



PIEDMONT

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

A RESEARCH AND MINISTRY JOURNAL
OF TEMPLE BAPTIST SEMINARY OF
PIEDMONT INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA
Spring 2018



Published Annually by:

Temple Baptist Seminary
of
Piedmont International University
420 South Broad Street
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27101
© 2018 by Piedmont International University

President
Charles Petitt, D.D.

Provost
Beth Ashburn, Ph.D.

Vice President of Temple Baptist Seminary
Barkev Trachian, Ph.D.

Dean of the School of Bible and Theology
Larry Tyler, Ph.D.

Dean of the Alford School of Ministry
Tim White, D.Min.

Editor
Barkev Trachian, Ph.D.

Publication Staff
Lisa Underwood

Introduction:

Aletheias is the academic journal of Temple Baptist Seminary of Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Each issue consists of scholarly, researched articles in Biblical Studies, Theology, and Christian Ministry as well as timely sermons. The editors consider the journal as part of the ministry of the University, serving believers in academic circles, in churches, and in the public arena. The journal's purposes are to inform, to encourage, to edify, and to instruct.

Copying:

Aletheias hereby grants permission for articles to be copied for use in a local congregation or classroom, if (a) the material is distributed free and (b) the copies include the notice, "Copyright (year) and reprinted from *Aletheias*, Piedmont International University." For any other use advanced permission must be obtained.

Doctrinal Basis:

Aletheias adheres to the Piedmont Statement of Faith published in the University catalogs.

Manuscripts:

The *Aletheias* editorial board welcomes manuscripts submitted by Piedmont faculty, graduate students, and alumni. Original research articles are also welcome from friends of Piedmont whose submissions meet the publication standards. Policies and guidelines are specified in the "*Aletheias* Instructions for Contributors." The editorial board reserves the right to reject manuscripts that do not meet the *Aletheias* standards.

Correspondence:

Lisa Underwood

underwoodl@piedmontu.edu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDITORIAL: DEFENDING THE FAITH IN A POST – TRUTH ERA.....	iv
Barkev S. Trachian	
DEFENDING THE FAITH BY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH: AN EXPOSITION OF JUDE 3-4.....	1
Randy G. Bottoms	
A DEFENSE OF THE EARLY THEOLOGICAL RECOGNITION OF A UNIVERSAL, EFFECTUAL, SALVIFIC ASPECT TO THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHRIST’S ATONEMENT	13
Scott A. Smith	
KNOWING THE SAVIOR: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF PHILOSOPHICAL RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, CHRISTIAN PLURALISM, AND CHRISTIAN INCLUSIVISM	45
Thomas J. Gentry II	
WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL	73
Timothy J. White	
CONTENDING VERSES DEFENDING THE FAITH.....	99
Sychellus W. Njibwakale	
THE NECESSITY OF A LITERAL ADAM IN PAULINE SOTERIOLOGY.....	114
J. Thad Harless	
LOST OR FOUND? THE IMPACT OF SIN UPON THE DEATH OF A CHILD	139
Daryl A. Neipp	
THE HUMILIATION OF DINAH AND THE SLAUGHTER OF THE SHECHEMITES: THEOLOGICAL TRAJECTORIES AND IMPLICATIONS FROM A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF GENESIS 34	158
G. Wayne Willis	
JOSHUA: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP	176
John F. Klem	
DEFENDING THE FAITH THROUGH MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUTH MINISTRY	196
Gregory N. Kaufman	
THE WORLD HAS CHANGED: A REQUEST TO THE LOCAL CHURCH TO STRIVE FOR UNITY IN ORDER TO PROCLAIM FAITH IN THE MODERN WORLD	222
Briley A. Penner and Grant A. Penner	

EDITORIAL

DEFENDING THE FAITH IN A POST – TRUTH ERA

Barkev S. Trachian, Ph.D.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Standing next to a portrait of Christ in a cathedral in Europe, the Swedish film director, Ingmar Bergman, whispered: “Speak to me!” Bergman waited, but there was only dead silence! He concluded: “In our world...we hear only ourselves. No voice comes to us from outside the universe. When we seek a word from God, we are confronted with dead silence!”¹

Recent studies have made varying claims about spirituality in America today. Some have concluded that American culture has become diverse, subjective, and individualistic. Others have added that contemporary youth have opted to seek a post – modern, post – truth faith that is conditional, propositional, and self-determined.

It is obvious that American spirituality has become increasingly marginalized, lacking in objectivity and coherence. Truth is subject to personal interpretation. We have the challenge of defending the Faith in a post-truth era.

II. A LOOK AT THE CONTEMPORARY SPIRITUAL SCENE

Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, in their book, *Soul-Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, report the findings of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR: See www.youthandreligion.org). This research project was conducted from 2001-2005 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.² The study shows that contemporary youth are interested in spirituality, but they are not devoted to a particular historical dogma.

The authors state: “They are dispositionally open to a multiplicity of truths, willing eclectically and selectively to mix and match traditionally distinct religious beliefs and practices and suspicious commitment to a single religious congregation. They operate as religious and

*Barkev S. Trachian is the vice president of Temple Baptist Seminary of Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, NC.

¹ Erwin W. Lutzer, *Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2015) 15.

² Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul-Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 6-7.

spiritual consumers by defining themselves as individual seekers, authorized judges of truth and relevance in faith according to how things subjectively feel to them.”³

It is acceptable for them to speak of faith, but not “The Faith.” The distinction is important because faith refers to the act of believing; whereas “The Faith” is the sum total of biblical truth entrusted to the saints. “The Faith is revealed truth. We are the custodians of “The Faith;” not the originators.”⁴ Jude exhorts us to contend for “The Faith” which was once delivered unto the saints.⁵

Smith and Denton describe the spiritual lives of contemporary youth as “Moralistic, Therapeutic, Deism (MTD).”⁶ The instrumental view of religion and faith is recognized and valued. The faith of the contemporary American teenager is “moralistic.” Our society believes in “morality.” This “morality,” however, is subjective, determined, and relative. A set of concepts or an act may be determined to be moral if an individual believes that it is so. Reality, right or wrong, morality, truth find meaning only in our perceptions. “It is judgmental and intolerant to say that a person is right and everyone who doesn’t believe like him or her is wrong.”⁷ Faith is “therapeutic” because having faith creates in an individual an inward feeling of satisfaction and peace. Finally, it is “Deistic” because our culture believes in God who has created the universe. A belief in God answers many questions of an inquiring mind. This God, however, is a “deistic” concept. God has created the universe, but is not personally involved in the lives of men and women. Smith and Denton explain the basic beliefs of MTD as follows:

1. God wants people to behave.
2. God wants people to be happy and well-adjusted.
3. There is a God, but He has left the universe to govern itself. He is not active in our lives.⁸

³ Smith and Denton, 73.

⁴ Sam Gordon, *Fighting Truth Decay*, (Greenville, SC: Ambassador Publishers, 2002) 43.

⁵ Jude 3.

⁶ Smith and Denton, 118-151.

⁷ Josh McDowell and David Bellis, *The Last Christian Generation*, (Holiday, FL: Green Key Books, 2006) 34.

⁸ Smith and Denton, 118.

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center reports that Americans who identify themselves as Christians declined from 78 percent to 71 percent between 2007 and 2014. This drop directly corresponds to the increase in the number of Americans who identify themselves as “religiously unaffiliated.”⁹ “Multiple studies highlight that 40 to 50 percent of youth group seniors...drift from God and the faith community after they graduate from high school.”¹⁰ In his weekly question-answer column, Dr. Earl Crow answered the following question: “Do you believe all who do not accept Jesus are damned?” His answer included the following statement: “I...wonder about the statement, ‘Jesus is the way.’ Does it imply the necessity of accepting Him as God incarnate?”¹¹

III. A REMINDER OF THE BIBLICAL MESSAGE

As explained clearly in 2 Corinthians 4:4, the problem of our culture is spiritual blindness, refusal to see revealed truth, refusal to hear God’s voice. Following Bergman’s example, many complain that they cannot hear God, therefore, they will follow their feelings.

Failure to hear God’s voice, subjectivity of truth, personalization of “The Faith,” deistic view of God, subjection of reality to personal feelings are challenges overwhelming today’s culture. The Word of God states that “...the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”¹²

Because our culture rejects the absolute objectivity of truth, whatever a person feels is the truth becomes the truth for him or her. Predictably, humanistic thinking is coming to a sad natural resolution. The Apostle Paul explains the current cultural darkness as follows: “...when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”¹³

⁹ Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin, *Growing Young*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016) 15.

¹⁰ David Kinnaman and Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011) 23.

¹¹ Earl Crow, “Perfection and the Path to Heaven,” *Winston-Salem Journal*, February 3, 2018.

¹² 2 Corinthians 4:4.

¹³ Romans 1:21, 22.

The sobering fact is that “...the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”¹⁴ Our Lord stated to Nicodemus: “For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”¹⁵

IV. AN AWARENESS OF THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL CRISIS

Is truth objective or subjective? Is truth established by reality or felt subjectively? Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth and the life...”¹⁶ Psalm 119:160 proclaims: “Thy Word is truth from the beginning: and every one of Thy righteous judgments endureth forever.” Our culture, however, sees truth as a subjective construct, not an objective absolute. Instead of pursuing after absolute truth, our culture asks: “Is it meaningful to me?” Every opinion is equally acceptable. Faith is subjective, personal.

The great crisis of today is an epistemological crisis, a crisis of refusing to hear God’s voice, to see God’s revelation, to obey God’s commandments. “It is a challenge for the Christian thinker, the Christian theologian, ...the Christian preacher, the Christian institution.”¹⁷ Francis Schaeffer addresses this sin problem directly in his book, *He is There and He is Not Silent*.¹⁸ God has revealed Himself, God is not silent.

God has spoken, God does speak to us, what should our response be? Albert Mohler suggests eight solemn realities if God has spoken:

If God has spoken, then our primary responsibility should be to find out what God has said.
If God has spoken, we know only by mercy.
If God has spoken, then we do know the truth.
If God has spoken, then we too must speak.
If God has spoken, then it is all about God, and it is all for our good.
If God has spoken, then it is for our redemption.
If God has spoken, then we must trust Him for our salvation and our eternal life.
If God has spoken, then we must be witnesses of His mercy, love, and grace.¹⁹

¹⁴ Romans 1:18.

¹⁵ John 3:16.

¹⁶ John 14:6.

¹⁷ R. Albert Mohler, *Words from the Fire*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009) 12.

¹⁸ Francis Schaeffer, *The Francis Schaeffer Trilogy*, (Wheaton: Illinois, 1990) 158-160.

¹⁹ Albert Mohler, 16-23.

Josh McDowell lists four significant areas where our young people have been victimized by the world: a distorted view of Christianity, a distorted view of Truth, a distorted view of Reality, and a distorted view of the Church.²⁰ What will it take to help our culture to see the Truth?

V. A CHALLENGE TO SEE WHAT IT WOULD TAKE

Our culture is seeking. The absence of the guiding light of God's revelation and the rejection of the comforting voice of God's love have directed our culture to seek guidance, meaning, and hope internally. A distorted view of Christianity has permeated our thinking and conduct. The basic answer to our problem lies in revealing to this generation... "who Christ really is and then leading each individual to properly respond to Him."²¹ Our role is not just presentation, but also a desire to see transformation. This radical change starts with our prayerful empathy for the lost.

Instead of focusing on programs, we are challenged to aim for warm peer and intergenerational friendships in our community. We need to be good neighbors locally and globally. God has revealed Himself. The Bible claims to lead us to God. In the Bible we find answers to the questions of life and eternity. God has spoken.

McDowell draws our attention to three foundational characteristics of God:

- a. The God of redemption, b. The God of relationships, and c. The God of restoration.

With a firm conviction of the reality that God has spoken, armed with the truth of God's Word, empowered by the Holy Spirit, motivated by empathy for the lost, we have the privilege of introducing a lost world to the Savior.²²

²⁰ McDowell, 33-57.

²¹ McDowell, 68-69.

²² Frank Anderson, "Preaching the Word in a Pre-Christian World," *Mid-America Messenger* (Winter 2017) 14-16.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Anderson, Frank. "Preaching the Word in a Pre-Christian World" *Mid-America Messenger*. Winter 2017.
- Crow, Earl. "Perfection and the Path to Heaven," *Winston-Salem Journal*, February 3, 2018.
- Gordon, Sam. *Fighting Truth Decay*. Greenville, SC: Ambassador Publishers, 2002.
- Kinnaman, David and Aly Hawkins. *You Lost Me*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011.
- Lutzer, Erwin W. *Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2015.
- McDowell, Josh and David Bellis. *The Last Christian Generation*. Holiday, FL: Green Key Books, 2006.
- Mohler, R. Albert. *Words from the Fire*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009.
- Powell, Kara, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin. *Growing Young*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016.
- Schaeffer, Francis. *The Francis Schaeffer Trilogy*. Wheaton: Illinois, 1990.
- Smith, Christian and Melinda Lundquist Denton. *Soul-Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

DEFENDING THE FAITH BY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH: AN EXPOSITION OF JUDE 3-4

Randy G. Bottoms, Ph.D.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The year 2017 marked the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, which began by most historians' estimation on October 31, 1517, when Martin Luther posted 95 theses for academic debate upon the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The year 2017 was a year of celebration among the Christian community as Protestants celebrated this pivotal event, which changed world history.

The Church during the Middle Ages, except for a few outcast independent groups, had deteriorated doctrinally and spiritually into a system of salvation and justification by works, with spiritual and moral decay and corruption. The Roman Catholic Church clearly taught doctrinal error in teaching salvation by works and church membership, the veneration of Mary, the doctrines of purgatory and indulgences, etc.

God raise up Martin Luther and other reformers during the 16th century to earnestly contend for the faith and to call the Church back to doctrinal purity and holy living.

The Church since the 16th century, and even before, has struggled for doctrinal purity and holy living. The Church even today struggles with doctrinal attacks from without and within from many different sources. The Church is commanded and called upon from an ancient, holy command to “contend for,” fight for, and struggle for “the faith” (Jude 3).

The ancient Church, even in apostolic times, struggled with doctrinal attacks from within and without the Church from the very beginning. Peter and John, and the other apostles,

* Randy G. Bottoms is an adjunct professor of Church History at Temple Baptist Seminary of Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, NC.

encountered falsehood through the attempt of Simon the Sorcerer to purchase the power to heal and perform miracles through the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:9-25). Paul, Silas, Luke, and other leaders of the Church encountered Satanic-inspired spiritism, which caused great difficulty and suffering to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:16-38). Peter mentioned false prophets, false teachers, and false teaching coming into the Church (2 Peter 2:1-22). John spoke of encountering false teachers and false teaching, including Gnosticism (1 John 2:18-29; 4:1-6; 2 John 7-11; 3 John 9-11). The apostle Paul wrote the Epistle of Galatians to counter Judaizers and the false doctrine of salvation by faith plus works that was affecting the Church. Paul also wrote the Epistle of Colossians to counter Gnosticism. The Church has been under attack doctrinally and spiritually from its very inception.

Jude, the half-brother of Christ, speaks of his encounter with false teachers during his ministry (Jude 4-19). It is in this context of Jude, writing about his encounter with false teachers, that we have the great commandment from the Lord that we, the saints in the Church, are to be busy earnestly contending for and defending the faith. God has committed to the Church the command to defend the faith.

II. THE COMMAND TO CONTEND FOR (AND DEFEND) THE FAITH – JUDE 3

In Jude 3, we find the great command to the Church to contend for and defend the faith. It was given in the context of Jude writing to a general group of believers (“to them that are sanctified by God the Father.....”-Jude 1). No specific church is mentioned. These believers were probably made up mainly of Jews, with perhaps some Gentiles, due to Jude’s many references to Old Testament characters and events that mainly Jews would have been familiar with, such as Cain, Balaam, Korah (Core), Enoch and Adam (Jude 11-15).

Jude states that he was writing to this general group of believers about the “common salvation” (Jude 3). By “common salvation,” Jude may have been referring to the doctrine of salvation, which would have needed clarification among these saints since they were being exposed to false teaching or Jude could have been using the expression to refer to doctrine in general. In the context of writing to these saints about doctrine, Jude gave the great command to contend for the faith.

Jude stated that “it was needful” (Jude 3), or necessary, for him to write unto these believers to contend for the faith. He stated his reason that this was necessary in Jude 4. Jude states that the Church is to “earnestly contend” for the faith (Jude 3). The words “earnestly contend” are the translation of one word in the original Greek, *epagonizesthai*. This word means literally “to fight.”¹ The word was used by Plutarch to refer to fighting against Hannibal.² It was also used in the idea of fighting in the arena.³ The Church is commanded “to fight” for the faith.

The command to “fight for the faith” is given to a general group of believers. It is not given to just a few professional apologists who are trained to defend the faith. The command to do so is given to the Church in general. Jude gives this command to a general group of believers that he addressed in the opening verses. Everyone in the Church is commanded to “fight for” the faith.

The Church is to fight for what Jude calls “the faith” (Jude 3). What does Jude exactly mean by the expression “the faith”? He apparently is referring to the great body of truth taught

¹ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 281.

² Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1889, 1975), 227.

³ Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 135.

and handed down to the Church through the apostles.⁴ A great, wonderful body of divine truth has been committed to the Church from God. The Church has a divine responsibility to protect that precious truth and to defend and fight for it. The exhortation to fight for the body of divine truth is a command to the Church, not an option.

The faith, the great body of divine truth committed to the Church, is said to be “once delivered” unto the saints (Jude 3). The word “once” in the original Greek is *hapaz*, meaning “once for all.”⁵ The body of divine truth, found in the Bible, has been handed over, committed to the Church in a once-for-all act. It has been done. God is no longer handing over to the Church continuing truth. It has been done once for all.

The Church has an awesome and solemn responsibility. To the Church has been committed divine, sacred truth. The Church has a vital, sobering responsibility to protect this truth and fight for it.

III. THE REASON FOR CONTENDING FOR (AND DEFENDING) THE FAITH – JUDE 4

In Jude 3, Jude gives the command to earnestly fight for the faith. In Jude 4, he gives the reason for earnestly fighting for the faith. Jude 4 begins with “for,” which in the original Greek is *gar*, which is an explanatory conjunction connecting Jude 4 with Jude 3, and was used as a conjunction “to express cause, inference, continuation, or to explain.”⁶ The “for” connects Jude 4 to Jude 3 and explains *why* the Church is to earnestly fight for the faith.

⁴ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, vol. 2, *Jude*, by Edward C. Pentecost (USA, Canada, and England: Victor Books, 1983), 919.

⁵ Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski, *A Reader's Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 544.

⁶ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 151.

The reason for earnestly fighting for the faith is stated in Jude 4. Jude states that it is because “there are certain men crept in” (Jude 4). Certain men had crept into the Church bringing in false doctrine. Jude describes these men bringing false doctrine into the Church as having “crept in unawares” (Jude 4). The words “crept in unawares” are the translation of one word in the original Greek, *pareisedusan*, which means to “slip in stealthily, sneak in.”⁷ False teachers had stealthily sneaked into the early churches that Jude addressed. That is usually the way that doctrinal error creeps into the Church. Very seldom does error come into the Church in an open, blatant manner. It usually sneaks into the Church gradually, bit by bit, by people who come into the Church who profess to be Christians and say that they believe traditional Christian orthodoxy. This is usually the pattern especially in the introduction of doctrinal error into Christian schools and institutions. People will come into the institution professing to be Christian and orthodox, and then will gradually, bit by bit, begin to introduce unorthodox teaching. It may be a statement of doubting some scientific or historical areas of the Bible as being accurate, or doubting the historicity of Adam and Eve, or doubting the historicity of Genesis 1-11, or doubting that a universal flood actually occurred in the days of Noah, or stating that the apostle Paul’s statements regarding women or the role of women were tainted by cultural bias, etc. Such unorthodox introductions usually begin small and subtle. And then, eventually, more serious doctrinal error begins to emerge. The introduction of false doctrine into the Church is usually a stealth attack. The Church and Christian institutions must constantly be on guard and vigilant to watch for the introduction of doctrinal error.

Jude goes on to say that the false teachers who sneaked into the church “were before of old ordained to this condemnation” (Jude 4). This portion of Jude 4 has created difficulty in

⁷ Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski, *A Reader’s Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 544.

interpretation and interpretative tension. There is disagreement as to the proper interpretation of this portion of this verse.

At first glance, the use of the words “before of old ordained” in the King James Bible to describe these false teachers might seem to imply that these false teachers in Jude were *preordained* by God to come into the Church with false teaching. This is the understanding held by some strong Calvinist interpreters.

But this is not the case. A careful look at this expression in Jude 4 in the original Greek clarifies the proper interpretation that should be understood. The words “of old” in the KJV are the translation of one word, *palai*, meaning “long ago, formerly,” and the word “ordained” is the translation of the word, *proگرامmenoi*, meaning “having been written beforehand.” The word “condemnation” is the word *krima*, which means “judgment.”⁸ What Jude is saying here is that it was written beforehand long ago that such false teachers will be judged by God. Jude refers to this being uttered long ago in his quote of Enoch, an antediluvian patriarch and ancestor of Noah (Genesis 5:19-24; Hebrews 11:5-6), in Jude 14-15. The patriarch Enoch uttered the words of judgment upon ungodly false teachers long, long ago, which have been written and recorded (Jude 14-15).

This understanding that Jude is referring to the judgment of false teachers being written about and prophesied long ago is a consensus of understanding among many evangelical commentators, such as Dr. Edward C. Pentecost⁹, David T. Payne¹⁰, John Peter Lange¹¹, Gene L.

⁸ Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski, *A Reader's Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 544.

⁹ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament Edition, Jude*, by Edward C. Pentecost (USA, Canada, England: Victor Books, 1983), 920.

¹⁰ G. C. D. Howley, gen. ed., F. F. Bruce and H. L. Ellison, consulting eds., *A New Testament Commentary, The Letter of Jude*, by David T. Payne (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), 627.

Green¹², Albert Barnes¹³, D. Edmond Hiebert¹⁴, Richard Wolf¹⁵, Thomas R. Schreiner¹⁶, R. C. H. Lenski¹⁷ and Charles R. Erdman¹⁸.

Also, God cannot cause any of his creation to sin. God cannot be tempted to sin, neither does He tempt or cause others to sin (James 1:13; Titus 1:2; I Peter 1:16). It would be inconsistent with the nature of God for Him to foreordain that some people sin, teach lies and falsehood, and lead others astray.

The errors of the false teachers spoken of by Jude are described in Jude 4. The false teachers are described as being “ungodly,” living lives that are characterized as not living under the commandments of God and contrary to God, without God in the life. They are also said to turn “the grace of our God into lasciviousness.” The word “lasciviousness” is the Greek word *aselgeian*, meaning “licentiousness, debauchery, sensuality.”¹⁹ The false teachers spoken of by Jude were living ungodly lives in sexual sins of debauchery and sensuality, probably being

¹¹ John Peter Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, The Epistle General of Jude* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1865), 13.

¹² Robert W. Yarbrough and Robert H. Stein, eds., *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Jude and 2 Peter*, by Gene L. Green (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 58.

¹³ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament, Explanatory and Practical* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949), 389.

¹⁴ D. Edmond Hiebert, *Second Peter and Jude* (Greenville: Unusual Publications, 1989), 222.

¹⁵ Richard Wolf, *A Commentary on the Epistle of Jude* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), 56-57.

¹⁶ E. Ray Clendenen, gen. ed., Kenneth A. Mathews, assoc. gen. ed., O.T., David S. Dockery, assoc. gen. ed., N.T., *The New American Commentary, Vol. 37, I, 2 Peter, Jude* by Thomas R. Schreiner (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003), 438.

¹⁷ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), 612-613.

¹⁸ Charles R. Erdman, *The General Epistles (James; I and II Peter; I, II, and III John; Jude)* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), 221.

¹⁹ Richard J. Goodrich and Albert L. Lukaszewski, *A Reader's Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 544.

involved in fornication. The false teachers were also said to deny “the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” This apparently meant that they were teaching a false view of Christ, apparently denying Christ’s deity and divinity. These false teachers were preoccupied with angels, teaching false things about them, and may have been attempting to equate Christ with angels in a Gnostic fashion (Jude 8-10). So, these false teachers were ungodly men, involved in sexual sin and debauchery, and teaching a false view of Christ.

IV. APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

The Church in the days of Jude and the apostles was infiltrated by and assaulted by false teachers. The Church has been under assault by false teachers and teaching since its very beginning. Jude stated that the Church has been given a very precious deposit of divine truth in the Holy Scriptures. He stated that it is a divine responsibility of the Church to “contend for,” to fight for, and defend the precious body of divine truth. Jude stated that the Church was to be active in defending the faith.

The Church today in the modern era is passive. It sits quietly by as lies, falsehood and deceit bombard the Church and the culture around it, even being promulgated within the so-called outward Christian church. Perhaps the Church is not willing to suffer the opposition and difficulties that come from standing for the truth. Perhaps the Church is quite content to “lay low,” avoiding difficulties, wanting to avoid “rocking the boat,” and hoping for Jesus’ soon return. Speaking clearly for the truth and opposing lies is certainly not popular and politically correct today. It is characterized as being uncharitable and unloving.

But the command of God in the book of Jude is clear. Christians are to recognize that false teaching has permeated the Church and culture. Christians are given a divine command through Jude to “fight for the faith that was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). Jude,

and the apostles Peter, John and Paul, and other apostles, did. Great Christians in the past, like John Wycliffe in England, John Hus in Bohemia, Martin Luther in Germany, and other reformers like John Calvin in Geneva, did. The admonition to “fight for the faith” is not a suggestion. It is a divine command.

The fight for the faith is essential and crucial. First, it is the holy truth of God, and is worth fighting for. Second, the orthodox faith delivered to the saints has the message of salvation, which brings eternal life to the souls of men, women and children. If this message is altered by false teaching, souls will be deceived and damned for all of eternity. It is crucial for the eternal destiny of the souls of men that the orthodox faith delivered to the saints be defended. Third, the orthodox faith delivered to the saints contains the truth that transforms lives from lives of sin and despair that anger God, to lives of holiness, godliness and purity that please God and bring happiness. The quality of life of men, women and children hangs upon the truth of the orthodox faith delivered to the saints. False teaching only encourages sin and ungodliness and brings unhappiness and despair.

