmental and the spiritual authorities, these two intermediaries are examined. This examination will illustrate that the prophesied messianic kingdom-age has not yet been inaugurated.

Governmental Civil Authorities and Submission

The concept of government is first illustrated in mankind's injunction to rule and subdue the earth as image bearers (Gen 1:26-27; 2:8-25) which is restated in Genesis 9:1-11. Grudem correctly argues that

God's establishment of civil government in human society is found in the early history of Genesis, just after the flood, when Noah and his family came out of the ark [and] God says that he will require payment ('a reckoning') for the crime of murder, and that he requires this to be carried out by other human beings.⁸

⁸ Wayne Grudem, *Politics - According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 77.

Notably,

God establishes the obligation to carry out the most severe punishment (the taking of a human life) in retribution for the most horrible crime (the murder of another human being) [so once] this principle is established, then the imposition of lesser penalties for lesser crimes is also validated, since if a government has the right to carry out the most severe kind of punishment, then it certainly has the right to carry out lesser punishments for lesser crimes as well.⁹

Government then entails a system of authority involving power of orderly enforcement and rule. This rule in Genesis 9:1-11 entails protecting and preserving humanity by punishing evil doers.

In like manner, Paul explains that God intends government to restrain evil by promoting good and punishing evildoers (Rom 13:3-4), thereby creating a relatively safe and secure society. The present active participle ὑπερεχούσαις (from ὑπερέχω) translated as “governing” clearly implies a “controlling position, *have power over, be in authority (over), be highly placed.*”¹⁰ God commissions and authorizes governing rulers (i.e., government) to restrain and retard the effects of the curse through a kind of temporal and imperfect management. Government cannot eradicate sinfulness but rather it is to preserve order in society. Paul emphasizes that government is a “minister of God . . . an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil” (Rom 13:4).

Johnson observes that there are

four reasons that Paul offers for being subject to authorities. (1) Out of respect for the authority of God (vv. 1-2); (2) in order to escape punishment from the rulers which Paul views as an instrument of the wrath of God (vv. 2b-5); (3) for the sake of

⁹ Ibid., 78.

¹⁰ Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Fredrick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1033.

conscience (v. 5b); (4) and to promote the good within the social order (v. 4).¹¹

Importantly, Paul uses the present imperative ὑποτασσέσθω (from ὑποτάσσω) translated submission in verse 5 to emphasize the subordinate relationship of the Christian to government.¹² Submission is the “recognition of one’s subordinate place in a hierarchical structure, i.e. the acknowledgement that certain people or institutions have been placed over us.”¹³ This same term also appears in 1 Peter 2:13 and Titus 3:1 with respect to the Christian’s relationship to government. Paul further emphasizes this delegated authority of the government by arguing in Romans 12:19 that while wrath and vengeance belong to the Lord, the government alone will dispense that wrath upon evildoers (Rom 13:4). Hence, God administers his wrath through the secular state and not through individuals taking personal vengeance. This temporal and imperfect management by government does not comport to the future prophecies of theocratic rule of Messiah.

Paul was not naïve regarding abuses of government. He himself had experienced unjust treatment from Roman officers in beatings and imprisonment (2 Cor 6:5; 11:23-25, 32-33; cf., Acts 16:22-24) though he still emphasizes government’s positive purpose(s). Paul clarifies that

Christians are not free to disobey a law just because it is unwise or because it fails adequately to promote virtue, truth, justice, liberty, equality, or godliness [as an] example, Paul instructs Christians to pay taxes to Rome (Rom 13:6-7)—taxes that would be used to finance the emperor’s vain pleasure palaces and entertainment venues, his armies making war on other nations for no other cause than greed and glory, his civil government

¹¹ Ronald W. Johnson, “The Christian and the State: Romans 13:1-7” *RevExp* 97 (2000): 92.

¹² BAGD, 1042.

¹³ Paul D. Feinberg, “The Christian and Civil Authorities” in *Masters Seminary Journal* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 92.

administration which routinely erected and staffed pagan temples as part of a large and powerful civic religion.¹⁴

Stein observes how Paul concludes this section of Romans with a specific application of the general imperative of being submissive given in 13:1. Therefore “we have a kind of ‘inclusio’ in which the commands of 13:1a and 13:7 bracket the entire account. The readers of this letter are to keep the general imperative of 13:1 by ‘Pay[ing] all of them their dues.’”¹⁵ Notably Paul emphasizes “render to all what is due them,” thereby indicating the government does have limitation in what is due them. Government only has authority to exact what is due. Thus obedience to government is a qualified obedience. Schreiner cautions that the “intention in Romans is to sketch in the normal and usual relationship between believers and ruling power (cf. Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13–17) [and that] Christians should submit to such authority and carry out its statutes, unless the state commands believers to do that which is contrary to the will of God.”¹⁶ Hence to “disobey the laws of the land, except where they contravene the express will of God, is to violate the purpose of God himself.”¹⁷

In 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Paul “urge[d] that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men [and] for kings and all who are in authority so that [Christians could] lead a tranquil life in all ‘godliness and dignity’” (1 Tim 2:1-2). Although scholars debate the specific nuances of godliness (εὐσέβεια) in the Pastoral Epistles, the term denotes a sense manifesting a correct attitude towards God

¹⁴ Andy G. Olree, “Government as God’s Agent: A Reconsideration of Romans 12 and 13” *Stone Campbell Journal* 8 (Fall 2005): 189.

¹⁵ Robert Stein, “The Argument of Romans 13:1-7,” *NovT* XXXI, no. 4 (1989): 342.

¹⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT 6 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 687.

¹⁷ Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, NAC 27 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 244.

and is therefore similar to the "fear of the Lord in the Old Testament."¹⁸

The injunction to pray for kings in authority directly relates to the ministry of the church in this context. Paul exhorts Christians to pray for governing leaders so these leaders will wisely dispense their stewardship from God so that Christians can live in godliness and dispense their responsibility—namely to proclaim the person and work of Christ. Both the government leaders and Christians have separate respective spheres of authority and stewardship.

Peter similarly exhorts the believers to both honor government leaders and to fear God as he writes, “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right . . . love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king” (1 Pet 2:13-17). Interestingly, Peter reserves *fearing God* (similar to Paul’s statement about living in *all godliness* in 1 Tim 2:2) as reserved for God alone. The king (or emperor) can be honored, though not feared as God would be feared. Peter may well be subtly denying any emperor’s claim to deity as only God himself should be feared. Importantly, Peter was writing to Christians who were suffering persecution as “aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Pet 1:1; cf., 1 Pet 2:21; 4:12-13; 4:1-4). Many scholars believe that Peter wrote his letter just before or after the Neroian persecutions.

Both Paul and Peter stress that government has delegated authority to preserve order by punishing evil doers and rewarding those who do good. As an agent of God, government has authority that is not resident in individual citizens. The state may tax or appropriately punish an evildoer while a citizen may not tax another citizen nor punish an evildoer. The government has authority to compel obedience of its citizens. The NT emphasizes that allegiance and commitment to Christ does not negate personal responsibility to civil government since there is

¹⁸ Ceslas Spicq, *Les Épitres Pastorales*, Librairie Lecoffre (Paris: J. Gabalda:1969), 485.

no authority apart from God's sovereign will. This does not mean that God approves of all governments or leaders. Importantly the delegated authority of government is not dependent upon the morality of rulers or governments.

When threatened by Pilate, Jesus himself said to Pilate, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11). In Matthew 22:21 Jesus says, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." The philosopher-theologian-apologist Francis Schaeffer correctly and simply portrays this Caesar-to-God responsibility as not having God and government on the same level but rather as God supreme over government—government receives its authority from God thus the government's authority is not a proper, intrinsic authority to itself but its authority is delegated from God.¹⁹ Government is portrayed as a fiduciary figure, thus representing the trust of another consequently absolute, unconditional obedience is reserved for God alone.

It is noteworthy that submitting and honoring the government does not preclude criticizing or confronting leaders or governments. Jesus criticizes both religious and political leaders (Mark 8:15; Luke 13:32; 22:25). In Mark 8:15 Jesus refers to the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod (Mark 8:15) and in Luke 13:32 he referred to Herod as a fox. John the Baptist directly spoke against king Herod's incestuous relationship with Herodias, his brother's wife (Mark 6:14-19).

In summary, government has delegated authority from God to sustain order. When government is functioning according to its divine intent, then believers are to submit to its laws, honor the leaders, pay taxes (even excessive cf., Luke 2:1; 19:8), and pray for its leaders (Matt 22:15-22; Rom 13:1-7; 1 Tim 2:1-8; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet 2:11-17). The Scriptures emphasize that governmental authority is limited in scope. Neither state nor any ruler of state has the right to grant or bestow dignity, value, or even purpose on its citizens; rather government is mandated

¹⁹ Francis Schaeffer, "A Christian Manifesto" in *The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, Vol. 5, *A Christian View of the West* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1982), 468.

to recognize, acknowledge, value, and protect the dignity and intrinsic value of its citizens. In summary, government is limited to providing *safety and security* of its citizenry but not individual *significance* of its citizens. *Significance* comes only through a personal and proper relationship with the Creator God through his Son Jesus Christ. Only God can provide individual significance and only God can demand unqualified obedience.

This section demonstrates that no correlation exists between the future promised messianic kingdom-age of theocratic rule initiated by the personal presence of Messiah when compared to God's ruling through sinful intermediary authorities.

The Church and Authority

The state is not mentioned as an agent of the mercies or mysteries of God in the NT, though in the future messianic kingdom-age, the state of Israel is mentioned as an agent of the mercies of God. Rather, the church is portrayed as a steward of God's revelation including the gospel and serves as his agent for redemption and mercy. For sake of brevity, the church is defined here as God's indestructible royal-spiritual-priestly people originating at Pentecost and empowered by Christ through the Holy Spirit to represent and mediate God's presence in world until the rapture. Importantly, the church is a geo-political people of God with the highest and most absolute authority in its commission. The gospel commission entails making disciples by evangelizing and teaching everyone everywhere in the world about the person and work of Christ. In the great commission Jesus gives his authority and commands the church to "go and make disciples" until "the end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20).

The phrase "all authority" is non-conditional and absolute and has no spatial, people-group, or governmental boundaries. The commission emphasizes complete, absolute, comprehensive commitment to Jesus and his teaching. This means that complete, absolute, comprehensive loyal-commitment and submission belong to Jesus alone. Identification and solidarity with Jesus means he alone is Lord and Master. His teaching becomes our teaching. Jesus specifies that the authority to make

disciples of himself is absolute and takes precedence as he indicates that he himself will be with church in this mission.

There is no authority higher than this authority as commissioned to the church. This gospel commission includes making disciples of everyone including government rulers thus no person or nation is exempt from the gospel mandate. Since the gospel is the “power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16), the very essence of “disciple-making” precludes any kind of forced, oppressive, or coerced, or tyrannical processes. The biblical authors portray such confidence in the gospel message that in 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 Paul boldly asserts, “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”

All Government Is Morally Accountable to God and His Law

Since government and its rulers derive authority from God and is not autonomous, government leaders are then responsible to God’s moral law. This moral law is revealed in general revelation and preserved in Scripture. Throughout Scripture, government leaders and rulers are judged for atrocities and mistreatment of humanity. God destroyed the world of Noah’s day because of unrighteous living. He judged the people at Babel for elevating themselves above God. He judged Sodom and Gomorrah not because they rejected special revelation, but rather because they denied and rejected general revelation (see Ezek 16:49-50) and the Lord struck down Herod Agrippa after he received adoration reserved for God alone (Acts 12:20-25).

Scripture clearly teaches that while some justice and judgment occurs in this world, God’s ultimate justice will be revealed in the final judgment (1 Pet 1:17) and the entire world will be held accountable. For this reason, every mouth will be closed. The entire world will realize their accountability before God (Rom 3:19). Christ himself will return in a sudden, dynamic, cataclysmic manner to inaugurate the messianic kingdom-age culminating in an eternal theocratic rule. John in

Revelation 20–22 and Daniel 2 and 7 portray this future kingdom-age as a time when God himself returns to end all current forms of evil human-mediated rule as he establishes his kingdom.

Christians should disabuse themselves of any myth that through some political, social, or religious transformative or reconstructive movement, they will create a utopian atmosphere.²⁰ Rather, Christians should have moderate expectations of government role. Wisdom suggests that when possible individual believers should work to create a responsible government to execute its laws based upon morality while understanding that final and complete justice and judgment will only occur in the future kingdom-age. Government cannot eradicate sinfulness, but the government can and should preserve order in society and thus limit the effects of the curse based upon God's moral principles.

Notably, the NT authors framed conflict response between two great doctrinal truths: the substitutionary atonement and the personal return of Christ. Jesus died for the sins of opponents and persecutors so the goal is never simply to win a dispute, which might possibly turn opponents away from Christ or somehow impede repentance of a believer (I refer to this as the Lamb metaphor since Jesus died for the sins of opponents). Believers should frame their response within a biblical paradigm of redemption. In the return of Christ, Jesus will publicly reveal concealed sin along with the hidden motivation and conduct of believers; He himself will avenge and vindicate his children (I call this the Lion metaphor since Jesus will roar). Ultimate justice for Christians will not occur until the judgment seat of Christ when the Lord himself will redress unjust treatment.

²⁰ Mappes and House, "Traditional Dispensational Premillennialism," 44.

Summary

This brief overview of government and church indicates there is no correspondence to the future kingdom-age messianic government or to the future messianic spiritual realities.

Additional thoughts on Civil Disobedience

The Scripture authors do not provide any specific pattern of truth for believers when a government thoroughly and comprehensively fails to function according to its divine mandate. The Scripture does, however, portray believers as practicing non-violent limited acts of disobedience while still respecting the institution of government along with examples of citizens fleeing an unjust government; furthermore, these acts of civil disobedience occur with God's approval. Christian civil disobedience is understood as specific, non-violent, spiritually-motivated and biblically-approved conscious acts of disobeying a binding government or ruler's legal enactment or mandate that requires a Christian to violate God's specific normative truth in God's word.

Categories of Civil Disobedience

Civil disobedience for unjust *permissible* laws

Some Christians advocate civil disobedience to laws that *permit* and promote, though *not prescribe*, gross acts of immorality such as abortion, euthanasia, genocide, gross sexual perversion, etc. This category of civil disobedience has a long and well-documented history and is associated with such thinkers as Samuel Rutherford, John Calvin, John Knox, and Francis Schaefer. Unfortunately, many examples provided in this category include complexities of resisting injustices promoted by a church-state government and not just state governments. Additionally, many of these examples in this category confuse the civil statutes embedded in Israel's national fabric with the church or presume a kind of inaugurated eschatology that allows direct application of OT passages to the church.

Most advocates of this model indicate that resistance should always start in the spiritual realm and include legislative action and then move to civil disobedience to include peaceful, active resistance and perhaps the use of force. Examples usually cited include opposition to war crimes and deprivation of civil liberties. Other cited examples include Christians who actively opposed the Nazi regime and other oppressive governments. The abolition of slavery and participating in the illegal Underground Railroad and rescue operations to deliver slaves from prison are also noted. More recent examples include providing ministry and refuge to illegal aliens and other disadvantaged people especially in the non-Western nations. During the 1980s "Operation Rescue" events took place when Christians illegally occupied abortion clinics to prevent the act of killing unborn children. Proponents of this kind of civil disobedience and active resistance usually limit the use of force to self-defense.

If peaceable acts of civil disobedience and active resistance fail to change permissible, grossly evil laws, then some within this model advocate the use of subversive force (not uncontrolled violence) to change the law or in extreme cases even replace the form of the government. These advocates argue the state can abrogate its ruling authority and thus forfeit its legitimate mediated authority from God. If a government so comprehensively fails to restrain evil that it incarnates evil itself, advocates then argue for active non-peaceful resistance to permissible immoral laws. Advocates of this paradigm do not advocate anarchy but rather seek to replace an evil government with another form of government.

The weakness in this position entails a lack of legitimate scriptural examples of Christians exercising civil disobedience over laws that merely *permit* immoral practices to exist. Roman law permitted gross acts of sexual perversion, abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. Jesus and the NT authors clearly referred to these acts and thereby the laws that permitted them as immoral and sinful. However they did not advocate civil disobedience for laws that permitted immoral practices. John the Baptist himself was beheaded due to his insistence

regarding the exclusivity and sanctity of marriage (Matt 14:1-12).

The contrast between two early documents of antiquity illustrates this tension between avoiding immoral practices vs. practicing civil disobedience to prevent others from practicing immorality. An ancient letter from a laborer (or perhaps soldier), Hilarion to his wife Alis, illustrates the irreprehensible immoral practice of killing children: “I beg and entreat you, take care of the little one, and as soon as we receive our pay, I will send it up to you.... [and] if by chance you bear a child, if it is a boy, let it be, if a girl, *expose it*.”²¹ The Romans and Greeks did not view a child as a human life until the father acknowledged that a child was part of the family—this usually occurred through some type of religious ceremony. If the child was unwanted, that family *exposed* the child to the natural elements until death. The *Didache* served as a kind of discipleship catechism primarily for non-Jewish converts: “you shall not kill a child in the womb nor expose infants.”²² This comparison merely serves as an example that some Christians in the very early church did not practice civil disobedience over laws that permitted immorality. They did, however, resist practicing immoral laws themselves and in the instance of the heinous practice of *exposure*, they protested against such treatment until the practice was eventually outlawed in some cities.²³

²¹ Cited in Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 60. Also see Stephanie West, “Whose Baby? A Note on P. Oxy. 744,” in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* Bd. 121 (1998), 167-172, published by Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn (Germany) Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2019020810.2307/20190208>. And Chrys C. Caragounis, “Hilarion’s Letter to his Wife Alis (P Oxy 744): A New Suggestion to Solve Its Problem,” <http://www.chrys-caragounis.com/Inscriptionsand.Papyri/Hilarion%20Letter.pdf>, accessed January 8, 2014.

²² Thomas O’Loughlin, *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 162.

²³ Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 60.