The Church can “fight for the faith” by openly standing for the orthodox truth of the word of God. The Church should point out false doctrine and lies. It can do this by proclaiming orthodox truth from the pulpit and pointing out error. Schools should proclaim the orthodox faith and point out error in classrooms, chapels, conferences and meetings and through writing and publications. Christians should openly point out error and proclaim the orthodox faith once delivered to the saints when given opportunities in the public arena such as in publications, on TV, on the radio and on the internet. Christians should write articles and books pointing out error and proclaiming the orthodox truth.

The modern Church is too passive. It should become very active, and follow the command of God to defend and “fight for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Arndt, William F. and Gingrich, F. Wilbur. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Barnes, Albert. *Notes on the New Testament Explanatory and Practical*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1949.
- Brown, Francis. *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon With An Appendix Containing The Biblical Aramaic*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979.
- Clendenen, E. Ray, gen. ed., Matthews, Kenneth A., assoc. gen. ed. OT, and Dockery, David S., assoc. gen. ed. NT. *The New American Commentary, Vol. 37, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, by Thomas R. Schreiner. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003.
- Erdman, Charles R. *The General Epistles (James; I and II Peter; I, II, and III John; Jude)*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974.
- Goodrich, Richard J. and Lukaszewski, Albert L. *A Reader's Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003.
- Hiebert, D. Edmond. *Second Peter and Jude*. Greenville: Unusual Publications, 1989.
- Howley, G. C. D., gen. ed., Bruce, F. F. and Ellison, H. L., consulting eds. *A New Testament Commentary, The Letter of Jude*, by David F. Payne. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969.
- Kittel, Gerhard, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 1*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964.
- Lange, John Peter. *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, The Epistle General of Jude*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1865.
- Lenski, R. C. H. *The Interpretation of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966.
- Nicoll, W. Robertson, ed. *The Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. V, The General Epistle of Jude*, by J. B. Mayor. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979.
- Thayer, Joseph Henry. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1889.

Walvoord, John F. and Zuck, Roy B., eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, Jude*, by Edward C. Pentecost. USA, Canada, England: Victor Books, 1983.

Wolf, Richard. *A Commentary on the Epistle of Jude*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960.

Yarbrough, Robert W. and Stein, Robert H., eds. *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Jude and 2 Peter*, by Gene L. Green. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.

A DEFENSE OF THE EARLY THEOLOGICAL RECOGNITION OF A UNIVERSAL, EFFECTUAL, SALVIFIC ASPECT TO THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

Scott A. Smith, Ph.D.*

I. INTRODUCTION

During the centuries long post-Reformation debates on the nature and extent of Christ's atonement,¹ there has remained a deep division as to whether that atonement is universal to all people (in some way) or non-universal, applicable to only believers or the elect (depending upon how one prefers to frame the group identity). The two primary sides of the debate argue from either a provisionalist or particularist view of atonement. In a provisionalist view, Christ *provided* atonement universally for the *potential* salvation of all people, but that atonement has *no salvific effect* except individually through faith. In a particularist view, Christ *particularly* atoned *only* for those individuals God has prechosen to *actually* save, having a *guaranteed*

* Scott A. Smith is an adjunct professor of Research and Writing at Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, NC.

¹ For details about historical debates, see W. Robert Godfrey, "Reformed Thought on the Extent of the Atonement to 1618," *Westminster Theological Journal* 37, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 133–171; Stephen Strehle, "The Extent of the Atonement and the Synod of Dort," *Westminster Theological Journal* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 1–23; G. Michael Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to the Consensus (1536-1675)*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 1997); David L. Allen, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Historical and Critical Review* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2016); additionally, on the points of contention within Baptist circles historically on the atonement, see H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), particularly pages 21, 39, 73.

For recent works including multiple points of view debating the nature and extent of atonement, see James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, eds., *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006); Derek Tidball, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker, eds., *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008); Andrew David Naselli and Mark A. Snoeberger, eds., *Perspectives on the Extent of the Atonement: Three Views* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015).

For the contemporary Baptist debate, see Eric Hankins, "An Introduction to 'A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation,'" accessed January 5, 2018, <http://sbctoday.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/A-Statement-of-Traditional-Southern-Baptist-Soteriology-SBC-Today.pdf>, and the statement a year later in the Calvinism Advisory Committee's, "TRUTH, TRUST, and TESTIMONY in a TIME of TENSION," Journal, *SBC Life - Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention*, June 2013, accessed January 5, 2018, <http://www.sbclife.net/Articles/2013/06/sla5>.

salvific effect for that group.² But there a potential mediating view. This view recognizes multiple issues need to be corrected for an individual's salvation, and so Christ's atonement functions on multiple levels and differing ways. At one level, it *actually, effectually* saves *all* people from some of those effects (universal atonement), while saving from all the effects *particularly* only those who God has chosen, which are those who believe (particular atonement). Clarifying the universal, this view has recently been labeled *pananastasism*, or "all-resurrected-ism," since the bodily resurrection is the universal, salvific effect granted to all people (believer and unbeliever) based on Christ's atonement, while only believers are saved from God's wrath and the second death.³ The view takes literally that "the living God," does not merely *provide a possible* salvation via atonement, but per 1 Tim 4:10, truly is "the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe."⁴ God saves all people at one level—bodily

² Another purportedly middle-view has been labeled by its adherents as a multi-intentioned view, but for the framing of individual salvific effects, such a view still falls under a provisionalist heading, as seen in how the advocates frame their understanding. For example, the universal intention is "a universal provision of forgiveness and the satisfaction of God's wrath without entailing universal salvation" (John S. Hammett, "Multiple-Intentions View of the Atonement" in Naselli and Snoeberger, 193). Gary Shultz still frames the universal effects as making things "possible" or "provided" in his work *A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2014), emphasis added:

The Father's general intention in the atonement was for the Son to pay the penalty for the sins of all people. He did this in order to make the universal gospel call *possible*, to make common grace (and not only salvific grace) *possible*, to *provide* an additional basis of condemnation for those who reject the gospel, to serve as the supreme example of God's character, and to make the reconciliation of all things *possible* (8).

This quote exhibits that any "salvific grace" has still only been made "possible," not actual, which is a provisionalist position on the extent of the atonement. David Allen notes about this view: "Actually there is nothing new in the multiple-intention view that was not a part of Amyraldianism or Hypothetical Universalism" (451), both of which views I classify as provisionalist.

³ Scott A. Smith, "Pananastasism—A Penal Substitutionary Model of a Definite Universal Atonement: God's Gracious Substitution to Pay the Penalty Due Every Individual in order to Righteously Resurrect All Mankind and Save a Particular People for Himself" (PhD diss., Piedmont International University, 2015). An online version can be found at <https://www.academia.edu/12057608/>.

The term pananastasism (pronounced pan-ana-stas-ism) is a term coined "from the Greek neuter form of πᾶς (*pas*) meaning 'all' and ἀνάστασις (*anastasis*), meaning 'resurrection,' and is thus the 'All-Resurrected-ism' model of penal substitutionary atonement" (35, n.74). In the pananastastic view, the particular salvific effect of atonement is to *wash* clean only the believers in God's sight by Christ's heavenly blood application (Heb 9:12), which is a distinctly different atoning act than his *death* as a penal substitute.

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the NKJV.

resurrection—but only believers fully. However, the core points of the pananastastic view are much older than this recent labeling and articulation, and the early patristic testimony provides hope for a modern unity in understanding the atonement—provided there be a return to a similar ancient understanding. Across both time and location, early church theologians held to a biblical view that Christ’s atonement was a necessary payment to bring about the bodily resurrection as an effectual, salvific reversal of sin’s penalty of physical death for all humanity, while still holding to a particular salvation for believers.

Despite being an early view of atonement, this tie between the general resurrection and its purchase by Christ’s penal substitutionary atonement as a salvific effect has not held prominence in the last few centuries of the atonement debate. There appear to be at least three primary reasons for this. First, post-Reformation particularists steered the conversation away from actual *extent* to God’s *intent* in atonement, with specific focus on the intent of the final extent of who is ultimately saved.⁵ This focus on intent obscured the discussion about extent, especially with respect to the means by which God may or may not have used the atonement for universal salvific purposes as part of reaching his ultimate intent to fully save only believers.

The second reason the resurrection is not viewed salvifically is the unfortunate theological de-emphasis on physical death as the penalty of sin. Rather, what has been labeled “spiritual death” tends to take prominence as the “penalty” for sin in theological discussions of atonement. Spiritual death, the spiritual and relational separation that sin has caused between God and man, is a consequence of sin; but it is arguably not the legal (decreed by God) *penalty*

⁵ For a defense *against* “intent” being the proper focus in the discussion of the extent of the atonement, see Smith, 56-72, and Allen, xix-xxviii.

for sin, but rather the natural consequence of mankind's failure to be like God as man was designed to be.⁶

Related to the second reason, the third reason is likely because in the last century, at least since Gustav Aulén's study of atonement—*Christus Victor* (originally published in 1931)—the resurrection, if discussed at all, tends to fall under a categorization of atonement theory by that same name.⁷ The result has tended to be that rather than seeing the resurrection as specifically a salvific reversal of sin's penalty of death because of Christ's payment of that penalty, it is viewed as a general benefit as part of Christ's victory.

None of these reasons causing many modern theologians to ignore this aspect of the atonement existed in the context of the patristic theologians. Many of those church fathers viewed physical death as the penalty for sin; they rightly based resurrection on Christ's atonement to reverse that penalty; and they did not question that such an aspect of salvation was

⁶ For a brief defense of this notion on death, see Smith, 151-159; a further, more detailed, defense is planned for the future.

⁷ Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003), Logos Bible Software. Aulén essentially argued that the "classic view" (which he has labeled *Christus Victor*) was focused on "victory of Christ over the powers of evil" (150), of which powers he states,

the classic idea groups sin with a whole series of evil powers—death, the devil, law, the curse. Most constant is the grouping together of sin and death. We have seen how unjustifiable it is to take this thought of deliverance from death as a proof that the whole idea of salvation, according to this view, is merely 'physical' or 'naturalistic.' The real meaning is quite other. If salvation is a deliverance both from sin and from death, and an entrance into life, this of itself forms a safeguard against the degradation either of the idea of sin to a moralistic level, or of the idea of the forgiveness of sin to the level of a mere remission of punishment (149).

So Aulén, in part, refocused attention on patristic writers emphasizing a relationship of atonement to victory over physical death. This has then manifested in the resurrection being grouped under that category in *Christus Victor* models of atonement. For example, David T. Williams in his chapter "Towards a Unified Theory of Atonement" in Tidball, et al., states, "while the penal substitutionary theory has little place for the resurrection except as a proof that God had accepted the sacrifice of the cross, the classic theory unites them as two aspects of a process" (231); for a contra view of some recognition of resurrection for penal substitution (albeit not a well formed one in my opinion), see Garry Williams chapter "Penal Substitution: A Response to Recent Criticisms" also in Tidball, et al., 184.

both the intent and extent of what God plans and will do for humanity. In short, they fit the model of the pananastastic view.

II. FRAMING THE STUDY OF EARLY ATONEMENT VIEWS

The study of atonement in the early church can be plagued with anachronism if modern theological labels control the discussion. The language of penal substitution, universal/unlimited vs. particular/limited atonement, intent vs. extent, etc., are not found in the writings of the early church. Nevertheless, aspects of these concepts can be extracted from the language they do use. In order to evaluate early theologians from a modern perspective, a framework must be established for purposes of identifying similar thoughts. There are five points of identification to determine if these ancient men fall within the framework of the modern, middle-view label of a pananastastic understanding of atonement.

The first point of this framework is to determine whether an early theologian recognizes physical death as one of the effects of sin, and even more specifically, as sin's legal penalty. Second, there must be a recognition of Christ's penal substitutionary death; that is, that Christ paid death itself in exchange for the third point, which is the coming resurrection of all people out of their penalty of physical death. The fourth point is a recognition that resurrection is deemed salvific at some level, and the fifth point relates to the fourth—while salvific, resurrection is not the totality of all that one needs to be completely saved from all the effects of sin—belief is still needed to become saved in the greatest sense of the term.⁸

Matching to these five points simply demonstrates each church father held an understanding in line with what the pananastastic view upholds, that Christ's atoning death was

⁸ These points, as well as some of the individuals and information represented in this article, have been adapted from chapter 5 of my original dissertation defending a pananastastic view of atonement; see Smith, 351-368.

viewed as universally resolving the physical death penalty of all people due to sin, by paying that penalty for sin for all people so that the resurrection can and will result.

III. EARLY THEOLOGICAL RECOGNITION

Four individuals are highlighted from the church fathers.⁹ Their lives span two generations during the early 4th to early 5th centuries, during a time of great theological development. They come from across the Mediterranean world, Theodore from near Syrian Antioch (where the apostle Paul is brought to minister in Acts 11), Athanasius and Cyril from Alexandria, Egypt, and Hilary from Poitiers, in modern France. This sample demonstrates the wide spread similarity of thought on the universal extent of the atonement as purchasing the general resurrection only a couple hundred years after completion of the New Testament.¹⁰

Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296–373)

In his work *On the Incarnation of the Word*,¹¹ Athanasius, archbishop of Alexandria in his day, evidences agreement with the five primary points matching him to a pananastastic view of atonement. His scheme of atonement is rightly recognized as a recapitulation model, but some incorrectly categorize him as merely holding a physical theory of redemption, where the

⁹ The order is not chronological, as Theodore would be before Cyril (he spans between the life of Athanasius and Cyril), but for purposes of contrast between him and the two Alexandrian men, I have ordered him last.

¹⁰ Each man surveyed had his own theology, much larger than what is discussed here, and within that theology his own view of soteriology—of which not all aspects are endorsed. The purpose here is simply to demonstrate that the conclusions of the pananastastic understanding of atonement are grounded in Scripture, and as such, have historically been recognized by others viewing those same scriptures while attempting to work out an understanding of the work Christ did to save people.

¹¹ The English copy used here is Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* in *St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, vol. 4, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2nd ser., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. John Henry Newman and Archibald T. Robertson (New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1892), 36-67, Logos Bible Software; the Greek copy is available online: *St. Athanasius on the Incarnation*, ed. Archibald Robertson (London: D. Nutt, 1882), accessed December 5, 2017, <https://books.logos.com/books/1688#content=/books/1688>.

redemptive act was the incarnation act itself.¹² Evidence from Athanasius given here shows that he viewed atoning acts by the incarnate Christ were necessary for redemption.

Athanasius sees physical death as the legal penalty for sin, one that apart from Christ's work of atonement would have been eternal for every individual:

For He brought them ['the race of men,' 3.3] into His own garden, and *gave them a law*: so that, if they kept the grace and remained good, they might still keep the life in paradise without sorrow or pain or care, besides having the promise of incorruption in heaven; *but that if they transgressed and turned back, and became evil, they might know that they were incurring that corruption in death which was theirs by nature*: no longer to live in paradise, but cast out of it from that time forth *to die and to abide in death and in corruption* ... But by 'dying ye shall die,' [cf. Gen 2:17] what else could be meant than *not dying merely, but also abiding ever in the corruption of death?* (3.4–5; emphasis added)¹³

Athanasius sees death here as being a legal sentencing of letting what is natural for mortal man to take place.¹⁴ However, he leaves no doubt that death comes as a legal penalty that God has committed himself to:

For *death*, as I said above [referring to the statement quoted above¹⁵], *gained from that time forth a legal hold over us*, and it was impossible to evade the law, since it had been laid down by God because of the transgression, and the result was in truth at once monstrous and unseemly. For it were monstrous, firstly, that God, having spoken, should prove false—that, when once He had ordained that man, *if he transgressed the commandment, should die the death*, after the transgression man should not die, but God's word should be broken. For God would not be true, if, when He had said we should die, man died not. (6.2–3; emphasis added)

¹² For an argument against categorizing Athanasius with a physical theory of atonement, see Keith Edward Norman, "Deification: The Content of Athanasian Soteriology" (PhD diss., Duke University, 1980), ProQuest.

¹³ Regarding Athanasius's take on the Gen 2:17 passage, while I agree with his conclusion that the penalty was intended to bring about a permanent state of death (apart from Christ's atoning to prevent that permanency), that is not what the phrase "meant" in context. Rather, the Hebrew phrasing is a legal formula in the Old Testament of issuing a death sentence. So in that day they sinned, Adam and Eve came under the legal sentence of *deserving* to die for that sin (cf. Exo 21:12, 17, 31:14; Lev 20:2, 10).

¹⁴ I view death as being the unnatural punishment applied to mankind for sin—God intended immortality to come naturally, but that immortality was conditional to partaking of the tree of life (Gen 3:22).

¹⁵ That his "as I said above" refers to the prior quote from 3.4–5 comes from the fact that no other place previously does he discuss law in its relation to death.

God's obligation for death had to be fulfilled because it was the very law God had laid down. People were to die and remain dead as a consequence of God's just penalty against sin. This meets the first point—Athanasius sees physical death as the legal penalty for sin.

He then makes statements to meet the second and third points of Christ's penal substitution paying the penalty, allowing for the resurrection from death. Athanasius argues God did not leave himself without a means to pay that death penalty himself. He did not create man, just to lose him to the death penalty. For Athanasius, such would be "unseemly" (6.6) of God.¹⁶ Because of this, he correctly sees the incarnation as essential to performing the atoning work, which work itself is essential to bring the resurrection:

And seeing the *race of rational creatures* in the way to perish, and death reigning over them by corruption; ... how *all men* were under penalty of death: He took pity on *our race* ... He ["the incorporeal and incorruptible and immaterial Word of God," (8.1)] takes unto Himself a body, and that of no different sort from ours.... And thus taking from our bodies one of like nature, because *all were under penalty of the corruption of death* He gave it ["a body of our kind" but "clean" and "pure" (8.3)] over to death *in the stead of all*, and offered it to the Father—doing this, moreover, of His loving-kindness, to the end that, firstly, all being held to have died in Him, *the law* involving the ruin of men *might be undone* (inasmuch as its power was fully spent in the Lord's body, and had no longer holding-ground against men, his peers¹⁷), and that, secondly, whereas men had turned toward corruption, He might *turn them again toward incorruption*, and *quicken them from death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of the Resurrection, banishing death from them* like straw from the fire. (8.2, 4; emphasis added)

Through the incarnation, by being joined to mankind, it allowed for Christ's perfect body to be given in death "in the stead of all" (ἀντι πάντων [8.4]¹⁸). This phrase shows a substitutionary understanding of Christ's atonement; but also in context the "all" he refers to is what he has been

¹⁶ See through 6.10 for Athanasius's fuller explanation of it being "unseemly."

¹⁷ Regarding the translation "his peers," I believe a better translation is "like natured men;" the Greek is κατὰ τῶν ὁμοίων ἀνθρώπων (8.4), the ὁμοίων paralleling the earlier use of the same word referring to Christ taking a body "of like nature" (8.4), showing that the law of death had no more power over mankind. Translating as "his peers" can be misinterpreted in this context to refer only to the children of God, which misses Athanasius's point.

¹⁸ Athanasius uses the phrase ἀντι πάντων four other times, also each in reference to Christ's death (9.1, 20.2, 20.6, 21.3).

discussing, “the race of rational creatures ... all men ... our race,” of which “He takes unto Himself a body.” Athanasius sees the substitutionary atonement as having universal application.¹⁹

That application is the coming resurrection of all people. He states this at the end of the quote, for with the power of the legal penalty being undone, “He might turn them again toward incorruption, and quicken them from death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of the Resurrection, banishing death from them” (8.4). The translator chose to capitalize “Resurrection” here to refer to Christ’s resurrection, but that is an improper interpretation of Athanasius here.²⁰ Athanasius qualifies in this context that to “quicken them from death ... banishing death from them” is by God’s grace in bringing their resurrection. That he refers to the general resurrection is evidenced by the two other places “by the grace of the resurrection” (8.4; τῇ τῆς ἀναστάσεως χάριτι) is found: (a) by it, “corruption might be stayed from all” (19.1) and (b) from it, “corruption ceasing and being put away” (21.1). In all the cases, Athanasius is referring to the resurrection that makes the corruptible body incorruptible, which is what occurs

¹⁹ By Athanasius saying, “all being held to have died in Him [Christ]” (8.4), he could mean either a physical union with the race of man (as the context would seem to indicate), and so all people are united to Christ by bodily nature and since the power of the law was “fully spent” in this death of the human body of Christ, essentially humanity died in Christ. However, there is some recourse to believe that Athanasius may be using “in Christ” in the standard sense of spiritual union in this instance, in contrast to his universal focus in the passage. The Greek in that text literally translates as “of all dead of those in him” (πάντων ἀποθανόντων ἐν αὐτῷ [8.4]). As I note in my dissertation, “This translation accounts for the genitive article των being used on the dative prepositional phrase ἐν αὐτῷ as limiting the set of πάντων referenced. This rendering would then make the ‘all’ be a reference to believers ‘in Christ,’ but in the context of a statement about an ultimate and particular intent of the universal effects” (Smith, 357).

²⁰ That the translator implies Christ’s resurrection is evident by comparing to “23.1, where the translator twice sees resurrection as referring to Christ’s resurrection (and capitalizes it), and twice as a general reference to resurrection, in which he does not capitalize it, and clearly in the context the two capitalized instances are referring to Christ’s resurrection” (Smith, 357).

at the individual's resurrection, when Christ consummates his victory over death (1 Cor 15:42, 54).²¹

These instances mentioning the grace of the resurrection all show how Athanasius meets point three, and all the first three points can be found in summary when he affirms the general resurrection is in view by this act:

by the sacrifice of His own body, He both put an end to the law which was against us, and made a new beginning of life for us, by the hope of the resurrection which He has given us. For since from man it was that death prevailed over men, for this cause conversely, by the Word of God being made man has come about the destruction of death and the resurrection of life ... For no longer now do we die as subject to condemnation; but as men who rise from the dead we await the general resurrection of all [κοινήν πάντων ἀνάστασιν], "which in its own times He shall show," even God, Who has also wrought it, and bestowed it upon us. (10.5; emphasis added)

This resurrection of all people that has been purchased by the atonement he sees as a salvific act, and so meets point four as well. The atonement to bring resurrection is, for Athanasius, "the first cause of the Saviour's being made man" (10.6),²² but he specifically sees Christ in this way as an actual savior of all people.

He denotes this universality further, "the whole conspiracy of the enemy against *mankind* is checked, and the corruption of death which before was prevailing against them is done away. For *the race of men* had gone to ruin, had not the Lord and *Saviour of all*, the Son of God, come among us to meet the end of death" (9.4, emphasis added). His "all" in context refers to the set of the entire "race of men." He uses this phrase "Saviour of all" a total of seven times, including quite specifically "the general" or "common Saviour of all," where he appears to be calling

²¹ For a defense of unbelievers also gaining an incorruptible body, which is the basis for why they are not consumed by the eternal fire of their second death, see Smith, 211-215.

²² Regarding the importance of atonement bringing resurrection, Athanasius is stating "it is the first cause because man could not be renewed into the image of God without first having death overcome (13.8). This first cause indicates that a penal substitution is at the beginning and heart of his recapitulation view of atonement. Without this 'first cause,' all else would be for naught" (Smith, 360 n.23).

attention to the universal salvific nature of Christ, sometimes in contexts where he is discussing further salvific aspects only for believers.²³

This latter aspect of distinction for believers is what matches to point number five, and what keeps Athanasius (and pananastasism that fits Athanasius's thought on atonement bringing resurrection), from being full blown Universalism. He sees a differentiation in benefits:

Why, now that *the common Saviour of all* has died on our behalf, we, *the faithful in Christ*, no longer die the death as before, agreeably to the warning of the law; for this condemnation has ceased; but, corruption ceasing and being put away by the grace of the Resurrection, henceforth we are only dissolved, agreeably to our bodies' mortal nature, at the time God has fixed for each, *that we may be able to gain a better resurrection.* (21.1)

He is contrasting his point of Christ being the universally “common Saviour of all” (extent), with a particular purpose (intent) that the “faithful in Christ” receive from that common “grace of the [r]esurrection.” This purpose is for an even “better resurrection” than the unfaithful. The salvation that is given to all people from Christ's work—the resurrection—is especially salvific and beneficial to the faithful. This is because Athanasius also recognizes that, while salvation from death was needed, there is more at stake at the second coming of Christ for full salvation:

He [Christ] is to come, no more to suffer, but thenceforth *to render to all the fruit of His own Cross*, that is, *the resurrection and incorruption*; and no longer to be judged, but *to judge* all, by what each has done in the body, whether good or evil; where there is laid up *for the good the kingdom of heaven*, but for them that have done *evil everlasting fire and outer darkness.* (56.3, emphasis added)

Athanasius asserts the resurrection to be “the fruit of [Christ's] own Cross” (atonement work), but distinguishes the final judgment as only being beneficial for those who have done good (the faithful, who enter heaven) and not for those who have done evil (the unfaithful, cast into fire

²³ It is translated in 15.2 as “general”, but “common” in 21:1, 37:3, and 52:1; yet all four instances in Greek are either the nominative form of ὁ κοινὸς πάντων Σωτὴρ (15.2, 52:1) or genitive of the same, τοῦ κοινοῦ πάντων Σωτὴρ (21:1, 37:3), so it is the same phrasing. Besides these four uses, the other three of seven are the aforementioned 9.4, and then 19.3, 53.4.

and darkness).²⁴ Athanasius fits the framework aligning to a pananastastic view of atonement. Physical death was the legal penalty for sin; Christ's substitutionary atonement was the universal solution for that penalty which results in the resurrection of all, which resurrection is an eschatologically salvific act, but one that is not the totality of salvific benefits that are reserved for believers only.

Hilary of Poitiers (c. 300–368)

A contemporary of Athanasius, Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, resided on the opposite end of the Mediterranean from Alexandria—in Gaul, what is now modern France. Athanasius certainly influenced Hilary's theology, but to what level is unclear, as the latter also shows points of “common ground with the Cappadocians.”²⁵ The two men apparently agreed on the nature of the atonement, as Hilary meets the same five points of the framework that align to a pananastastic view, just as Athanasius did.

²⁴ In this quote from 56.3, it is not clear that Athanasius is necessarily equating the faith as the grounding for good works, and unbelief as the ground of evil works. Indeed, in the

finish to his treatise he emphasizes what appears to be a works based salvation, faith seeming to take a second seat to the works that faith ought to be manifesting. While such a theology should be criticized, what is important here to notice is that the objective, salvific work of Christ's cross is focused on the first need of mankind *universally*—freedom from the penalty of death, which is the resurrection to incorruption. His theology about the finishing of that salvation is tainted by not emphasizing that the good works can only be had by the gaining of the righteousness through faith. (Smith, 362 n.32)

Yet the previous quote (in the body text from 21.1) showed Athanasius does see a distinction of “the faithful” in the benefit. So while he may have some issues articulating the relation of works to faith, he mentions the necessity of faith as well in other places (e.g. 27.1–4), though often in context of believers by faith no longer needing to fear death because of the promised resurrection.

²⁵ Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, “Introduction,” in *St. Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*, vol. 9, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 2nd ser. (New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1899), xviii, Logos Bible Software. See also pages xv–xvii for more discussion of Hilary's thinking both as influenced by Athanasius as well as independent in thought.

In his treatise *On the Trinity*,²⁶ there is a passage where Hilary argues it would have been unworthy of God to create mankind and then just leave mankind to death. In that, he acknowledges bodily death was a “sentence” that would have left faith unrewarded had that sentencing been the eternal outcome:

For true faith in God would pass unrewarded, if the soul be destroyed by death, and quenched in the extinction of bodily life. Even unaided reason pleaded that it was unworthy of God to usher man into an existence which has some share of His thought and wisdom, only to await *the sentence of life withdrawn and of eternal death*; to create him out of nothing to take his place in the World, only that when he has taken it he may perish. (*Trin.* 1.9; emphasis added)

That this sentence was a legal issue is discovered in his *Homilies on the Psalms*.²⁷ In speaking of Psalm 1, Hilary refers to “Adam, who by his sin in breaking Law lost the happiness of an assured immortality” (*Hom.* 1.18), which loss is an allusion to death. Then at the end of commenting on Psalm 53/4,²⁸ he notes how physical death is what a person owes: “death, ... severance of soul and body ... the debt which man must manifestly pay” (*Hom.* 53/4.14).

That latter reference is actually part of describing what Christ did for mankind, and so Christ “submitted to death” to pay this penalty due (*Hom.* 53/4.14). Both death as the penalty and Christ’s substitutionary atonement as the solution come together in a single passage, where Hilary emphasizes the death for death as Christ “blotted out through death the sentence of death, that by a new creation of our race in Himself He might sweep away the penalty appointed by the former Law” (*Trin.* 1.13). Regarding the penal nature of the death in the Psalms, he notes:

²⁶ The English version used is Hilary, *On the Trinity*, in *St. Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*, vol. 9, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 2nd ser., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. E. W. Watson, L. Pullan, et al. (New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1899), 40-233, Logos Bible Software; references to *On the Trinity* are book and paragraph.

²⁷ Hilary, *Homilies on the Psalms*, in Schaff and Wace, 9:235-248; references are to psalm and paragraph number.

²⁸ The number 53 is in the LXX and Vulgate (from which Hilary commented), but 54 is the number in the Hebrew text and most English translation; references will be noted 53/4 (or also, 55/6) for psalm number to these indicate these anomalies.

the Only-begotten Son of God Who was uplifted on the cross, and that He was *condemned to death* Who is eternal by virtue of the origin which is His by the nature which He derives from the eternal Father, it must be clearly understood that He was subjected to suffering of no natural necessity, but *to accomplish the mystery of man's salvation*; that He submitted to suffering of His own Will, and not under compulsion. And although this suffering did not belong to His nature as eternal Son, the immutability of God being proof against the assault of any derogatory disturbance, yet it was freely undertaken, and *was intended to fulfil a penal function*. (*Hom.* 53/4.12; emphasis added)

And then specifically the substitution of Christ's death as removing the "discontinuance"

(referring to death) of the "accursed," he states:

[Christ] offered Himself to the death of the accursed that He might break the curse of the Law, offering Himself voluntarily a victim to God the Father, in order that by means of a voluntary victim the curse which attended the discontinuance of the regular victim might be removed. (*Hom.* 53/4.13)

So Hilary meets the first two points of seeing physical death as the penalty for sin, which penalty was paid by Christ's substitute death.

That this substitute death results in the resurrection beyond just believers is also evident in Hilary's writings, but plainly in his commentary on Psalm 55/6, where support for all three final points aligning to pananastasism comes (this quote is taken from Michael Haykin quoting Hilary, and currently to my knowledge is the only English translation of Hilary on this passage):

"From which wrath the Apostle promises that we shall be rescued, saying, 'Because if, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us, much more we, who have been justified by his blood, shall be saved from wrath by him' (Romans 5:8-9). Therefore, he died for sinners that they might have the salvation of the resurrection [*salutem resurrectionis*], but he will save from wrath those who have been sanctified by his blood [*sanctificatos in sanguine suo saluabit ab ira*]." ²⁹

²⁹ *Hom.* 55.7 quoted in Michael A. G. Haykin, "'We Trust in the Saving Blood': Definite Atonement in the Ancient Church," in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*, ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2013), 68. I have been unable to find a full English translation of Hilary's commentary on Psalm 55(56). This excerpt, including the bracketed Latin text, is from Haykin, who in his n.58 states "for the Latin text, see *Sancti Hilarii Pictaviensis Episcopi: Tractatus super Psalmos: Instruction Psalmorum, In Psalms I-XCI*, ed. Jean Doignon, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 61A (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1997), 157-58." For an online version of the Latin text underlying Haykin's translation, see Hilary, *Sancti Hilarii Episcopi Pictaviensis: Tractatus Super Psalmos*, ed. Anton Zingerle, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vindobona: F. Tempsky, 1891), 22:166, para. 7, accessed December 21, 2017,

This passage reveals Hilary understands resurrection as salvific from the penalty of death, that there are two levels of salvation, a salvation of all sinners based on Christ's death, and then of those, a group saved from wrath who have been sanctified by Christ's blood.³⁰ With these three final points, the statement finalizes that Hilary is aligned with the five points of the framework for a pananastatic view of atonement.

Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376–444)

Being born soon after Athanasius's death, Cyril was a whole generation removed, but worked as an archbishop in the same location of Alexandria, Egypt. Comparing their ideas reveals a consistency in the thought regarding atonement for over hundred years in this early era of Church history.

In his *Commentary on the Gospel According to S. John*,³¹ Cyril affirms physical death as the legal penalty for sin. That Adam's sin was a legal issue is affirmed both directly and in contrast to any additional violation of God's Law:

<https://archive.org/stream/shilariiepiscopi22hilauoft#page/166/mode/2up>, and reads: “a qua ira eripiendos nos apostolus pollicetur dicens: quoniam si, cum adhuc peccatores essemus. Christus pro nobis mortuus est. multo magis iustificati in sanguine eius saluabimur per eum ab ira. pro peccatoribus igitur ad salutem resurrectionis est mortuus, sed sanctificatos in sanguine suo saluabit ab ira.”

³⁰ Two things need to be noted about Haykin's quote of Hilary. First, Haykin misunderstood Hilary's thought here, and incorrectly identified him as holding to a particular atonement, when the passage in fact shows Hilary sees both a general and a particular aspect of atonement very similar to that of pananastasism. However, second, Hilary has an oddity in his theology where he classifies people into one of three groups, “ungodly unbelievers, agnostic sinners, and godly believers” (Smith, 367), the first group never being resurrected, the second resurrected to wrath, and the last fully saved. These groups are mentioned in his comments on Psalm 1 (*Hom.* 1.19–24; for further discussion, see Smith 367–368, especially n. 47). The point here is that, while Hilary is either not fully universal in his general aspect of atonement to resurrection or he is inconsistent in his theology, what he *does* demonstrate is a view of atonement applying to an *unbelieving* group of sinful humanity for resurrection, but who will still face wrath.

³¹ The English translation used here is Cyril, *Commentary on the Gospel According to S. John*, bk. 6 (vol. 1), Library of the Fathers of the Church, vol. 43, trans. P.E. Pusey (London: Walter Smith, 1874), accessed December 19, 2017, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_on_john_06_book6.htm [covering John 8:44–10:17]; and Ibid., bk. 12 (vol. 2), Library of the Fathers of the Church, vol. 48, trans. T. Randell (London: Walter Smith, 1885), accessed December 19, 2017, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_on_john_12_book12.htm [covering John 18:24–21:25]; references are to Cyril's chapter and verse of the book of John.

the curse that, by the Divine Law, impends over the transgressors, and the sentence that went forth against all who erred against those ancient ordinances of the Law, like unto Adam's curse, which went forth against all mankind, in that all alike broke God's decrees. For God's anger did not cease with Adam's fall, but He was also provoked by those who after him dishonoured the Creator's decree; and the denunciation of the Law against transgressors was extended continuously over all. We were, then, accursed and *condemned, by the sentence of God, through Adam's transgression*, and through breach of the Law laid down after him. (19.19; emphasis added)

So in Adam's transgression of Law, Cyril notes above that a "curse ... went forth against all mankind." This curse is half of mankind's issue, for he states that it and the condemnation were "by the sentence of God" (a legal matter), both originally "through Adam's transgression" and later as well "through breach of the Law laid down after" Adam.

Physical death is Cyril's result of the curse from this transgression; cross referencing Paul's argument in Romans, he states, "*For death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression; and we bore the image of the earthy* in his likeness, and underwent the death that was inflicted by the Divine curse" (19.40-41; italics orig.). And then physical death is alluded to in his quote of Gen 3:19, "For by Adam's transgression, as in the firstfruits of the race, the sentence went forth to the whole world: *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*" (20.15; italics orig.), which he earlier noted as well that "in one, that is, the first Adam, it [humanity] was condemned to death and corruption" (6.10).³²

Death being the penalty of sin, in Cyril's theology, he recognizes a substitutionary death of Christ as payment for the penalty of death. He states that Christ

suffered for our sake, and [He] was giving His Life as a **ransom for the lives of all. For all men upon the earth**, in that they have fallen into the snare of sin (*for all have gone aside, and have all together become filthy*, according to the Scripture), had made themselves liable to the accusation of the devil, and were living a hateful and miserable life.... the Saviour wiped out the handwriting against us, by nailing the title to His Cross, which very clearly pointed **to the death upon the Cross which He underwent for the**

³² While Cyril in these quotes distinctly shows his understanding that God's legal sentence, his condemnation, is that of the curse that is (or at least entails) physical death, he also attributes the actual making of death in mankind to the devil (8.44).

salvation of men, who lay under condemnation. For our sake He paid the penalty for our sins. (19.19; italics orig., bold added)

Cyril is using universal language here, reiterated elsewhere, for “He endured the cross for our sakes that by death He might destroy death, and was condemned for our sakes that He might deliver all men from condemnation for sin” (6.12–13), and “For as Christ, Who knew not death, when He gave up His own Body for our salvation, was able to *loose the bonds of death for all mankind*, for He, being One, died for all” (19.1–3; emphasis added).

Yet Cyril’s commentary on Jn 19:16–18 is the clearest about this substitutionary transaction:

Bearing the Cross upon His shoulders, on which He was about to be crucified, He went forth; His doom was already fixed, and He had undergone, for our sakes, though innocent, the sentence of death. For, in His own Person, **He bore the sentence righteously pronounced against sinners by the Law**. For He became *a curse for us*, according to the Scripture: ... For those against whom the transgression of the Law may be charged, and who are very prone to err from its commandments, surely deserve chastisement. Therefore, He That knew no sin was accursed for our sakes, that He might deliver us from the old curse. For all-sufficient was the God Who is above all, so dying for all; **and by the death of His own Body, purchasing the redemption of all mankind**.

The Cross, then, that Christ bore, was not for His own deserts, but **was the cross that awaited us, and was our due, through our condemnation by the Law**. For as He was numbered among the dead, not for Himself, but for our sakes, that we might find in Him, the Author of everlasting life, subduing of Himself the power of death; so also, **He took upon Himself the Cross that was our due, passing on Himself the condemnation of the Law**, that the mouth of all lawlessness might henceforth be stopped, according to the saying of the Psalmist; **the Sinless having suffered condemnation for the sin of all**. (19.16–18; italics orig., bold added)

Notice Cyril understands this transaction explicitly to be “purchasing the redemption of all mankind.” This is because, paralleling the third and fourth points of the framework, he sees the result of that payment of Christ’s death as the resurrection of all people, a salvific act, redeeming all people from that state of death. He declares “all shall rise again and shall hasten anew unto life, both faithful and faithless. For by no means is the Resurrection partial, but equally to all, so

far at least that all must live again” (8.51). Hence, Cyril can affirm of Christ that “it was expected that He should die for the salvation of all men” (19.23–24), a salvation achieved because “the Second Adam appeared among us, the Divine Man from heaven, and, contending for the salvation of the world, *purchased by His death the life of all men*, and, destroying the power of corruption, rose again to life” (19.40–41; emphasis added). This purchase of life by Christ’s death is the coming resurrection, a salvific act for every individual of mankind.

Cyril sees that there is more than just this salvific aspect for a person to be fully saved. Indeed, he essentially summarizes the final four points of the framework when commenting on John 6:10, which comment reveals he sees two distinct destinies for believers versus unbelievers, even while maintaining that all partake of the resurrection Christ provides:

the Shepherd, had come, not only that the sheep may have life, saith He, but also something more; for **besides the restoration to life of those who believe in Him, there is also the certain hope of being blessed with all good things.... For the restoration to - life is common to both saints and sinners**, to both Greeks and Jews, as well as ourselves, for: *The dead shall arise, and they that are in the tombs shall awake, and they that are in the earth shall rejoice*, according to the sure promise of the Saviour. **But the participation of the Holy Spirit is not thus common to all**, being the *more* than *life*, as it were something beyond that which is common to all; and will be bestowed only upon those who are justified by faith in Christ ... **For indeed all shall rise from the dead, because this is granted to all nature, through the grace of the Resurrection**; and in One, that is, Christ, Who was the first and foremost to break down the dominion of death and attain eternal life, the common lot of humanity was changed and made incorruptible, even as also in one, that is, the first Adam, it was condemned to death and corruption. **But there will be at that time an important difference among those who are raised, and very widely distinct will be their destiny. For those who have gone to their rest with faith in Christ, and who have received the earnest of the Spirit in the appointed time of their bodily life, will obtain the most perfect grace, and will be changed to the glory which shall be given from God. But those who have not believed the Son, and have deemed such an excellent reward of no account, shall be once more condemned by His voice, and, sharing with the rest in nothing save in the restoration to life, shall pay the penalty of such prolonged unbelief.** For they shall depart down into Hades to be punished, and shall feel unavailing remorse. (6.10; italics orig., bold added)

Cyril here refers to a penalty and punishment yet to come because of unbelief, by being “once more condemned,” even though they had shared with believers “in the restoration of life” that the

“grace of the Resurrection” brings because Christ broke “down the dominion of death.” He makes a similar statement just a bit later when commenting on Jn 6:15 and Christ’s “friendly relationship” to all people:

The manner of the friendly relationship is common to all, both to those who have known Him and to those who have not known Him; for He became Man, not showing favour to some and not to others, out of partiality, but pitying our fallen nature in its entirety. Yet the manner of the friendly relationship will avail nothing for those who are insolent through unbelief, but rather will be allotted as a distinguishing reward to those who love Him. *For just as the doctrine of the resurrection extends to all men, through the Resurrection of the Saviour, Who causes to rise with Himself the nature of man in its entirety*, yet it will profit nothing those who love sin, (for they will go down into Hades, *receiving restoration to life only* that they may be punished as they deserve); nevertheless it will be of great profit to those who have practiced the more excellent way of life, (*for they will receive the resurrection to the participation of the good things which pass understanding*): in just the same way I think the doctrine of the friendly relationship applies to all men, both bad and good, yet is not the same thing to all; but while to those who believe on Him it is the means of true kinship and of the blessings consequent upon that, to those who are not such it is an aggravation of their ingratitude and un-holiness. (6.15; emphasis added)

Cyril is in error here conflating Hades with the lake of fire (the latter being where the resurrected actually go after they are resurrected *out* of Hades), and his “friendly relationship” view is suspect, given that God is still wrathful against unbelievers (Rom 1:18, 9:22; Eph 2:3; Col 3:6, et al.). But Cyril’s core idea that all are resurrected because of Christ’s work, yet unbelievers to a place to “be punished as they deserve,” is correct, and shows he is not a universalist in final, full salvation.

So in the five points of the framework paralleling pananastasis, Cyril is in conformity. The penalty of physical death is alleviated by Christ’s atoning death to pay that penalty, giving resurrection to all people, saving them from death, while still needing faith to bring about full salvation for one’s eternal existence.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–428)

His life spanning between that of Athanasius and Cyril, Theodore of Mopsuestia was geographically removed from all the other men noted here, being in the northeastern part of the Mediterranean. Additionally, he was theologically diverse, being a main proponent of the Antiochian school of interpretation, which opposed the Alexandrian school.³³ He and Cyril debated their differing views of Christology.³⁴ Yet despite these profound differences, Cyril and Theodore agree in the principles paralleling pananastasism about the atonement purchasing the salvific need of the resurrection to escape the penalty of death.

In his *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*,³⁵ Theodore succinctly acknowledges death as the penalty for sin, stating, “Adam who after having sinned received the punishment of death” (5[59]), of which he affirms elsewhere that mankind “became the heirs of his [Adam’s] nature and his punishment” (1[20]). This punishment of death is physical death for “death is from sin and the same death is the corruption of the body” (5[57]). To handle this death, sin had to be dealt with first:

it was necessary that sin which was the cause of death should have first been abolished, and then the abolition of death would have followed by itself. If sin were not abolished we would have by necessity remained in mortality, and we would have sinned in our mutability; and when we sin, we are under punishment, and consequently the power of death will by necessity remain. (5[56])

³³ Alan J. Hauser and Duane F. Watson, eds., *A History of Biblical Interpretation, Vol. 1, The Ancient Period* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2003), 43-47.

³⁴ See the fragments of books 2 and 3 of Cyril, *Against Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Library of the Fathers of the Church, vol. 47, trans. P. E. Pusey ([London ?]: 1881), 337-349, accessed December 27, 2017 http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_against_theodore_01_text.htm; 350-362, accessed December 27, 2017, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_against_theodore_02_text.htm.

³⁵ The English translation used is Theodore, *Commentary on the Nicene Creed* in and excerpt of *Woodbrooke Studies: Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic, and Garshūni*, vol. 5, edited and trans. Alphonse Mingana (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., 1932), 18-116, accessed December 28, 2017, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/theodore_of_mopsuestia_nicene_02_text.htm; this work is divided only into chapters, so I have unconventionally made the references to chapter number of the original, with the page numbers of this translation following in brackets for easier finding.

If sin had not been dealt with, then death would remain; resurrection would not be able to occur for anyone.

Theodore holds that Christ pays the penalty of death. Christ “went to crucifixion and death so that He might destroy the last enemy, which is death, and make manifest the new and immortal life” (6[63]). He states further that Christ’s work was “so that He might perform the Economy of the Gospel according to order, and in this (Economy) He died and abolished death” (6[69]). Theodore’s writings are not as clear as the other patristic writings surveyed here on the nature of this transaction being substitutionary;³⁶ but the implication of his language matches what is expressly noted in the others, namely that Christ’s death paid mankind’s punishment of death (a substitute of death for death), which death mankind should have “by necessity” remained within had Christ not paid it. So Christ’s death is what allows for the resurrection.

From Christ’s payment, Theodore affirms the resurrection of all people, and this as a salvific act. “He [Christ] will raise all of us born of Adam, that is all the children of men who had died, and will transform them into an immortal nature” (7[79]). Theodore views resurrection as “the principal benefit of all the Economy of Christ in the flesh—since by it all evil things vanish and an entry is effected for all good things” (7[75]). The death and resurrection were the culmination of Christ’s work “accomplished by Him for our salvation” (6[63]), and Christ’s resurrection was “so that he might *confirm the general resurrection* from the resurrection of Christ” (7[74]; emphasis added). Regarding this culmination, Theodore expounds in his *Prologue to the Acts of the Apostles*, “the gospels afford us accurate knowledge of the economy

³⁶ Theodore of Mopsuestia is not listed among the Church Fathers more explicitly holding to penal substitution in Michael J. Vlach, “Penal Substitution in Church History,” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 20, no. 2 (Fall, 2009): 199, accessed January 4, 2018, <http://www.tms.edu/m/tmsj20i.pdf>. The other three Fathers surveyed here do make his list. I’ve chosen to include Theodore because his assertions on Christ’s death (atonement) still align with pananastasis, even if his specific grasp of substitution is not clear.

(of salvation) ... *as a crowning conclusion* [of Christ's words and deeds] *he added the resurrection, which is a token of the general resurrection of men ... giving to all men assurance of the resurrection"* (*Prologue* 2.1; emphasis added).³⁷

Yet as with others, Theodore is not a universalist for salvation. The resurrection is a necessary salvific act, but not the totality of what God has for those with faith. He states,

The question involved in the resurrection [here he is specifically speaking of the resurrection of Christ] is not an unimportant one because to those who do not believe it implies the danger of death and of falling away from all benefits, but on those who believe this same resurrection bestows confidence, and puts the seal on all the wonderful things accomplished in the Economy of Christ. (*Nicene* 7[75]; emphasis added)

These wonderful things only come by the resurrection:

In this he shows that death was abolished through resurrection, and sin through death, as after the resurrection we become immortal and immutable, and if the resurrection does not take place faith is vain and death holds sway together with sin, and you also are still in your sins and have no hope of good things which we announced as coming to you through the resurrection. (*Nicene* 7[76])

And those good things only come if one has fellowship with Christ while still living in this world, "because of the communion that we have with Him in this world, we will, with justice, be partakers with Him of the future good things" (*Nicene* 6[69]). So not all people will have those wonderful rewards, as some will be made immortal, yet punished:

Those men who will be overtaken by the general resurrection while still alive He will only transform [speaking of 1 Cor 15:51], and from being mortal He will make immortal. ... all the children of men shall be judged and none shall escape scrutiny, and that when they have been judged they shall receive a judgment commensurate with the nature of their actions in a way that *some of them will be rewarded and some others punished*. (*Nicene* 7[79]; emphasis added)

³⁷ This quote is from Theodore[?], *Prologue to the Acts of the Apostles* in an excerpt translated by Ernst von Dobschütz, "A Hitherto Unpublished Prologue to the Acts of the Apostles (Probably by Theodore of Mopsuestia)," *The American Journal of Theology* 2, no. 2 (April, 1898): 363-364, accessed November 2, 2017, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/theodore_of_mopsuestia_acts_prologue_02.htm; the reference is to section and paragraph number. The work is not directly attributed to Theodore of Mopsuestia, but von Dobschütz gives his reasoning for ascribing it to him, and portions of his logic can be found at http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/theodore_of_mopsuestia_acts_prologue_01.htm; a full article facsimile can be found at <https://archive.org/details/jstor-3152769>. I have no reason to question Dobschütz's conclusion on authorship—indeed, the points noted in this quote match very well the same ideas quoted from Theodore's *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*.

The resurrection is a gift to all people, one that should be the grounds of faith in Christ because of his own resurrection, paid for by the death of Christ. With the exception of some ambiguity on holding to penal substitution, Theodore otherwise aligns with the five framework points matching a pananastastic view of atonement.

Summary of Patristic Testimony

These four Church Fathers, representing diverse geographical, temporal, hermeneutical, and theological orientation, all felt Scripture was clear enough to posit that Christ's death paid the penalty of death from Adam's sin, so that such an atonement brings the salvific need of resurrection out of death to all people. Yet each maintains that such a salvific work by that atonement is not the entirety of what God plans for those with faith. In this way, each shows the essential core of what the pananastastic view of atonement holds. Christ's atonement has a definite, effectual, universal, salvific aspect which brings resurrection to all.

IV. UNITING ON UNDERSTANDING NATURE AND EXTENT

While the resurrection as a direct, salvific act reversing the penalty of death placed by God upon Adam for his sin was a major part of patristic understanding of the universal aspect of Christ's atonement, this is largely lost in the modern debate on the extent of the atonement. There are a few echoes of the importance of the resurrection on the extent of the atonement in some later penal substitutionary thought,³⁸ but those echoes in others' theology all tend to fail to account for the implications and/or the scriptural facts necessary to hold that connection

³⁸ See Smith, 369-400, where Thomas Aquinas, John Wesley, William Burt Pope, Robert Lightner, Gary Shultz, and Robert Jefferson Breckinridge are examined as noting something of this connection; also see the aforementioned article by Garry Williams (Tidball, et al., 184) for a brief mention of it. Shultz's previously noted articulation of the multi-intentioned view (n.2) is actually very close to the pananastastic view, but he fails to make certain important connections about the logic of the resurrection as an actual effect (393-393).

logically, which failure pananastasis attempts to resolve.³⁹ A proper defense of the faith demands that this connection of atonement to resurrection be recognized and proclaimed. The way forward, toward unity on the extent of the atonement, is to overcome the area of failure in one's viewpoint. The failure falls differently for each group.

The particularist maintains that the atonement only has salvific application for the elect. Therefore, a particularist has what appears to be three choices when contemplating the atonement's relation to the general resurrection: (1) deny, against Scripture, any link between atonement and resurrection; (2) affirm the link, but deny, against Scripture, the resurrection is salvific in any way (since even unbelievers are resurrected, affirming it as salvific defeats their rigid particularist understanding of atonement); or (3) admit there is a universal, salvific intent and effect in the resurrection such as pananastasis (and these patristic theologians) affirm, in which case particularists would have to shed their label of affirming a particular atonement over a universal atonement. The last is the way forward for unity on extent for the particularist. This theological move allows the particularist to stop "kicking against the pricks"⁴⁰ of all the universal passages in Scripture, without necessarily compromising much of the rest of his or her soteriology.⁴¹

³⁹ For an in-depth scriptural defense of pananastasis, see chapter 4 of my dissertation, "Resurrecting Atonement from the Text of Scripture," (Smith, 129-350).