The Scriptures are silent in respect to the populace usurping one form of government for another government. However if a government so comprehensively fails in its scriptural mandate, then questions of broader political civil disobedience must be addressed and not simply acts of Christian civil disobedience. If a government does incarnate evil and comprehensively fail in its scriptural mandate, rarely are immoral laws neatly divided between what is *permitted* and what is *prescribed* of its citizens, and in many cases the government itself will be in violation of its own laws and legal-standing. If a government violates its own constitutional, legal charter, then opposition is not civil disobedience since the citizenry is merely enforcing the true laws of that government.²⁴

Civil disobedience against unjust *prescribed* laws

The Scriptures is replete with examples of believers who practiced civil disobedience when a government mandate or binding law required a believer to disobey God's revealed,

²⁴ One primary example revolves around the nomenclature of "The American Revolutionary War" vs. the "War for Independence." The American colonies had developed their own independent governments from England. According to most colonial charters from England they had every legal and lawful right to exist and manage their own affairs independent from England. As the colonies grew, England violated its own laws of the land (e.g., *Magna Carta* in 1215 AD, the Petition of Right in 1628, and the English Bill of Rights in 1649) as well as many of the initial charters to the colonies. The colonies received their charters from the Crown in England, though later England's Parliament sought to illegally asserts its authority over the colonies. The early colonists reminded both the Crown and Parliament many times of this illegal act and most colonies refused to accept the Parliament's authority over the colonies. The Declaration of Independence documents many of these violations. In 1689, the Parliament gained supremacy over the Crown and declared the colonies which had been under the Crown's protection would now be viewed as foreign enemies and thus England removed their protection of the colonies. The War of Independence was actually a war to enforce and re-establish their legal status as independent colonies-the founding fathers were not rebels or anarchists. See John Eidsmoe, *God and Caesar: Christian & Political Action* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1984), 29-35, esp. 34-35.

normative word or when a government or legal mandate sought to prohibit a believer from obeying God's revealed, normative word. In each case, examples illustrate that (1) civil disobedience was specific to an unjust prescribed law and not all the laws of government; (2) believers who disobeyed governments were generally willing to accept the associated penalty and/or they would flee the oppressive government. Note the following examples:

1. The Hebrew midwives refused to obey the king of Egypt to kill newborn male children (Exod 1:15-22); thus they feared God and obeyed the specific Abrahamic promise not to curse Abram or his offspring (Gen 12; 15).
2. Moses refused the Pharaoh's direct order to leave and deprive the Hebrews who were in Egyptian slavery (Exod 5:4-23), thus specifically obeying God's command (Exod 3).
3. Rahab directly disobeyed the command from the king of Jericho to produce the two Israelite spies who had entered the city to gain intelligence. Rather, she helped them escape (Josh 2), thereby obeying the Abrahamic promise to bless the Hebrews (Gen 12; 15).
4. Obadiah (King Ahab's attendant) who "feared the Lord greatly" refused to obey Queen Jezebel's policy to kill the prophets (1 Kgs 18:3-13), but rather he provided refuge for the prophets.
5. Jeremiah publicly defied King Zedekiah's plans to fight against the Babylonians (Jer 38:1-5).
6. Daniel and friends refused to eat the food that was ceremonially unclean (Dan 1).
7. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego disobeyed Nebuchadnezzar's law of self-worship and idolatry as they explain, "We want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up" (Dan 3:4-18).
8. Daniel disobeyed King Darius's thirty-day law prohibiting prayer to any deity other than to king Darius (Dan 6:10).

9. The magi disobeyed King Herod and did not report to him the location of baby Jesus (Matt 2:8-13).

10. Jesus and the disciples repeatedly disobeyed the religious authorities whom Rome had granted authority to rule. The Sanhedrin was the supreme ruling council in Jerusalem. Roman authorities authorized this council to adjudicate many Jewish matters; hence this council was an extension of Roman authority and not simply a religious authority. Peter and John disobeyed the Sanhedrin's specific charge to stop preaching Jesus. Luke writes that the Sanhedrin "commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard'" (Acts 4:18-20).

11. Peter and the apostles responded to the Sanhedrin's directives, "We must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:27-29).

12. Tribulation believers will refuse to worship the antichrist who will have "authority over every tongue, tribe, nation" (Rev 13:7).

In each instance limited acts of civil disobedience became necessary when the governing law (or government-empowered authorities) required a believer to disobey God's revealed, normative truth or when the government sought to prohibit a believer from obeying God's revealed, normative truth through his word. In each case, the law or governing authority clearly and directly mandated a violation of God's normative truth in his word such as advocating murder, prohibiting the prayers and worship of God, prohibiting the preaching in Jesus name, etc. These unjust civil commands demanded limited, specific, non-violent acts of civil disobedience.

Summary Comments on Civil Disobedience

Unqualified, absolute obedience and worship is reserved for God alone lest the government be idolatrized and believers

forfeit their calling to worship and glorify God alone. The Scripture prescribes civil disobedience when governing authorities *require* a believer to disobey God's revealed word or when government *prohibits* a believer from obeying God's revealed word. There must be a clear government law requiring the violation of God's normative direct pronouncement in Scripture. Civil disobedience must be based upon clear normative *precepts* and not simply principles of truth and never passions of the moment. Christians should not romanticize persecution or civil disobedience. The believer should exercise great caution in disobeying government and should prayerfully examine all of God's counsel, seek godly counsel, seek wise legal counsel, and exhaust all appeals. Any act of civil disobedience must be rooted in an acceptance that God sovereignly rules and he expresses that rule through various intermediaries including evil men. Consequently, civil disobedience is not legitimate if based only on the immorality of civil leaders or immorality of a government.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the profound difference between the LORD ruling through intermediaries when compared to his direct theocratic rule in the future kingdom-age. There is no correspondence between messianic kingdom-age particularities of peace, harmony, justice, judgement, spiritual realities, etc., when compared to the current dimension of how the LORD rules through intermediaries. Hence the messianic kingdom-age has not yet come.

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Interpreting the Wisdom Books: An Exegetical Handbook. By Edward M. Curtis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017. 208 pp. \$21.97.

Edward M. Curtis, professor of biblical and theological studies at Biola University and Talbot School of Theology in California, provides a welcome addition to Kregel's Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis, covering the four wisdom books of the Hebrew Bible. His goal is to provide a general discussion of the background and perspective that characterizes these books, as well as to offer some guidelines for interpreting and proclaiming them (18). The volume is divided into six chapters along with an appendix prepared by Austen M. Dutton, who explains how to search through various electronic resources such as BibleWorks, Accordance, Logos, Olive Tree, the Word, Shebanq, among others.

The first chapter describes the nature of biblical wisdom, its perspective, and goal in the history of Israel. The author rightly sees חָכְמָה, "wisdom," as the ability to skillfully apply the principles of life with the goal of developing mature, godly character (30). He understands the importance of genre in the Bible and discusses poetry and proverbs as two genres of wisdom literature. When discussing poetry, Curtis challenges the three types of parallelism described by Lowth (synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic) and agrees with Berlin and Kugel that the Hebrew writers use the second line to supplement, intensify, and stress the first one. He also explains how proverbs can capture a tiny cross-section of the truth, describing the way things usually work in a general sense (50). Therefore, he advises the reader to use wisdom to rightly interpret, teach, and apply proverbs in daily living (51).

The second chapter explores the major themes of each book. In Job, the author correctly notes that human suffering is not always a result of sin. In this case, the doctrine of retribution is not in view because the Bible describes Job as blameless (Job 1:1). Since human knowledge is limited, wisdom from above is necessary to accept the circumstances of life (61-63). That wisdom, as described in Proverbs, centers on the fear of the LORD, a concept that implies total dependence on God which ultimately leads to discretion, understanding, and humility (66-

68). The fear of the LORD is also a key theme in Ecclesiastes, according to Curtis. Once man understands that all is *הֶבֶל*, “a puff of air,” he will see life as an opportunity given by the sovereign God and learn to enjoy it wisely (72-77). Finally, he argues that the Song of Songs values human love, sex, and marriage between a man and a woman (78). Hence, the “one-flesh” relationship in Genesis 2 should function as “hesed,” a mutual love and commitment that reflect the nature of God (82-84).

Chapters three and four deal with the exegetical method applied to the wisdom books. Curtis begins by noting the importance of the Ancient Near Eastern culture to these materials (chap. 3). He also deals with the issue of textual criticism and uses examples from Proverbs and Job to explain how to determine the original reading of the Hebrew text. He offers a detailed and annotated bibliography of resources for both the Ancient Near Eastern background and textual criticism, before providing some general guidelines for interpreting each individual wisdom book (chap. 4). Chapters five and six offer various useful tips for preaching and teaching in the wisdom material. Here, Curtis encourages the exegete to slowly and reflectively read the chosen text multiple times, preferably in the Hebrew language, while paying attention to the historical and literary context. He uses Proverbs 2 and Job 28 as examples to show how to proclaim these four books. Finally, he provides four steps to show the interpreter how to put all the pieces together in a sermon. Here, the author walks through practical illustrations to explain how to accomplish that goal. Pastors will be thankful for this section.

Curtis does a good job explaining these four difficult wisdom books. By identifying their primary key themes, he allows the reader to grasp the message well. For instance, knowing that human suffering may not always be the result of sin, as in the case of Job, believers who suffer today can be encouraged. Curtis also captures the semantic nuance of the Hebrew term *הֶבֶל* in Ecclesiastes, which he describes as a “puff of air” (70-71). This is important because the message of the book depends largely on the meaning of that theme. Lexica and most commentators agree that *הֶבֶל* refers to “breath” or “vapor.” Thus, rendering it as “breath” is not saying that life is meaningless under the sun, as

some suggest. Rather, everything is important in its time (3:1). With that in mind, Qohelet calls the reader to enjoy life as an opportunity given by God because it is temporary, fleeting, and soon flies away. This meaning is consistent with the rest of the Bible (see Ps 103:15-16; Ps 90). Similarly, Curtis correctly explains the meaning of the word אֲשֶׁר usually translated, “fortunate,” or “blessed” even though he translates it as “truly happy” in some instances (154-55). In wisdom literature, the term אֲשֶׁר refers to someone who fears the LORD (Prov 1:7), abstains from evil (Ps 1:1; 40:5), and lives by faith in God (Hab 2:4), as opposed to someone who is emotionally happy. This meaning will be consistent with the equivalent Greek word μακάριοι, meaning “blessed” in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. Finally, by arguing that the Song of Songs “lacks indicators that it was written as an allegory,” Curtis challenges an interpretation that has prevailed throughout history (78-79). However, his approach allows the reader to better appreciate the message of the book. Overall, this volume succeeds in its goal of offering pastors and seminary students essential tools for properly exegeting and proclaiming this section of Scripture.

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Reading Jesus’s Bible: How the New Testament Helps Us Understand the Old Testament. By John Goldingay. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017. 270 pp. \$24.00.

The New Testament’s use of the Old Testament remains a popular topic, and John Goldingay, Professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, enters the fray with his *Reading Jesus’s Bible*. His goal in the book is to observe how the NT writers used the OT to understand Jesus, “in order then to consider a question that is the reverse of theirs: to look at the pointers they suggest for understanding the Old Testament itself” (1). The author offers his understanding of Matthew’s five ways of reading the OT as his outline for how readers today might

effectively read the OT (which Goldingay calls the “First Testament”) for themselves (2–3).

Too often readers of the Bible either ignore the OT by not reading it or miss the deep dependency of the NT on the OT. Goldingay addresses this omission in his book, showing how

- the story of the NT is inextricably linked to the OT (chap. 2),
- the promises of the OT are fulfilled or “filled out” in Jesus (chap. 3),
- readers cannot understand aright the images, ideas, and words found in the NT without knowledge of their OT roots (chap. 4),
- the OT provides background for a right relationship with God (chap. 5) and ethics in the world (chap. 6).

Goldingay is emphatic that the NT fills out OT story and pattern. He notes typological comparison as one way the NT does this. Yet many other times he could have noted typological comparisons that fit with his definition of type (14–16), for example in Matthew’s use of Isaiah 7 (62, 64, 70, 114). Sadly, he refers to typology only in passing one other time (153). Instead, Goldingay appears to promote something akin to a *sensus plenior* understanding of NT authors’ use of the OT, referring to it as a “fuller significance” (e.g., 66).

Reading this book, I often felt like a student looking over the shoulder of an elder professor, or like a friend having a conversation with him. *Reading Jesus’s Bible* is informal, with few footnotes to reveal sources. I do not imply the book is simplistic. Far from it. Goldingay addresses a dozen or more difficult issues between the Testaments (e.g., fuller sense/significance, typology, Matthew’s use of the word “fulfill,” and supersessionism, which the author is strongly against). Nevertheless, the author often gives limited support for his views.

Admittedly, many times Goldingay’s explanations are quite lucid and helpful, even pastoral. Yet at other times, his exposition requires just one or two more sentences to communicate what is clear in his mind. Too often, I found myself having to reread a section to uncover the insight the author attempted to communicate, only to find myself befuddled by vagueness. The

farther into the book I read, the more I sensed that the book was incomplete, put together too hastily. One expression of this is the lack of conclusions to summarize the thrust of each chapter. Instead, Goldingay provides questions for discussion. Similarly, the concluding chapter is a short two pages, contributing less than the introductory chapter on his topic. I do not doubt the author's acumen in the given subject, simply the clarity of his expression of it in this book.

Goldingay's audience for the book is clearly contemporary Western Christians, whose (mis)understandings of the First Testament he often compares with what he judges to be correct (first century or ancient) Jewish understanding of the OT. Goldingay wants his audience to read the OT for themselves in context. Therefore, when he discusses links between the OT and the NT, he often quotes large passages from the OT. On the one hand, this is refreshing and keeps the reader from having to flip through his own Bible to find half a dozen references (or from ignoring parenthetical references). On the other hand, Goldingay often provides too little exposition and sometimes vaguely alludes to NT authors' links to the OT (without indicating the reference to which he alludes). Maybe he did not feel further exposition is necessary since the OT translations are apparently his own and thereby suffice for his interpretation.

One might be inclined to recommend the book to those interested in an introduction to a NT understanding of the OT. However, the book includes many assumptions of its audience's understanding of exegetical intricacies. Although the author promotes evangelical views of the gospel and biblical inspiration, he also questions Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (53); believes the book of Jonah (but not Jonah himself) is fictional (58); and promotes the view that Isaiah was written in three phases, with the second and third parts written by "prophets whose names we do not know" (98). This view of Isaiah is integral to his observations (later in *Reading Jesus's Bible*) on NT links to Isaiah.

For those who already have solid convictions on OT authorship and dating, *Reading Jesus's Bible* offers many helpful insights, unpacking a NT hermeneutic from a strong OT perspective. Though I have studied this topic for several decades,

I am grateful to Goldingay for revealing still more connections between the First and New Testaments, and for encouraging his readers to take seriously the OT foundation of the NT and the Christian faith.

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Discovering the Septuagint: A Guided Reader. Edited by Karen H. Jobes. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016. 351 pp. \$39.99.

The book *Discovering the Septuagint: A Guided Reader*, edited by Karen Jobes, is an essential resource for anyone interested in gaining better proficiency in reading the Septuagint. Jobes, a former professor at Westmont College and Wheaton College, designed this book specifically for students to gain greater competence in LXX vocabulary. She is no stranger to Septuagint studies, having co-authored the first and second edition of *Invitation to the Septuagint* with Moisés Silva.

Jobes states, “The idea for this book emerged during the years I’ve taught advanced koine Greek reading classes at Wheaton College” (7). In her experience, two primary obstacles needed to be overcome for the student to successfully engage the text of the Septuagint. This book is therefore designed to provide a resource to address these issues: “1) The vocabulary in the Septuagint is quite vast and extends far beyond the words learned for reading the New Testament.... 2) Although the syntax of the Septuagint is largely the same as the syntax in the New Testament, there are many places where the underlying Hebrew syntax has so influenced the syntax of the translation that the resulting Greek is strange at best and occasionally quite difficult to comprehend” (7). By addressing these two issues, Jobes provides a resource that can greatly assist the student in improving his or her ability to read widely in the Septuagint.

Discovering the Septuagint is designed with the student in mind. It is divided into ten chapters: (1) Genesis 1:1-3:24; (2) Exodus 14:1-15:27; (3) Exodus 20:1-21/Deuteronomy 5:6-21;

(4) Ruth 1:1-4:22; (5) Additions to Esther; (6) Selected Psalms; (7) Selections from Hosea; (8) Jonah 1:1-4:11; (9) Malachi 1:1-4:6; (10) Selections from Isaiah. Each chapter is formatted similarly to the others. Each begins with an introduction to the issues involved with the Septuagint text and the quality/method of translation. Subsequently, a brief selected bibliography is provided for the reader's further study.

Jobes has divided each Septuagint passage into manageable portions for students to work through in one sitting. In each case, the Greek text is provided in a verse-by-verse fashion, listing key vocabulary words, syntactical issues, and important historical references beneath the text. Wise students should try to work their way through each verse before consulting the notes below. At the end of each of these sections, Jobes provides the NETS translation of the LXX text for reference. This provides students with an easy way to check their translations for errors. Finally, each section ends with a chart of uses of each specific LXX passage in the NT. Jobes provides the LXX reference, the NT reference, and the theme that is developed by the NT author.

Prior to the release of this text, the only other resources that interacted substantively with the Septuagint for the student in this manner were Rodney Decker's *Koine Greek Reader: Selections from the New Testament, Septuagint, and Early Christian Writers* (2007), and Conybeare and Stock's *Grammar of Septuagint Greek: With Selected Readings, Vocabularies, and Updated Indexes* (originally published in 1905). Although these resources are of significant value, it is surprising that in the growing field of Septuagint studies, Jobes's *Discovering the Septuagint* is the first reader devoted solely to the LXX that has appeared in the past hundred years. For this reason alone, it is well worth the price to purchase.

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Preaching Old Testament Narratives. By Benjamin H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016. 255 pp. \$18.99.

“There is a reason why more than forty percent of the Bible is narrative. People, by God’s design, want to see how their personal narrative fits into a larger one” (45). Most people love stories and the video-driven age can especially be impacted by God-inspired narratives. But, how can a Bible expositor prepare and deliver sermons from this genre with the greatest impact? Benjamin Walton has provided useful guidance for this challenge. His goal in writing was “to create a resource you’ll want to turn to when you preach OT narratives” (19).