⁴⁰ A play on words from Christ's encounter with Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:5. This phrasing references the abundance of plainly stated universal texts in Scripture that universal atonement advocates have so often pointed to in the debate against particularists (e.g. Thomas McCall's and Grant Osborne's response to the definite atonement view of Carl Trueman [Naselli and Snoeberger, 71-73]), which scriptures particularists often mention the difficulties of interpreting (because they do not want to interpret them universally; e.g. Trueman's view in Naselli and Snoeberger, 32-40), and perform various exegetical gymnastics to try to contort the plainly universal texts to fit their theological understanding. To me, this is akin to Saul's "kicking against the pricks" of the truth about who Jesus was, only in this case against the pricks of what God is trying to say he has done universally through atonement in Christ.

⁴¹ Pananastasis need not replace a particularist's view on election, for the model can fit either of the primary views on how God elects:

The provisionalist maintains that the substitutionary atonement has been provided, but is only salvifically effectual for those who believe. The provisionalist then has what appears to be these three possibilities: (1) deny, against Scripture, any link between atonement and resurrection; (2) maintain that there is a link, but illogically still hold that there is only a provisional, not effectual, aspect for unbelievers, even though (a) a substitution must by definition have an effect (something particularists rightly argue⁴²) and (b) unbelievers will certainly experience the effect of being resurrected; or (3) admit there is a universally effectual, salvific intent in the resurrection such as pananastasism (and these patristic theologians) affirm, in which case provisionlists would have to shed their mantra of atonement only being effectual for believers. The last is the way forward for unity on extent for the provisionalist. This move allows the provisionalist to maintain a logical coherency with scripture in relation to the salvific result of the resurrection, and better fits Scripture's language of actual effectiveness.

Both groups additionally benefit in another way regarding the defense of the faith—gospel proclamation. Often the provisionlists argue that the particularists do not have a good

The particular subset number of the elect is not equal to the universal total number of those substituted for. Pananastasism affirms that the particular individuals who God chose to ultimately save among mankind was freely His choice, but in order to save any of those, the whole of mankind needed freedom from the corporate penalty of death enacted by the progenitor of all mankind, the first man who sinned—Adam. Pananastasism functions as a valid atonement model whether the choice of God is conceived of as selecting particular individuals without regard for any other factors (i.e. unconditional election) or selecting particular individuals with regard to what He has chosen as the selection factor, that being a person's response by faith (i.e. conditional election). The Pananastasist model works either way because the substitutionary death itself and the result from that, resurrection, happens regardless of whether one has faith or not, and regardless of where one's ultimate destiny resides once freed from the first death (Smith, 404-405).

⁴² Again, one example is Trueman's contribution in Naselli and Snoeberger, 40-41; also Garry J. Williams, "The Definite Intent of Penal Substitutionary Atonement" in Gibson and Gibson, 461-482. I believe Allen's dismissal of this as an issue because it is too commercialistic to be an error in his logic (e.g. Allen, 383-384). Christ substitutes his death for all people's deaths, as the passages upon which *penal substitution* is based note the universality of the transaction, and so it is a one-for-one transaction for each person. Additionally, Scripture uses clear commercialistic language of the atonement transaction as a ransom and a market place redemption. So here, much like particularists "kick against the pricks" of universal language to fit their atonement view, Allen similarly rejects the plain commercial language to fit his provisionalist view. Pananastasism meets the particularist's correct assertion that penal substitution must result in a definite, effective atonement for that payment.

ground for proclaiming any “good news” to unbelievers, since their good news is only for the elect—Christ has done nothing toward salvation for the non-elect. For example, David Allen (a provisionalist), in his excellent historical survey on views of the extent of atonement, focuses much attention on the lack of real “sufficiency” in the atonement of Christ for the non-elect, with some parts of the argument specifically related to the gospel:

How can preachers universally and indiscriminately offer the gospel in good faith to all people, which clearly includes many who are non-elect, when there is no gospel to offer them—that is, when there is no satisfaction for all their sins? ... The issue is we are offering something to all people, including those who turn out to be non-elect, that indeed does not exist for all to whom the offer is made. An offer made to all sinners entails contradiction as the preacher knows that the satisfaction for sins by Christ on the cross was not made for all to whom the gospel comes, but he pretends and speaks as if there is a legitimate offer to all to whom the gospel is preached. ... The problem is even more acute with respect to the gospel offer when it is understood that it is God himself making the offer through us. Second Corinthians 5:18-20 makes it clear that it is God offering salvation to all people through the church *on the grounds of the atonement of Christ*. If he himself has limited that substitution to only the elect, how can he make such an offer genuinely to all people? It would appear such is not possible.⁴³

Allen, and other provisionalists, are correct to call out particularists on this issue.

But provisionalists have a similar issue in that if there is no salvific effect except through belief, then Christ really did *not* die as a *substitute* for unbelievers—he only provided himself as a *potential* substitute, should they believe. If the *substitutionary death* is the atonement process for paying the penalty of death for sin (and it is in a *penal* substitution model), in the provisionalist scheme it is still a hypothetical “satisfaction” for the non-elect/unbeliever, and not an actual substitution that would then result in an actual satisfaction. Allen and other provisionalists still fall under the issue he expresses in the quote above against the particularists, if God “has limited that substitution to only the elect, how can he make such an offer genuinely to all people?”

⁴³ Allen, 774; italics orig.

Contra both the particularist's and provisionalist's hypothetical *penal substitutionary* satisfaction for the non-elect, God's "good news" includes a true statement of "Christ died for [ὅπερ] us" (Rom 5:8),⁴⁴ who died "to give His life a ransom for [ἀντί] many" (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45), paying the "ransom for [ὅπερ] all" (1 Tim 2:6; i.e. "all men," v.4). A human's greatest love is "to lay down one's life for his friends" (Jn 15:13), but Christ's love lays down his life even for his enemies in an expression of divine love (Rom 5:10; even as he commands others to love their enemies in Mt 5:44 and Lk 6:27, 35). His death actually is the "propitiation for our [believers'] sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 Jn 2:2), a world comprised of "children of wrath ... dead in trespasses" (Eph 2:2, 4), yet for that world, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them" (2 Cor 5:19). Because of this, the "good news" of the gospel is that God has dealt with each individual's sin, and sin's penalty of death, for all people—and so he will *save* them all from death by the resurrection.

This death to bring redemption from death through the resurrection is the actual, effectual work he has done toward each person's salvation. Now how will people respond? They should do as 2 Cor 5:14-15 implores: "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again." People are to believe upon and live

⁴⁴ The "us" in Rom 5:8 is inclusive of all mankind, for every individual (except Christ) falls in the classifications discussed in the context:

The characteristics of "weak" and "ungodly" (v.6), "sinner" (v.8), and "enemy" (v.10) refer to classifications for all other people without exception, and not just certain kinds of people without distinction. That Paul is making reference to this class of people in respect to believers ("we" and "us", v.6, 8-11) does not limit the class, and indeed the point of v.6-8 and 10 is to indicate that Christ's death related to all those who were "ungodly," "still sinners," and "enemies," that is, those *still part of* the classification from which believers *have distinguished* themselves out from because of that belief. (Smith, 290 n.349)

for God because of what he has done for them. This need to believe is why God has given Paul and all believers a calling in 2 Cor 5:19-21,

the ministry of reconciliation ... [God] has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

God's objective reconciliation of the world—which righteously allows for and brings forth the resurrection out of the penalty of death because their trespasses will not be reckoned (1 Cor 15:19) toward keeping them in penalty—this objective reconciliation is the basis for the subjective reconciliation believers are to urge through their ministry. Believers should be encouraging unbelievers to believe in what God has done to deal with the death penalty because faith is God's ordained vehicle to bring a positive account of righteousness to people (Rom 4:3, 11, 13, 24). For all people, the penalty against their deeds is righteously taken care of in order to be removed, but their unrighteousness of character—of their very nature and being—remains. That unrighteousness is what prevents one from relating to God as friend. Instead, as an enemy, unbelievers are set to experience God's wrath.⁴⁵ The call for a personal reconciliation must be heeded for people to “become the righteousness of God” in Christ that 2 Cor 5:21 promises. These two reconciliations parallel the two-fold stage of salvation that 1 Tim 4:10 plainly declares, where “God is the Savior of all men” by the payment of the penalty of death as a substitute in the atonement, so that they may be resurrected out of that penalty of death, but “especially [the Savior] of those who believe” by the granting of righteousness and an eternal life

⁴⁵ This *distinction* of issues between legal penalty based on legal infraction (yielding *death*) and relational issue based on the unrighteous and unclean nature of the person (yielding *wrath*) is the basic division faced by sinful people that pananastasism recognizes. It is this division that allows for both the universal and particular aspects of atonement to affect all humanity in one way (resurrection) and yet believers in both ways (resurrection to a blessed eternal life in fellowship with God).

in that resurrected state. A recognition of these two stages in God's soteriological work can provide a way forward toward unity on the extent of the atonement.

V. CONCLUSION

The patristic testimony, guided from Scripture, led these notable church fathers to understand across both time and location, despite in some cases differing theology and hermeneutics, a biblical view that Christ's atonement was a necessary payment to bring about the bodily resurrection as an effectual, salvific reversal of sin's penalty of physical death for all humanity, while still holding to a particular salvation for believers. As modern believers seek to better defend the faith, let the New Testament witness (foremost) and the patristic wisdom (secondarily) guide us in this age to a unity on seeing the universal nature of the atonement to bring about the sure, salvific effect of the resurrection—and then proclaim that good news *for* every person, *to* every person, so that every person is made aware of the solid ground God has given from which they should believe so that the better resurrection may be theirs as well, a resurrection free from God's wrath through the second death.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, David L. *The Extent of the Atonement: A Historical and Critical Review*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2016.
- Athanasius. *On the Incarnation*. In *St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*. Vol. 4, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, 2nd ser. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Translated by John Henry Newman and Archibald T. Robertson, 36-67. New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1892. Logos Bible Software.
- . *St. Athanasius on the Incarnation* [Greek text]. Edited by Archibald Robertson. London: D. Nutt, 1882. Accessed December 5, 2017. <https://books.logos.com/books/1688#content=/books/1688>.
- Aulén, Gustaf. *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*. Translated by A. G. Hebert. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2003. Logos Bible Software.
- Beilby, James and Paul R. Eddy, eds. *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006.
- Calvinism Advisory Committee, “TRUTH, TRUST, and TESTIMONY in a TIME of TENSION,” *SBC Life - Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention*. June 2013. Accessed January 5, 2018. <http://www.sbclife.net/Articles/2013/06/sla5>.
- Cyril. *Against Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia*. Library of the Fathers of the Church. Vol. 47. Translated by P. E. Pusey. [London?]: 1881. Accessed December 27, 2017. Pages 337-349, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_against_theodore_01_text.htm; pages 350-362, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_against_theodore_02_text.htm.
- . *Commentary on the Gospel According to S. John*. Bk. 6 (Vol. 1). Library of the Fathers of the Church. Vol. 43. Translated by P.E. Pusey. London: Walter Smith, 1874. Accessed December 19, 2017. http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_on_john_06_book6.htm.
- . *Commentary on the Gospel According to S. John*. Bk. 12 (Vol. 2). Library of the Fathers of the Church. Vol. 48. Translated by T. Randell. London: Walter Smith, 1885. Accessed December 19, 2017. http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_on_john_12_book12.htm.
- Godfrey, W. Robert. “Reformed Thought on the Extent of the Atonement to 1618.” *Westminster Theological Journal* 37, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 133–171.
- Hankins, Eric. “An Introduction to ‘A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God’s Plan of Salvation.’” June 2012. Accessed January 5, 2018. <http://sbctoday.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/A-Statement-of-Traditional-Southern-Baptist-Soteriology-SBC-Today.pdf>.

- Hauser, Alan J. and Duane F. Watson, eds. *A History of Biblical Interpretation, Vol. 1, The Ancient Period*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2003.
- Hilary. *Homilies on the Psalms*. In *St. Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*. Vol. 9, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 2nd ser. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Translated by [Hilary's works only] E. W. Watson, L. Pullan, et al., 235-248. New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1899. Logos Bible Software.
- . Excerpt from *Homily on Psalm 55(56)*. English translation and quote in Michael A. G. Haykin. “‘We Trust in the Saving Blood’: Definite Atonement in the Ancient Church,” in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*. Edited by David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2013.
- . *On the Trinity*. In *St. Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*. Vol. 9, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 2nd ser. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. Translated by [Hilary's works only] E. W. Watson, L. Pullan, et al., 40-233. New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1899. Logos Bible Software.
- . *Sancti Hilarii Episcopi Pictaviensis: Tractatus Super Psalmos*. Edited by Anton Zingerle. Vol. 22. Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Vindobona: F. Tempsky, 1891. Accessed December 21, 2017, <https://archive.org/stream/shilariiepiscopi22hilauoft>.
- McBeth, H. Leon. *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987.
- Naselli, Andrew David and Mark A. Snoeberger, eds. *Perspectives on the Extent of the Atonement: Three Views*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2015.
- Norman, Keith Edward. “Deification: The Content of Athanasian Soteriology.” PhD diss., Duke University, 1980. ProQuest.
- Schaff, Philip and Henry Wace. “Introduction.” In *St. Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*. Vol. 9, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 2nd ser., i-xcvi. New York, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1899. Logos Bible Software.
- Shultz, Gary. *A Multi-Intentioned View of the Extent of the Atonement*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2014.
- Smith, Scott A. “Pananastasism—A Penal Substitutionary Model of a Definite Universal Atonement: God’s Gracious Substitution to Pay the Penalty Due Every Individual in order to Righteously Resurrect All Mankind and Save a Particular People for Himself” PhD diss., Piedmont International University, 2015. Accessed January 11, 2018. <https://www.academia.edu/12057608/>.

- Strehle, Stephen. "The Extent of the Atonement and the Synod of Dort." *Westminster Theological Journal* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 1–23.
- Tidball, Derek, David Hilborn, and Justin Thacker, eds. *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of Atonement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.
- Theodore. *Commentary on the Nicene Creed*. In an excerpt of *Woodbrooke Studies: Christian Documents in Syriac, Arabic, and Garshūni*. Vol. 5. Edited and translated by Alphonse Mingana, 18-116. Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd., 1932. Accessed December 28, 2017. http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/theodore_of_mopsuestia_nicene_02_text.htm.
- . *Prologue to the Acts of the Apostles*. Translated by Ernst von Dobschütz in "A Hitherto Unpublished Prologue to the Acts of the Apostles (Probably by Theodore of Mopsuestia)," *The American Journal of Theology* 2, no. 2 (April, 1898): 363-364. Accessed November 2, 2017. http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/theodore_of_mopsuestia_acts_prologue_02.htm. (A full facsimile found at <https://archive.org/details/jstor-3152769>).
- Thomas, G. Michael. *The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to the Consensus (1536-1675)*, Studies in Christian History and Thought. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 1997.
- Vlach, Michael J. "Penal Substitution in Church History." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 20, no. 2 (Fall, 2009): 199-214. Accessed January 4, 2018. <http://www.tms.edu/m/tmsj20i.pdf>.
- Williams, Garry J. "The Definite Intent of Penal Substitutionary Atonement" in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective*. Edited by David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2013.

KNOWING THE SAVIOR: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF PHILOSOPHICAL RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, CHRISTIAN PLURALISM, AND CHRISTIAN INCLUSIVISM

Thomas J. Gentry II, D.Min.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Are all religious truth claims equal? Is it possible to be a Christian and still affirm that there are many paths to a relationship with God, even through other religions? Can a person receive the salvific benefits of Jesus' atoning work on the cross and the gift of eternal life without consciously affirming faith in him? Are those who claim that an intentional relationship with Jesus is the only way to a relationship with God correct? These are the types of questions that inform the discussion that follows, which focuses on the relationship between religious pluralism and the Christian's message of salvation through Jesus Christ.¹

The researcher seeks to accomplish two goals in this study. First, the study presents the fundamental nuances of pluralism, distinguishing between societal religious pluralism (i.e., the recognition that various religious perspectives are represented in every society) and philosophical religious pluralism (i.e., the insistence that there is no place for absolute religious truth in society, and that all religious truth claims are equal).² Second, two Christian responses to philosophical pluralism are summarized and critiqued from an orthodox Christian perspective: 1)

* Thomas J. Gentry II is a 2016 alumnus of Temple Baptist Seminary of Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, NC. He is Senior Pastor at Fellowship in Christ Church of Carterville, IL; Founder and Director at Pulpit Apologist Ministries in Carterville, IL; Associate Editor of MoralApologetics.com; Director at Grace Point Christian Counseling of Carterville, IL; and Brigade Chaplain, 87th Troop Command, Arkansas Army National Guard.

¹ The present work is adapted from an earlier unpublished work prepared in 2017 as part of the author's doctoral coursework in theology and apologetics at Liberty University's Rawlings School of Divinity.

² These labels are the author's, but they are consistent with the gist of discussion in this area. See D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); Millard J. Erickson, *Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001); John H. Hick, *God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982); Ronald H. Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Kathleen J. Greider, "Religious Pluralism and Christian Pastoral Theology," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 22, no. 2 (2012):3.1-3.21; et al.

Christian pluralism (i.e., Christianity should absorb religious pluralism's core tenets into its system and affirm that all religions are equally valid ways to know God); and 2) Christian inclusivism (i.e., no matter the path to God, all faithful religious persons are ultimately saved through Jesus Christ, even without their conscious affirmation of Christianity).³ Research findings will suggest that though societal and philosophical pluralism are prevalent, Christian pluralism and Christian inclusivism are insufficient answers and inconsistent with orthodox Christian teaching regarding salvation by personal faith in Christ alone.

II. DEFINING AND DISCUSSING PLURALISM

"Pluralism," explains Carson, "is a surprisingly tricky word in modern discussion. For some it has only positive connotations; for others, only negative."⁴ Part of the reason for this trickiness is that each person, when speaking of pluralism, brings with it his or her own rationale, background, and experiences that produce these positive and negative connotations. Such difficulty has led some to conclude that the term is hopelessly amorphous and subjective.

This concern notwithstanding, an attempt to define pluralism, at least in its broadest sense, is fundamental to help frame the discussion below. Thus, pluralism may be defined, broadly speaking, as the admixture and coexistence of varied cultural, political, ideological, or religious perspectives and claims within a given social construct, such as a city or nation.⁵ For

³ Regarding orthodox Christianity, this researcher means an affirmation of the ancient creedal declarations regarding the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (e.g., the Apostles', Nicene/Constantinopolitan, Chalcedonian, and Athanasian creeds/definitions), with special emphasis on the evangelical Christian distinctives of Scripture's ultimate authority and the necessity of personal repentance and faith in Jesus, including an acceptance of his death on the cross as payment for sins. For a detailed discussion of these distinctives, see Ted M. Dorman, *A Faith for All Seasons: Historical Christian Faith in its Classical Expression*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001).

⁴ Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 13.

⁵ Although this definition draws from his thought, Carson prefers a three-fold discussion of pluralism as "empirical pluralism, cherished pluralism, and philosophical or hermeneutical pluralism," (Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 13), whereas, for the purposes of the current research, only the religious aspects of pluralism are considered in detail. Cultural pluralism is discussed, but only briefly.

example, in this researcher's hometown of Carterville, Illinois, there are representatives of Asian culture and Appalachian culture living in the same neighborhood as Democrats and Republicans, with a Baptist church on one corner, and a Hindu temple on another. This type of coexistent diversity is what pluralism, at least in contemporary society, is generally understood to mean, and this understanding will serve as the basic definition for the present consideration.

Regarding this approach to defining pluralism, the terms diversity and pluralism are sometimes used synonymously to represent what Tracy describes as the "fact . . . of plurality,"⁶ and what Martinson speaks of as "factual pluralism."⁷ This emphasis on the fact and factuality of "the sheer diversity of race, value systems, heritage, language, culture, and religion in many Western and some other nations" is what Carson qualifies as the "empirical" aspect of pluralism, since it is easily observable and quantifiable across contemporary cultures.⁸ One sees in this empirical understanding of pluralism that, although including religious matters, pluralism is certainly broader than religion. However, for the purposes of the present discussion, the primary concern will be with the religious aspects of pluralism in relationship to the Christian message. There are two reasons for this limitation.

Focusing On Religious Pluralism

First, empirical pluralism is not, per se, a contestable issue for Christians when engaging theological and apologetic concerns, but rather a matter of the context or milieu in which much of Christianity is lived-out in the contemporary world. Further, sans the religious component, empirical pluralism is not necessarily opposed to the Christian faith. Some may even argue,

⁶ David Tracy, "Christianity in the Wider Context: Demands and Transformations," in *Worldviews and Warrants: Plurality and Authority in Theology*, ed. by William Schweiker and Per M. Anderson (New York: University Press of America, 1987), 2.

⁷ Paul V. Martinson, "Dynamic Pluralism," *Dialog* 28, no. 1 (1989): 8.

⁸ Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 13.

although the details of such argumentation are beyond the scope of the present study, that the non-religious essence of empirical pluralism reflects a diversity that is inherent within the persons of the Godhead and that, as image bearers of the triune God, people are necessarily pluralistic and diverse on multiple levels.⁹ Thus, while there may be benefits for a broader missiological and sociological consideration of aspects of pluralism beyond the religious, the present study presupposes that empirical pluralism is an accepted fact, and its religious aspects are the main concerns for Christians.

Second, as a demonstration of the need to focus on religious pluralism, Christians are commanded by Jesus to “go . . . and make disciples of all the nations.”¹⁰ The implicit command Jesus gives is that, as his disciples go into each nation, the Christian message is to be proclaimed as the true religious message, in contrast to the religions found among the peoples of those nations.¹¹ In support of this implication, consider the nature of the spread of the gospel as described in Acts, and note how the Christian message is contrasted with various religious practices and traditions among the peoples to which it is proclaimed (cf. the Samaritans in Acts 8:4-8; Cornelius and other Gentiles in Acts 10:1-48; and Paul in Cyprus in Acts 13:4-12). In each of these and other instances, the Christian message is proclaimed within a broadly pluralistic culture, but the focus is on the religious elements of pluralism. For example, when Paul is in Athens proclaiming the gospel on Mars Hill (Acts 17:19-33), his concern is prompted by the

⁹ For a more in-depth, though somewhat speculative discussion of the broader implications of the Trinity upon world design and culture, consider James B. Jordan’s, *The Sociology of the Church: Essays in Reconstruction* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1999), and *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1999); see also H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, expanded ed. (New York: HarperOne, 2001), although Niebuhr’s discussion is more targeted to how Christ, specifically, shapes culture.

¹⁰ Matthew 28:19. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible, New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982).

¹¹ Compare Timothy C. Tennent, *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable: Evangelicalism in Conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002).

religious pluralism he encounters (Acts 17:16-17), as he engages its inhabitants with the message of Jesus. Paul's focus is on proclaiming Christian (i.e., religious) truth within his context. Thus, as these examples demonstrate, engaging the religious aspects of pluralism is a fundamental emphasis of the Christian's labor on behalf of the gospel, and how Christians make that engagement (i.e., as Christian pluralists, inclusivists, or otherwise) is the focal point of this research.¹²

Two Types Of Religious Pluralism

Having established the religious aspects and importance of pluralism, it is also helpful to further distinguish between two types of religious pluralism.¹³ The first, societal religious pluralism, is descriptive, and the second, philosophical religious pluralism, is prescriptive. Further, societal religious pluralism is a socio-demographic reality, and philosophical religious pluralism is a worldview. Consider each of these approaches to religious pluralism more closely.

Societal Religious Pluralism. Societal religious pluralism is a component of the empirical pluralism discussed above, insofar as religious diversity is an observable fact in most of Western culture (although, except for Islamic nations where outward demonstrations of religious diversity are forbidden, there is a sense in which much of the two-thirds world (i.e., non-Western culture) is also religiously diverse as a matter of socio-demographic fact).¹⁴ With its biblical and historical archetypal moment in the judgment on those at Babel who were attempting

¹² As Netland argues, engaging religious pluralism is the sine qua non of apologetical encounter in non-Christian settings. See Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith and Missions* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001), 247-285.

¹³ Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 13-22 See also Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?*, 22-23.

¹⁴ See David Garrison, *A Wind in the House of Islam* (Monument: WIGTake Resources, 2014) for a discussion of current diversity and Christian expansion within Islamic nations, and Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 4th ed. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009) for a discussion of societal religious pluralism in the two-thirds world, especially the 10/40 window.

an illicit ecumenism designed to overthrow God, societal religious pluralism is a concomitant of the post-fall, pre-eschaton world.¹⁵ Yet, even with these origins, societal religious pluralism has come to be understood as predominantly a descriptive, socio-demographic reality that has always been the context in which Christianity has carried forth its mission.¹⁶ Is societal religious pluralism the ideal? No. There is coming a day when it will no longer exist, when “at the name of Jesus every knee [will] bow . . . and every tongue . . . confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”¹⁷ However, societal religious pluralism, while it is the context of Christian mission and does pose something of a challenge to the gospel, is not the same as the greater foe faced by Christianity. Philosophical religious pluralism is that greater foe. Stated with a bit of poetic flair, societal religious pluralism may be likened to the dark and polluted waters of a mysterious lake, and philosophical religious pluralism is the murderous leviathan living within its depths.

Philosophical Religious Pluralism. To reiterate, whereas, societal religious pluralism is a descriptive, socio-demographic reality, philosophical religious pluralism is a prescriptive worldview.¹⁸ Insofar as it is prescriptive, it attempts to state what “ought to be” in matters of religion, and, as a worldview, it becomes the litmus test by which every other religious

¹⁵ See Genesis 11:1-9. It may be more accurate to discern the origins of societal religious pluralism in the post-fall world of Cain and his descendants, climaxing in Noah’s day and followed by the judgment of the flood; returning (and rather quickly) at Babel. Regarding the significance of Babel, as well as other instances of attempts to subvert the true divine religion, see Michael S. Heiser, *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2015).