Dr. Walton, a former pastor and professor, leads Preaching Works, an organization dedicated to helping pastors improve their preaching potential. The organization’s website (www.preachingworks.com) describes his consulting service for preachers and also has free downloadable worksheets for studying OT narratives. Walton acknowledges his debt to homiletics Haddon Robinson, Donald Sunukjian, and Jeffery Arthurs. In fact, he stated, “Chapters 4-10 are a conscious attempt to apply, in my own way, Donald Sunukjian’s homiletic to the preaching of OT narratives” (19).

The book is divided into two parts—Discover the Message and Deliver the Message. Part I appropriately begins with a survey of the hermeneutics of OT narratives. Walton emphasizes taking note of the latest old covenant expansion in any context.

The author then presents a method for studying narratives in five steps—selecting a complete unit of thought, identifying the theological and historical context, studying the plot, determining the original theological message, and crafting the take-home truth. He provides useful tools and approaches well suited to analyzing narratives. For example, he lists the common beginning and ending markers for recognizing complete units of thought which should be preached together. He also explains how to write scene summaries and provided a chart for identifying clearly what the narrative dwells on or stresses. He explains how to ask good questions before using good commentaries. He shows how to use the dialogue and action of each scene to determine its theological and literary contribution.

Such careful study should lead to a “take-home truth” that is accurate and faithfully exposit the inspired narrative. Walton closes Part I with a “Succinct Commentary of 2 Samuel 10-11” that models the tools and steps involved in studying OT narratives.

Part II on Delivering the Message calls for preaching that is accurate, relevant, orally clear, and inspiring. Walton analyzes and discourages narrative preaching that is a verse-by-verse running commentary, that is overly alliterated, that is mere principlization, or that relies on the “big idea” approach without adapting it to presentation of narratives. He argues for the effectiveness of Sunukjian’s mini-synopsis approach and of “movements” instead of “points” to present OT narratives.

Then, in chapters 5-12, the author leads the reader through the homiletical process of creating the introduction, preaching through the complete unit of thought, sharing the take-home truth, helping the listener “buy” the take-home truth, developing picture-pointing applications, moving to Christ, and designing an affirming conclusion. These chapters included helpful general homiletical advice as well as a recommended process for packaging narrative preaching. Chapter 13, “From Good to Excellent,” gives additional general coaching for preachers. Sprinkled throughout the chapters of Part II are sample sermon paragraphs that model the approach being described.

Walton footnotes and recommends Steve Matthewson’s *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*, which is still my personal favorite on this subject. Matthewson does rely on the Hebrew text more than Walton, whose English Bible approach may make his volume more accessible to many.

However, I found Walton hard to digest at times because of his heavy reliance on homiletical jargon. He used abbreviations constantly for the CUT (complete unit of thought), EI (exegetical idea), OTM (original-theological message), PPA (picture-painting application), and THT (take-home truth). He added other terminology like “focus” and “engage” to produce sentences that left me stopping to unravel them, such as, “An effective way to open the sermon is to put the first half of one or more PPAs in the Engage. Later, in the application section we would call back these situations to complete the PPA by showing

listeners how to put the THT into practice in them” (116). Personally, I had to dog-ear the abbreviation page at the beginning so that I could flip back to it often so as to recall the scheme for abbreviated jargon.

While basically appreciating the author’s approach to OT hermeneutics, a couple of statements were disappointing. For example, in explaining Israel’s view of the retributive principle and the afterlife, he argues, “Israel expected it to be carried out in this life. This is because Israel had no concept of *reward* or *punishment* in the afterlife until the book of Daniel, one of the latest books of the OT” (52). This is an overstatement, as some verses in Job, Psalms, and Proverbs strongly imply resurrection or reward after death (for example, Job 14:7-14 and 19:23-27; Pss 16:9-11; 17:15; and 73:21-26). He was also too dismissive of young earth creationism in one brief section (119-120).

The book would also have been helped by a stronger emphasis on the power of the self-authenticating word of God to penetrate human hearts. For example, the section on “Reasons People Don’t Buy THTs (take-home truths) from OT Narratives” (158-62) could be taken to imply that whether people take truths home depends more on the preacher’s technique than the Holy Spirit. In the author’s defense, he did say, “Using the Bible and a few illustrations—stories, props, humor, metaphors, etc.—God can work through us to convince and inspire listeners to want to follow the THT” (163). As preachers, we do need to hone our craft as sharply as possible, but also need frequent reminders not to depend on our techniques more than on the inherent power of God’s word and God’s Spirit. In that regard, the author *is* to be commended for listing “Pray” as the first section in his concluding chapter on “Good to Excellent.”

I recommend *Preaching Old Testament Narratives* to biblical expositors as well worth reading, pondering, and applying. Most of us need such help in continuing to grow in our effectiveness in preaching this powerful genre of inspired Scripture.

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The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest: Covenant, Retribution, and the Fate of the Canaanites. By John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. 269 pp. \$20.00.

John H. Walton, Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College and Graduate School and his son, J. Harvey Walton, a graduate student at St. Andrews University and researcher in biblical studies, co-author this installment of the *Lost World* series, following *The Lost World of Genesis One* (2009) and *The Lost World of Adam and Eve* (2015). Walton and Walton take issue with the “traditional” understanding of the conquest and sympathize with those who are “baffled” with the portrait of the God of the Old Testament, clashing as it does with the “peaceful love of God proclaimed in the New Testament” (1).

Walton and Walton organize their work into 21 propositions under six main headings: (1) Interpretation; (2) The Canaanites are not depicted as guilty of sin; (3) the Canaanites are not depicted as guilty of breaking the law; (4) the language and imagery of the conquest account has literary and theological significance; (5) What God and the Israelites are doing is often misunderstood because the Hebrew word *herem* is commonly mistranslated; and (6) How to apply this understanding. They write clearly and with the commendable objective of trying to clarify a troubling issue. However, their thesis suffers from omissions, dubious conclusions, and special pleading.

First, regarding the “peaceful love” of God, the New Testament ultimately depicts Jesus as a leveling conqueror. Regardless of one’s eschatological view, Jesus’ second coming involves worldwide cataclysm and eternal judgment. Outside of Revelation, the Gospels and epistles depict Jesus as one who will “slay with the breath of His mouth” the man of lawlessness and judge others who “perish because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” (2 Thess 2:8, 10). The conquest is not an issue unless a person has a problem with the judgment of God in general.

After the Interpretation section is some questionable exegesis. The second section centers around the *kî*, “because,” clause in Genesis 15:16: “for the iniquity of the Amorite is not

yet complete.” Walton and Walton question each part of the clause: “iniquity,” “yet,” and “not complete.” In each case, they take a possible reading for each word or phrase and combine them to make the entire clause look more obscure and dubious than it is. For instance, they write: “The root of the word *šālēm* normally connotes wholeness or completeness but the exact form . . . occurs only here” (53). The “exact form” difference is the negation, “not,” which they then use to call into question the predominant meaning of the adjective “complete.” Another example is the word *’āwōn*, “generally interpreted to refer to spectacular sin” (54) but really, according to Walton and Walton, “the emphasis of *’āwōn* is on the punishment, not the crime” (55) so technically, the passage does not “indicate that the Canaanites were committing sin” (50). It is this type of relentless nuancing that makes one think that Walton and Walton insist on driving on the edge of what is a really a straight thoroughfare.

The third section, that “The Canaanites are not depicted as guilty of breaking God’s law,” rests almost solely on the point that God gave the law to Israel, so that the Canaanites cannot be guilty of breaking that which they never received. Although this is true, YHWH does say, “Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled” (Lev 18:24). However, according to the fourth section, such talk is a “common ancient near eastern literary device,” “rhetoric” designed “to generate a negative profile of those who live outside the established order” (140) so that “the text is not claiming that the Canaanites were actually, observably wicked” (147). The fifth section then argues that the word *herem* does not always mean “utterly destroy,” since the word can apply to inanimate objects, and that the essence of *herem* is not destruction but removal of ethnic identity. Therefore, Sihon and Og (Josh 2:10) and the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:18) were all *herem*, but it is Rahab who is the “embodiment” of *herem* since she removed her Canaanite identity and assimilated with the people of God (213). Ultimately, for Walton and Walton, *herem* has nothing to do with destruction and is a NT principle (section six) for all Christians who must surrender their identity (*herem*) and retain no other identity than Jesus (247). As an example, Walton and Walton

claim that NT *herem* requires Jewish Christians to “surrender their own Jewish identity” (247) which simply is untrue. Jewish Christians must surrender only those cultural practices that exclude Gentiles.

The Waltons discuss many Hebrew words, provide many cultural parallels, and include interesting metaphors. However, their thesis is unsubstantiated. Except for one passing reference (83) and one footnote, the authors fail to deal with one of the most troublesome verses, Deuteronomy 20:16: “Only in the cities of these peoples [in Canaan] that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes.” The verb in this verse *hyh*, “let live” in the negative, one cannot explain away. They also dismiss other key verbs like *hrg*, “kill” (Josh 10:11), and *šmd*, “annihilate” (Josh 11:14), with phrases like “words like *šmd* (“annihilated”) are rhetorical; this kind of language is ubiquitous in ancient conquest accounts” (177). Even their “*herem* as cultural assimilation” theory runs afoul of the accounts of Ezra (9:2; 10:2) and Nehemiah (13:25) that portray the assimilation of the Canaanites as sinful.

The Lost Word of the Israelite Conquest is interesting historically and culturally, but it of limited value in giving an accurate interpretation of Joshua’s conquest.

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Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical Theological Study. By Jonathan I. Griffiths. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2017. 153 pp. \$22.00.

At the outset of *Preaching in the New Testament*, Jonathan Griffiths points out that although many would agree that preaching the word of God is at the core of God’s plan, they struggle to articulate a comprehensive definition of preaching from the Scripture. Griffiths believes that the history and pragmatism of preaching is valuable, but neither should be the controlling dynamic of theology. He points out the lack of books

dealing with the character and theology of preaching according to the Scripture (1).

The author tackles two vital questions: First, is “preaching” in any way to be distinct from other forms of word ministry? And second, is there a relationship between OT prophetic, the apostolic, and contemporary preaching? (2)

Griffiths moves readers from the mere assumption of specialized preaching in the post-apostolic age to actually identifying the phenomenon. He demonstrates the believers’ involvement and expectation of perpetuity in the evangelistic mission of the church woven throughout the Scriptures. He calls for the recognition of a wide variety of believers engaging in the word ministry beyond just the pastoral preaching in the church.

The continuity of post-apostolic preaching with the ministries of the OT prophets and Jesus or the apostles is carefully accentuated through careful analysis of key NT texts. Based upon the theological distinctiveness, Griffiths addresses the issue of gender roles in the ministry of the word (4).

Griffiths presents an overview of the biblical theology of the word (as preaching is a ministry of the word) and an overview of key Greek terms related to preaching in the NT and meticulously considers a study of the New Testament’s teaching concerning the scope and character of other ministries of the word in the church (5).

Griffiths explores the features of a biblical theology of preaching in the NT by observing that God is the source of all Scripture and he speaks even today as he acts and encounters people through his word.

The author, based upon Claire Smith’s scholarly work, avers that the semi-technical Greek terms *euangelizomai*, *katangelo*, and *kerysso* refer to the concept of proclamation of the gospel or the word to non-Christians and establishes preaching as a distinct activity in the NT (19). He meticulously considers every occurrence of these verbs in the NT to help readers see that the speaker in most cases is a person of authority, speaking in a public context, and the content of the message is the gospel, with few exceptions. He asserts that the language that is used for evangelistic proclamation and edification is different (34). He

believes that these three Greek terms are not synonyms, but share vital commonalities (36).

It is observed that the NT does not instruct believers as a whole group to “preach,” but using language that is similar to preaching, encourages them to minister the word to one another. The word ministry of the believers in general flows from the public ministry of the leaders (47). Griffiths states that the three Greek words already mentioned are not part of this general exhortation (49).

Griffiths carefully exegetes selected passages from the NT and articulates that the post-apostolic preaching ministry has its roots in the OT and perpetuates through the prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus, the apostles, and apostolic agents. For example, Paul’s charge to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2 is significant as it concerns the pastor-teacher’s role and traces the line of continuity from the apostolic preaching ministries to the preaching ministry of apostolic agents like Timothy in the post-apostolic age. The designation “man of God” (1 Tim 6:11 and 2 Tim 3:17) and the word “preach” (2 Tim 4:2) show the continuity between OT prophets and NT preachers (59-60). The use of five verbs in the imperative mood demonstrates dynamic and didactic proclamation of God’s word.

Additionally, Paul’s use of OT quotations related to Moses (68-69) and Isaiah (70-72) in Romans 10:6-17 show the perpetuity and authority of preaching by those whom Christ commissions and sends. God speaks through the preachers so that the hearers would encounter God (Rom 10:17). From 1 Corinthians chapters 1-2, 9, and 15, Griffiths observes that Paul’s authority of preaching comes from the power of God and not from worldly rhetorical devices (77). He is of the persuasion that the nature of the new-covenant ministry in some respects aligns with the prophetic ministry of the OT (93), but the preaching under the new-covenant is glorious and carries forward beyond the apostolic office (83). Paul explains this idea in 2 Corinthians chapters 2-6 and compares it with the old-covenant ministry of the word through allusions to Moses and Isaiah.

Griffiths, in the backdrop of Acts 17 for 1 Thessalonians 1-2, articulates that Paul’s ministry was a public ministry of proclamation with authority, and the use of genuine first person

plural implies that his associates also preached as God's approved agents and were channels to bring about change in the lives of the hearers (98). Griffiths observes that the unique sermonic nature of the book of Hebrews provides a model for shaping preaching today in exposition and application. Though the identity of the author is obscure in the epistle, yet the sermon sent in the capacity of a leader implies his authority in the post-apostolic preaching ministry (106). He also observes the consistent use of the term *ho logos* as accentuating the centrality of a biblical theology of the word (108-9). Further, the author uses the verb *euangelizomai* for the announcement of the good news in public and the use of "today" when God's voice is heard as also applying to the people listening to a sermon today (111-12). Griffiths asserts that the function of "speaking the word of God" is the responsibility of church leaders (117).

In the first excursus, Griffiths examines the word "brothers" in Philippians 1:14-18 in its contextual and exegetical milieu and believes that it refers to the preaching activity of the co-workers rather than that of the Christians in general (43). In the second excursus, he demonstrates the biblical-theological framework for the continuity of preaching through the Old and New Testaments and beyond (66).

However, Griffiths affirms that such perpetuity does not imply any new revelation and hence the language of "prophet" and "prophecy" is not assigned to the Christian preacher operating under a new covenant (127). A preacher is definitely commissioned by God himself to preach and has a right to material support from the church (78), but the author does not explain how the commissioning process takes place in the post-apostolic age.

Here are some positive aspects of this book:

1. The book is an easy read for students, pastors, and professors.
2. Biblical-theological themes, lexical information, and exegesis of choice NT passages are used to set forth a convincing argument.
3. The data presented in tabular form is very useful and easily understandable for readers.

4. Griffiths instills confidence in the post-apostolic preachers to preach the word with authority in public to non-Christians as prophets of the OT, Jesus, apostles, and their associates preached, and he distinguishes this from other forms of word ministries that the general congregation can engage in.

5. Although Griffiths admits the limitations of the scope of his research, he demonstrates thoroughness in his footnotes and bibliography and argues for the need for further study.

6. The conclusions are characterized by modesty and brevity.

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The Greek New Testament, Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge. Edited by Dirk Jongkind and Peter J. Williams. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017. 526 pp. \$49.99.

Conversations began in 2005 during tea and coffee breaks at the Tyndale House in Cambridge that ultimately brought about the publication of this new Greek text by Crossway. The stated goal was “to present in an easily readable format the best approximation to the words written by the New Testament authors, within the constraints of the documentary evidence that survives” (505). Therefore, Jongkind, Williams, and many other assistant editors spent about a decade carefully composing this Greek New Testament in order to offer the reader the benefit of knowing that this text rests on the early testimony of its authors.

This edition of the Greek NT began with an electronic transcription, produced in 2009, of Samuel Prideaux Tregelles’s text from the late nineteenth century. Although Westcott and Hort used the text by Tregelles for their influential edition in 1881, Jongkind claims it was “undeservedly ignored” in future editions of Greek texts. Therefore, due to this oversight of Tregelles’s text and its early testimony of witnesses, Jongkind adapted and used it as the base for this edition. Actually, Jongkind and Williams state that the revision was more extensive than anticipated; therefore, they have provided the reader with a completely new edition.

In the introduction to their text (505-23), the editors discuss four key areas that were carefully considered, and therefore, implemented to create the text so as to differentiate this Greek text from its counterparts (e.g., UBS⁵ and N/A²⁸). Thus, they produce a more readable and less interpretive text for its readers.

First, Tregelles's documentary approach was kept intact by insisting with each variant that the text "be attested in two or more Greek manuscripts, at least one being from the fifth century or earlier" (506). In the evaluation of these textual variations, the priority was given to the scribal tendencies that were well documented and found elsewhere, such as immediate contexts and/or in the same book.

Second, the textual apparatus is limited. The choice of variants to include in the apparatus was limited to those that were "close contenders for consideration for the main text ... have high exegetical importance ... [and] illustrate scribal habits" (515). Because the emphasis of the edited text is upon the earliest of witnesses, the apparatus provides information regarding the papyrus and majuscule witnesses. A list of the witnesses is provided in the back of the text.

Third, the editors pride themselves on insisting to use the spelling from the fifth century or earlier. It is important, however, that the reader of this Greek text understand that the editors required adequate evidence to suggest the conventional spellings. In other words, the editors' goal was to present the most widely documented spellings believed to be closest in time to the biblical authors themselves. For example, the editors decided to accept and print the epsilon-iota (ει) as a representation of the etymological (ι). One example is γείνομαι, "become," in Mark; Luke; portions of John; and Romans–Colossians. It is the editors' belief that the received spellings of some of the words found in the dictionaries and grammars today may not be the same as what the scribes accepted or used.

Fourth, is the editorial design that fashions the text such as paragraph breaks, punctuation, and the order of the books. The paragraphs in the text most closely conform to the manuscripts from the fifth century and earlier, and these differ from those that are most widely accepted and followed today. Accents and breathing marks are also printed consistent with the earliest

manuscripts. And last, the order of the books follows that which is preserved by the earliest of manuscripts. Most manuscripts preserve the NT books in four groups: four Gospel accounts; Acts and Catholic Epistles; Pauline Epistles, including Hebrews; and the Apocalypse.

There is little doubt as to the impressive readability of the text. The font, the spacing of words, and the limited apparatus are all supportive to accommodate the reader's eyes. For the joy of reading one's Greek New Testament, Jongkind and Williams are to be commended. Also, noteworthy of praise, is the editors' careful construction of a Greek text that emphasizes the use of the earliest manuscripts in the paragraphing, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and even the order of the books. The complaints I offer include its limited apparatus and a lack of inclusion of later-dated manuscripts (e.g., Majority Text MSS), and its order of books is not convenient. This Greek text will not likely serve as one of my classroom resources. I am, however, impressed with its ease of readability and its consistent, careful attention to detail; therefore, I plan to utilize it in my personal study and growth.

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Jesus and the Future: Understanding What He Taught About the End Times. By Andreas J. Köstenberger, Alexander Stewart, and Apollo Makara. Wooster, OH: Weaver Books, 2017. 196 pp. \$15.99.

In their work *Jesus and the Future: Understanding What He Taught about the End Times*, authors Andreas J. Köstenberger (Senior Research Professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary), Alexander Stewart (Academic Dean and Associate Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Tyndale Theology Seminary, the Netherlands), and Apollo Makara (lecturer at the Pastoral Training School and the Christian Leadership Institute

of Rwanda) present a survey of Jesus' teachings on eschatology. Addressed to a general audience (17), *Jesus and the Future* seeks "to guide you through the Olivet Discourse and Jesus' teaching about the future in all four Gospels" (27). The authors divide Jesus' teachings into two parts. Part 1 (chapters 1-4) addresses the major issues of the Olivet Discourse, including the abomination of desolation, the identity of "this generation," and the coming of the Son of Man in relation to the destruction of the temple. Part 2 (chapters 5-9) expounds the other eschatological teachings of Jesus, including coming persecution, the period of delay between the first and second comings, and the final judgments. The primary and most significant conclusion of the text is as follows: "In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus ... focuses on two future events. One of these events, the destruction of the temple, was in Jesus' near future (his current generation) and is in our past. The other event, Jesus' return, has not yet taken place and is still future" (85).

Köstenberger, Stewart, and Makara have accepted a daring and bold quest in *Jesus and the Future*. The Olivet Discourse is one of the most debated pericopes in the Gospels and perhaps all of Scripture, and thus it is no small feat to address the issue, even at the popular level. For this endeavor, the authors are to be commended.

Jesus and the Future succeeds in a number of different areas. As a text, it provides a readable introductory volume to the issues surrounding the interpretation of the Olivet Discourse and other prophetic elements in the Gospels. *Jesus and the Future* also rightly critiques the various preterist and partial preterist views of the Son of Man's return (68-70). It seems very unlikely that the destruction of the temple in AD 70 fulfilled this coming, especially when Jesus argues that the coming will result in the final judgments (Matt 24:29-25:46), and the authors confidently defend this point.

On the other hand, in focusing upon Jesus' view of eschatology alone, *Jesus and the Future* creates a difficult problem. By its very definition, eschatology is the study of what all of Scripture says about the end times, not just what one portion of Scripture states. Even the authors cannot help but cite other eschatological passages to support their views, for

example, the authors cross-reference 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 to demonstrate that Christ's second coming should not be associated with the destruction of the temple in AD 70 (69). Interestingly enough, Christ told his followers to read the prophet Daniel to understand his teachings on the future, and during His Olivet Discourse no less (cf. Matt 24:15). The writers admit this difficulty (174), but unfortunately the lack of exposition of influential eschatological passages is problematic because one's interpretation of other texts will influence one's interpretation of Jesus' words. For example, how would the authors synthesize Daniel 11 and 2 Thessalonians 2 with their view of the abomination of desolation (cf. 55-56)? On another note, it would have been helpful to include more interaction with competing views. For example, how would dispensationalists push back against the authors' arguments that "this generation" refers only to Jesus' contemporaries (cf. 75)?

In conclusion, *Jesus and the Future* is a good popular introduction to Jesus' view on the end times. Even those who disagree with the authors will find its organization and survey of the key issues helpful. However, one must approach the text understanding that its very nature creates limitations and should include *Jesus and the Future* alongside other studies of eschatology.

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Greek for Life: Strategies for Learning, Retaining, and Reviving New Testament Greek. By Benjamin L. Merkle and Robert L. Plummer. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017. 152 pp. \$19.99.

Do you know Greek? And if so, how well do you remember your Greek? Or has it been too long since you've taken Greek that it is beyond repair? How often do you use your Greek? Do you schedule consistent time to read and/or translate from your Greek New Testament? Regardless of your vocation—pastor, missionary, professor, or layperson—if you want to communicate God's word effectively, then spending consistent

time with your Greek NT is a must. The heartbeat of Benjamin Merkle and Robert Plummer is to offer the necessary encouragement and motivation to help readers use Greek to learn, minister, and communicate God's word for the benefit of the reader and hearer.

This book is a practical guide for all people with varying levels of Greek knowledge from the beginner to the scholar. As a matter of fact, Merkle and Plummer wrote the book with the following readers in mind: the student, the teacher, the pastor, and the one sheep "who has wandered from the [Greek] fold" (x). This book has eight chapters and is a joy to read; once you begin, you will not want to put it down. Each chapter is equipped with just the right amount of inspiration and motivation to learn, retain, or revive your Greek; with helpful sections that accommodate most chapters that provide necessary resources to assist your own knowledge and understanding of Greek; and a devotional reflection from the Greek NT.

The first chapter is centered around one goal: that is learning Greek, first and foremost, so that one knows God as he is revealed in the NT. Although the task of learning Greek is great, the payout is even greater; keep the end in sight. Learning Greek is a means of God's grace in one's life.

The second chapter is designed for those who have become undisciplined and, quite frankly, lazy with their study of Greek. Topics such as laziness, diligence, discipline, time management, efficiency, and technology are explained as possible reasons for losing Greek. Simply put, the authors encourage the reader to be disciplined with Greek. But, how can readers do this?

The third chapter walks through some practical ways to study Greek. The bottom line is to review, review, and review some more. There just is no substitute for a consistent review of Greek to know Greek. While chapter three provides ways to study Greek, the fourth chapter is designed to provide assistance with memorization. Merkle and Plummer's goal is to help readers move their Greek from short-term memory to long-term memory. Easy-to-use, practical methods flood this chapter with ideas on how to memorize Greek in order to retain it.

The fifth chapter provides recommendations on how to develop a reading plan. The authors offer suggestions on what to

read by offering a chart that reports the level of difficulty of vocabulary for each NT book; how to read Greek, by offering a number of sources combining various tools (e.g., interlinears and lexicons); and how long to read, focusing on the consistency of reading, not the time spent reading.

The sixth chapter comes alongside those on the journey of learning Greek for life and discusses various resources that aid in the use of Greek. These resources include software, websites, smartphone apps, lexicons, word-study tools, Greek guides, handbooks, Greek grammars, commentaries, and communities of accountability. This chapter is worth the price of the book, especially given the plethora of resources today. A guide offered by these experienced authors is extremely helpful.

Whereas the second chapter dealt with discipline, this seventh chapter can be narrowed down to one word as well: accountability. But it is more than *just* accountability; it discusses keeping one's Greek. In other words, don't waste your breaks/time off. For the student, this could refer to the time between semesters, and for the pastor/missionary, this could refer to time between appointments or downtime in the office. Whatever one's situation might be, the point is to set a realistic goal with retaining/learning Greek, write down a plan, commit to the plan, and have another person keep you accountable.

The final chapter offers some guidelines to get your Greek back, if you have wandered from the fold. A number of testimonials encourage readers toward revitalization of their Greek.

As a professor of Greek for the past seventeen years, I can honestly say that this book is an excellent resource for those passionate about the Greek NT. If you are in a position (pastor, teacher, missionary, etc.) to use Greek, this book must be on your shelf. The practical, easy-to-use, and experienced advice from these seasoned authors will be the encouragement that you need at just the right time.

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Constantine Tischendorf: The Life and Work of a 19th Century Bible Hunter. By Stanley E. Porter. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015. 190 pp. \$29.95.

In Stanley E. Porter's *Constantine Tischendorf: The Life and Work of a 19th Century Bible Hunter*, Porter confesses "a longstanding fascination" with this remarkable scholar (viii). His brief biographical profile of Tischendorf presents him as a highly motivated man who meticulously pursued his passion of "locating and publishing as many ancient manuscripts as he could" (73). Porter identifies the three main areas for which Tischendorf is known today: (1) his relentless pursuit of ancient manuscripts, primarily consisting of NT sources, but also other important ones, not the least of which is *The Epistle to Barnabas* and the *Fragment of Papias*; (2) his work as a textual critic; and (3) most famously, his discovery of the *Sinai Codex* from St. Catherine's monastery located at the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt (6). This last item has generated questions about Tischendorf's ethics and integrity. Porter weighs in on this and makes a good case to show that Tischendorf did not—as some have accused him—abscond with *Codex Sinai*, and (as the accusations go) deceive its stewards (viz., the resident monks) who were oblivious to its true value.

Porter's fascination with Tischendorf is infectious. He observes that although this tireless "Bible hunter" has received only anecdotal references in textbooks on the subject matter, his contributions are under-appreciated and perhaps inestimable. Not only was Tischendorf a major contributor to advancing the discipline of textual criticism, he was even more a defender of biblical authority against men like Hegel, Schliermacher, and Bultmann, whose liberal German scholarship had the effect of supplanting the authority of the Scriptures. Thus, as a pious nineteenth-century conservative German scholar himself, he sought to establish the authenticity of the most ancient NT manuscripts through his skill as a paleographer. He especially set out to discredit F. C. Bauer, who assigned second-century dates to many of the NT books, effectively calling into question the historicity of the NT Gospels, as well as removing Pauline authority from the majority of the letters traditionally credited to

the esteemed apostle. His achievements in this area alone, as Porter so faithfully presents them, are a marvel of human endurance and skill.

Constantine Tischendorf is a relatively brief book of 190 pages. Aside from a foreword, bibliography, and index, there are two main divisions. In the first part, Porter devotes seventy-six pages to Tischendorf's life. The first sixty of these pages offer a biographical profile, focusing mainly on his academic and professional career. The remaining pages outline his two primary areas of expertise: paleography and textual criticism, which he applied to the *Greek Old Testament* and to the *Greek New Testament*. Porter assesses these achievements as both "monumental" and "magisterial" (70).

Part 2 of Porter's *Constantine Tischendorf* spans a total of ninety-six pages, sixty-four of which are reproductions of Tischendorf's own writings (translated from the German into English). After a very helpful thirty-two-page introduction by Porter, which contextualizes this amazingly well-rounded individual, the reader has the privilege of reading a firsthand account of Tischendorf's discovery of *Codex Sinaiticus* when Tischendorf visited St. Catherine's monastery. Following this Porter presents Tischendorf's *When Were Our Gospels Written?*, published originally in 1866 as a pamphlet containing five main topical sections, later to be published in book form with chapter divisions, as presented here: Chapter I: Ecclesiastical Testimony; Chapter II: The Testimony of Heretics and Heathen during the Second Century; Chapter III: Apocryphal Literature; Chapter IV: Testimony of Apostolic Fathers: Barnabas and Papias; Chapter V: Manuscripts and Versions of the Second Century.

These five chapters not only give us insight into the bright mind of Constantine von Tischendorf, but they are also still relevant for pastors or students of the Scriptures as a means of helping equip them to answer skeptics who assail the authenticity of the NT manuscripts.

Perhaps some who read this brief treatment of Tischendorf's life—including this reviewer—will be left with a desire for more. Although it was not in Porter's purview (and thus he should hardly be criticized for it), one wishes that he had included, say, another twenty or thirty pages that would have presented a more

detailed account of the controversies that swirl about this intriguing man. As even Porter himself admits (see p. 73), this makes him vulnerable to criticisms of undue bias in favor of Tischendorf. Despite that, this reviewer is satisfied that Porter has offered a fair and balanced treatment of a servant who has served Christ's church admirably.

All in all, this is a superb reference for those interested in textual criticism. In fact, I would recommend this for professors who teach the subject matter in the classroom who undoubtedly encounter many students apprehensive about its highly technical nature and demands for attention to tedious detail. I would even suggest it being placed on the "required reading" list of textbooks for the course. Even though this is not Porter's main aim, I believe it would ably serve to enthrall students with a man who dedicated his life to textual criticism, and by doing so, may not only allay many of their apprehensions, but also impress upon them its great significance as a discipline.

Beyond the discipline of textual criticism, this book will be of great interest to those who enjoy church history or simply enjoy reading biographies of great men who have made significant contributions to the church. Though the overall target readership is admittedly narrow, those who do choose to pick it up and engage with it will find it rewarding both on a technical level and on a personal level.

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The Extent of the Atonement: A Historical and Critical Review.
By David L. Allen. Nashville: B&H, 2016. 820 pp. \$59.99.

David L. Allen is the Dean of the School of Preaching, Professor of Preaching, George W. Truett Chair of Pastoral Ministry, and Director of the Center for Expository Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He was previously Dean of the School of Theology from 2004-2016. He received the BA degree at Criswell College (1978), Master of Divinity at Southwestern Baptist Theological

Seminary (1981), and PhD in Humanities with a major in linguistics from University of Texas at Arlington (1987). Dr. Allen served two congregations as senior pastor and has served as interim pastor for several churches. He is the author of several books, articles, and chapters in edited volumes.

As a theologian, pastor, and preacher, Allen has had ample reason and opportunity to wrestle with the question of how to get the gospel right. The biblical and theological issue of the extent of the atonement of Jesus Christ became a substantive part of that quest. The poles of the issue, while simply stated, have been controversial through the centuries of the existence of the church. Did Jesus die for the sins of all people, or only for the sins of the elect? Allen explores this question historically, biblically, and theologically in his book.

In fact, Allen clearly states that his “ultimate goal ... is simple: to demonstrate historically, and then biblically and theologically, why universal atonement is a more excellent way, and that from the pens of the many Calvinists who have believed such” (xviii). One of the fascinating results of his investigation is the demonstration of the “unity between all moderate Calvinists, Arminians, and non-Calvinists on the specific issue of the extent of the atonement” (ibid). Allen writes not from a Calvinist, nor from an Arminian perspective, but rather as a Baptist whose heritage has contained elements of both Calvinist and Arminian soteriology.

The bulk of the volume (from page 3 to page 653) is devoted to a historical treatment of the doctrine in the writings of authors from the early church to the present. This includes lengthy treatments of the positions of Northern and Southern Baptist writers on the extent of the atonement. Distrustful of secondary sources, Allen has laboriously worked through the actual writings of these authors to determine and to demonstrate their positions. When he does quote from secondary sources, he does not hesitate to respond to their characterizations of the position of the writer under discussion.

To this quite thorough (though admittedly not exhaustive) review, Allen adds a critical review of Gibson and Gibson, eds. *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspective*

(published 2013). Due to the endorsements that book received (“definitive”), the standpoint of the authors of its essays (“defending the notion of definite atonement”), and inaccuracies he discovered in the essays, Allen felt it necessary to respond to the authors of the book. While giving credit to the writers who accurately dealt with the primary evidence, Allen carefully and incisively points out those statements that misquote the sources or inaccurately generalize about the positions of the original writers concerning definite, particular, or limited atonement.

Not only has there been a difference between the Arminians, moderate Calvinists, high Calvinists, hyper Calvinists, and Hypothetical (Conditional) Universalists in their understanding of these terms, but there has also been confusion about other aspects of soteriology along with the extent of the atonement. As Allen frequently insists, “Failure to distinguish properly between intent, extent, and application with respect to the atonement is a critical error when investigating the subject historically” (680).

Fundamental questions asked regarding the extent of the atonement include the following: Could Christ have paid the price for the sins of the whole world, and yet not all be saved? What is the significance of the word “for” in the statement “Christ died only for the elect”? Could a person for whom Christ died suffer in hell? Does the provision for salvation become effectual only when a person exercises faith? Is the good news only good news for the elect? Through patient historical, exegetical, and theological interaction with those who have asked and answered these crucial and long debated issues, Allen in a clear and remarkably readable way has pointed out the inaccuracies and logical inconsistencies of many who have ventured into this important area of soteriology.

In conclusion, Allen provides a helpful chapter on “Why Belief in Unlimited Atonement Matters.” Moving away from historical theology, *per se*, he presents a theological argument for unlimited atonement, and against the fundamental arguments of those who hold to limited atonement. For Allen, the boldest proclamation of the gospel will be based upon assurance that Christ died for the one to whom the gospel is preached. He claims that the burden of proof is on the teacher of limited atonement to demonstrate exegetically, in the face of NT texts that say that

Christ died for the sins of all people, that Christ died only for some people's sins.

If one is looking for a theological treatise on limited or unlimited atonement supportive of a theological persuasion or school, this is not the book, though it is difficult to imagine an exegetical or theological argument that is not thoroughly discussed in it. If one is interested in learning what theologians have written—and are still writing—about the subject, this is the book to read. It will be eye-opening for those who have not researched the subject to learn how many of the great teachers of the past have held to unlimited atonement, believing that Christ's sacrifice was a sufficient provision for all humans, even if they have also believed that only the elect and/or only those who believe will receive the salvific benefit of that sacrifice.

Whatever the theological persuasion of the readers, they will benefit from this massive tome. In this major work, David Allen has provided a resource that will not likely be duplicated in the foreseeable future.

The book has no bibliography, but the complete indices and footnotes suffice to point the reader to sources.

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Old-Earth or Evolutionary Creation?: Discussing Origins with Reasons to Believe and BioLogos. Edited by Kenneth Keathley, J. B. Stump, and Joe Aguirre. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. 256 pp. \$24.00.