¹⁶ Part of the Pax Romana the early church enjoyed was precipitated by Rome’s pluralistic commitments and accommodations. For a discussion of pluralism in the ancient near East, see Ronald H. Nash, *The Gospel and the Greeks: Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2003).

¹⁷ Philippians 2:10-11.

¹⁸ Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 18-19.

perspective is evaluated. To better understand, consider four aspects of philosophical religious pluralism.

First, philosophical religious pluralism represents a sacrosanct commitment by its adherents to a type of religious diversity that cannot countenance any type of religious claims to ultimate or exclusive truth. Its proponents aver that “any notion that a particular . . . religious claim is intrinsically superior to another is necessarily wrong. The only absolute creed is the creed of [philosophical religious] pluralism. No religion has the right to pronounce itself right or true, and the others false, or even . . . relatively inferior.”¹⁹ As an example of this type of philosophical religious pluralism embraced even among Christians, consider the statement from an anonymous Christian layperson during an interview conducted by sociologist Christian Smith and colleagues: “To say that other religions are wrong is self-centered and egocentric . . . Whatever trips your trigger is fine with me, if that’s your belief system. We are mortal. Who is to say who is right and wrong? If it helps you get through your life and helps bring meaning to your life, then fine.”²⁰

Second, while philosophical religious pluralists may accept differing articulations of the divine, even allowing for those who want to speak more specifically of “Him” or “Her” in relational terms, or who may appeal to certain historic constructions of religion (e.g., Christianity or Judaism), these are only relative and limited statements of what is ultimately reducible to a vague commitment to spirituality that may or may not require a deity. In the words of Hick, considered by some as the pre-eminent philosophical religious pluralist of the twentieth century, “the Ultimate [is] that putative reality which transcends everything other than itself but is not

¹⁹ Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 19.

²⁰ Christian Smith, Michael Emerson, Sally Gallagher, Paul Kennedy, and David Sikkink. *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 61.

transcended by anything other than itself. The Ultimate, so conceived is related to the universe as its ground or creator, and to us human beings, as conscious parts of the universe as the source both of our existence and of the value or meaning of that existence.”²¹

Third, philosophical religious pluralists generally affirm that their conclusions regarding intolerance of any claims to absolute truth in religious matters except the claim that all religious truths are equally valid, and their underlying commitment to spirituality in vague, amorphous terms, are the inevitable result of an evolved mind that has outgrown its more restrictive, less-evolved tendencies.²² Philosophical religious pluralism is, accordingly, a sign of a truly enlightened person, and those who resist it are unenlightened and ignorant.²³

Fourth, concern for the unenlightened and ignorant resisters of philosophical religious pluralism has led some of its promoters to become aggressive proselytizers and outspoken critics of all views but their own. As an example, consider the words of Marty and Appleby in their critique of what they label as fundamentalism, which is essentially orthodox Christian belief: “Fundamentalism is essentially antidemocratic, anti-accommodationist, and antipluralist and . . . violates, as a matter of principle, the standards of human rights . . . the battle lines are drawn clearly between fundamentalist and nonfundamentalist, mutual understanding is unlikely or impossible.”²⁴

²¹ John H. Hick, *Disputed Questions in Theology and the Philosophy of Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 158.

²² Compare Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991).

²³ Such is often the type of conclusion made by the New Atheists (e.g., Dawkins, Hawking, Harris, et al) as they argue more against Christian exclusivism and in favor of philosophical religious pluralism than they argue for any specific atheistic approach. See, for example, Daniel Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

²⁴ Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalism and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance*, vol. 3 of *The Fundamentalism Project* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 5.

Why Is Philosophical Religious Pluralism A Concern For Orthodox Christians?

Before offering a discussion of two Christian responses to philosophical religious pluralism, it is helpful to briefly consider four reasons orthodox Christians should be concerned about it.²⁵ The first and second reasons relate to the societal impact of philosophical religious pluralism, and the third and fourth reasons relate to its direct impact on Christianity.

First, Christians should be concerned about philosophical religious pluralism's effect of separating matters of religion from logical discourse. Consistent with the modernist emphasis on the distinction between "true" knowledge (i.e., scientific knowledge) and subjectively-derived religious experience, which cannot be viewed as knowledge due to its inability to be evaluated scientifically, philosophical religious pluralists insists that religious discourse is purely subjective and not bound to the conventions of logic such as the Correspondence Theory of Truth or the Law of Non-contradiction (if such conventions are even considered legitimate).²⁶ Rather, what matters is one's ability to freely and without critical analysis speak of religion in an illogical, hyper-subjective manner. Greider, for example, in her discussion of religious pluralism and pastoral care, explains that the most mature form of religious and pluralistic discourse insists on first-person language since all she can speak of is her own experience.²⁷ The practical implication of this insistence on subjectivity and the avoidance of objective, logical evaluations

²⁵ Orthodox is used here to describe Christians who affirm the historical understanding of Scripture's authority, the tri-unity of God, the full divinity and humanity of Jesus, the atoning work of Jesus on the cross, and the only means of salvation as found in a consciously affirmed relationship with Jesus. Other qualifiers could be added, but the desire in these few are to attribute orthodoxy to those who believe the basic, fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith taught by the apostles and early patristics. See Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Malden: Blackwell, 2000), 17-37.

²⁶ For a discussion of the challenges to logical discourse in contemporary culture, see Jon Hickson and Greg Ganssle, "Epistemology at the Core of Postmodernism: Rorty, Foucault, and the Gospel," in *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 68-89, and the introductory essay in R. C. Sproul, *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith* (Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2011), Kindle.

²⁷ Kathleen J. Greider, "Religious Pluralism and Christian Pastoral Theology," *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 22, no. 2 (2012): 3.1-3.21.

are what Carson describes as the fostering of a culture where not knowing and avoiding certainty are considered virtuous.²⁸ This is the inevitable conclusion to philosophical religious pluralism, a culture where there is no need for discussion of religion or faith in any context other than the personal and subjective; what matters most for religious discourse is making sure there is nothing certain or substantive claimed about religion beyond the individual's experience.²⁹

Second, Christians should be concerned about the paralysis of social and political will that can result from philosophical religious pluralism. As demonstrated in the ideological left's lack of social and political will to censor radical Islam's rise in the West during the first two decades of the twenty-first century, if one is truly committed to philosophical religious pluralism, then the social and political consequences of religious belief are eventually enveloped within the sacrosanct, no-judgment mantra of radical tolerance, even if the views being tolerated are not consistent with such toleration.³⁰ All inconsistencies aside (e.g., the lack of tolerance the ideologically liberal left shows to conservative Christianity), when radical toleration such as that found within philosophical religious pluralism prevails, the culture in which it is enshrined is unable, ultimately, to discriminate between matters of right and wrong since every idea is viewed as equally valid and true. In such a culture, the only religious idea that is wrong is the idea that there are religious ideas that are wrong, and when this approach becomes the hallmark of a

²⁸ Carson, *The Gagging of God*, 35-36.

²⁹ Compare David F. Wells, *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), and Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994). Though both books are over twenty years old, their contents reflect an understanding of what was beginning in their day and has now emerged as full-blown post-Christian, postmodern Western culture.

³⁰ See the discussion of the political and societal implications of religious pluralism in Chandra Mallampalli, "World Christianity and 'Protestant America': Historical Narratives and the Limits of Christian Pluralism," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 30, no. 1 (January 2006): 8-13.

society, the historical consensus is that another religion whose culture is intolerant inevitably rises and subjugates the culture of hyper-toleration.³¹

Third, in a context of pronounced biblical illiteracy, philosophical religious pluralism may be mistakenly perceived of as an expression of godly love. Regardless of the depth of this generation's biblical illiteracy, one would be challenged to find someone who did not affirm that God is love. Further, since God is love, what could be more loving than tolerating and respecting another belief, and affirming each person's fundamental right to believe whatever they want by relegating religion to matters of personal preference and feeling? This is the conclusion of biblically illiterate Christians who want to affirm the love of God, but do not have the concomitant knowledge of Scripture to recognize that God's love always accords with truth, and that error and contradiction are not the marks of genuine Christian experience.³² Nor do such Christians understand that it is truly unloving to allow one to remain in religious error without sharing with them the truth of the Christian message, even when the message contradicts what the person believes.³³ What is occurring in such instances is that love has been conflated with the pluralistic idea of radical tolerance, and the discussion is actually about philosophical religious pluralism disguised as love.³⁴

Fourth, philosophical religious pluralism, insofar as it is embraced within the Christian community, replaces the emphasis on proclamation of the gospel with an emphasis on social

³¹ Garrison, *A Wind in the House of Islam*, 225-252.

³² Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?*, 134-136.

³³ See James 1:19-20 and Jude 20-23.

³⁴ Compare Mark E. Dever, "Communicating Sin in a Postmodern World," in *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 138-152.

concerns.³⁵ Given philosophical religious pluralism's emphasis on accepting every religious belief as valid, and its reduction of all religious claims to the level of subjective conclusions, the Christian message's emphasis on evangelism via proclamation of the gospel, a decidedly universal and dogmatic religious message about Jesus, is verboten. Thus, Christians who tend toward this radical pluralism will find it more palatable to focus on efforts aimed at helping people with societal concerns such as education and poverty and parenting; all valid concerns for Christians but not a replacement for the role of proclaiming ideas held forth as ultimate truth and universally prescriptive.³⁶ One need only look at the outcome of biblical higher criticism and its neutering of much mainline Protestant Christian missions in favor of a social gospel in the early twentieth century to see how philosophical religious pluralism and its religious antecedents tend toward a social-emphasis Christianity.³⁷

Summary

Before considering two Christian responses to philosophical religious pluralism, it is helpful to summarize the discussion thus far. Part one began with an exploration of pluralism, which may be defined as the diverse and coexistent ideological, political, cultural, and religious perspectives within a society. While religion is part of pluralism, pluralism is broader than religion. However, for the purposes of this study the focus is on two types of religious pluralism: societal and philosophical. Whereas, societal religious pluralism is a descriptive, socio-demographic reality resulting from diverse religious expression, philosophical religious pluralism is a worldview that prescribes that all religious truth claims are equal and valid, and

³⁵ Niebuhr discusses the presence of this type of reductionist approach in Ritschl's work in the late nineteenth century, wherein a liberalized view of the uniqueness and historicity of Christianity led to an emphasis on societal interaction and generalized morality over proclamation of ultimate truth found in Jesus Christ. See Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 97-101.

³⁶ Erickson, *Truth or Consequences*, 75-112.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 75-92.

that religious views affirming ultimate truth should be rejected. Finally, four characteristics of philosophical religious pluralism were considered, as well as four reasons why it presents a concern for orthodox Christians.

III. CHRISTIAN PLURALISM AND CHRISTIAN INCLUSIVISM

Part two focuses on two Christians' responses to philosophical religious pluralism: Christian pluralism and Christian inclusivism. The key tenets of each are summarized and presented in thesis form, followed by a response from an orthodox Christian perspective and an engagement with potential pluralist or inclusivist objections to the orthodox perspective.

Christianity Is One Way – Christian Pluralism

Christian pluralists do not view philosophical religious pluralism as something to be opposed, per se. Rather, Christian pluralists advocate that Christianity should not claim to be the only path to God, since all the world's major religious expressions can lead one to God. Thus, Christian pluralism can live harmoniously with philosophical religious pluralism as one religious expression among many.

An example of a Christian pluralist is John H. Hick, who, though he eventually departed from Christian pluralism into an amalgam of pluralism rooted in a variation of pantheistic monism, represents in his early thought the Christian position's most common expression.³⁸ At the heart of Hick's approach is the affirmation that there must be "a shift from the dogma that Christianity is at the centre (sic) to the realization that it is God who is at the centre (sic), and that all religions, including [Christianity], serve and revolve around him."³⁹ Flowing from this

³⁸ See John H. Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*, 2nd ed. (Chatham: Oneworld Publications, 1993). Although Hick continued to develop as a pluralist, after his early years he no longer attempted to maintain any Christian identity in his approach or conclusions.

³⁹ Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*, 131.

presupposition, five theses articulating a Hick-eian approach to Christian pluralism are as follows.⁴⁰

One: God is love, and as love he cannot and would not wish to see any of humanity perish, nor would he restrict life to only those who find him through the Christian path, since that would be unloving given the vast number of people who have lived and died and probably will live and die outside Christianity.

Two: As communication across cultures has increased, so has the awareness that there are many within humanity who still do not know of the Christian God, and yet they have a legitimate experience of God through their own religious traditions and practices.

Three: These non-Christian religious traditions and practices are, as an expression of the devotee's sincere attempt to know God, a legitimate means for those within them to experience the God who loves them and wants them to enjoy eternal life.

Four: While Christianity may be one way to God, its story of Jesus is more concerned with the idea that those who seek God will find him, rather than that there is only one way to seek and find God; Jesus is an exemplary seeker, an example, but certainly not the exclusive means to God.

Five: Sincere Christians may rest assured that their experience of God is real, and that his love for them is real, just as sincere adherents of other religions may rest assured that their experiences of God are also real; all sincerely-followed religious paths lead to God, and the assessment of those religions is ultimately the personal experience of their adherents.

⁴⁰ These theses represent a synthesis of Hick's thought drawn from *God and the Universe of Faiths; Evil and the Love of God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1966); and *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987).

A Critique Of Christian Pluralism

Hick-eian Christian pluralism falters in at least four areas. First, Christian pluralism involves an explicit denial of the teaching of Scripture regarding Jesus as the only way to salvation. Two passages reveal this teaching: 1) John 14:6, wherein Jesus claims that he is “the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me;” and 2) Acts 4:12, wherein Peter declares regarding Jesus that “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Although it will be obvious from the remaining critique of Christian pluralism that Hick and other pluralists do not regard the Scriptures as authoritative or reliable in the sense that orthodox Christians do, it is the orthodox position that the Bible clearly affirms the exclusivity of salvation in Jesus alone. Rather than shying away from this fundamental point when interacting with Christian pluralists, Fernando argues that, in terms of engaging pluralism, it is “the hard truths [of the gospel] that foster urgency,” as Christians build their arguments against pluralism from and to Scripture.⁴¹ Thus, the critique starts with Scripture.

However, Hick-eian pluralists generally respond that, even though they are not particularly concerned for the overall veracity of Scripture, there is a commitment on their part, vis-à-vis their acceptance of Christianity as one way among many to know God, to affirm the idea of Scripture regarding the idea of God’s love and Jesus as an exemplary seeker of God. Yet, as McGrath argues, the Christian message does not rest on an idea, but on a person and an event.⁴² The person of Jesus and the event of his incarnation, including his sacrificial death, his burial, and his bodily resurrection, provide the backbone of the text of the New Testament, and

⁴¹ Ajith Fernando, “The Urgency of the Gospel,” in *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 371-383.

⁴² Alister E. McGrath, “The Christian Church’s Response to Pluralism,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35, no. 4 (December 1992): 487-501.

to reduce them to ideas is to effectively remove them from the Bible. Thus, Christian pluralism's appeal to the ideas of the Bible sans a commitment to the person and events of Jesus leaves pluralism with only a book cover but no pages. One may reasonably ask, therefore, how does the Christian pluralists' reduction of Christianity to an idea, then, constitute a legitimate religion among world religions? Given the attempt by Christian pluralists to claim to be Christians in some sense, have they not effectively undermined their own commitments? This is, arguably, why Hick eventually abandoned his attempt to remain Christian and finally embraced the broadest, least defined approach to religious pluralism.

Second, and concomitant with the criticism just discussed, Christian pluralism necessarily makes any consideration of the person and work of Jesus Christ a matter of what may be described as a "bottom-up," rather than "top-down" approach.⁴³ Rather than approaching Jesus as a divinely-sent representative of God (i.e., the incarnation), whose mission was to make known the way to God through personal acceptance of his atoning work at Calvary (cf. John 3:16-17), Hick approaches Jesus as a mere man. While providing an exemplary model of true spiritual self-realization, Jesus is nothing more than an historical figure of whom there is little that can be accurately stated given the alleged centuries of Christian addition to and unbalanced interpretation of what is at its core a simple story of a religious man through whom God was especially, but not uniquely active.⁴⁴ At this point, Hick reflects a dual influence: 1) the critical liberal scholarship regarding the person and work of Jesus with its genesis in a Bultmannian attempt to demythologize the Jesus of Scripture; and 2) an approach to God reflecting the

⁴³ This is best exemplified in John H. Hick, ed., *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: Hymns Ancient and Modern, 1978). The phrases "bottom-up" and "top-down" come from McGrath, "The Christian Church's Response to Pluralism," 490.

⁴⁴ Hick, *The Myth of God Incarnate*, 179.

conclusions of the evolutionary history of religions school that arose within nineteenth century German protestant scholarship.⁴⁵ Hick does not, however, attempt to argue for their conclusions, per se, but synthesizes the work of these and other critical scholars into an approach that seems unconcerned to engage the orthodox Christian perspective in apologetic dialogue. It is as if Hick is stating, “Well, this is the Jesus I have discovered, and you should accept him if you want to know God from the Christian perspective.”

In his critical assessment of Hick’s approach to Jesus, McGrath states,

It is significant that the pluralist agenda forces its advocates to adopt heretical views of Christ in order to meet its needs. In an effort to fit Jesus into the mold of the "great religious teachers of humanity" category, the Ebionite heresy has been revived and made politically correct. Jesus is one of the religious options made available by the great human teachers of religion.⁴⁶

Not only is Hick’s redefinition of Jesus a point of critique regarding Christian pluralism, the definite claims Hick makes regarding Jesus reveal another area of critique for Christian pluralism.

Third, despite Hick’s assertion that God is unknowable and “exceeds all human thought,”⁴⁷ his approach to pluralism proceeds from claims to definite knowledge about God.⁴⁸ Consider three instances: 1) Hick claims to know that God is accessible by all major religion; 2) Hick claims that the orthodox Christian view of Jesus (i.e., the top-down view) is inaccurate; and 3) Hick’s very claim to God as unknowable assumes that there is a God and that this God is unknowable (which, if it were true, means nothing could be said about God, not even that God is unknowable). All three of these claims by Hick reveal the contradictory nature of his pluralistic

⁴⁵ Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism*, 170-177.

⁴⁶ McGrath, “The Christian Church’s Response to Pluralism,” 488.

⁴⁷ Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths*, 178.

⁴⁸ This is the fundamental critique Nash makes of Hick in *Is Jesus the Only Savior?*, 29-38.

argument which, as discussed above, is consistent with philosophical religious pluralism's attempt to sever religious discussion from logical discourse. Nash's critique is apropos at this point, "Instead of [Hick's] pluralism flowing logically from a set of plausible premises, the reverse seems to have been the case. Hick started with a conclusion and then sought premises to support it. The opponent of . . . exclusivism [i.e., that there is only one way to God] . . . snared himself in his own version of it."⁴⁹

Fourth, Hick's pluralism claims to offer salvation through many paths to God, while leaving unanswered greater question of what is meant by salvation?⁵⁰ What is salvation in Islam? In Buddhism? In Hinduism? In Christianity? None of these religions answer the question the same, and only Christianity addresses personal forgiveness and justification in its teaching of salvation, whereas, what the other views offer is either some type of eschatological salvation (e.g., Islam), or a variation of eventual coalescence with nothingness (e.g., Hinduism or Buddhism).⁵¹ These answers reveal that in each of these religious systems there are radically different understandings of God and the predicament faced by humans, which has led to the critique by opponents of pluralism that "the common assumption [by pluralists] that all religions ultimately teach the same things in their own culturally conditioned way is untenable. Not only are they not saying the same thing but also the issues addressed in the various religions are not

⁴⁹ Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?*, 38.

⁵⁰ This is one of three questions Netland raises in exposing the contradictions between major world religions. The others deal with the nature of the religious ultimate, and the nature of the human predicament. (See Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism*, 182-188.) The focus in this research on the nature of salvation is due to space limitations, as well as the conclusion that the Christian or Islamic or Buddhist understanding of salvation also reveals the answers to the other questions.

⁵¹ Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?*, 47-48. The uniqueness of Christian salvation's emphasis on forgiveness and justification carries significant psychological benefits, as well, which provide ancillary support for the "better" salvation in Christianity, since it actively addresses the human experience of guilt and shame. See Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007), 177-194.

necessarily the same.”⁵² Considering this third concern regarding the nature of salvation, Hick eventually abandoned his attempt to posit Christian pluralism, conceding the point of contradiction regarding the nature of salvation in different religions. He did not, however, give up his commitment to pluralism.

Hick’s new answer regarding salvation was to radically redefine it. Consider the following statement:

The great world faiths embody different perceptions and conceptions of, and correspondingly different responses to, the Real from within the major variant ways of being human; and . . . within each of them the transformation of human existence from self-centeredness to Reality-centeredness is taking place. These traditions are accordingly to be regarded as alternative soteriological “spaces” within which, or “ways” along which, men and women find salvation/liberation/ultimate fulfillment.⁵³

Has Hick answered his critics? No. Rather than addressing the radical distinctions between the meaning of salvation among the various religions, Hick simply makes salvation a matter of personal fulfillment as one becomes centered on the Real. However, what if the Real is the Christian God who calls his followers to “take up [their] cross daily and follow” him?⁵⁴ In this instance, salvation involves personal sacrifice on behalf of others. Yet, if the Real is the teachings of Buddha and the denial of self and suffering, then salvation generally involves ignoring the difficulties in one’s world and focusing on other-worldly enlightenment. The contradictions still hold; all Hick has done is remove them one level by making salvation a discussion of a subjective ultimate fulfillment rather than an outcome such as forgiveness or becoming one with the universal divine.⁵⁵

⁵² Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism*, 187.

⁵³ John H. Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 240.

⁵⁴ Luke 9:23.

⁵⁵ For a discussion of approaches to salvation and how adherents of various religions dialogue about the differences, see Tennent, *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable*.

Christianity Is The Only Way – Christian Inclusivism

Recognizing the difficulties inherent in upholding a Hick-eian approach to Christian pluralism, there are those who, while affirming much of the agenda of philosophical religious pluralism, still wish to contend for some form of unique role for Christianity in salvation. These are the Christian inclusivists, and the gist of their teaching is that Jesus is the only means to salvation, but those who are saved do not necessarily have to consciously claim him as their savior. The Roman Catholic theologian Jacques Dupuis and the Protestant Clark Pinnock provide scholarly representatives for the inclusivist position, which may be summarized in the following five theses.⁵⁶

One: God has specially revealed himself in the person and work of Jesus Christ, who is the unique and only-begotten Son of God and Word of God incarnate.

Two: God made this special revelation in Jesus because he loves all people, and desires that all people will be saved and enjoy eternal life.

Three: God recognizes that not all people will hear of or accept Jesus as their savior, even though he is the only means to salvation.

Four: God has, therefore, made salvation a matter of either explicitly trusting in Jesus, the source of salvation, or explicitly trusting in other religious paths as the means to salvation.

Five: God makes the other religious paths means to salvation through his gracious decision to channel saving grace through them, even if unknowingly on the part of the adherents.

⁵⁶ Jacques Dupuis, *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), and Clark H. Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992). These five theses reflect a synthesis of Dupuis and Pinnock's main points. Dupuis is chosen in this study for his explicitly Christocentric approach, as well as for his exemplary representation of the post-Vatican II ecumenical theology espoused within Roman Catholicism. For more on the latter, consider "Chapter II: On the People of God," in *Lumen Gentium*, accessed August 1, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

A Critique Of Christian Inclusivism

Though Christian orthodoxy affirms the first three theses of the inclusivists (i.e., the uniqueness of Jesus' incarnation; the exclusive mediatorial role he plays in salvation; and the love of God for all mankind, even though there are many who have not and will not come to know Jesus) as consistent with its creedal and evangelical commitments, there are at least two problems with the inclusivist position.

First, the Christian inclusivist teaching directly contradicts the biblical message regarding the necessity of personal, conscious faith in Jesus as the means to one's individual salvation. Consider two passages: 1) Acts 2:38, where Peter responds to the question of what is to be done in light of the teaching that Jesus is the savior by declaring, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;" and 2) Romans 10:9 and 13, where Paul explains that "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved . . . For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'"

Christian inclusivists, at least those who attempt to take Scripture as authoritative in these matters, will generally respond to appeals to explicit biblical passages about knowing and trusting Christ in the following manner: To affirm the exclusivity of personal knowledge of Jesus for salvation means no one before his incarnation could be saved, yet there are instances in the Bible (e.g., Adam and Eve, Abraham, the prophets, the thief on the cross) where people are described as having a relationship with God without having specifically known Jesus or specific truths about him.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, 95, 197.

However, one need not conclude there was no explicit faith in Jesus among these Old Testament saints. Examples such as 1 Peter 1:10-12's revelation of the knowledge of the prophets concerning Jesus, as well as Jesus' statement in John 8:56 regarding Abraham's knowledge of him, and Adam and Eve's knowledge of the coming seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15, lead to a conclusion that, even in the Old Testament, salvation was based in Jesus as those of that time looked forward to him who was to come. Thus, rather than supporting an inclusivist claim, the example of Old Testament saints carefully considered lends considerable weight to the orthodox Christian perspective.

What about the thief on the cross? The inclusivist may claim he, too, was saved without explicit faith in Jesus. However, the interaction between the thief and Jesus reveals evidence to the contrary. In the account taken from Luke 23:40-43, the thief appears to have recognized his own sinfulness, testified publicly to the righteousness of Jesus, and asked Jesus to be merciful to him in the coming Kingdom. Although not nuanced in the explicit terms of those converted after Jesus' resurrection, the thief's interaction with Jesus bears the marks of true faith like the Old Testament saints mentioned above, and certainly more than the undifferentiated "faith principle" alleged by inclusivists as how adherents of other religions enjoy unknown access to Jesus as savior.⁵⁸

The second problem with the Christian inclusivism is what has been called the universality axiom, which concludes that because God desires all persons to be saved he is therefore obligated to guarantee every person a chance to be saved.⁵⁹ Similar to the confusion discussed previously regarding the love of God and philosophical religious pluralism, the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 157.