Bringing any groups who disagree about doctrine to the same table has the potential to end in greater division than understanding. However, Keathley and the fellow editors of *Old-Earth or Evolutionary Creation?* masterfully play up the tensions between Reasons to Believe (RTB) and BioLogos's understanding of science and theology enough to create an

engaging and insightful conversation regarding science-faith issues, specifically about creation in this work.

Old-Earth or Evolutionary Creation? begins with a brief presentation by the leaders of RTB (Hugh Ross) and BioLogos (Deborah Haarsma) regarding the history and mission of their respective organizations. Following these statements, Keathley, on behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) academy affirms the positions of the professors involved in this particular conversation as “conservative evangelicals” and affirming of both the Baptist Faith and Message and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (6). The introduction closes with Keathley’s recommending the model of this work in which “two creationist organizations can strongly disagree with one another while treating one another with Christian charity” and serve as a pattern for the Christian community to “lovingly pursue reconciliation on this and other controversies threatening to divide the church” (7).

Each of the eleven conversations that follow Keathley’s introduction begins with the topic presented from the SBC moderator, followed by initial presentations from each organization stating its position on the question. Following the initial presentations, the moderator leads each organization to engage with the tension created by asking them to further clarify the stated position, challenge their opponents’ position, or address subsequent questions that have arisen from the initial presentation. Following the final responses from both organizations, the moderator closes each discussion with a summary of the discussion as well as comments regarding their personal perspective of where each organization closed or created greater tension on the matter.

While there is certainly a high level of scientific discussion within *Old-Earth or Evolutionary Creation?*, this work is clearly and thoroughly an integrated work of science and theology. Each of the eleven conversations detailing the positions of RTB and BioLogos concern topics involving the interpretation and application of Scripture including the nature of biblical authority, viable positions concerning Adam and Eve, death and predation prior to the fall, God’s interaction with the natural world, and

geological and fossil evidence as well as anthropology and genetics.

As a young-earth creationist, I'm thankful this work has helped me recognize that old-earth creation proponents are not only within the church, especially a church located in a scientific research-based university city like Rochester, but they are also leaders of conservative evangelical churches. They are not merely prolific thinkers, writers, and influencers but also passionate Christ-followers who play a crucial role in determining the next generations' interpretation and application of Scripture. Though I may frequently and strongly disagree with their conclusions and at times even shudder at their interpretative models, I am not only better for hearing their positions and understanding why they hold those conclusions, but I am also better because I am able use utilize their sources, questions, and arguments to better articulate my own position.

Through this work, Keathley's team was able to successfully reach their stated goal of creating a written dialogue characterized by respect for each other and love for the Savior designed to serve as an example for future dialogues to follow as they discuss doctrinal matters with those inside and outside of the faith community. Because of the successful conversation presented in *Old-Earth or Evolutionary Creation?*, it is a resource that is well worth the investment, regardless of one's position on the age of the earth.

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Between One Faith and Another: Engaging Conversations on the World's Great Religions. By Peter Kreeft. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2017. 213 pp. \$17.00.

Professor and well-known author Peter Kreeft believes there are basically two great conversations in the world. The first, and

most important, is the vertical conversation between humans and God. The second greatest conversation, and the one on which his book is based, is the conversation “*Between One Faith and Another.*” In this engaging conversation on the world’s great religions, Kreeft addresses a specific question: Is one religion greater or truer or better than another? To put it another way: Are the different religions incompatible or compatible (1)? Kreeft states,

This book considers that question of comparative religions. It is also a very quick tour through the essential teachings of seven of the world’s great religions to gather enough data...to form a reasonable opinion or theory of comparative religions, a theory that judges the data. The questions...are motivated by an attempt to find that unfashionable thing called truth. (2)

Kreeft accomplishes the task of finding truth via a dramatic presentation. He utilizes three characters: Thomas Keptic (a hard-headed, logical, nonreligious *exclusivist*), Bea Lever (a postmodern, open-hearted, intuitive, religious *inclusivist*), and Professor Fesser (a neutral, scholarly, objective *pluralist*) (3). Throughout this dialogue, Kreeft magnificently employs the Socratic method to stimulate the reader as he or she thinks through the distinctions of each religion and/or faith.

Each chapter takes place at the conclusion of Professor Fesser’s “World Religions” lecture for that day. After class, Thomas and Bea—along with the occasional guidance and challenges from the professor—reignite their “debate” of a specific religion from that day’s lecture. The flow of the conversation is incessantly influenced by each character’s intellectual paradigm (Thomas—empirical *exclusivism*; Bea—existential *inclusivism*; and Professor—neutral *pluralism*). Starting in the first chapter, one of the most frustrating yet reoccurring issues is the attempt to define “religion.” As each faith is scrutinized, religion seems to continually cloud the discussion. Yet, through the process of challenging each other (often employed through Kreeft’s delightful humor and sarcasm), Thomas and Bea come to a point where they are able to narrow every religion down to three dimensions: “Creed, code, and cult.

Or words, works, and worship. Theology, morality, and liturgy. Every religion tells you what to believe, how to live, and how to worship or pray or meditate or do some specifically religious practice” (22).

The existence of God is another issue that causes dissension between the three individuals. For Thomas, the idea of God’s existence is based exclusively on empirical evidence—clear, unadulterated, scientific logic. Bea, on the other hand, views the existence of God from a mystical type of existentialism that relies on the senses. When the professor enters the conversation, he brings a neutral experientialism to the mix. These two points of discussion—religion and God—continue to emerge throughout the rest of the book challenging, and often frustrating, Thomas’s and Bea’s views of the various faiths.

Chapters three through ten involve a concise but focused overview of various eastern and western religions. Kreeft gives a synopsis of Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Despite the fact that Kreeft succinctly presents the points of each religion throughout the trialogue, the continual back and forth banter between Thomas, Bea, and the professor becomes a bit tiresome. Yet, the mystical “punches” and logical “counterpunches” thrown between the characters display a linguistic brilliance that makes this book a masterpiece.

Throughout their discussions I found myself drawn to one of the three individuals in the trialogue. It was very difficult to remain neutral as every individual—myself included—has a specific bent toward one of the three theological/philosophical paradigms that are conveyed by each character. As I “listened in” on their conversation, I found myself “siding” more with Thomas and his exclusivistic logic even though I disagreed completely with his agnostic conclusions. At the same time, I was able to understand and agree with some of Bea’s inclusivistic perspective as well as the professor’s pluralistic perspective. I do applaud Kreeft for specifically bringing Thomas to a “logical” conclusion of who Jesus really is based on both the “Lord, liar, or lunatic” reasoning as well as the challenge from “Pascal’s Wager” (200-201). I believe this was an important key element to the whole book—both for Thomas as well as all who read it.

In conclusion, I do appreciate that Kreeft recognizes from the outset that we are not God; therefore we can in no way—at least not in this life—know how the different religions sound to God (2). At the same time, he unequivocally states that he, personally, is an exclusivist regarding Christ. He continues, “Christ cannot be half of the way, the truth, or the life: he is all of it” (6).

I would recommend this book to anyone trying to reach this postmodern millennial generation. Yet, this recommendation comes with a caveat: Be prepared to be challenged in your own thinking about how the three dimensions of theology, morality, and liturgy all function *Between One Faith and Another*.

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Finding Truth: Five Principles for Unmasking Atheism, Secularism, and Other God Substitutes. By Nancy Pearcey. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2015. 383 pp. \$22.99.

Nancy Pearcey, a scholar-in-residence at Houston Baptist University, provides an engaging analysis of the Christian worldview and its substitutes. The volume does not just preach to the choir—it also preaches *at* the choir. The Foreword reminds Christians that “individuals are under no obligation to affirm as true something they have not adequately examined” (14). Therefore, apologists should be like Jesus Christ himself, who evinced “an attitude of openness to examination so that inquisitive people are welcomed to explore and investigate” (16). Pearcey herself warns against the assumption that church leaders can override doubts and questions “merely by cultivating a more intense devotional life” (57). “If my students are at all representative, teens regard emotional tactics as manipulative anyway. They know it’s easy to manufacture an artificial sense of belonging with loud music, water-balloon fights, and Ultimate Frisbee games” (59).

Pearcey's apologetic method is difficult to pin down fully within the common classifications. She often employs forms of the "transcendental argument," as emphasized by presuppositionalists (30), and she charges skeptics with suppressing the *sensus divinitatis* (31). Yet she also highlights the integration of various evidences and rational arguments. Her overall approach especially mirrors the apologetic method of Francis Schaeffer, who greatly influenced her during her formative years. Pearcey's argumentation also reminds one of the worldview apologetics of Douglas Groothuis, who considers his theology to be "reformed," but has sympathetically yet openly critiqued Van Tilian presuppositionalism. Some have classified Schaeffer, Groothuis, and Pearcey as adapting a modified "verificationist" approach (as espoused by Gordon Lewis).

Pearcey's interpretive analysis of Romans 1 becomes foundational, as humans are either oriented toward the Creator or toward creaturely substitutes, thus worshiping "the gifts instead of the giver himself" (38). With this Pauline framework in place, Pearcey identifies five apologetic "principles" or tactics (42-51): (1) Identify the idol. (2) Identify the idol's reductionism. (3) Test the idol: Does it contradict what we know about the world? (4) Test the idol: Does it contradict itself? (5) Replace the idol: Make the case for Christianity. In sum, "at some point, every idol-based worldview contradicts reality. This creates an opportunity to make a positive case for Christianity" (48). This fivefold approach reflects Pearcey's understanding of "total truth," that the Christian *Weltanschauung* is consistent, coherent, and comprehensive (48).

First, one must begin by cutting to the heart of any alternative worldview by identifying its "idol" (85). If one presses far enough back, one reaches "an ultimate starting point" (assuming there cannot be an infinite regress), "something that is taken as the self-existent reality on which everything depends" (62). Either God or a "God-surrogate" is "the self-existent, eternal reality that is the origin of everything else," that which is "beyond or behind everything else" (66-67).

Second, one should demonstrate that the worldview, as founded upon its "God-surrogate," does not adequately preserve the humanization of humanity: "We could say that every concept

of humanity is created in the image of *some* god. And because the divinity will always be lower than the biblical God, its view of humanity will also be lower” (98). In unadulterated naturalism, for example, morality is nothing more than “self-interest in disguise” (100). Freedom of deliberation is a mere illusion, as “all our actions are really the effects of unconscious physical causes” (107). A comprehensive relativism is self-refuting as a truth claim: “Like every other evolving idea, it is relative to its own moment in history, and therefore not true in any transhistorical sense” (116). In fact, a postmodern hermeneutics of suspicion can become self-devouring, as its own perspectives may be reduced to social constructions situated within particular social-historical contexts (120-23).

Third, Pearcey recommends that one examine the liveability of the alternative worldview within the “real world”: “Because idols deify a *part* of creation, they produce maps that cover only *part* of reality. As a result, in the course of ordinary life, humans keep walking off the map” (150). Such lived experience results in “cognitive dissonance” and “double-think” among adherents of the worldview (149, 152, 162), resulting in the loss of “unified truth” (152). For this reason, even if unwittingly, “Many stop short of working out the full implications of their worldview” (153). Therefore, one must bring the ultimate implications and the gaps in explanatory power to the surface (163). One senses here a parallel to Schaeffer’s tactic of “taking the roof off” alternative worldviews (cf. 161; 306 n43).

Fourth, Pearcey advocates testing the surrogate worldview for internal consistency. For instance, logical positivism “insisted that any statement not reducible to sense impressions is not only false, but cognitively meaningless—that is, not even subject to standards of true and false” (184). Pearcey responds, “But is *that* statement empirically testable? Of course not. It is not an empirical observation. It is a metaphysical one—an arbitrary definition of what qualifies as knowledge. Thus when the criterion of logical positivism was applied to itself, it was discredited. It stood self-condemned” (185). Postmodernism insists that truth-claims are expressions of economic interests and social power, which would seemingly relativize the truth-claims of postmodernism’s own “language games.” And the reduction

of humans to biological programmability and adaptive survivability is no ultimate guarantee of human rationality and the truth value of their thoughts.

Finally, Pearcey calls upon her readers to make the case for Christianity: “Scripture says all people are made in God’s image, live in God’s world, and experience God’s common grace. As a result, in practice they experience the truths of general revelation, even if they selectively suppress that knowledge” (224). Overall, Pearcey’s fifth section remains somewhat defensive and polemical in tenor, although Pearcey sets out to build a positive case for Christianity. Quoting William Provine, Pearcey insists that if God does not exist, then “no ultimate foundations for ethics exist, no ultimate meaning in life exists, and free will is merely a human myth” (246). In and of itself, this is not a positive argument *per se*. One could, after all, choose to be an atheistic, amoral, naturalistic nihilist and remain logically consistent with Pearcey’s disjunctive dilemma.

Pearcey ultimately proclaims that Christianity “fulfills humanity’s highest hopes and ideals,” as the “good news” of the gospel serves as a beacon to those “jaded by the failure and inhumanity of reductionism” (234). One wonders if such a kerygmatic turn is ultimately unavoidable, if one moves beyond a negative polemic to a full, positive accounting (an observation, not a criticism). “At its best,” insists the closing chapter, “apologetics includes not only the *critique* of idols but also the *creation* of life-giving alternatives” (269). Since believers themselves are sometimes entangled by “counterfeit gods,” are not all ultimately dependent upon the creative, life-giving *verbum Dei* of the Christocentric gospel (2 Cor 4:1-6)? An “Appendix” (321-26) provides the biblical text of Romans 1:1-2:16, which is foundational to Pearcey’s approach. One wonders if the apostle Paul might consider his discussion in 1 Corinthians 1-2 to be *apropos* to the discussion as well, as one moves beyond the “general revelation” of Romans 1-2 to the Christocentric *euangelion*, which remains a *skandalon* to those saturated in surrogate worldviews that have not been upended by the cruciform message. In the gospel, the self-giving Christ overpowers opposing “strength” through the active reversal of his humble weakness.

The endnotes on pages 277-321 provide the documentation for the volume and are worth perusing in and of themselves, as they provide a window into the resources that have affected Pearcey's thinking. Pages 331-73 provide prompts for further discussion and a sample exam. The inclusion of "Acknowledgments" (327-29) and an "Index" (375-83) round out the volume. But the last word left ringing in the reader's ear may be found on page 252: "Christians will be effective in reaching out to others only when they reflect biblical truth in their message, their method, and their manners."

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Should Christians Fear Outer Darkness? By Dennis Rosker, Tom Stegall, and Kurt Witzig. Duluth: Grace Gospel Press, 2015. 520 pp. \$24.95.

What will become of lazy, disobedient, or carnal Christians after the return of Christ? Will they "get off scot-free?" Or will they have to suffer some form of retribution for their failure to live a victorious Christian life? This question has generated significant discussion in free grace circles during the past few decades. In order to retain free grace distinctives while simultaneously providing a retributive mechanism for carnal Christians, some have embraced a view called *kingdom exclusionism*. According to this view, believers who are disobedient in the present age will be excluded from the millennial kingdom and/or suffer punitive damages at the judgment seat of Christ. This, so the theory goes, provides a powerful impetus for righteous living.

The authors of *Should Christians Fear Outer Darkness?* write to critique and confute this view. They are themselves committed to free grace theology and traditional dispensationalism, and they feel that kingdom exclusionism is both inconsistent with those systems and an inaccurate interpretation of the germane biblical texts. They argue that no Christians will ever be cast from Christ's presence into a realm

of outer darkness, nor will they suffer punitive damages at the bema.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 offers a brief introduction to kingdom exclusion theology and examines the outer darkness passages (Matt 8:5–13; 22:1–14; 25:14–30). After framing the issue and laying out the pertinent questions to be raised and answered, the chapters in this section discuss the doctrinal, contextual, exegetical, and lexical problems plaguing the exclusionist interpretation of the outer darkness passages. A final application chapter explores the psychological effects of kingdom exclusion theology on the believer and argues that kingdom exclusionism tends to cultivate a legalistic approach to the Christian life.

Part 2 focuses primarily on the bema seat and other key issues involved in the kingdom exclusion debate. Here, the authors provide a brief introduction to the doctrine of the judgment seat of Christ; labor to demonstrate that believers will never experience God's wrath; and distinguish salvation from rewards, God's punishment from his discipline, and the fear of punishment from perfect love. Finally, refutations are offered to the typical exclusionist understandings of inheriting vs. entering the kingdom and overcoming vs. non-overcoming Christians. The authors argue that all believers are overcomers and that they will all both enter and inherit the millennial kingdom.

The appendices offer touching personal testimonies from two former adherents to kingdom exclusion theology. They claim that their lives were characterized by harsh legalism when they held to the exclusionist view, and that abandoning it has given them a profound new appreciation for the grace of God.

On the whole, *Should Christians Fear Outer Darkness?* is an excellent book. Rokser, Stegall, and Witzig have obviously read quite widely in the writings of kingdom exclusionists and have considered their point of view carefully. The theological and exegetical refutations they offer are well-researched, clearly articulated, and cogent. The argumentation is at its strongest when it is exposing the doctrinal inconsistencies between free grace theology and dispensationalism on the one hand and kingdom exclusion theology on the other, and when highlighting the all-too-common linkage between kingdom exclusionism and

harsh legalism. (Of course, in fairness, it should be pointed out that this linkage is present in quite a few other approaches to Christian living, too!) That the authors are themselves committed dispensationalists and free grace adherents lends them a great deal of credibility to speak out on this topic. This book should also be commended for the charitable, gracious tone it employs throughout. Rokser, Stegall, and Witzig have taken their opponents' views seriously and represented them fairly, even when expressing passionate disagreement with them. The pastoral concern for individual Christians who struggle with assurance of their salvation and anxiety over their performance is also present throughout this book, and it is laudable.

Of course, as with any book of this nature, there are a few things to criticize. Some will find the title, though striking, a little misleading: a far greater proportion of the book is dedicated to the question of punitive damages at the bema than to the outer darkness. The omission of a subject index is a weakness, particularly for a book that addresses such a wide range of topics. In a few places, although I substantially agreed with the authors' conclusions, I found their exegetical argumentation to be either unconvincing or overreaching. For instance, whereas kingdom exclusionists typically regard the wedding garment in the parable of the wedding feast (Matt 22:1–14) as signifying *personal* righteousness, this book argues that it signifies the *imputed* righteousness of Christ (108–12). But why must it signify either? Does not this hermeneutical approach verge on allegorical interpretation, or hyper-typologizing at the very least? Sometimes a tent peg is just a tent peg, and sometimes a wedding garment is just a wedding garment. Importing extra doctrinal data into parabolic details is generally ill-advised. Another example of exegetical overreach may be found in the use of the first-class conditional as an evidence that all the addressees of the epistle to the Galatians were regenerate (414–16). Although there is a case to be made here, probably less weight should be put on the first-class conditional construction itself and more weight on other contextual factors in the passage.

A few other examples could also be multiplied, given additional space. But all of these are minor nitpicks and do not detract materially from the very high quality of the book. *Should*

Christians Fear Outer Darkness? is heartily recommended to all Christians who are grappling with issues of assurance, performance, and obedience, and to those who minister to them. It is written in a non-technical style so as to be accessible to both pastors and laypeople. Although the subject under discussion can be weighty indeed, this is not a difficult book to read. Those who take the time to read it carefully will be richly repaid for their efforts.

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Resurrecting the Trinity: A Plea to Recover the Wonder and Meaning of the Triune God. By M. James Sawyer. Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2017. 192 pp. \$14.99.

M. James Sawyer (PhD, Dallas Theological Seminary) is dean and professor of theological studies at Pacific Islands Theological Seminary and director of Sacred Saga Ministries. Sawyer's purpose in writing is to urge the church to rediscover the meaning of the Trinity. He claims "for all practical purposes we have lost its meaning, and in the process have lost the biblical picture of Jesus Christ as Lord of creation as well" (16). Sawyer's aim in writing the book is to move beyond a simply doctrinal understanding of the Trinity to a practical and comprehensive one with Jesus as the focus, noting that "While we Christians in the West continue to assert that God is Trinity, we in fact live our lives as believers in a unitarian God" (17). This has led Western Christians to lose the biblical picture of Jesus Christ over creation (16) and has been a major contributing factor to the fractured nature of contemporary Christianity (16).

Sawyer goes on to argue that we generally put God into boxes that are far too unitary when it comes to his character (chapter two). He contends that doctrine and personal revelation from Jesus is the way into understanding the Trinity, rather than doctrine alone (chapter three). In chapter four he writes that to properly understand the Trinity, we must also understand God as three in one, especially noting the personal relationship through

love between the three persons of the Trinity: “The deepest truth of the divine being is the dynamic relationship of the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit” (86). Chapter five describes the work of Christ. Sawyer argues that the penal substitution view of the atonement can be reductionistic because it misses the larger purpose of adoption (124). Speaking of penal substitution, Sawyer states, “Ultimately, it arises out of a conceptual matrix of law and justice that has its roots in Roman jurisprudence rather than in Scripture” (124). He also writes, “The image of adoption moves the focus from our legal courtroom status to our status as beloved children within the family” (125). The incarnation, while involving wrath, “must be viewed as an act of love” (137). His last chapter urges the reader to understand the Holy Spirit in terms of “unpredictable activity, creativity, and change” (151) as it is described in the Bible.

In the conclusion Sawyer urges the reader to be willing to abandon preconceived notions of the Trinity and be open to adjusting to his idea of the Trinity, one that he states is “profoundly existential and life-transforming as we grasp that reality of which it speaks” (178).

The book ends with an appendix on the gender of the Holy Spirit. Sawyer’s conclusion is that the Holy Spirit can be referred to as “he” or “she” based on the premise the Greek necessitates no gender. According to Sawyer, female imagery is implicit in the NT with the phrase “born of the Spirit,” and the Eastern acceptance of some feminine references to the Holy Spirit.

Many aspects of Sawyer’s book are attractive. He appeals to a wide range of readers by including many helpful illustrations, stories and personal anecdotes to help explain his points and quotes from a wide range of academic sources. Sawyer’s survey of the church fathers is also very interesting, and he weaves all of this together to present a book that is enjoyable and easy to read—even while touching on some complex doctrinal issues. For this, he is certainly to be commended.

Sawyer seems to be cautiously attempting to build a bridge between estranged theological positions. His focus on the Nicene Creed (which he explicitly notes is accepted by most theological traditions), and his quotation of a wide range of scholars (from Clark Pinnock to Leon Morris and Jonathan Edwards), show his

attempt to try to find some unity in the church through the doctrine of the Trinity.

Furthermore, one of Sawyer's larger goals seems to be to urge people to have a more comprehensive view of God, and this is noble. If we are focusing on God's wrath to the exclusion of His love (or vice versa), we are in error.

As for negative aspects, Sawyer is somewhat ambiguous regarding serious doctrinal issues throughout the book. For example, he describes penal substitution as being "mostly true" (124), but fails to elaborate on what aspects are false, also noting that the doctrine is based on history rather than Scripture (124).

Sawyer also approvingly quotes from the best-selling book *The Shack* without addressing dangerous doctrines such as universalism that are taught in the book. At the minimum, Sawyer should include a disclaimer about the book if he does not believe everything it teaches. To the contrary, he states, "Those who have made the loudest complaints are those who have read it as a theology (which it is not) rather than a novel" (56).

Lastly, there are several typographical errors. The beginning of the third chapter describes a summary which he notes is "at the end of the previous chapter" (59), when in fact the chapter he refers to was the first chapter. Also, on page 132 he writes "nd" when possibly meaning "read"?

I would recommend the book to discerning readers looking to ensure that their understanding of the Trinity is biblical. Although, Sawyer's ambiguity makes it somewhat difficult to always understand his point, Christians can be edified by his encouragement to understand the Trinity more completely.

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Christianity: The Biography, 2000 Years of Global History. By Ian J. Shaw. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. 279 pp. \$16.99.

Ian Shaw is a historian who serves as director of the Langham Partnership Scholars Ministry, an organization founded by John Stott dedicated to training scholars to work in evangelical

seminaries in the majority world. He previously served as Lecturer in Church History at International Christian College, Glasgow. Before this, Shaw served as pastor of an Independent Evangelical Church in an area of urban deprivation in Manchester. He completed a Ph.D. in Church History at Manchester University.

The book displays an attractive structure and unique titles for its chapters. Shaw investigates Christianity using the metaphor of a person's lifetime from the cradle to maturity, a technique that maintains the reader's interest throughout the book. By using a biographical structure, Shaw's divisions of his book concentrate on periods of time instead of dates and critical events. The cradle period refers to the early years of Christianity, infancy characterizes the time of significant growth, and the medieval era suggests Christianity's youth. Full adulthood comprises the "period from around 1650 to the twentieth century" (6), which has crises, changes, and consolidation as its primary characteristics. The period after full adulthood shows signs of decline, although perpetuation by children and grandchildren is present. Shaw displays brilliant insight which gives this saturated topic new breath.

The lack of a bibliography and charts demonstrate Shaw's consistency in writing a biography. Although not a weakness by itself, readers need to be aware of this. However, one can find helpful overviews of the history of Christianity from different angles and time periods (global, regional, early church period, medieval period and Reformation, modern period) in the "Further Reading" section at the end of the book (270-72).

Shaw is not concerned with making distinctions between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. On the contrary, he intentionally avoids those categories, while recognizing the value and importance of theology for the life of Christianity. Wherever the reader finds himself within these categorizations, it needs to be clear that the term "Christianity" is used in opposition with all the other religions in the world and has the fundamental belief in Jesus as its founder 2000 years ago. Thus, the reader needs to bear in mind that this is a biography of Christianity, not of orthodoxy.

All these characteristics corroborate to make the *Biography* an “introductory orientation ... of the Christian tradition and its heritage around the world” (1), and this leads to another noteworthy feature of Shaw's book, the scope of its task. Shaw must be commended for, as the book's subtitle anticipates, his presenting Christianity as a global movement from the first century to the present. He does not perceive the breadth of Christianity as a demonstration of the triumph of Western culture over the world, but voices the story of the advance of Christianity as a global movement, from Jerusalem to the world, albeit many areas still need to be reached. It might be refreshing for one from a non-Western background to read about Asian, South American, and African forms of Christianity that predate modern missions. In fact, in the closing paragraph, Shaw states that “by 2010 Christianity was again a faith of people from many cultural and linguistic backgrounds, with no common centre or single theological language” because, it has “returned to what it originally was—a global faith” (268).

Being aware of these different formats of Christianity can prevent errors in taking a cultural aspect as an integral part of the Christian message, which has been a recurrent pitfall in the modern mission movement since the ninth century. If the *Biography* has the pedagogical goal of answering the question of “how can Christians today avoid making such a mess of things again?” (3); describing Christianity as a global movement is a thought-provoking concept. Shaw demonstrates how Christianity took root in diverse cultures, telling the same story but in a broad way. As a missionary from Brazil, this reviewer applauds Ian Shaw for his striving to present the supra-cultural essence of Christianity, rather than blending Christianity into the Western nations or even into North America, given the universal scope of Christianity.

Christianity: The Biography presents the ideal scope for a one-semester survey class in a seminary or university, but is not limited to this. It is probably too short for a two-semester survey course, which is common in evangelical seminaries, but it could perhaps work in some settings with a dose of meaningful supplemental readings. Lay readers will surely find benefit in its pages. Shaw's book is also recommended for use in a local

church setting, a reading-discussion group, or even as a textbook for Christian high school or homeschool students.

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Beginning with God: A Basic Introduction to the Christian Faith. Expanded edition. By James Sire. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2017. 176 pp. \$12.00.

First published in 1981 and expanded in 2017, *Beginning with God* provides a valuable introduction to the Christian faith compatible with today's postmodern mindset. Rather than beginning with doctrine, James Sire begins with questions. This philosophical approach is what readers would expect from Sire. His works have influenced a generation of Christians, including this reviewer, who recalls reading *The Universe Next Door* while a student at Bible college in the 1980s.

Beginning with God introduces the reader to essential Christian doctrines. "The chapters are organized around a simple scheme: creation, the fall, redemption, new life in Christ and glorification" (11). However, these themes are not presented in the traditional manner of systematic theology. Sire's explanation of God is woven around a strong individualistic focus. He starts from the reader's point of view rather than an explanation of abstract theological truths. This book is extremely accessible for someone's first encounter with Christian theology, whether a new believer or a non-Christian investigating the Christian faith.

Rather than beginning the dialogue about God with a discussion of his existence or written word, Sire first addresses the question of identity. From the opening pages, non-Christians are engaged to read further as the author probes universal questions about the human condition. Sire's style is direct, honest, and provoking. Though brief, the chapter on God's existence emphasizes that God is transcendent. Never using that theologically packed word, Sire provides simple illustrations to

demonstrate that the only reasonable understanding of the universe starts with God. Everything else (the creation) is subordinate to him. “Whatever is, is either one or the other” (32).

Sire demonstrates that humans yearn for relationship because they were created in God’s image. He explains that the ability to reflect God’s image is marred by sin and that God seeks to redeem humans through Christ. This approach helps the non-Christian as the author builds the case slowly and emotionally rather than through strongly supported historical or intellectual argument. This book is an emotional apologetic rather than a rapid-fire presentation of irrefutable facts. It is a valuable tool for a generation conditioned to feel rather than think.

Beginning with God will find its best use for pre-evangelism or for a skeptic willing to investigate Christian beliefs. The book’s strength is its non-offensive and personal approach. It lacks the theological depth to be a sufficient theological introduction for a new believer, but that does not appear to be the author’s intent. It is a welcome resource for today’s postmodern thinker with limited knowledge of the Christian faith. As a book on Christian doctrine, *Beginning with God* is unique in its apologetic nature that tackles questions that reside deeply in the human soul. Sire demonstrates that these questions find their answer in God’s existence and redemptive plan.

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Biblical Authority after Babel: Retrieving the Solas in the Mere Protestant Christianity. By Kevin Vanhoozer. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 288 pp. \$21.99.

Is it any secret that the Roman Catholic Church would have a negative assessment of the Reformation? Of course not! However, beyond the charge of divisiveness in the body of Christ, and the concern of competition for parishioners, what other indictment can the Roman Catholic Church make?

In Kevin Vanhoozer’s probing book, *Biblical Authority after Babel: Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant*

Christianity, Vanhoozer deals honestly, thoroughly, and confrontationally with the proposed case against the Reformation. Beyond the aforementioned charges, the most legitimate concern he grapples with is interpretive authority.

Vanhoozer cites a Roman Catholic who once told him, “The Roman Catholic Church has a head (Gk. *arche*), a figure of authority who directs the body and says what the Bible means. You Protestants lack such a figure: you are headless (Gk. *an + arche* = “without a head/ruler)—hence, anarchists” (ix). Is this true? You be the judge: “In 2010 there were four million congregations worldwide and thirty-eight thousand denominations” (1-2), all claiming validity based upon a meaning of the text derived from the private interpretation of Scripture.

Unfortunately, the proliferation of interpretation under the banner of *sola scriptura* unwittingly undercuts the entire concept of *sola scriptura*. The idea of interpretive anarchy is a stinging criticism that should be considered among Protestants and Evangelicals. This is the issue Vanhoozer addresses head-on, offering a paradigm to move forward and to “reclaim elements for a normative Protestantism from the ruins of present-day Protestantism by revisiting historical Protestantism” in the form of the five *solas* of the Reformation (xi).

The book especially excels at pointing out the problem(s) stemming from the decentralization of an interpretive authority. The oft-used phrase in the book “Protestantism’s dangerous idea” challenges the well-accepted and beloved evangelical cornerstone of “*sola scriptura*,” pressing the reader to evaluate his or her own veracity to the text in the context of his or her own denominational (interpretive) tradition. What is this “dangerous idea”? It is the notion that believers can “read and interpret the Bible for themselves” (4).

Most Evangelicals reading this book have never been challenged to consider the dangerous repercussions of this dearly held truth. Yet, Vanhoozer aptly points out the validity of Roman Catholic criticism of the interpretive “Babel” unleashed on the church by the Reformation. Thankfully, he does end with validation. His vision is for a conciliatory Protestantism that can learn to come together, bound by a deeply theological exegesis of the five *solas*.

What does this solution look like? Vanhoozer gives his vision clearly, saying, “The *solas* provide a pattern for reading Scripture theologically that enables protestant unanimity on theological essentials, and thus the possibility of genuine fellowship in spite of secondary and tertiary doctrinal differences” (28).

Vanhoozer illustrates this several times by likening Christianity to a neighborhood street called Evangel Way. At the end of the street is a high-rise apartment building (Roman Catholicism) that offers rich tradition, orderliness, and a uniform lifestyle for everyone. Further down the street are various independent houses (denominations), each responsible to maintain its own property as it sees fit. In Vanhoozer’s vision, the five *solas* provide the oversight akin to a homeowners’ association. Each house is governed independently, yet each house is bound together under certain agreed upon rules. The homes in the neighborhood make a practice of getting together for block parties, recognizing their similarities and discussing their differences in order to promote a healthier neighborhood.

How can the five *solas* provide the substance for this vision? Vanhoozer addresses this in the body of the book. After the introduction, there are five chapters: one for each of the *solas*. He finishes the book with a concluding chapter wherein he teases out this vision. He brilliantly discusses the five *solas*, showing how they must be taken together as a body of theology instead of as separate principles (28), while at the same time driving each of them to their practical implications for ecclesiology.

Vanhoozer begins with grace alone and challenges the reader to move beyond simply salvation by grace by extending the grace principle to the entire character of God. This provides the general calibration for consistent interpretation. The chapter on faith alone shatters the notion that the Reformation ignited skepticism by freeing the reader from tradition. Instead, it strengthens faith and encourages the study of epistemology. The chapter on scripture alone disabuses us from thinking that Scripture alone shapes our interpretation, and that Scripture interprets Scripture in a vacuum. No interpretation is completely devoid of some interpretive tradition. The chapter urges us to be honest about our interpretive traditions and to be willing to sharpen, challenge, and hone those traditions within the context of a collegial mere

Protestantism. In the next chapter, “In Christ Alone,” Vanhoozer makes a beeline to the royal priesthood of all believers, but locates it in the context of a firm ecclesiology instead of allowing it to be an excuse for lone-ranger Christians. He posits that the Reformation never intended for interpretation to be unlocked from a local church context. Finally, he finishes off with the glory of God, bravely asserting that the existence of numerous Protestant groups is ultimately glorifying to God.

In his concluding chapter, he ties up the loose ends and gives his final vision for this kind of Protestantism. This quotation is probably one of the best in the book: “Each Protestant church seeks to be faithful to the gospel, but no one form of Protestantism exhausts the gospel’s meaning. Rather, it takes the discussion between the many Protestant churches to appreciate fully the richness of the one gospel” (224).

The book moves with logical fluidity. It is written in a dense, theological style with just enough wit and humor to keep it interesting. It is a must-read for denominational or associational leaders as well as for those in Christian higher education institutions. The book’s weakness is a lack of fleshing-out the vision and showing in practical terms what it might look like in real life. However, given the complexity of the issues, I’m not sure of the feasibility of specific applications without stepping on dangerous landmines in the process. Lord willing, Vanhoozer’s work will push those of us who love the gospel to utilize the gifts and intellect of others who love the gospel in order to enhance the multifaceted and unsearchable glory of God.

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Reformation 500: How the Greatest Revival Since Pentecost Continues to Shape the World Today. Edited by Ray Van Neste and J. Michael Garrett. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016. 272 pp. \$29.00.

With essays from an array of disciplines, this book explores the impact of the Reformation across a wide range of human

experience. Historical figures such as Augustine, Zwingli, Luther, Calvin, Barth, Bonhoeffer, Rembrandt, Bach, Bunyan, and Wycliffe all find their way into this amazing story. From Anglicans to Baptists, scientists to poets, *Reformation 500* weaves many historical threads into a modern-day tapestry.

The Medieval Period, Middle Ages, English Reformation, Renaissance Period, and Protestant Reformation all saw periods of dismissal of Scripture, idolatrous worship, and corruption. Much of this was brought on by both the laity and the clergy. In many instances, the laity attended the worship services only to be kept in silence while the minister or priest did all the work. There were many occasions in which no Scripture was read, idols were present, and the sacraments were abused. In some cases, laity became disgruntled and led reforms; in others, the clergy heard the people and they led the reforms. This protest became known as the Protestant Reformation. Luther was a noted leader, as well as other reformers such as Calvin.