⁵⁹ See John Sanders, *No Other Name* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

universality axiom assumes a less-than-biblical understanding of the love God, committing a logical fallacy in its rush to justify God's duty to make salvation available to all, even if it is through another religion. As Nash explains, the fallacy has to do with the second premise, that God is somehow obligated to make salvation available to everyone, with or without Jesus.⁶⁰ While Nash argues that the universality axiom is illogical at its second point for either reasons only known to God, or for the potential that those who are commanded to take the gospel to all the world would choose not to do so and leave the pagan in his state of ignorance regarding the gospel, this researcher prefers an appeal to something a bit more philosophical, having to do with God's middle knowledge.⁶¹

As Craig explains, God knows all actual and possible worlds (i.e., God knows all facts and counterfactuals), so it is conceivable that he could, in a manner consistent with his love for all, know that in no possible world will everyone freely choose to follow him, and that only in this present world, where not all will have the opportunity to hear the gospel, is it possible to preserve human freedom and allow those whom he already knows will never choose him in any world to exist in this world where they do not ever hear the gospel, because even if they did hear it they would reject it.⁶² In this scenario is God somehow obligated to save through another religion those he knows would never accept his Son as savior? No, and to insist on the contrary is to commit the logical fallacy of *petitio principii* (i.e., begging the question), which is to

⁶⁰ Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?*, 95-96.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 134-135.

⁶² William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra, *A Reasonable Response: Answers to Tough Questions on God, Christianity, and the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 253-267.

assume an answer that has yet to be demonstrated (i.e., if those in other religions would accept God's offer of salvation).⁶³

At this point the Christian inclusivist is likely to make one of two responses: 1) Even if it is illogical, the higher concern in Scripture is to love, so the most loving thing God could do is make salvation possible (i.e., either offer everyone the gospel, or make sure that everyone has access to God through some other religion). Therefore, even if it is a logical contradiction, the universality axiom holds.⁶⁴ 2) As Pinnock argues, God is not exhaustive in his foreknowledge, insofar as he does not know things related to human choice that are still future, especially concerning salvation; thus, God truly does desire the salvation of all and will make it possible as far as he is able, depending on the future choices that he will experience in the course of human history.⁶⁵

In response to 1), consider two points. First, God's love is not irrational, but "rejoices in the truth,"⁶⁶ and would not, therefore, be at odds with the logical truths contained in Scripture regarding the necessity of man's choice in salvation (cf. Acts 2:37-39) or the exclusivity of salvation via explicit faith in Jesus (cf. Rom 10:9). Second, to continue to assert something after it has been logically proven is to cease to engage in rational discourse; asserting proves nothing.

In response to 2), Pinnock's assessment of God's knowledge of the future diminishes God's essential attributes, as classically understood (i.e., his omniscience and foreknowledge), and leaves Pinnock open to the charge of introducing a variation of process theology into the

⁶³ Norman L. Geisler and Ronald L. Brooks, *Come, Let us Reason: An Introduction to Logical Thinking* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 100-101.

⁶⁴ See Sanders, *No Other Name*, 216.

⁶⁵ See Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

⁶⁶ 1 Corinthians 13:6.

discussion.⁶⁷ Ultimately, Pinnock's appeal to God's openness regarding the future as a basis for the universality axiom is based upon an unsubstantiated and speculative approach that detracts from the general tenor of Scripture regarding God's exhaustive and perfect foreknowledge. While not free from its own conundrums, the middle knowledge approach discussed above avoids Pinnock's errors.

IV. CONCLUSION

Philosophical religious pluralism is a growing intellectual and cultural force within the Western world, having been uncritically embraced as the mantra of postmodern and post-Christian societies. The preceding research considered how, within the broader scope of pluralism, this prescriptive worldview poses a danger to society, in general, and Christians, specifically. Two responses to philosophical religious pluralism were also considered, Christian pluralism and Christian inclusivism. Each of these approaches to understanding the Christian message in a pluralistic context were summarized and critiqued from an orthodox Christian perspective. The conclusion of the research is that the answer to philosophical religious pluralism is not found within Christian pluralism or Christian inclusivism, but only in the historic orthodox position that salvation is available only in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Suggested areas of additional study in these matters include a full presentation of the Christian exclusivist position (i.e., orthodox position), including a response to critics, as well as a deeper discussion of the subject of God's middle knowledge relating to matters of human freedom and salvation.

⁶⁷ Nash, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?*, 130-133.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Carson, D. A., ed. *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000.
- Carson, D. A. *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*. 2nd Ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- “Chapter II: On the People of God.” In *Lumen Gentium*. Accessed August 1, 2017. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vatii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.
- Collins, Gary R. *Christian Counseling*. 3rd Ed. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007.
- Craig, William Lane and Joseph E. Gorra, *A Reasonable Response: Answers to Tough Questions on God, Christianity, and the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013.
- Dennett, Daniel. *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon*. New York: Penguin, 2006.
- Dorman, Ted M. *A Faith for All Seasons: Historical Christian Faith in its Classical Expression*. 2nd Ed. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001.
- Dupuis, Jacques. *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Truth or Consequences: The Promise & Perils of Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2001.
- Garrison, David. *A Wind in the House of Islam*. Monument: WIGTake Resources, 2014.
- Geisler, Norman L. and Ronald L. Brooks. *Come, Let us Reason: An Introduction to Logical Thinking*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990.
- Greider, Kathleen J. "Religious Pluralism and Christian Pastoral Theology." *Journal of Pastoral Theology* 22, no. 2 (2012): 3.1-3.21.
- Heiser, Michael S. *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*. Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2015.
- Hick, John H. *An Interpretation of Religion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- , *Disputed Questions in Theology and the Philosophy of Religion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- , *Evil and the Love of God*. New York: HarperCollins, 1966.

- , *God and the Universe of Faiths*. 2nd Ed. Chatham: Oneworld Publications, 1993.
- , *God Has Many Names*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982.
- , *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1987.
- Hick, John H., ed. *The Myth of God Incarnate*. London: Hymns Ancient and Modern, 1978.
- Jordan, James B. *The Sociology of the Church: Essays in Reconstruction*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1999.
- , *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1999.
- Lasch, Christopher. *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1991.
- Mallampalli, Chandra. "World Christianity and 'Protestant America': Historical Narratives and the Limits of Christian Pluralism." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 30, no. 1 (January 2006): 8-13.
- Martinson, Paul V. "Dynamic Pluralism." *Dialog* 28, no. 1 (1989): 8.
- Marty, Martin E. and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Fundamentalism and the State: Remaking Politics, Economies, and Militance*. Vol. 3 of *The Fundamentalism Project*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*. Malden: Blackwell, 2000.
- , "The Christian Church's Response to Pluralism." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35, no. 4 (December 1992): 487-501.
- Nash, Ronald H. *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- , *The Gospel and the Greeks: Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?* 2nd Ed. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2003.
- Netland, Harold. *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith and Missions*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001.
- Niebuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. 50th Anniversary Ed. New York: HarperOne, 2001.
- Pinnock, Clark H. *A Wideness in God's Mercy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- , *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Sanders, John. *No Other Name*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992.

Smith, Christian, Michael Emerson, Sally Gallagher, Paul Kennedy and David Sikkink. *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Sproul, R. C. *Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*. Carol Stream: Tyndale House, 2011. Kindle.

Tennent, Timothy C. *Christianity at the Roundtable: Evangelicalism in Conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

Veith, Jr., Gene Edward. *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994.

Wells, David F. *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

Winter, Ralph D. and Steven C. Hawthorne. *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 4th ed. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2009.

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

Timothy J. White D.Min.*

I. INTRODUCTION

James Leo Garrett observed that Walter Rauschenbusch “had both his admirers and his critics”¹ and it should be added, and still does. Generally, the theological liberals highly esteem Rauschenbusch and the Biblical conservatives critique him. “PBS recently called him (Walter Rauschenbusch) ‘one of the most influential American religious leaders of the last 100 years.’”²

Tim Keller, however, in his book *Generous Justice: How God’s Grace Makes Us Just* wrote that Rauschenbusch rejected “the theory of penal substitution and sees Jesus’s death as revealing the social injustice of this world.”³

There is no more serious accusation that can be leveled against a theologian than the denunciation that he rejects doctrines of God’s Word and the foundation for the only way of salvation i.e., the atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross for the sins of mankind. Rauschenbusch’s unbiblical view of the death of Christ, primarily the rejection of the penal substitutionary death of Christ and the doctrine of imputation, is his greatest theological

* Timothy J. White is professor of ministry and the Dean of the Alford School of Ministry at Temple Baptist Seminary of Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

¹ James Leo Garrett Jr, *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study* (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 2009), 318.

² Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis in the 21st Century: The Classic That Woke Up the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), Back Cover.

³ Keller gives some social context for Rauschenbusch’s social gospel: One of the founders of the Social Gospel movement was Walter Rauschenbusch, a German Baptist minister whose first pastorate was on the edge of New York City’s Hell’s Kitchen in the 1880s. His firsthand acquaintance with the terrible poverty of his neighborhood led him to question traditional evangelism, which took pains to save people’s souls but did nothing about the social systems locking them into poverty. Rauschenbusch began to minister to “both soul and body,” but in tandem with this shift in method came a shift in theology. He rejected the traditional doctrines of Scripture and atonement. He taught that Jesus did not need to satisfy the justice of God, and therefore he died only to be an example of unselfishness (Timothy Keller. *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just*. New York: Penguin Publishing Group. Kindle Edition, 2010, 114, 188).

aberration. The writer of this article came to this conclusion very disappointedly. He was hoping to find in Rauschenbusch the model for social justice that he had heard touted from evangelical conservatives. The writer only found the opposite. Therefore, the thesis of this article is the Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch is not the saving Gospel of the New Testament. This thesis will be supported by examining Rauschenbusch's background, conversion, training at Rochester Theological Seminary, pastorate at Second German Baptist Church, professorship at Rochester Theological Seminary, theology of the social gospel, and the Biblical doctrine of imputation.

II. HIS BACKGROUND

Liberalism from Germany greatly impacted Rauschenbusch starting early in his life.⁴ Walter Rauschenbusch was born Oct 4, 1861 and died July 25, 1918. His father August was the 6th German, Lutheran minister in his family. Later Walter's father became a Baptist pastor and professor at Rochester Theological Seminary in Rochester, New York. Walter would follow in his father's footsteps and become a Baptist pastor and professor at Rochester.⁵

⁴ Stephen R. Holmes paints the big picture of the invasion of liberalism from Germany to American seminaries in the nineteenth century in which Rauschenbusch labored: The nineteenth century was marked, theologically, by increased openness to the new 'liberal' theologies coming out of Germany. Three streams of thought came together to form the new theology of the day. First was an emphasis on religious experience after the manner of Schleiermacher.... Second was a belief concerning the centrality of history. In the German tradition, this was the inheritance of Hegel, who believed in an immanent and inevitable historical progress towards perfection; later in the century, it chimed perfectly with the post-Darwinian fad of applying the concept of evolution to everything, not just the origin of species.... The third aspect of the new theology to be mentioned is a stress on the ethical content of the faith as more important than the dogmatic in Germany, Ritschl or von Harnack spring to mind; for the Baptist preacher in America, struggling with an astonishing rate of cultural change, and challenges to faith from science and from biblical criticism, to be able to point to the ethical character of Jesus and take a stand on its wonder and the perfection must have been enormously attractive. Rauschenbusch had studied deeply both Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf von Harnack (Stephen R. Holmes, *Baptist Theology*, 1 edition. London: T&T Clark, 2012), 38. Rauschenbusch is the confluence where these three streams of German theological liberalism merge. This German liberalism influence started early in Rauschenbusch's life as is seen in his background.

⁵ Timothy George, *Baptist Theologians*, ed. David Dockery (Nashville, Tenn: Baptist Sunday School Board, 1990), 366.

August moved his family to Germany when Walter was five years old for four years so his dad could study Anabaptists in German universities. When Walter graduated from high school, he and his father move to Germany so Walter could study and prepare for the ministry.

What was the result of Rauschenbusch's studies in Germany? His biographer, Christopher H. Evans, who now teaches Church History at Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity, where Rauschenbusch previously taught, wrote: "His years of formative education, in Germany and in Rochester, provided him with indispensable experiences educationally and culturally that sowed the seeds of Walter's burgeoning theological liberalism and, in some ways, his future outlook."⁶ This chapter in Rauschenbusch's life illustrates the importance of choosing the right institutions of higher education. Rauschenbusch absorbed his liberal training and turned away from any orthodoxy he once possessed.

III. HIS CONVERSION

At age 17, Rauschenbusch was "converted" and baptized. He wrote about it with both gratitude and disdain:

Now, that religious experience was a very true one, although I have no doubt there was a great deal in it that was foolish.... And yet, such as it was, it was of everlasting value to me. It turned me permanently, and I thank God with all my heart for it. It was a tender, mysterious experience. It influenced my soul down to its depths. Yet, there was a great deal in it that was not really true."⁷

Was Walter Rauschenbusch converted? It is difficult to determine if Rauschenbusch was a believer by examining the fruit. What Paul testified in the 1 Thessalonians 1:4, cannot be said about Rauschenbusch: "For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you." In other

⁶ Christopher H. Evans, *The Kingdom Is Always But Coming: A Life of Walter Rauschenbusch* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2010), 23.

⁷ Walter Rauschenbusch, WR, *'The Kingdom of God' Cleveland Young Men* (Rochester: Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. January 9, 1913), box 39.

words, Paul had assurance of the salvation of the Thessalonians. Based on the cardinal doctrines of Scripture that Rauschenbusch rejected, what Paul testified about the Thessalonians cannot be said about Rauschenbusch in the opinion of this writer.

IV. HIS TRAINING AT ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

His professors at Rochester Theological Seminary were disturbed at his liberalism. A. H. Strong, the leading Baptist theologian in the 19th century and Rauschenbusch's theology teacher said one of his papers was "subversive to scripture."⁸ Rauschenbusch graduated May 1886. His Old Testament professor, Howard Osgood, wrote a letter to the American Baptist Missionary Union where Walter Rauschenbusch had applied to be a missionary, warning the agency of Walter Rauschenbusch's liberal leanings. The mission board consequently turned Walter Rauschenbusch down.⁹

V. HIS PASTORATE AT SECOND GERMAN BAPTIST CHURCH

The Second German Baptist Church was on the edge of Hell's Kitchen in New York City.¹⁰ Walter Rauschenbusch went there on June 1st, 1886 at the age of 24 and stayed until July 1897.

⁸ Walter Rauschenbusch, "The Bushnellian Theory of Atonement," Handwritten comments by WR on copy of "The Bushnellian Theory of the Atonement," Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. N. D.

⁹ Evans, *The Kingdom Is Always But Coming*, 43.

¹⁰ Tenements to house the workers and their families were hastily thrown up from the 1850s on, and out of them roamed gangs of youths who ruled the streets after the Civil War. The Hell's Kitchen Gang, whom Herbert Asbury called "a collection of the most desperate ruffians in the city" in his 1927 book "The Gangs of New York" (inspiration for the Martin Scorsese film), fought constantly with the police and with rivals like the Gorillas, the Parlor Mob, and the Gophers. Members had names like Stumpy Malarkey, Goo Goo Knox, Happy Jack Mulraney, and One Lung Curran, who, when his girlfriend complained of the cold, walked out to the street, "blackjacked the first policeman he encountered," according to Asbury, and stole his coat. The block of West 39th Street between 10th and 11th Avenues saw so much fighting it was nicknamed Battle Row. In 1881 an article in The New York Times referred to a particularly scurrilous tenement on the block as Hell's Kitchen, its first known use in print ("Turf of Gangs and Gangsters" The New York Times. By John Strausbaugh. 17, 2007. Accessed 12-16-2018 <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/17/arts/17hell.html>).

New York City exploded in population after the Civil War which gave rise to “the tenement” which was a means of housing lots of people in small spaces. These unsanitary living conditions became “breeding grounds for numerous contagious and fatal diseases, including typhoid fever and cholera.”¹¹ This is where Rauschenbusch’s church members lived or barely existed and many times died. This shook Walter Rauschenbusch to the core of his soul. “Oh, the children’s funerals! They gripped my heart---that was one of the things I always went away thinking about---why did the children have to die?”¹² This social injustice greatly moved Walter Rauschenbusch emotionally and theologically. At this time, Walter Rauschenbusch was reading other social gospel preachers like Washington Gladden and Josiah Strong, and social scientists like Richard Ely and even Karl Marx. The ambivalence that Walter Rauschenbusch struggled with at this juncture in his life is seen when he was reading socialists he was also praising D.L. Moody and J. Hudson Taylor.

After his resignation at The Second German Baptist Church, he toured Europe for nine months from March to December in 1891. On this tour, he met and read more German liberals. When he returned, he resumed his pastorate at Second Baptist and stayed until July 1897. A. H. Strong had persistently for years tried to get Walter Rauschenbusch to come to Rochester and teach and in 1897, Walter Rauschenbusch finally agreed to teach history. His goal in teaching history was to discover the evidences of the Kingdom of God in history and move his students to social activism. Although A. H. Strong was conservative and the reigning Baptist theologian for a century, he added at least seven liberal professors to his seminary. The requirement of faculty signing a solidly Biblical doctrinal statement is indispensable to the future of a Bible college or seminary.

¹¹ Evans, *The Kingdom Is Always But Coming*, 61.

¹² Rauschenbusch, “WR, ‘The Kingdom of God’ Cleveland Young Men,” Box 39.

VI. HIS PROFESSORSHIP AT ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

While Walter Rauschenbusch was professor at Rochester, he wrote his first book *Christianity and the Social Crisis* in 1906. The social crisis in America, according to Rauschenbusch, was social injustice caused by the greed of capitalism and the cure was the social gospel. "Nations do not die by wealth, but by injustice."¹³ His book received rave reviews by the liberals and criticisms by the conservatives, such as, William Riley and I. M. Haldeman.

Rauschenbusch and his family embarked on a year and one half sabbatical in Germany in April 1907 right after this book was published. He wanted to be out of the country when the fall out occurred concerning his book. When he returned, however, he was extremely popular and in great demand as a speaker.

I. M. Haldeman (1845-1933) was one of America's most influential premillennialists and critiqued *Christianity and the Social Crisis* in *Professor Rauschenbusch's "Christianity and the Social Crisis."*¹⁴ I. M. Haldeman was pastor of First Baptist Church for forty-nine years in New York City. Haldeman exposed Rauschenbusch's rejection of the biblical doctrines of atonement, authority of Scripture, and individual salvation. Here are some of Haldeman's contemporary reactions with the social gospel of Rauschenbusch.

According to Haldeman, Rauschenbusch saw the cross "not as the end for which he was born into the world, not as the culminating point of the Mosaic ritual, not as the fulfilment of every victim to slaughter led, but as an interruption to his moral progress---a discord in the ethic song he would sing. He believed, however, that he (Jesus) would be permitted to come back and accomplish his socialistic work."¹⁵

¹³ Evans, *The Kingdom Is Always But Coming*, 187.

¹⁴ This book can be found in the Rare Book Section of the library at Piedmont International University in Winston-Salem, N. C.

¹⁵ I. M. Haldeman, *Professor Rauschenbusch's "Christianity and the Social Crisis"* (New York: The Book Stall, n.d.), 18.

Haldeman documents that Rauschenbusch rejected as reliable the writings of Apostle Paul and some of the sayings of Christ. Rauschenbusch contended, when the writings of Paul and the sayings of Christ contradict socialistic ideas, they cannot be trusted.¹⁶

Haldeman also observed that Rauschenbusch rejected individual salvation for the collective salvation of society:

The kingdom of heaven is a collective conception involving the whole social life of man; it is not a matter of saving human atoms, but of saving the social organism. It is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven but of transforming the life on earth into the harmony of heaven.... Jesus never fell into the fundamental heresy of later theology, he never viewed the human individual apart from human society....¹⁷

Walter Rauschenbusch's rejection of the core doctrines of Biblical atonement, the integrity of the New Testament, and the necessity of the new birth should not just give evangelicals pause but stop them dead in their tracks before holding up Rauschenbusch as a model to follow in advancing a Biblical social justice.

VII. HIS THEOLOGY OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

Rauschenbusch finished his *A Theology for The Social Gospel* about eight months before his death. While his book received favorable reviews from liberals, the theologian to whom Rauschenbusch dedicated the book, A. H. Strong, strongly criticized his book:

¹⁶ Why could not the sayings of Christ be trusted? Haldeman explains Rauschenbusch's rationale: The sayings of Jesus were not written down for thirty or forty years after he had spoken them. With the very best intention in the world, as we know by our own experience, it is impossible always to repeat exactly what has been said to us. It is equally impossible that the disciples could have reported perfectly the words of Jesus, unless we assume a 'divine prevention' of such an impossibility (and Rauschenbusch does not assume it). There can be no doubt, then, (there appears to be no doubt in Mr. Rauschenbusch's mind) that as time went on, some things were forgotten, others were added till the discourses to the Master were idealized and, perhaps, fancifulized; those who wrote them down, insensibly, involuntarily, fashioned and moulded them to suit their own concepts....IF then these sayings to Christ would conflict with the modern ideas---if they should conflict with socialistic ideas---it would be logical to suppose that these are the sayings which had not been correctly reported, and that, therefore, as an evidence of 'sane' and advanced exegesis, it would be perfectly legitimate to construe them in harmony with modern and progressive thought, or set them aside altogether (Ibid., 21).

¹⁷ Ibid., 65.

Your theology is one of love, but not of righteousness like that of Paul.... In seeking to make a new application of Christianity, are you not leaving out the only Christianity we have to apply? Are you not replacing Christianity by a man-made substitute, which furnishes neither explanation of man's universal sin nor dynamic whereby to cure it?¹⁸

The main proposition of this book is: "We have a social gospel. We need a systematic theology large enough to match it and vital enough to back it." For that to be accomplished, Rauschenbusch shows in chapters 1-3 that "a readjustment and expansion" of what he considers an outdated theology is necessary. In the balance of the book Rauschenbusch demonstrates how the more relevant doctrines of sin and redemption must be "readjusted"¹⁹ to match the Social Gospel. Only the chapters relevant to the thesis of this paper are reviewed.

Chapter One: A Theology For The Social Gospel

The purpose of this book is "a readjustment and expansion of theology"²⁰ which he believes is woefully inadequate. Theology needs to change to embrace a salvation for society not primarily the individual. Rauschenbusch believes more strongly in social repentance than individual repentance: "The social gospel seeks to bring men under repentance for their collective sins."²¹ He also believes more strongly in social regeneration than individual.²²

Chapter Two: The Difficulties Of Theological Readjustment

Rauschenbusch begins to down play the importance of the doctrines of the church. He states that "Doctrinal theology is in less direct contact with facts than other theological studies."

¹⁸ Strong should have been challenged with the question: Why did you hire a professor who is "leaving out the only Christianity we have to apply?" (Augustus Strong, "Augustus Strong to WR," December 28, 1917, Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. Box 31), 155.

¹⁹ Walter Reuschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, STIFF WRAPS edition. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1945), 1.

²⁰ Ibid., 1.

²¹ Ibid., 5.

²² "The adjustment of the Christian message to the regeneration of the social order is plainly one of the most difficult tasks ever laid on the intellect of religious leaders." Ibid., 7.

By criticizing the Roman Catholic Church's determination to preserve its doctrine, Rauschenbusch could take a swipe at conservatives who were also determined to preserve the doctrines of God's Word: "This selfish ecclesiastical conservatism is not for the Kingdom of God but against it." "Theology needs periodical rejuvenation."²³ By contrast, the social gospel is superior to traditional theology because "the social gospel approximates lay religion."²⁴ Rauschenbusch relentlessly attacks the atonement throughout his writings.²⁵ Rauschenbusch contends that there should be "a democratic change in theology based on religious experience."²⁶

Chapter Three: Neither Alien Nor Novel

Rauschenbusch continues to express contempt for "the older handbooks of theology" and the "so-called evangelical theology" and "individualistic theology" and "Conservative theology."²⁷ The ethical Kingdom of God message of Christ was destroyed by these theologies which emphasized individual sinfulness and individual salvation and not the national sinfulness of capitalism and militarism.²⁸ In the place of these old traditional theologies, Rauschenbusch praises liberal German theologians like Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl.

²³ Ibid., 12.

²⁴ Ibid., 16.

²⁵ Rauschenbusch launches the first of many attacks against the atonement when he writes: "Does Calvinism deal adequately when a man appears before the judgment seat of Christ with \$50,000,000 and its human corollaries to his credit, and then pleads a free pardon though faith in the atoning sacrifice"? Ibid., 19.

²⁶ The solution to theology's weakened position in Christianity is the social gospel. "The social gospel has already restored the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, which held first place with Jesus but which individualistic theology carefully wrapped in several napkins and forgot" Ibid., 21.

²⁷ Ibid., 25, 28.

²⁸ Ibid., 26.

Chapter Five: The Fall Of Man

Rauschenbusch totally rejects the fall of man into sin as biblical and rather teaches the doctrine of the fall of man into sin as a hindrance to meeting the sins of social injustice. Basically, the doctrine of the fall of man into sin was Paul's invention. The Old Testament prophets and Jesus did not teach or emphasize this doctrine. Augustine, Luther, and Calvin followed Paul in teaching the total depravity of man because of the fall. Rauschenbusch argues that the account of the fall in Genesis three was the result of "the Jahvist narrative,"²⁹ a document of Ephraimitic origin dating back to the ninth century B.C. The original purpose of the story was not to explain the origin of sin, but the origin of death and evil."³⁰ So, the fall was not a historical event in the Old Testament, according to Rauschenbusch and other Higher Critics. Rather than focusing on the past event of the fall, Rauschenbusch advocated following the example of the Old Testament prophets and Jesus who concentrated their "energies on the present and active sources of evil"³¹ such as "syphilis, their graft" and wars which "have loaded us with public debts."³² Again, Rauschenbusch's social gospel exalts society over the individual. Once more, Rauschenbusch lampoons old theology for teaching doctrine, this time, the doctrine of the fall of man into sin and the resulting total depravity.