Published on 500th anniversary of the Reformation, this collection of probing essays examines how the recovery of biblical truth and the gospel of grace impacted history, theology, politics, and culture. These essays are written by seventeen professors well regarded in their fields.

These essays cover an array of disciplines such as literature, education, visual art, culture, politics, music, theology, church life, and Baptist history. Many of the essayists begin with a history of what was occurring years before the Reformation and what was happening at the time of the Reformation. They then shift the focus of their essays to the developments of progress in their fields since the Reformation. Their writing is readable and easy to understand.

Carl Trueman writes about Luther and the marks of the true church (55-70). The Reformation, started by Luther, changed the known world forever. Unfortunately, the world today has lost many of those changes. Therefore, the modern church needs a great revival again.

Henry Lee Poe writes that with the rise of monasteries, preaching faced abuses (93-104). Many pastors were hired by landowners where the church and/or monastery was located and received little pay. The pastor would often take a second job to

support himself and his family. This situation led to little time for sermon preparation. During the sixteenth century, many Puritans resisted this preaching. Although many remained in England, others left for various other countries. There was also a rise and fall of the Presbyterian movement, which fostered a protest about the lack of Scripture's centrality in preaching.

Taylor Worley writes about Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was influenced by the Reformation (233-49). Bonhoeffer was a student, minister, leader of an underground seminary, alleged spy who spent years in prison, and martyr during World War II. Bonhoeffer often studied the Reformation; in fact, Luther was his role model. He wrote papers about Luther and often quoted him in his sermons. As an underground seminary leader, Bonhoeffer often led the students in the spiritual practices of Luther. Having faced similar problems, Bonhoeffer was considered by many to be a modern-day Luther.

Overall, all the contributors to this volume successfully demonstrate the changes which have occurred over the past five hundred years since the Protestant Reformation. Additionally, they surface the need for a new revival or Reformation in the modern church.

Whether you are a pastor, lay leader, a lover of the arts, music, literature, modern science, education, or politics, this book is for you. It is both interesting and useful in understanding the historical background of the Reformation, as well as how this event continues to influence the modern world today.

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From Cairo to Christ: How One Muslim's Faith Journey Shows the Way for Others. By Abu Atallah and Kent A. Van Til. Downers Grove: IVP, 2017. 212 pp. \$16.00.

One of the travesties of Western Christianity has been its failure to understand Islamic culture and its implications to conversion and life. However, *From Cairo to Christ* offers those who desire to better understand Muslims a rare glimpse into this

culture, tracing the life of Abu Atallah from his Islamic upbringing to his Christian conversion and ministry.

In many ways, this book serves as the biographical testimony of Atallah and his coming to Christ. It is interwoven with his personal journey and ministry to Muslims throughout the world. Having been born in the late 1950s, Atallah's childhood was spent in a well-off home in Egypt (13-15). Atallah recounts numerous life events, such as his Islamic heritage, his family background, his father's death, and his brief stint in the Muslim Brotherhood (33-34).

Ultimately, Atallah came to Christ through a friend who was interested in Christian women because they would socialize with men (whereas Muslim women would not). Atallah's friend took him to a prayer meeting where they studied the Bible (36). The Christians prayed what seemed ridiculous prayers to Atallah, who had been taught memorized prayers (36-37). They addressed God as a friend and asked him to help them with things such as their homework (36-37). However, a few weeks later, Atallah found himself praying spontaneously, as they did. He prayed similarly when he lost control of a motorcycle he was racing (38). His friend Jansi, an atheist, came up to him and credited God with saving him (38). After this, Atallah began questioning what he had been taught about God and began reading the Bible (38).

His Christian friends were so consistent and kind; yet becoming a Christian would mean walking away from family, country, religion, and possibly even forfeiting his life (38-41). However, Atallah realized that although *sharia* could never make him perfect, he could claim Christ's perfection by accepting Christ (42-43). When Atallah read the *Four Spiritual Laws*, he prayed the "Believer's Prayer" (43). Atallah realized that it was not his good works that could save him, but only "what God in Christ has done for" him (190).

God miraculously protected Atallah from those who wanted to kill him because of his conversion, and provided a way for him to attend a Bible college in the United States (50-55). After attending seminary, Atallah ministered to the Muslim community in Dearborn, Michigan (65). Although he has maintained connections to his family, it has been at a distance.

As for the remainder of the book, Atallah provides numerous insights into the cultural background of Muslims. This section is quite valuable, as Atallah writes for Christians about key components necessary to understanding Islamic culture.

The chapter “Arabs and the West” insightfully addresses the tensions experienced by American Christians. It is a strong reminder that Christians should not approach Muslims as if they are all “of one mind” but should follow Christ’s admonition to love even our enemies (78). Atallah candidly discusses the tendency in Europe and the United States to be “politically correct” in not honestly questioning or critiquing Islam (80).

The chapter on “Israel and the Muslims” challenges many of Western Christian thoughts on Israel. Atallah argues that the contemporary state of Israel is not the same as the people of God (122). Indeed, he believes that the only answer for the conflict over Jerusalem may be the Christian view that “believers rather than places are holy” (122). Although this sounds compelling, literal interpreters of the Bible recognize that the Jews were promised a land (Gen 15:18-21). Atallah argues that insisting on a literal interpretation of these verses “ignores the nearly four thousand years of subsequent history” (124). Muslim Christians often struggle with how to mesh contemporary realities with God’s promises to the Jews.

Atallah shares many insights that will help Western Christians interface with and witness to Muslims. For instance, Allah is a lawgiver who does not possess the fatherly love attributed to the Christian God (172). Atallah argues that Islam itself creates “openings for Christian evangelism” (175). However, cultural conditioning dies slowly as illustrated by Atallah’s sharing how he instinctively got on his knees beside his bed to pray when he heard the call of the muezzin at five one morning—over twenty years after leaving Islam for Christ (180)! Although he realized that he had no reason to pray to Allah, he used this to emphasize that a tint of Islam “remains even years after a person has converted” (180).

Although some biblicists will struggle with Atallah’s non-literal interpretations and his journey to Christianity, he is clearly a brother in Christ. As such, Western Christians have much to gain from studying his perspectives. The Muslim world is ripe

for evangelism and Christians must not miss the opportunities to love Muslims in their neighborhoods. Perhaps Americans (as well as other Western nations) need to realize that God may have a greater plan than they realize with so many Muslims coming to America. After all, Christians are ultimately of the kingdom of God that will be replete with people from every tribe and nation.

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Power to Lead: Five Essentials for the Practice of Biblical Leadership. By Mike Ayers. Spring, TX: RBK Publishing Group, 2015. 238 pp. \$15.95.

Dr. Mike Ayers uses over thirty years of vocational ministry experience (including twenty-two years as the Senior Pastor of the vibrant and growing The Brook Church in Houston, TX) with over fifteen years as the lead faculty in leadership at the College of Biblical Studies in Houston, TX, to assist him in writing an exceptionally simple yet profound book on leadership. He combines practical experience with a thoroughly biblical understanding of leadership to produce a practical resource for everyone from lay leaders to seminary presidents. Of the countless books I have read on leadership, outside of the Bible, his is the most helpful in challenging me to lead better.

The format of the book sets it apart from many other leadership books. Whereas many other leadership books start with the author's philosophy of leadership, *Power to Lead* begins with a theology of leadership. Ayers discusses God as leader and then discusses leadership in the Bible. He begins with leadership before the fall and then addresses several biblical characters and tests that contribute to a biblical understanding of leadership.

In his second chapter, Ayers contrasts biblical leadership with contemporary theories of leadership. It is clear that Ayers is well read in a wide variety of leadership theories, and then he provides a biblical analysis of these theories. He then addresses what he calls "methodolatry" in which people trust and imitate methods more than God. He then concludes the chapter by

discussing the biblical distinctives of leadership that he addresses in the forthcoming chapters: character (chap. 3), calling (chap. 4), competence (chap. 5), community (chap. 6), and Christ as the source of power for the leader (chap. 7). This Christocentric focus of leadership is very helpful (especially when contrasted with the tendency towards methodolatry that Ayers had previously discussed). Ayers then takes those biblical distinctives to build the following definition of leadership: “A biblical leader is a person of *character* and *competence* who influences a *community* of people to achieve a God-honoring *calling* by means of the power of *Christ*” (40; emphasis original).

The greatest strength of the book is the focus on a biblical understanding of leadership. For instance, Ayers provides a helpful summary of the following biblical images Jesus used to describe leadership: the servant (the leader’s view of people), the steward (the leader’s view of power), and the shepherd (the leader’s view of position).

Not only is the book tremendously biblical, but it also is very practical. For instance, when discussing the importance of leadership, Ayers provides an example of a pastor who liked crowds but disliked people. While recognizing that this attitude is common among leaders who see crowds of people as a means to an end, Ayers contrasts this with Jesus who often was less focused on large crowds and more focused on individual people. Knowing that this tendency is a temptation for many people in ministry, Ayers concludes, “People are the primary outcome of biblical leadership—people who are influenced, impacted, and transformed.”

For the reasons listed above, I highly recommend *Power to Lead* for anyone from the business man who is trying to incorporate biblical leadership principles in his business to the seminary professor wanting to assign a leadership book for his class. The book is biblical enough to be trustworthy and practical enough to be relevant. This combination is hard to find.

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Single Gay Christian: A Personal Journey of Faith and Sexual Identity. By Gregory Coles. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2017. 120 pp. \$15.00.

Single Gay Christian chronicles a young man's journey of seeking to honor his Christian faith while dealing with persistent same-sex attraction. A similar work was written seven years ago by Wesley Hill (*Washed and Waiting*), who writes the foreword to this book. D. A. Carson is among several evangelicals who provide endorsements.

What is missing in Coles's story is the familiar assumption that something traumatic—sexual assault, an abusive father or a distant mother, etc.—must have been a part of his upbringing. Rather, according to Cole, he was raised in a loving Christian family, and he surrendered his life to Christ at the age of seven. However, as he came into puberty, his persistent attraction to males led him to believe that he was gay. Initially, he fiercely resisted this realization because being gay, he had been told, was “a choice, a lifestyle, a sin” (13). Yet, fervent pleas to God to make him “straight” went unheeded.

Struggles persisted as Coles became a Christian college student, and he became a consummate actor, pretending to be straight out of fear of rejection. During this time, he entered into several dating relationships in the hope they would “awaken” heterosexual desires. However, not only did these experiments fail, he felt both shame and Jesus' disapproval at having “used” these women. For a time, he became angry with God, even questioning the truth of Christianity. But after intensive study of the Bible's teachings on homosexuality, he became convinced that God was calling him to a celibate lifestyle.

However, what he lacks is a healthy experience of intimacy. As he puts it, “The decision to live as a celibate gay Christian is a weighty one in part because it means rejecting society's most obvious pathways to intimacy.... Living without sex is difficult. Living without intimacy is a death sentence” (79–80). The pain of his celibate journey is exacerbated, on the one hand, by the rejection of many in the Christian community who regard him as “unnatural, dangerous,” and, on the other hand, by the rejection

of those in the LGBTQ community, who regard his commitment to celibacy as “a tragic, archaic ritual of self-hatred” (6).

Besides his commitment to the authority of Scripture, I appreciate Cole’s testimony that throughout the most challenging days of his journey, God “kept pointing me back to the cross of Christ” (5). In this regard, his insights into the meaning of taking up one’s cross are penetrating and challenging, and he provides refreshing perspectives on biblical love and intimacy. He also rightly chastises the evangelical community for producing a plethora of books and church programs about masculinity and singleness that too often fall short of the Bible’s view of those issues.

Although exegetical and theological arguments for the evangelical perspective on homosexuality are rare in this book, Cole comes to some thought-provoking conclusions such as “maybe the calling to gay Christian celibacy stands in twenty-first-century America as a precious reminder of just how desperately, helplessly devoted we were meant to be to the cross of Christ. ... maybe the problem isn’t that faith costs some of us too much, but that it costs all of us too little” (39). And: “The calling of gay celibacy is a calling to longing. It’s an admission that our deepest sexual desires can wait for another world, for another life, for another kind of fulfillment” (98).

Of course, some believers will object to the juxtapositioning of the two adjectives “gay” and “Christian.” But Coles responds, “Is it too dangerous, too unorthodox, to believe that I am uniquely designed to reflect the glory of God? ... That my orientation, before the Fall, was meant to be a gift in appreciating the beauty of my own sex as I celebrated the friendship of the opposite sex?” (46–47). Yet, because Paul describes homosexuality as “against nature” (Romans 1:26), it is difficult to conceive it as having been part of a pre-Fall creation plan. In the same vein, Coles struggles to “believe that God could have possibly said over me, as he did over all creation, ‘It is good’” (6). Again, this is a pre-Fall assessment of creation.

At the end of the day Coles does not know why he is gay, and he is okay with that. He grants that his gay orientation is “broken,” but, he insists, so is every orientation, every human being, every facet of creation. Not surprisingly, because of his

failure and the statistical failure of many “ex-gays” to change their orientation, he regards such attempts with deep skepticism (63). On the other hand, he testifies, “There’s a kind of love I’ve foresworn, and it’s a real denial, a painful one. But I’ve received a hundred kinds of love in its place. It seems selfish for asking for pity when I’m so unspeakably rich” (89).

As already noted, there are a handful of places where I would question his handling of Scripture. He also seems to engage in some postmodern agnosticism towards the end of the book where he confesses that he’s not sure whether a “Christian” lesbian who marries another woman or a “Christian” heterosexual who lives a promiscuous lifestyle is more likely to be in heaven (109–10). Yet, Scripture is clear that neither lifestyle choice bodes well for eternity (1 Cor 6:9).

Despite these few negatives, I would recommend this book to every pastor, to every parent who has a child who has “come out” or is thinking about it, and to every believer in Christ who wishes to minister in a more loving and understanding manner to those in the LBGQT community.

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Visual Arts in the Worshiping Church. By Lisa J. DeBoer. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 310 pp. \$24.00.

Visual Arts in the Worshiping Church examines the use of visual arts in Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant churches from a sociological perspective. The author, Lisa DeBoer, focuses the study on painting, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, media, digital media, installations, and to some extent architecture. DeBoer’s primary sampling came from churches located in Michigan for her study.

DeBoer devotes the first part of the book to describing Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant perspectives of art within their respective faith traditions. She provides a description and discusses practices, successes, and struggles of visual arts within the three primary streams of religion in America. The

author goes into detail with her description of the icons and history of the icons in the Orthodox church. She explains and describes the Roman Catholic integration of the liturgy and the use of the visual arts. Lastly, DeBoer describes how the Protestant landscape has been shaped in the last half century. She uses six churches from western Michigan as a template of how some Protestant churches are using the visual arts presently. The author uses a history of art education in the United States to describe how the Protestant faith has been shaped by visual arts.

DeBoer devotes the second part of the book to a comparison and contrast. She examines the three major streams against six concepts: Universal & Local, Story & Presence, Public and Private Devotion, Institutionalization & Professionalization, Naturalism & Abstraction, and Inculturation & Enculturation.

This section provides an interpretation of how each faith tradition views and applies the visual arts. It provides distinctions and contrasts between the three groups that prove to be useful for any reader. DeBoer uses this platform to provide some prescriptive insights to promote the visual arts as a tool for social and cultural advancement.

A major strength of this book was the comprehensive research provided for the three major religious traditions. She accomplished the goal of describing the practices and traditions of three major denominations using the visual arts. The author supported her work with specific examples from a variety of local churches. Reading how churches interact with the visual arts proved to be valuable to process the written information.

There were several weaknesses observed throughout the book. The title could lead people to believe that this book has a practical dimension. A reader would be hard pressed to find “how to’s” or “we did’s”. This book does not offer many practical tips on how to create an atmosphere for artistic pieces. It is written from a conceptual and philosophical context.

Her primary sampling was isolated to a specific area of the United States. Western Michigan does not reflect the broader cross-section of churches and personalities represented throughout the country. Western Michigan has a demographic of college educated, urban, and church saturated family units. It

would have been more effective to draw a sampling from different regions of the United States.

The author described the Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant church as institutions with frameworks that have shaped each one. She fell short of accomplishing her goal in describing Protestants. Her evaluation was based primarily on six churches in the greater Grand Rapids area. These churches were heavily influenced by local institutions of higher learning. The information gathered from these ministries does not fairly represent the broad cross-section of Protestants throughout the country.

In the process of evaluating the practices of Protestants in using the visual arts, she missed some of the major visual tools that most Protestant churches use to visually remember their heritage: crosses, communion tables, steeples, baptismal pools, pictures, and media. DeBoer did not provide enough visual examples to support her findings. It would have been helpful to illustrate her findings through pictures.

This book will work well in a classroom setting where the focus is on the visual arts in both distant and recent church history. It would also work well in an introductory fine arts class or in a visual arts course. It would be especially helpful for Protestants who love art and are looking for ways that other denominations express beliefs and values through the visual arts.

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The Compelling Community: Where God's Power Makes a Church Attractive. By Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop. Wheaton: Crossway, 2015. 224 pp. \$15.99.

This book seeks to raise the bar of what church leaders might envision about authentic church community. Although the authors appreciate small groups, they seek to go beyond and demonstrate that the fellowship and togetherness Christians

experience in genuine Bible-based, gospel-centered church community should transcend all natural bonds—whether generational, economic, or ethnic. Rather than grounding small groups on common interests or the latest church growth methodology, the authors contend that Christians must rely on the Holy Spirit and the supernatural power of the gospel to unite them. While not charismatics, the authors argue for a supernaturally created community that confounds the watching world and compellingly draws in seekers.

The authors, pastors at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., bring an evident love for the church to address this urgently needed topic. Primarily written by Dunlop, this book focuses on lessons learned and principles derived from senior pastor Mark Dever and the church the two authors lead. It is full of biblical principles and offers much practical counsel. Though raising the bar about how Christians envision church community, it aims to lower our ambition for what *we* can do to create community. It gently reminds readers that Scripture teaches that the community that matters is community built by God.

The first section lays out two contrasting visions of community often found in Bible-believing churches: one that is “gospel-plus” (where most relationships are “founded on the gospel *plus* something else”) and another that is “gospel-revealing” (where relationships “would not exist but for the truth and power of the gospel”). The authors argue that fellowship based merely on things like similar life experiences, similar identities, felt needs or similar social positions, miss the NT expectation of community grounded on commonality in Christ alone. Gospel-revealing community will manifest itself in two dimensions (as seen in Ephesians 2 & 3)—with *both breadth and depth*. One stated thesis of the book is that leaders often “get impatient, building gospel-plus community that undermines God’s purposes for the local church by compromising that same depth and breadth” (33).

Regarding the *depth* of authentic community, the authors contrast community built on comfort (resulting in treating Christians as consumers) versus community built on significant and formalized commitment to membership in a local church.

Regarding the *breadth* of biblical community, with all its diversity, the authors show that God's eternal purpose for every congregation is to "show off the power of the gospel" as he brings people together across natural boundaries of age, economics, politics, social ability, and cultural background (73-74). These kinds of intentionally multiethnic, multi-generational, and multi-economic churches speak volumes, they argue, to the divided cities of the United States.

After laying out this theological foundation, the middle two sections of the book cover the practical matters of how to foster and protect this type of countercultural corporate community. The authors deal with (1) the right preaching of God's word that equips God's people to do life together, (2) how to pray together corporately, (3) discipleship through building a corporate culture of loyal and loving relationships, (4) structural impediments to community, (5) the inevitable discontent/disunity that come in a growing church and how the apostles wrestled with these issues, and (6) how to proactively address sin in the church to preserve unity.

The final section of this book fleshes out "community at work." The authors contend effective evangelism must be *both* personal and corporate, ideally springing from a *deep culture and commitment to do outreach together* whenever possible. Rather than taking a programmatic or even organic approach to evangelism, they advocate a third way: "a regulated free-market approach" where leaders actively look to see where/how the Spirit of God is prompting members (195-96). Leaders must also see that genuine community is not an end in itself but a blessing to be shared with nearby communities through intentional church planting and/or church revitalization.

Besides its comprehensiveness, *The Compelling Community* has a number of other strengths. First is its *continued call to root community in the gospel*. This will challenge many churches today that are trying to generate man-made community when they see how far they fall short of God's design. Yet this constant gospel focus should also encourage church leaders that Christ can/will build his church as they entrust their ministries to his plan and power.

Second, the book *encourages leaders to remain faithful to God's Word* as they co-labor with him to build true community in the local church. It avoids, I believe, much of the quick-fix pragmatism and many of the straw man arguments and false dichotomies seen in many books dealing with community.

A third strength is its *solid baptistic ecclesiology*, one that I would describe as “pastor-elder led (as opposed to elder-rule), deacon-served congregationalism.” Like all 9Marks books, it seeks to build healthy (not just trendy) churches God’s way—and not to imitate today’s popular corporate structures but to function as the warm, caring living organism God designed the church to be.

Fourth, this book is one of the more helpful I’ve read *showing the biblical-theological basis for congregations to build unity in diversity*—and then it gives hope that it can be done. Capitol Baptist certainly models for others a very diverse congregation, one strikingly comprised of all generations and numerous ethnicities and nationalities.

Finally, I appreciated the book’s *dual emphasis on both local evangelism and regional church multiplication*. Often churches adopt an either/or approach and rationalize that they are not ready for parenthood. Instead of program-based and individualistic approaches to outreach, Dever and Dunlop show how a truly neighborhood-oriented congregation can be “both context and apologetic for evangelism” (198). A gospel-revealing community that showcases the gospel opens the door for God’s people to both (1) evangelize *as a community* and (2) to *start new communities* of faith by “hiving off.”

I heartily recommend this book to pastors who desire to lead their congregations toward a gospel community that attracts the lost, edifies his people, and glorifies God. Though drawn from the authors’ experiences with their own congregation, the timeless Bible-based principles and practical wisdom of this book would prove profitable to any congregation.

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Encountering God through Expository Preaching: Connecting God's People to God's Presence through God's Word. By Jim Orrick, Brian Payne, and Ryan Fullerton. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017. 224 pp. \$19.99.

Encountering God through Expository Preaching by Jim Orrick, Brian Payne, and Ryan Fullerton seeks to unpack this statement: "Preaching occurs when a holy man of God opens the Word of God and says to the people of God, 'Come and experience God with me in this text'" (xv). All three authors have extensive pastoral and preaching experience, and two of them (Orrick and Payne) are professors at Boyce College in Louisville, KY. The book is broken into three parts. The first section deals with the character of the preacher, the nature of expository and topical preaching, and the role of the Spirit in the preaching process. The second section addresses homiletics and hermeneutics. The last section outlines three different approaches to preaching: manuscript, outline, and preaching without notes.

The great strength of the book is the reminder that preaching is an event in which people encounter God through the Scripture. Preaching is more than explaining the facts of a passage; it is a call to behold and respond to God through the truth. As a result, three chapters are devoted to the role of the Spirit in preaching. This is a welcome emphasis in a sea of hermeneutics and homiletics books that pay only lip service to the Spirit's role. Not only do the authors emphasize the importance of the Spirit, they are careful to explain just what the Spirit does in preaching. The Spirit gives boldness to the preacher, proper appreciation of the truth for both preacher and hearer, sympathetic love that colors the preaching, and the very words that will affect change in the hearts of the hearers. Additionally, these incredible gifts are not given apart from the Scripture, but through deep reliance on the Spirit's word, the power of the gospel, and prayer.

This work is brief yet manages to cover a lot of ground. In an encouraging style, the authors call preachers to a careful study of the word, reliance on the Spirit, and awareness of the spiritual state of their people.

The brevity of the work is also one of its weaknesses. In just over 200 pages, the authors attempt to explain the character of the preacher, the nature of preaching, the place of the covenants, the relationship between Old and New Testaments, the role of the Spirit, how to examine a text, how to consider the audience, and how to deliver the message. Lengthy books are written on each of those crucial topics. There is little doubt the reader of this book will be left wanting more. The hermeneuticist will cry for more exegetical helps and precision. The homiletician will want more by way of preparing application and illustration. At the very least, a list of suggested resources for further study would be helpful.

The organization of the book is also somewhat odd. There seem to be two sections on exegesis. Chapters three and four address the various contexts of a passage (historical, literary, covenantal, canonical, and contemporary). This is followed by chapters on the role of the Spirit and importance of good delivery. Chapters twelve through fourteen then circle back around to exegesis by examining how the passage fits into the Bible, its unique contribution to the Bible, and even delving into particulars like genre, the development of the argument, and grammar. This meandering approach detracts from the book's central theme.

The work would have been better served if it dispensed with some of the procedural issues altogether and really developed the central thrust that preaching is an event where God is to be experienced and his people are to be changed. That thrust is what makes this book a unique and needed call to preachers today. *Encountering God through Expository Preaching* will surely convict and encourage even the most seasoned preacher. However, had the authors chosen the rifle instead of the shotgun, this book could have been required reading for anyone in pastoral ministry.

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Dynamics of Muslim Worlds: Regional, Theological, and Missiological Perspectives. Edited by Evelyne A. Reisacher. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. 256 pp. \$32.00.

Evelyne A. Reisacher is associate professor of Islamic studies and intercultural relations in the School of Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary. Before coming to Fuller she worked in L'Ami, a Paris-based Christian organization, for twenty years, facilitating the relationship between churches and North African immigrants and developing alternative ways for sharing the gospel cross-culturally. Reisacher has been active in informing and writing about the Muslim world and Islam-Christian relations. She is the general editor of *Toward Respectful Understanding and Witness among Muslims: Festschrift in Honor of J. Dudley Woodberry* (2012) and the associate editor of *From the Straight Path to the Narrow Way: Journeys of Faith* (2006). Moreover, Reisacher has published chapters in the books *Peace-Building By, Between, and Beyond Muslims and Evangelical Christians* (2009) and *A Worldview Approach to Ministry Among Muslim Women* (2007). Reisacher brings these extensive qualifications to editing *Dynamics of Muslim Worlds*.

Dynamics brings together prominent missiologists, theologians, and historians from the 2016 Missiology Lectures at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of Intercultural Studies to present a prospect of contemporary Muslim societies around the world. The book is divided into three parts and ten chapters. The first part, called "Regional Perspective," addresses the issue of Muslim communities worldwide in areas such as Europe, West Africa, and South Asia. In turn, part two focuses on "thematic analyses" and discusses women's rights, punishment for blasphemy, and the challenge of pluralism. Finally, part three aims to offer a "missiological assessment" of present Muslim dynamics and some missiological implications of it. In light of the necessity for Christians to become more conversant about this increasingly important topic in the present global world, the goal of this volume is twofold: "to unfold as accurately and broadly as possible the dynamics of Islamic societies and to formulate Christian theological and missiological assessments in response"

(2). In other words, *Dynamics* attempts to provide a better understanding of the Muslim world and to point out how Christians may engage Muslims in a meaningful way.

The achievement of its first goal is probably the most significant contribution of this collection of articles, that is, to explore the changing dynamics of Islam today and how current religious and social climates shape Christian engagement with Muslims. In chapter one, Martin Accad challenges the monochromatic view of Islam, arguing for a colorful perception. The idea of inherent pluralism inside Islam is repeated numerous times throughout the book. That is, “the Muslim world is radically diverse and pluralistic” (213). There are Muslim secularists, modernists, traditionalists, fundamentalists, and terrorists. “Islam is as diverse as Christianity. It has a comparably broad range manifestation, a like diversity of beliefs, practices, and speculations.” (37)

One of the reasons for the editor’s insistence on presenting the internal Muslim variety is related to the discussions about Muslims in the media. The impression is often given that Islam is a single, uniform entity more prone to violence. The so-often misleading media reports and the disinterest in interreligious dialogue compels the majority of Western Christians to perceive Islam as being made up of continuously violent individuals. This reviewer does not agree that Islam could be detached entirely of every ounce of violence, but would agree that this viciousness is not a part of every Muslim practitioner.

Therefore, turning to the implications of this dynamic reality plus the calling of Jesus to love our neighbors and enemies, we must, as Rick Love states, “begin waging peace by loving God with our minds. We need to learn about Islam and actually meet Muslims. We get the facts. We practice the art of evaluation. We don’t believe everything that comes across our computer screens or fills our inboxes” (213). Also, a biblical evaluation of the Christian message needs to take place. Once again, the mixture of Jesus plus denominational distinctive and cultural features builds an obstacle and confusion about what is important and what is essential to the missionary task. Missionaries must strive “not to put unnecessary stumbling blocks in the way of those moving toward Jesus” (196).

The reader unfamiliar with topics related to the Muslim world such as ideas and vocabulary might have some difficulty in understanding some of the chapters, especially the ones addressing regional Islam. The article by David E. Singh, “Islam in South Asia,” presents the reality of the dynamics of Muslim in Hyderabad Deccan, a state of India where the Hindu majority was ruled by a Muslim for a long time (1967). Although Singh’s conclusions are easy to follow and important to ponder, the number of transliterated technical terms used to describe other transliterated terms might make this chapter too difficult for uniformed readers. Furthermore, though not related to his complex terminology, Singh’s conclusion “that debates resulted in people secretly believing without belonging” (108) is, in this reviewer’s opinion, not persuasive. Singh misses dealing with biblical texts where Jesus clearly demands an open and complete allegiance (Luke 14; Mark 10; Matt 5:11). Despite the consequences of public loyalty to Christ, one needs to thoughtfully consider if there is a biblical option for “secret-not-belonging believers” in light of Jesus’ words like “whoever, then, acknowledges me before people, I will acknowledge before my Father in heaven” (Matt 10:32 NET).

Dynamics of Muslim Worlds displays an actual, intriguing reality that Christian believers avoid while offering some innovative and challenging ways to interact, love, and reach Muslims for Jesus.

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A Compact Guide to the Whole Bible: Learning to Read Scripture’s Story. Edited by Robert W. Wall and David R. Nienhuis. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. 176 pp. \$18.00.

It is easy to find introductory textbooks that overwhelm readers with information and theories about the Bible. Those textbooks complicate rather than open up the Bible to its readers.

The promise of this slim volume is its commitment to genuinely invite readers into the Bible by providing a keen sense of how each section of Scripture contributes to the whole and by identifying key landmarks for making sense of the biblical standards. This compact guide is an excellent resource for both undergraduate courses at Christian universities as well as for use in the church.

This text is an answer to those who have wanted a smaller commentary or guide to the Scripture. It leaves out heavy theological terms and overwhelming historical data. It is clear and theologically accurate and written with the student or reader in mind. The writers have brought their scholarly expertise and commitment to theological reading to bear on the whole Bible. The result is a collaborative work that is unified in its approach, uniformly accessible, and of great value to anyone who wants to better understand the message of the Bible.

Robert W. Wall states this book is about “Reading the Bible as Scripture,” for the Bible is the church’s book, a sacred text. He writes that Scripture is important and interpreting it is hard work. The nature of Scripture is that it is holy, it is catholic, and it is apostolic (11-18).

David R. Nienhuis writes that the Bible should be considered a story book. The Bible contains many short stories that are well known, but all of them point to one main thread that runs throughout the Bible—a biblical metanarrative. The one great point is that God will eventually send his Son to earth to live among mankind and to rescue them from their sins. Humans cannot live without the metanarrative. It is the big story of God at work (27-28).

Frank Anthony Spina writes in the chapter “Israel In and Out of the Land,” that the world in which God acts and Israel lives is a real world. There is no such thing as a secular realm. Every mundane reality has a sacred dimension. God is to be found in the ordinary world that Israel experiences on an everyday basis. In that sense, biblical religion is concrete, not abstract; not general: in the fray, not above the fray. The story of Israel insists that there is a living God and an actual people (62-63).

Eugene E. Lemcio writes “The Story’s Conclusion” about the last book in the Bible, Revelation. He states, “A closer reading

of the book of Revelation indicates that one of God's major strategies is to send a series of shock waves to get the attention of a deceived humanity—the enlisting of God's creation to cause earth dwellers to 'listen up.'" So, the elements of nature are God's tools, not the target of divine wrath (146-47).

I found myself in agreement with the authors of this book, both quoted and not. Their summaries are sound; their arguments come from their detailed study of the biblical books. Their style is simple and straightforward. The book itself is well-written and interesting. It is a book that can be returned to frequently.

The targeted audience would be both new believers with an interest in God's Word and students who have seldom opened a Bible before. The book is a helpful companion to the Bible and would go far in establishing a solid foundation of faith for the student or new believer. Overall, I would strongly suggest that pastors make this book available for those who desire to better grasp God's Word.

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Pastoral Ministry in the Real World: Loving, Teaching, and Leading God's People. By Jim L. Wilson. Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2015. 256 pp. \$13.50.

In a day when pastors are choosing to tap the business world and secular leaders for pastoral ministry paradigms, it is refreshing to read a book *for* pastors, *about* pastoral ministry, written *by* a veteran pastor. Fifty years ago, Jim L. Wilson's book *Pastoral Ministry in the Real World: Loving, Teaching, and Leading God's People* would have been just another practical ministry book in a crowded field of other how-to manuals. Today, however, most of those generalist books are old and outdated, instructing pastors on how to operate the mimeograph machine and encouraging three-piece suits in the office. Wilson's book is modeled after the generalist books of old while at the same time providing a compass for pastors trying to survive in rapidly changing times.

The subtitle—*Loving, Teaching, and Leading God's people*—clues the reader into the three main points of the book, which I believe is a helpful way to break down ministry. The book ranges widely in style and in content. It includes everything from detailed physiological explanations of conflict management to the rationale and wisdom of using breath mints during hospital visits. In other words, the reader moves from the simplistic and obvious to complicated, multi-stepped processes within a few pages. Wilson gives solid biblical exposition resulting in biblical applications, but also includes psychological hypotheses which he translates into best practices for leading a church. This could be interpreted as the book's greatest strength or its greatest weakness, depending on the viewpoint of the reader.

The book is organized into four sections: Introduction, Loving, Teaching, and Leading. In the introduction Wilson provides general definitions for the office of pastor and for the job of pastoral ministry. He skillfully directs the reader toward the people-focus of the ministry. This provides the springboard for the three main functions of people-saturated ministry: loving, teaching, and leading. Ultimately, he contends, this is what the sheep desire from their shepherds, and this is what Jesus modeled as the Chief Shepherd when he was on earth.

If I were to classify this book in terms of food, the second section of the book—loving people—is meat and potatoes. He addresses the nitty gritty of hospital calls, dealing with tragedy, and knowing what to say ... and what not to say in times of tragedy. He encourages ministry to hurting people and ministry to hurtful people. After loading the pages with practical advice, he ends the section with instructions on weddings, dealing with divorce, celebrating the birth of children in the church, and caring for one's own spiritual hygiene.

If the second section was meat and potatoes, the third section—teaching people—is dessert: sweet and delightful. The first chapter of the third section was worth the price of the book as it guided the reader to shape sermons which conform to the authorial intent of the passage. On page 101 Wilson states, "If preachers align their sermons with authorial intent, the majority—if not all—of their sermons will be Theo-centric." This chapter focuses on the pulpit, the next chapter on teaching

in disciple-making contexts, and the final chapter in the section focuses on teaching within conflict situations. It is a timely reminder to let the teaching of God's word permeate every context of the pastor's ministry.

Section four of the book—leading people—is akin to a buffet: a little bit of everything for everybody. There are four chapters in this section, and the first three are somewhat complex as they distill information from numerous leadership and psychology books. Considering that the book provided advice about breath mints, this section leaps from *simple* to *symposium*. These pages would need to be read several times while taking careful notes in order to implement the leadership principles he articulates. He strikes a decidedly “John Maxwellian” tone, and in fact uses an extended John Maxwell illustration to round out the end of the chapter. Some will find this section extremely helpful, while others will simply be lost. It all depends on the personality of the reader.

The book concludes with examples of “one-point” sermons; something he encourages in the teaching and preaching section of the book. Those examples provide a valuable follow-up to reinforce the principles Wilson proposes.

I applaud the author for resurrecting an evaporating genre of books. This book will certainly prove a valuable resource to pastoral theology classes in colleges and seminaries and will serve as a good refresher to the veteran pastor.

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