²⁹ F. R. Tennant, who strongly taught the Documentary Hypothesis, taught a similar Higher Criticism as Rauschenbusch in his book *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*. Referring to Genesis three, Tennant wrote: This Old Testament story implies a previous course of development in theological thought much greater in duration than that by which were subsequently reached, from the biblical narrative as starting-point, the most complex post-Reformation theories of unfallen and fallen human nature. It can no longer be assumed, in the light of knowledge yielded by comparative mythology and the prehistoric sciences, that the third chapter of Genesis supplies us with the record of a revelation of historical fact, divinely given at some definite time, or even with the story whose form and details were wholly the creation of its writer's inspired imagination (page 1). What the author has just described is part of "the Jahvist or.... the Prophetic document (J)" (page 2), which as Rauschenbusch would also agree gives ground for denying the existence of the Fall of man into sin in Genesis three... (F. R. Tennant. *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1903), 1, 2.

³⁰ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 40.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

³² *Ibid.*, 43.

The final word on doctrine is in the Epistles. Even though the Old Testament and the Gospels teach the sinfulness of man, the final word on any doctrine is the New Testament Epistles, and in the case of the fall, one of the primary texts is Romans 5:12: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”³³

Chapter Ten: The Social Gospel And Personal Salvation

Rauschenbusch states, again, casting old theology or old doctrine and particularly the atonement of Christ, in a bad light: “wherever doctrine becomes rigid and is the pre-eminent thing in religion, ‘faith’ means submission of the mind to the affirmations of dogma and theology, and, in particular, acceptance of a plan of salvation and trust in the vicarious atonement of Christ.”³⁴ Rauschenbusch contends, traditional theology is incorrect in requiring faith in the substitutionary death of Christ. Rauschenbusch deceptively speaks of the necessity of faith and salvation. While he speaks the same vocabulary true Biblical Christianity employs, he has a different dictionary.³⁵ Salvation in the social gospel is deliverance, but primarily a deliverance of society of economic inequities and war.

³³ Paul refers to Adam’s fall into sin and names Adam showing Paul’s belief in the historicity of Genesis three and Adam: “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Timothy 2:13-14). Todd S. Beall writes: “There are at least 25 New Testament passages that refer to Genesis 1-11, and all take the account literally” (Todd S. Beall, “Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1-11,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury. Green Forest: Master Books, 2008, 146). John Murray devotes his entire book *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin* to teaching the meaning of Romans 5:12-19 and the impact of the fall of Adam on his posterity. Murray considers Romans 5:12-19 “the high point of the epistle” (John Murray. *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959), 6.

³⁴ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 101.

³⁵ As far as the social gospel is concerned, faith is not so much the endorsement of ideas formulated in the past, as expectancy and confidence in the coming salvation of God.... In the midst of a despotic and predatory industrial life it is faith to stake our business future on the proposition that fairness, kindness, and fraternity will work. When war inflames a nation, it is faith to believe that a peaceable disposition is a workable international policy (Ibid., 102).

Chapter Nineteen: The Social Gospel And The Atonement

What Rauschenbusch has done throughout all his writings, he now devotes an entire chapter to continue to denigrate the importance of the atonement. This is Rauschenbusch's greatest theological heresy. He believed that the apostle Paul in the Epistles added more importance to the death of Christ than the early Christians held in the gospel.

Rauschenbusch historically surveys the different views of the atonement all of which, in his opinion, reflected the thinking of society at that time: "It is important to note that every theory of the atonement necessarily used terms and analogies taken from the social life of that age." Rauschenbusch will use this theory of the history of the doctrine of the atonement to justify his distorted view of Jesus' substitutionary atonement.

1. The ransom paid to Satan view lasted unto Anselm of Canterbury in AD 1098. "The theory that the death of Christ was a ransom to Satan was the outgrowth of the semi-dualistic religion of the Empire and the prevalent belief in the rule of demons."³⁶
2. The Satisfaction view of Atonement which Rauschenbusch rejected because he appraised it as advocating the innocent dying unjustly for the guilty.

Anselm's theory seems to me clearly the product of the penitential practices of the medieval Church, within which Anselm lived and moved and which was his social order. Every priest in the confessional was constantly assessing the delinquencies of men in terms of penalty and merit, and assigning so much inconvenience or suffering as a "satisfaction" for so much sin.³⁷

3. The Reformation view is the penal substitutionary death of Christ described by Rauschenbusch as teaching that "Christ experienced the wrath of God³⁸ in his suffering, and that

³⁶ Ibid., 243.

³⁷ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 243.

³⁸ A contemporary of Rauschenbusch, Cambridge scholar, C. H. Dodd (1884-1973), also rejected this concept of propitiation. Instead, he believed that the idea of expiation, or forgiveness of man's sin, was the proper meaning, not the appeasement of God's wrath. "Hellenistic Judaism, as represented by the LXX, does not regard the

wrath is now satisfied, so that God can forgive”³⁹ to which should be shouted, “Amen.” But, Rauschenbusch totally rejects this view saying, “the fundamental terms and ideas---- ‘satisfaction,’ ‘substitution,’ ‘imputation,’ ‘merit’ ----are post-biblical ideas, and are alien from the spirit of the gospel.” Rauschenbusch explains the social view of the Reformation age reflected in this view of atonement: “Perhaps the commercial and governmental theories of later Protestantism were the natural social product of the age of capitalistic merchants and of limited monarchies.”⁴⁰

All the views of atonement, according to Rauschenbusch, mirror the age of their proponents and not the Scriptures. Because the age of Rauschenbusch was the age of “personality and social solidarity” the atonement must be adapted to the social needs of this generation. “The problems which burden us are the social problems. Has the death of Christ any relation to these? Have we not just as much right to connect this supreme religious event with our problems as Paul and Anselm and Calvin, and to use the terminology and methods of their day?”⁴¹

Rauschenbusch asks, how did Jesus bear sins which he did not commit? The old theology replied, by imputation. But guilt and merit are personal. They can only be transferred from one person to another. Imputation is a legal device to enable the laws to hold

cultus as a means of pacifying the displeasure of the Deity, but as a means of delivering man for sin” (C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935, 93). Dodd’s influence was so great, the RSV translated *hilasmos* and *hilasterion* not as propitiation but as expiation. Leon Morris answered Dodd: “To the men of the Old Testament the wrath of God is both very real and very serious. . . . There are more than twenty words used to express the wrath conception as it applies to Yahweh (in addition to a number of other words which occur only with reference to human anger). These are used so frequently that there are over 580 occurrences to be taken into consideration” (Leon Morris, *Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955, 131). “Propitiation is a sacrifice that bears the wrath of God against sin and thereby turns God’s wrath into favor” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994, 575). This is another major doctrine related to the atonement that Rauschenbusch disavowed.

³⁹ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 242.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 243.

⁴¹ Ibid., 244.

one man responsible for the crime committed by another. Imputation sees mankind as a mass of individuals, and the debts of every individual are transferred to Christ. The solution does not lie in that way.”⁴²

Rauschenbusch totally rejected Jesus’ substitutionary death for individual sinners or the Biblical doctrine of imputation.⁴³ Rauschenbusch enumerated “six sins, all of a public nature, which combined to kill Jesus.... It requires no legal fiction of imputation⁴⁴ to explain that ‘he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.’”⁴⁵ The six public sins were: religious bigotry, graft and political power, the corruption of injustice, mob spirit and mob action, militarism, and class contempt.

Because Rauschenbusch repudiated the doctrine of imputation throughout his writings, it is, therefore, necessary to examine the Biblical tenet of imputation upon which the salvation and eternal destiny of every believer rests.

VIII. THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF IMPUTATION

Though justification and imputation are closely related, most theologians do not equate these two doctrines.⁴⁶ Justification is a legal courtroom word where the judge declares the person innocence whereas imputation is a business word. While justification and imputation are

⁴² Ibid., 245.

⁴³ Jesus did not in any real sense bear the sin of some ancient Briton who beat up his wife in B. C. 56, or of some mountaineer in Tennessee who got drunk in A. D. 1917. But he did in a very real sense bear the weight of the public sins of organized society, and they in turn are causally connected with all private sins (Ibid., 247).

⁴⁴ Rauschenbusch used the Roman Catholic description, legal fiction of imputation, to reject the Biblical doctrine of imputation. Brian Vickers notes that the charge that imputation is legal fiction is five-hundred years old. Martin Chemnitz (November 9, 1522 – April 8, 1586) defended imputation against Jesuit’s claims of legal fiction in his book *Justification: The Chief Article of Christian Doctrine as Expounded in “Loci Theologici* (Brian Vickers. *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006, 217). A modern Protestant theologian who also rejects the Biblical doctrine of imputation and designates it as “legal fiction” is N. T. Wright in *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1997), 102.

⁴⁵ Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 248–256.

⁴⁶ John Murray is an exception. He believes that imputation and justification are synonymous (John Murray. *Romans* NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 134.

interconnected, they are not the same. Justification is based on imputation. When God credits or imputes to the believing sinner's account the righteousness of Christ, God then justifies or declares the converted unbeliever righteous. Neither imputation nor justification, however, affects the believer personally. They give the believer a legal standing in heaven of more than "not guilty" but a standing of being as righteous as Christ.⁴⁷ Regeneration does touch the individual at salvation.⁴⁸

Now that the differences between imputation and justification and regeneration have been noted, the three Biblical imputations will be considered. Both Charles Ryrie in *Basic Theology*⁴⁹ and Wayne Grudem in *Systematic Theology*⁵⁰ discuss three imputations. Wiersbe says one way

⁴⁷ There is probably no passage in the Scriptures in which the doctrine of justification is more concisely or clearly stated than in [2 Corinthians 5:21]. Our sins were imputed to Christ, and his righteousness is imputed to us. He bore our sins; we are clothed in his righteousness. . . . Christ bearing our sins did not make him morally a sinner . . . nor does Christ's righteousness become subjectively ours, it is not the moral quality of our souls. . . . Our sins were the judicial ground of the sufferings of Christ, so that they were a satisfaction of justice; and his righteousness is the judicial ground of our acceptance with God, so that our pardon is an act of justice. . . . It is not mere pardon, but justification alone, that gives us peace with God (Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the Second Letter to the Corinthians*. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1862, 150-151). Martin Luther uniquely expressed this aspect of imputation when he said that believers "in their own sight and in truth they are unrighteous, but before God they are righteous because He reckons them so because of their confession of sin." They are actually sinners, but they are righteous by the imputation of a merciful God. Luther illustrates this dimension of imputation with his sick patient example: It is similar to the case of a sick man who believes the doctor who promises him a sure recovery and in the meantime, obeys the doctor's order in the hope of the promised recovery and abstains from those things which have been forbidden him, so that he may in no way hinder the promised return to health or increase his sickness until the doctor can fulfill his promise to him. Now is this sick man well? The fact is he is both sick and well at the same time. He is sick in fact, but he is well because of the sure promise of the doctor, whom he trusts and who has reckoned him as already cured because he is sure that he will cure him; for he has already begun to cure him and no longer reckons unto him a sickness unto death (Martin Luther, *Epistola beati Pauli apostolic ad Romanos incipit*, WA 56: 269; translation Tillmanns and Preus, Luther's Works 25: 258) (qtd. in Vickers, 25).

⁴⁸ Regeneration is an act of God in us; justification is a judgment of God with respect to us. The distinction is like that of the distinction between the act of a surgeon and the act of a judge. The surgeon, when he removes an inward cancer, does something in us. That is not what a judge does---he gives a verdict regarding our status. If we are innocent he declares accordingly. The purity of the gospel is bound up with the recognition of this distinction. If justification is confused with regeneration or sanctification, then the door is opened for the perversion of the gospel at its center (John Murray and Carl Trueman, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2015, 121).

⁴⁹ Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*, New Edition. (Chicago, Ill: Moody Publishers, 1999), 256-257.

⁵⁰ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 726.

to understand the complicated doctrine of imputation is to remember the little three letter word right in the middle of imputation which is “put.”⁵¹ When Adam sinned in the garden, sin was imputed or “put” on the sinner’s account. When Christ died on the cross, the sins of the world were reckoned or “put” on His account. When the unbeliever trusts Christ as his Savior, God will impute or “put” Christ’s righteousness on his account in heaven.

The Imputation Of Adam’s Sin In The Fall To Mankind

There is a distinction between inherited sin and imputed sin. Inherited sin is the sin nature that every sinner inherits from his parents (Psalm 51:5). This sin nature inhabits the body of every person. Paul confessed in Romans 7:14, “I am carnal sold under sin” i.e., I possess a carnal or fleshly nature. Some call sin nature Original Sin or the sinful propensity resulting from Adam’s fall.

Imputed sin is the sin from Adam that was directly credited to the account of the human race. God “put” Adam’s sin on their account at the fall. Imputed sin does not affect the sinner personally like inherited sin. Imputed sin makes the sinner’s legal standing before God guilty.

Paul says in Romans 5:12 that sin passed on all men because of Adam’s sin and then Paul declares what many believe are the most crucial, difficult, and controversial words in the verse: “all have sinned.” Mankind sinned in Adam. How did every sinner sin in Adam? Paul in 5:13 adds that although there was no Mosaic Law to disobey from Adam to Moses, sinners still died. Why did they die? Not because of personally disobeying God’s Law which was nonexistent, but because they sinned in Adam.

⁵¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Key Words of the Christian Life: Understanding and Applying Their Meanings* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 58.

The covenant theology view states that Adam was the representative for all of mankind and when he sinned his sin was passed on to those he represented. Humans suffering for someone else's sin, however, does not square with the justice of God.

Scripture teaches that mankind sinned in Adam, the Seminal view, not just the representative of believers. Like a giant oak tree is at one point in an acorn, humanity was in Adam.⁵² This is foreign to the thinking of 21st century Western civilization. This kind of thinking, however, was not foreign to Old Testament Israel.

When Achan stole, God said, "Israel has sinned" (Joshua 7:11). Michael Horton observed, "Just as the sin of Adam was imputed to the human race" in the Old Testament we see "the notion of imputing the sin of one person to each Israelite and thus to the nation."⁵³ John Piper in his book *Counted Righteous In Christ* believes the proof that humans sinned in Adam is the death of infants between Adam and Moses. Infants died because they sinned according to Romans 5:12. How did infants sin? Not because of personal sin. Piper believes Paul is referring to infants in 5:14 when he wrote "Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those

⁵² The Seminal view says that because we were in union with Adam when he sinned in the Garden that God is just in punishing each of us with death. "We die because we sinned in Adam" is Paul's argument in Romans 5:12. "Participation is the ground of merited imputation" of sin to each sinner (William Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980, 2:29). Charles Ryrie argues that the seminal, realistic, or Augustinian view sees Adam as containing the seed of all his prosperity so that when he sinned, we actually sinned. Mankind was not merely represented by Adam but was actually organically joined to Adam. Hebrews 7:9-10 furnishes another example of the seminal or germinal concept in the human race. The writer plainly stated that Levi, though not born until almost two hundred years later, actually paid tithes in his great-grandfather Abraham. The ancestor, Adam, contained all of us, his descendants. Therefore, just as Levi did something in paying tithes, so we did something in sinning in Adam" (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999, 258). This was also the view of A. H. Strong in his *Systematic Theology*. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1953, 622-637, Philip Edgecumbe Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989, 131-132, and F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963, 129.

⁵³ Although Michael Horton does not advocate the Seminal view, he uses the language of a Seminalists: "We are not only guilty *for* Adam's sin; we are guilty *as sinners in Adam*. Although this way of thinking (namely, corporate solidarity) is difficult to understand for those of us reared in liberal democracies, it is basic to Israel's faith" (Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011, 426, 633).

whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam.” John Piper wrote: “Infants died. They could not read the law on their hearts and choose to obey or disobey it. Yet they died. Why? Paul’s answer in the context would be: the sin of Adam and the imputation of that sin to the human race.”⁵⁴ Infants die like all people die because they sinned in Adam and sin was imputed to their record.⁵⁵ While Paul did not have infants in mind as proving all sinned in Adam, infants are examples of those who seminally sinned in Adam and therefore die. Of course, God in His mercy allows infants to go to heaven when they die because they have not rejected any light of God’s revelation (Romans 1:20).

The Imputation Of Humanity’s Sins To Christ On The Cross

Paul says that “God made Christ sin” in 2 Corinthians 5:21. Just as in the imputation of Adam’s sin to mankind was not personal neither is the imputation of humanity’s sins to Christ. Christ did not become sinful on the cross. God “put” or imputed mankind’s sins on Christ’s account at the cross. Brian Vickers strongly argues that the phrase “made to be sin” could mean “sin offering” referring to the Old Testament sacrificial system. “The position taken here is that ‘made to be sin’ is sacrificial language and that Paul is speaking of Christ as a sacrifice for sin.”⁵⁶

⁵⁴ John Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness?* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2002), 96.

⁵⁵ Brian Vickers disagrees with Piper: “There is no need, in my view, to posit either infants, or the mentally challenged, or any other particular group beyond those whom Paul himself mentions: those who lived in the time between Adam and Moses. By far the most troublesome aspect of the idea that Paul is speaking of infants or some other such group is that it means that he is clarifying verse 12 with an implicit statement” (Brian Vickers. *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Imputation*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006, 143).

⁵⁶ Vickers notes that several theologians who do not see “made to be sin” as a “sin offering.” Vickers mentions Philip E. Hughes, Margaret E. Thrall, and Charles Hodge. Vickers quotes Hodge admitting that “the meaning in either case is the same, for the only sense in which Christ was made to be sin is that he bore the guilt of sin; in this sense every sin-offering was made sin” (Ibid., 143). This helps explain how Christ did not personally become sinful on the cross but suffered as our sin offering.

The wages of sin is death. What the sinner earns through sinning, God deposited into the account of Christ. When God looked at His Son's record as He hung on the cross, He saw at that moment, not His Son's righteousness but humanity's sin. That is when God the Father judged His Son in the place of every sinner. That is when Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled: "He was wounded for our transgressions...."

The Imputation Of Christ's Righteousness To Believers At Salvation

The balance of 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "that we might be made the righteousness of God." Paul in Romans 4:1-5 further explains that Abraham in Genesis 15:6 believed, not worked, and it was counted or imputed to him as righteousness. This is antithetical to Roman Catholicism's doctrine of infusion.⁵⁷

Standing in opposition to the Biblical doctrine of imputation is the Roman Catholic doctrine of infusion, which states that at baptism, God's righteousness is infused or poured into the Catholic's personal soul. The Council of Trent declared baptism the instrument for the beginning of justification.⁵⁸ In biblical imputation, it is the believing sinner's standing before God that is changed once and for all.

⁵⁷"To say nothing of the fact that at the Baptism of the Redeemer in the Jordan the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove, to teach us that when we are washed in the sacred font His grace is infused into our souls" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church: Trent Edition*. N.D. Kindle Locations 2918-2920).

⁵⁸ The Council of Trent is still the definitive doctrinal statement of Roman Catholic Church. The officials of the Roman Catholic Church deliberated for seven months on how to word its doctrine of justification in the sixth session. Here is one clear statement from the Council of Trent teaching salvation by water baptism: Of this Justification, the causes are these: the final cause indeed is the glory of God while the efficient cause is a merciful God who washes and sanctifies gratuitously, but the meritorious cause is His most beloved only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, the instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, without which (faith) no man was ever justified.... Wherefore, no one ought to flatter himself up with faith alone, fancying that by faith alone he is made an heir, and will obtain the inheritance, even though he suffer not with Christ, that so he may be also glorified with him (J. Waterworth, Ed. and trans. *The Council of Trent: The Canon and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*. London: Dolman, 1848, 34).

If the Catholic mortally sins, his mortal sin kills the infused righteousness. The Catholic must be justified again with the second sacrament of penance. Catholicism calls imputation *Legal Fiction* (same term used by Rauschenbusch in rejection of Biblical imputation) because God counts someone personally righteous when he is not. Catholicism confuses imputed righteousness with sanctification and thus creates a works righteousness system of salvation.

The Scriptures teach that the righteousness imputed to the believer's account is a real righteousness not a fictional. There is nothing fictional about the righteousness on Christian's record in heaven. Imputed righteousness cannot be lost as can infused righteousness. In Romans 4:7, 8, Paul records David's praise for God's imputed righteousness on his account on which sin can never again be imputed.⁵⁹

In a lecture, R. C. Sproul defines what he calls *Double Imputation*. In double imputation, our sins are imputed to Christ on the cross. Which is true. But the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to the believer at salvation, Sproul says is because "He lived a life of perfect obedience. His life of perfect obedience is just as necessary to our salvation as his perfect atonement on the cross."⁶⁰ This is called active obedience in His life in addition to the passive obedience of Christ on the cross.⁶¹ This is a logical inference based on Romans 5:19 but is not a proper exegesis. In

⁵⁹ Brian Vickers states that "there is a corollary consideration to the believer's union with Christ, as seen most clearly in 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 and Romans 3:21-26, which is Christ's representative death on behalf of believers. The benefits of Christ's sacrificial death flowing to the believer are no more a legal fiction than Christ's dying for sinners is a legal fiction. In other words, the 'legal fiction' argument must logically conclude that Christ's sacrifice was also a legal fiction, a transaction that took place only in the mind of God" (Brian Vickers. *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness*, 218-219).

⁶⁰ Sproul, R. C. *Imputed vs Infused Righteousness* by R.C. Sproul, n.d., accessed October 31, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVK-dEGysM>

⁶¹ While Piper accurately refutes Robert Gundry's overall rejection of imputation, Piper fails to answer Gundry's denial of active obedience. Gundry denies that Christ's one act of righteousness is "inclusive of both his life and his death." Piper quotes Gundry: That one act of righteousness does not include Jesus' previous life any more than Adam's contrastive one transgression included a subsequent life of sinning. Contextually, Jesus' one act of righteousness refers to his dying for the ungodly, dying for us while we were still sinners, shedding his blood for our justification, and reconciling us to God through his death—period. (II, 15) Piper states that Gundry gives several

Romans 5:19, Paul wrote that for “one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” The contrast is between the one act of disobedience of Adam not a life of disobedience, and the one act of obedience of Christ in his death on the cross and not his life of obedience. The verse just before 5:19, makes this clear in the ESV: “Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.” Imputation is based exclusively of the sufferings of Christ on the cross not His life sufferings or his active obedience. Of course, Christ lived a perfectly holy life. He was and is the sinless God/Man. His atonement, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, however, is based on his death. The Old Testament atonement was based not on a blemishless lamb but on the shedding of the blood of the Passover lamb. God said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you” with which New Testament Epistles agree: “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7).⁶²

‘data’ in support of this view. Only one of Gundry’s arguments is given here, which is the opinion of this author, and which Piper did not answer: Gundry calls attention to “[the references earlier in Romans 5 to Christ’s] dying for the ungodly, dying for us while we were still sinners, shedding his blood for our justification, and reconciling us to God through his death [vv. 6-11].” While I disagree with Gundry’s overall view of imputation, he is correct in arguing against active obedience by referring to the emphasis Paul gives in Romans 5 to Christ death on the cross for our sins and not His life of obedience. In other words, the context in Romans 4 and 5 is the passive obedience of Christ or His death on the cross as the basis for the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believing sinner and not His life of obedience (Piper, John. *Counted Righteous in Christ?: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness?* 2002, Kindle Locations 1691-1698).

⁶² Robert Lightner gives convincing arguments for the passive obedience or only His death on the cross as substitutionary. Dr. Lightner shows the connection between the active obedience view and the Covenant of Works in Covenant theology: One’s view of the value of Christ’s life sufferings and obedience to the Law is directly related to acceptance or rejection of Covenant theology. If it can be conceded, as Covenant theology contends, that God made a covenant with Adam promising him eternal life for his obedience, and if this covenant is the basis for all God’s redemptive dealing with man for all ages, then belief in the substitutionary nature of Christ’s sufferings in life is a natural corollary. This is so because just as the first Adam, represented his posterity, so Christ, the last Adam, represented the same group. Because the first Adam sinned he plunged the entire human race into sin. Christ as the last Adam, in addition to coming to die for our sins, came to do for the race what the first Adam fail to do---obey God and thus fulfill His part of the covenant.... the most serious weakness of all is the stark fact that no Scripture assigns substitution to the life sufferings of Christ. On the contrary, Scripture abounds with evidence that, through His substitutionary death on the cross, and that alone, He took the sinner’s place and died in the sinner’s stead (Isa. 53:6-7; Rom. 3:18, 24-25; 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:14-21; 1 Peter 2:24) (Robert Lightner. *Sin, the Savior, and Salvation*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991, 92).

Like David in Psalm 32:2, every child of God should bless the Lord because the righteousness of His Son is eternally reckoned to his record and that sin will never again be imputed to his account.

To pursue a Biblical social justice does not mean orthodox doctrines, such as, imputation, must be abandoned. William Wilberforce was a Biblical Social Justice Warrior in the 18th century. It was through his untiring efforts for over forty years that finally abolished the slave trade and not just the slave trade but slavery in Great Britain.⁶³ Wilberforce not only believed strongly in all the core doctrines that Rauschenbusch rejected, but he believed that these core doctrines must be the bases of social justice.⁶⁴

In conclusion, Walter Rauschenbusch's social gospel is a false gospel in contrast and opposition to the saving gospel of Christ. Haldeman's concluding indictment and critique of Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis* is a fitting conclusion of this article:

However skillfully Professor Rauschenbusch may have presented the case for Christian socialism, a faithful analysis of his book will show that it is composed of modified German rationalism (echoes of Wellhausen and Harnack), twentieth century

⁶³ Piper in *Amazing Grace in the Life of William Wilberforce* lists a sampling of the 66 diverse Christian and social justice endeavors Wilberforce was involved in addition to the abolition of slavery: His involvements ranged widely. He was involved with the British Foreign Bible Society, the Church Missionary Society, the Society for the Manufacturing Poor, and the Society for the Better Observance of Sunday. He worked for the alleviation of harsh child labor conditions (like the use of small boys by chimney sweeps to climb up chimneys), for agricultural reform that supplied affordable food to the poor, for prison reform and the restriction of capital punishment from cavalier use, and for the prevention of cruelty to animals (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 36-37. Piper added: Is it not remarkable that one of the greatest politicians of Britain and one of the most persevering public warriors for social justice should elevate doctrine so highly? Perhaps this is why the impact of the church today is as weak as it is. Those who are most passionate about being practical for the public good are often the least doctrinally interested or informed. Wilberforce would say: You can't endure in bearing fruit if you sever the root. From the beginning of his Christian life in 1785 until he died in 1833, Wilberforce lived off the "great doctrines of the gospel," especially the doctrine of justification by faith alone based on the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ (Ibid., 75).

⁶⁴ In his *A Practical View of Christianity*, Wilberforce defended Christ's death for sinners and the result of justification by faith. Christianity is a scheme "for justifying the ungodly" [Romans 4: 5], by Christ's dying for them "when yet sinners" [Romans 5: 6– 8], a scheme "for reconciling us to God— when enemies" [Romans 5: 10]; and for making the fruits of holiness the effects, not the cause, of our being justified and reconciled: that, in short, it opens freely the door of mercy, to the greatest and vilest of penitent sinners; that obeying the blessed impulse of the grace of God, whereby they had been awakened from the sleep of death, and moved to seek for pardon (Wilberforce, William. *A Practical View of Christianity*. Hendrickson Christian Classics, 1996. Kindle Locations 1509-1513).

humanitarianism, and the doctrine of a Christ and a Church unknown to Paul. The earnestness of the book.... its subtle denial of inspiration, its discount of New Testament integrity, and the unmiraculous Christ in whose name it comes, make it a dangerous bit of reading to unformed faith, and to minds swayed by sentiment rather than a 'thus saith the Lord.'⁶⁵

There is one even more fitting conclusion to Rauschenbusch's social gospel and especially for any evangelical who would exalt Rauschenbusch as an example to follow in pursuing Biblical social justice. While we admire his devotion and zeal for the betterment of society and the suffering, and his personal morality, these virtues do not sanitize his unorthodox message. Paul's pronouncement on the Galatian heresy being entertained by the Galatian believers is equally appropriate to Rauschenbusch's denial of Christ's all sufficient death for the sins of the world as the only hope of salvation and those evangelicals who would promote Rauschenbusch:

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9 ESV).

⁶⁵ Haldeman, *Professor Rauschenbusch's "Christianity and the Social Crisis"*, 42.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Beall, Todd S. "Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1-11," in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury. Green Forest: Master Books, 2008.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church: Trent Edition* (Kindle Locations 2918-2920). Kindle Edition.
- Dodd, C. D. *The Bible and the Greeks*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935.
- Evans, Christopher H. *The Kingdom Is Always But Coming: A Life of Walter Rauschenbusch*. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2010.
- George, Timothy. *Baptist Theologians*. Edited by David Dockery. Nashville, Tenn: Baptist Sunday School Board, 1990.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Zondervan, 2000.
- Haldeman, I. M. *Professor Rauschenbusch's "Christianity and the Social Crisis"*. New York: The Book Stall, n.d.
- Hodge, Charles. *An Exposition of the Second Letter to the Corinthians*. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1862.
- Holmes, Stephen R. *Baptist Theology*. 1 edition. London: T&T Clark, 2012.
- Horton, Michael. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*. Zondervan, 2011.
- Hughes, Philip Edgecumbe. *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Garrett, James Leo, Jr. *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*. Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 2009.
- Keller, Timothy. *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just*. Penguin Books, 2012.
- Lightner, Robert. *Sin, the Savior, and Salvation*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991.
- Luther, Martin. *Epistola beati Pauli apostolic ad Romanos incipit*, WA 56: 269; translation Tillmanns and Preus, Luther's Works 25: 258.
- Morris, Leon. *Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955.

- Murray, John, and Carl Trueman. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2015.
- _____. *Romans* NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968.
- _____. *The Imputation of Adam's Sin*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959.
- Piper, John. *Amazing Grace in the Life of William Wilberforce*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2006.
- _____. *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness?* Wheaton: Crossway, 2002.
- Ramsay, William M. *Four Modern Prophets: Walter Rauschenbusch*. Atlantic: John Knox Press, 1973.
- Rauschenbusch, Walter. *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, STIFF WRAPS edition. (Abingdon Press, 1945).
- _____. *Christianity and the Social Crisis in the 21st Century: The Classic That Woke Up the Church*. HarperOne, 2008.
- _____. "The Bushnellan Theory of Atonement," Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School. n.d.
- _____. "WR, 'The Kingdom of God' Cleveland Young Men," January 9, 1913. Box 39. Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*. New Edition edition. Chicago, Ill: Moody Publishers, 1999.
- Shedd, William. *Dogmatic Theology*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980,
- Strausbaughaug, John. *The New York Times*. 17, 2007.
- Strong, Augustus. "Augustus Strong to WR," December 28, 1917. Boxes 31, 155. Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School.
- _____. *Systematic Theology*. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1953.
- Sweet, Leonard. *Me and We: God's New Social Gospel*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014.
- Sproul, R. C. *Imputed vs Infused Righteousness by R.C. Sproul*, n.d. Accessed October 31, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P78g87h9J5M>.

Tennant, F. R. *The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin*. Cambridge: The University Press, 1903.

Vickers, Brian. *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006.

Waterworth, J. Ed. and trans. *The Council of Trent: The Canon and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*. London: Dolmar, 1848.

Wiersbe, Warren W. *Key Words of the Christian Life: Understanding and Applying Their Meanings*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002.

Wilberforce, William. *A Practical View of Christianity*. (Hendrickson Christian Classics, 1996).

Wright, N. T. *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1997.

CONTENDING VERSES DEFENDING THE FAITH

Sychellus W. Njibwakale *

I. INTRODUCTION

O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness (1 Tim. 6:11; KJV).¹ The phrase “earnestly contending for the faith” (ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι) is an expressive compound infinitive which is only used in Jude 3 in the whole New Testament corpus. The verb (ἀγωνίζομαι), which is an English form meaning to “agonize,” was commonly used in connection with the Greek stadium to show a strenuous struggle to overcome an opponent, as in a wrestling contest. It was also used more generally of any conflict, debate, or lawsuit. This involves the thought of the expenditure of all one’s energy in order to prevail. According to Alford, the preposition ἐπί (epi) in the compound “gives the purpose for which the fight is to be waged.”²

In this article, the author explores the concept of contending for the faith as the foundation of Defending the Faith. The author believes that to defend the faith fully, one needs to contend with the faith first. This will be done through some semi examination of the biblical text especially Jude 3-4 as well as through drawing some biblical examples of individuals who defended the faith by contending for it.

What is the “Faith” for to which one is to contend? In this context, faith has a reference to the body of basic Christian doctrine and Christian truth. This Christian doctrine is the object for which believers are earnestly to contend. This body of doctrine is complete and must govern the

* Sychellus W. Njibwakale is a Ph.D. student at Temple Baptist Seminary of Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture quotations in this article are from the King James Version.

² Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament* (reprint) 4 vols. In 2, Chicago: Moody, 1958, 4:530.

meaning of the terms in which doctrine stands. This is similar to what John said to his readers not to add to or subtract away from the Word (Rev. 22:19). Mombert writes that contending is “to fight, standing upon a thing which is assaulted and which the adversary desires to take away, and it is to fight so as to defend it, and to retain it.”³ The present tense shows that contending and defending are not a one-time duty, but they are the continuing duty of the believers. However, Woods remarks, “These efforts are, it is surely unnecessary to add, of a moral and persuasive nature only; all force of a physical nature being expressly forbidden the faith.”⁴

The faith (τη πίστει) for which believers are to contend is the gospel of Jesus Christ that convicts the believer’s heart to receive salvation. As Jude writes, the faith to contend for is that “which was once delivered unto the saints.” The phrase “once delivered” denotes the end of the faith. Wards notes, “An apt commentary on it would be the Epistle to the Hebrews, concerned as it is with the finality.”⁵ To defend the gospel effectively demands that the truth of God must be embodied in the life of the defender of the gospel. Morgan writes, “The final argument for faith in the world is not the argument of words, but the argument of life.”⁶ As such, it is the responsibility of every believer to be part and parcel of the defenders and preservers of the faith. This requires sainthood in the believer.

³ G. F. C. Fronmuller, “*The Epistle General of Jude*,” in *Lange’s Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, with additions by J. Isidor Mombert (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 13.

⁴ Guy N. Woods, *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude* (Nashville: gospel Advance, 1954), 385.

⁵ Ronald A. Ward, *The Epistle of John and Jude: A Study Manual, Shield Bible Study Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1965), 78.

⁶ G. Campbell Morgan, *Living Message of the Books of the Bible*, 4 vols. (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1912), 4:203.

Barclay notes that this faith was “delivered;” it was “not something which the believers have manufactured and discovered for themselves.”⁷ It will not be delivered for the second time; it was “once for all.” This faith was delivered through Jesus and his apostles. As divinely as it was given, this faith allows no additions, alterations, and anything of such kind, as was being introduced by false teachers. At the same time, no new generation will require a new faith or revelation. This is because the foundation truth of Christian faith as well as the gospel of Christ are not negotiable. For that matter, it is the duty of every generation to study such revealed truth and apply to their time and situation. The common destination for which the faith was entrusted was the “saints,” who were “the believers in the early church.”⁸

When this faith is delivered to the “saints,” it does not imply that this faith is to be the possession of any one local body of believers, or church leaders within the church. But as Barclay writes, “The Christian faith comes down within the church, is preserved within the church, and is understood within the church.”⁹ The use of the term “saints” by Jude shows the contrast between true believers and the libertines who are rejected in this epistle of Jude. Their lives and conducts, as well as their teachings that justify their immoral way of life have demonstrated that they were not in line with “the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.”

The Christians ought to take these cardinal doctrines— “the faith” seriously and live practicing them, drawing from them important lessons and principles for daily living as a body of Christ. These doctrines are not to be denied nor distorted in any way. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul used similar terminology, when he stated that “I have fought a good fight, I have

⁷ William Barclay, *The Letters of John and Jude*, The Daily Study Bible (Edinburgh: Saint Andrews, 1960), 209.

⁸ Cf. Acts 9:13, 32, 41; 26:10; Rom. 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25–26; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:1; Eph. 1:1, 15; Phil. 4:21. Here, the saints are pictured as consecrated to God through being called out of the world in order to live an exemplary holy life.

⁹ Barclay, 210.

finished my course, I have kept the faith” (4:7). This doctrinal statement is not limited to a generation of believers, but it applies to all believers of all generations. It is to be applied into the contemporary Christian experience.

II. DEFENDING THE FAITH

“I Gave All Diligence To Write Unto You Of The Common Salvation.”

Jude felt an urgent need, as well as an intense burden to write about the “*common salvation*.” This was occasioned by the fact that the church had begun to be infiltrated by false unwarranted teachers who are trying to twist the Christian faith. As such, Jude thought it needful to remind his believing audience about the salvation that all born again believers have. By “common salvation,” the author refers to God’s gift of eternal life that true believers share. Qualitatively as well as quantitatively speaking, all Christians receive the same salvation in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing like varying degrees of salvation; no one is more saved than another. Jude is emphasizing the doctrine of salvation in all its aspects, namely, justification, sanctification, glorification, and so on.

Jude may have wanted his believing audience to know whom and what they have believed, and by knowing, they will not doubt their salvation when false teachers persuade them to leave the way of the Lord. Before Jude was written, Paul’s epistles to the Romans, Galatians as well as Hebrews had already circulated among churches and they were well-grounded in the faith. Jude’s aim was to defend that body of truth. On the other hand, a Christian is not only called to believe the Word of God but also to defend it in all ways.

Because of the dangers surrounding the Church, Jude urges the believers to “*earnestly contend*” for the faith. The etymology for the word “earnestly contend” is the word in which we get the English word “agonize.” This is a strong term for “struggle.” It is a call for one “to exert

intense effort on behalf of something.”¹⁰ It is a language of the military, and the word can be translated as “fight.” Paul tells Timothy, “Fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). Therefore, as believers, we are to defend the faith against false teachers, heresies, worldliness, and so on. This is done by means of the Word of God which is the Sword of the Spirit (Ephes. 6:17). In the Christian context, defending the faith means spiritual warfare. This does not involve rifles and grenades, or any firearms (John 18:36). In other words, when we preach, write, and conduct ourselves by Christian principles, we are earnestly contending for the faith.

The spiritual warfare battle is a prolonged one. As such, we need to earnestly contend for the faith every day. As the church’s agonizing work, there should be a constant, consistent, and continual struggle for the purity of the church and her message. Jeffrey Khoo writes, “When a person believes in the Holy Bible and obeys it, he goes against the philosophy and praxis of a God-denying and Gospel-hating world.”¹¹ As a Christian, all forms of abuse (especially, verbal abuse, discrimination, incarceration, and so on) can be expected. But a Christian contender is urged to withstand all these forms of abuse and remain faithful to His Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As earlier noted, we have to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. In this respect, faith can be understood in two ways: in the subjective ways of personal life (for instance, belief, trust, submission, surrender, etc.), or in the objective way of Christian faith (thus, Christian religion, the body of truth that Christianity is based upon). In fact, Jude, in his mind, is referring to the later. This faith is contrasted with other faiths in the manner that it is the “only true faith or the only true religion.” As John and Paul writes, “True forgiveness of sin with its

¹⁰ Cf: Luke 13:24; John 18:36; 1 Cor. 9:25; Col. 1:29, 4:12; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.

¹¹ Jeffrey Khoo, *Read, Pray, and Grow* (July-September 2003) (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2003), 71.

promise of eternal life is found only in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6, 1 Tim 2:5). To the amazement of Christians today, they fail “to earnestly contend for the faith.” Instead, they contend for the sake of being spectators and not gladiators.

III. EXAMPLES OF CONTENDERS AND THE DEFENDERS OF FAITH

In the book of Numbers 22:15–35, Balak wants to bring down the destruction of Israel. For Balak to succeed, he requested Balaam to curse the Israelites. As for Balaam, he appeared to be a man of God, who had integrity, and refused the countenance of Balak’s wicked motives. After being enticed with increased rewards, Balaam’s Spiritual life dwindled, and he felt constrained to pray over the matter once again. To his delight, God consented to his request. While on the way going, God opened the mouth of Balaam’s ass so that it could speak to the prophet.

Balaam had determined that he would earnestly contend for the faith. However, because of the king and the gifts, as well as the respect accorded to him, Balaam was in a fix. He wanted to help his powerful king Balak for the rewards he had been offered, but he thought it wise to give honor to God who chose him to be a prophet. During his last encounter with Balak (Num. 24:1–10), Balaam once again refused to curse Israel, but he instead blessed them before returning to his place. Balaam could not the Israelites contrary to the instruction of God, but he demonstrated to Balak how to lead the people into spiritual immorality, thus bringing about their undoing. Although Balaam appeared to be a defender of the faith, he was with no doubt a destroyer of the faith. Balaam was the false prophet who had a love for material things more than the love for truth.

In 1 Kings 22: 1–23, we find another good example for the defender of the faith. During the time of Micaiah, faith had truly taken deeper root. Micaiah fulfilled the role of a true prophet

and what he prophesied came to pass (Deut. 18:22). King Ahab, the king of Micaiah's time, had no business with him because much of what Micaiah spoke from God was against the kingship of Ahab. About four hundred apostate clergy of Samaria were Ahab's advisors concerning the city of Ramoth in Gilead. This city of Gilead, had earlier on the territory of Israel, but it had fallen in the hands of the Syrians. They were anticipating to wage war or not.

The false prophets of Baal were not interested in the truth. Instead, they were in for popularity. This is true of the modern day false prophets. They use enticing words to convince and lure their clients. The prophets of Baal had clerical collars, gowns, and degrees from liberal schools in Samaria, and they were devoid for truth. They perhaps felt that there was power in numerals, but God had sent a lying spirit into the mouths of these prophets to bring down the throne of Ahab.

When Jehoshaphat was approached to adopt Ahab's plan, and that of the false prophets, but he requested to be given more time to think about it. Micaiah was called to speak for the Lord, but his counsel was not accepted by Ahab. Micaiah was put on a lot of pressure to follow the false prophets, but he learned to "buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23). Micaiah was under the compulsion of the Holy Spirit to speak the truth even if it means being killed. God's approval counted first in his decision making, over material gains. Do we have the Micaiahs in our churches today?

Gideon was an earnest contender of faith, and he serves as a great encouragement and example to us today since he was an ordinary person in the community. Gideon seems to have been a son of a farmer, as he was busy working on threshing grain the time when the angel of God spoke to him. With other Israelites, Gideon was worried for fear of the marauding

Midianites who frequently attacked the Israelites. He did not believe when the angel referred to him as a “mighty man of valor” (Judges 6:12).

Gideon was so fearful and careful that he needed several signs from God to convince him that he was not an ordinary man but really a man God had chosen (God chose the weak things of this world). God tempted Gideon to see how obedient he is, when he instructed him to destroy all the idols belonging to his father and pull down the altar for Baal. Gideon risked his life and did as instructed. One can imagine the anxiety Gideon had when he learned that the Philistines have an army of 135,000 compared to his own army of 32,000 men. When God reduced the number to 300 men, Gideon must have been left with panic and fear. But one thing was sure; this battle was for God himself not for Gideon.

In Judges 6:1–24, that well-known battle is described to have been fought with pitchers and lamps. It emerged that the victory was for God’s people. The point to highlight here is that Gideon was an ordinary person who had an extraordinary God. When you count great people in the world, Gideon was not, but as Paul writes, God takes “the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and.. the weak things of the world to confound things which are mighty; and base things... things that are not ..” (1 Cor. 1:27–28). Why? Because: “That no flesh should glory in his presence” (1Cor 1:29).

David is described as the man after God’s own heart. His story has been an inspiration to God’s people forever. In whatever he did, he put God first, and that is why he succeeded immensely. He merited before God over his elder brothers because “the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Sam 16:7). David had love and zeal for God and these two credentials distinguished him from his brothers. When he went to the valley of Elah under the direction of his father, little did he know

that God was sending him for a big job. While there, it happened that Goliath, a Philistine giant, strutted out speaking his blasphemous utterances before the Israelite army. David asked, “How was it that no one was prepared to go out in the name of God and silence this man?” His brother Eliab had a different motif for David. He wanted David to go back home. Saul got the message that there is a young man who wants to fight with Goliath. In fact, if no one else would contend for God and the truth, David is ready.

You can imagine how the angels in heaven were in earnest to witness the scene. David wanted to go all alone trusting God. Saul’s chariots had its own weaknesses, and David did not want to depend on it, but to trust God alone for success. He armed himself with simple weapons of some staff and sling, and the protection of Israel’s God. Fortunately, the battle took the shortest time in the history of battles between the Israelites and Philistines. For human beings fight not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in the heavenly realm. Today, the Churches need someone like David who can go in the power of the Holy Spirit to fight with the giants of modernism, ecumenism, charismatic, neo-fundamentalism, and so on.

Jehoshaphat, like Ballam, had mixed characteristics. When he inquired about listening to the prophet of God, he concluded that the prophets of Baal had a flawed message. Jehoshaphat became a victim of the campaign for the wicked king Ahab, although Micaiah had issued a warning. Further, Jehoshaphat’s son married the daughters of Ahab, which was not a good decision too. In 1 Chronicles 20, we find Jehoshaphat fighting a battle against the Moabites, the battle was won without a single shot being fired. This was the work of God for His chosen king.

Jehoshaphat, who was from Judah/Jerusalem, had nothing to benefit from the northern territory of Israel which was ruled by king Ahab, goaded by the notorious wicked Jezebel.

Sincerely, God was not with Israel. Instead of Jehoshaphat remaining in Judah to build up the people of God, he was busy fraternizing with King Ahab who was doing evil all the time. Therefore, Jehoshaphat living a double standard life was no longer contending “for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

In the days of Elijah (1 Kings 18:17–45), the spiritual life was at a low ebb. People’s devotion to Jehovah was falling away, and the worship of Baal was getting shape to fill into the gaps. This may be termed as the ecumenical movement of the time, which had captured the life of many people. Although was not in line with God’s spiritual standards, it was practiced in the umbrella of Jehovah’s name. The worldly god, Satan, had blinded the souls and minds of many who had not believed, therefore, they could not distinguish between the true God and the false one.

Baal and his prophets had gained the ground and became the clergy of the day. In fact, they were the blind leaders leading other blind followers with their apparels of robes, collars, and doctorates. Elijah distinguished himself as the spiritual man of his day. He acknowledged the false worship of Baal. Since Elijah was a contender of faith and really wanted to defend the faith, he loved the truth, and hated devilish ways even if it meant death because of that. At Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:42ff), there was a great contest and Elijah felt completely alone in the battle. But God was pleased to reward His servant Elijah that day for the courage to remain true to worship Him.

The content of his prayer on that day is very significant. He did not pray for himself, or his own welfare, but for the people around him to know that what happened was the hand of God. The fell on the faces as the fire of the Lord fell crying; “The Lord, he is the God; the Lord,

he is the God” (1 Kings 18:39). The stand of Elijah may not be a popular one, but God blesses those who stand for the truth during difficult times, and earnestly embrace it.

Stephen challenged the Jews authorities asking, “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?” (Acts 7:52). Mostly likely nobody. Jeremiah received abuses more than he expected. Jeremiah was resisted by rulers, priests, false prophets, and other people. Jeremiah buckled under intense pressure, but God promised to stand with him all through. In Jeremiah 1:6, he described himself as “a child.” His age was a problem also to his call. He was divinely pre-ordained before he was born (1:5). Jeremiah could be called upon to speak to people older than him. In most cases, older people will refuse to listen to young pastors. Paul writes, “Let no man despise thy youth” (1 Tim. 4:12). This was Paul’s advice to young Timothy as he was commissioned to go out in the ministry.

Jeremiah was not self-confident about his calling. He felt threatened by the furious faces of the congregation. AS such, he needed God’s word for exhortation — “Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee” (Jer 1:8). Khoo narrates the episode for the young Carey saying,

William Carey, who originally traveled to China as a missionary, encountered a situation while on the ship. As he boarded the ship, some brother slipped a piece of paper into his hand, which he put in his pocket and promptly forgot about it. When young Carey stepped off the ship in China, surrounded by a sea of strange faces, he was filled with a feeling of indescribable isolation. The faces of the Chinese dock workers terrified him. His hand slip nervously into his pocket and there was the slip of paper. He took it out and read, “Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee” (Jer 1:8).¹²

Because Jeremiah was an earnest contender of the political and spiritual leaders of his day, it caused quite a bit of offense. He was called several names, including being called a traitor for urging surrender to the Babylonian forces who were plotting to seize Jerusalem. On one

¹² Khoo, 72.

occasion, Jeremiah was hit in the face by a priest called Pashur, and he was thrown in the stocks for the whole night (Jer 20:2). When he came out the following day, Jeremiah staged a scathing denunciation of Pashur terming him as a terror.

Jeremiah was distracted and discouraged because of Pashur's activity, and resolved to quit earnestly contending. Jeremiah recalled that, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer 20:9). Several year later, the apostle Paul was found in the same situation while preaching Christ; "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16). As such, whatever we do, and wherever we go, there will be no real satisfaction and fulfillment in life unless we proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

The other example to offer in contending and defending the faith, is the story of the three Hebrew men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The unwillingness of these three young men to bow before the statue of king Nebuchadnezzar is significant for our study today as far as contending is concerned. Their refusal to bow before the image was because it was idolatrous practice of their people in Israel and Judah which led to exile. The king issued threats of live cremation if they fail to worship the images.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego remained firm saying that they are not anxious concerning the whole idea. Despite the king's threats, they knew that their God, whom they serve, is capable of saving them as well as delivering them from the fiery furnace. The king's anger kindled the culprits were thrown into the flame of burning fire and the intense heat killed instead the men who threw them into the furnace. God rewarded them for their faithfulness by delivering them save from the furnace. King Nebuchadnezzar identified the figure in the fire as

one “like the Son of God” (Dan 3:25). God is always aware of the pressure imposed upon His servants even in the present age. The writer of the book of Hebrews recounts, “The Lord is my helper; and I will not fear what man shall do unto me” (Heb 13:6).

This list cannot be complete without citing Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Stephen was an earnest, devout, and dedicated godly person. The Jews tried to find fault in Stephen, but failed, though they went ahead and persecuted him. Stephen’s words, works, and wisdom were utterly irrefutable, and that made the Jews angrier than ever. They convinced the people that they found Stephen speaking blasphemous words to Moses and God. Such false accusation was also used by the wicked queen Jezebel and king Ahab to punish Naboth (1 Kings 21:1–16).

The book of Acts 7 gives a brilliant defense account of Stephen during his trial. His overview of the Old Testament narrative was the standpoint that the Jewish leaders used to put the messiah to murder. Stephen referred to them as “stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers, so do ye” (Acts 7:51). These people had killed the prophets and had now betrayed and murdered “the Just One” (Acts 7:52).

Stephen made the good news plain and simple that every listener could understand the point. The Jews were not happy. Stephen’s eyes were not on earth, he looked up in heaven, and thereafter, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. From no time, Stephen spread with rocks and stones, and shortly, his body was no more, but his soul was with the Lord. In other words, the world and the devil demonstrated its contempt for those who are earnestly contending and defending the faith.

IV. CONCLUSION

We have been examining how to earnestly contend for the faith, and we have seen that a serious contender is also a serious defender of the faith. As we contend for the faith, we should

be aware that there are those who do not, and they may pull us back. So, we are contending along with false prophets and teachers. In such instances, believers ought to contend firmly, and defend the faith mightily, but in love. In contending and defending, the aim is to reclaim these false prophets and teachers back to Christ. This message is significant for the twenty-first century millennial churches. We must proclaim the truth and defend it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alford, Henry. *The Greek Testament* (reprint) 4 vols. In 2, Chicago: Moody, 1958.
- Barclay, William. *The Letters of John and Jude, The Daily Study Bible*. Edinburgh: Saint Andrews, 1960.
- Fronmuller, G. F. C. "The Epistle General of Jude," in *Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, with additions by J. Isidor Mombert. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.
- Khoo, Jeffrey. *Read, Pray, and Grow* (July-September 2003) Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2003.
- Morgan, G. Campbell. *Living Message of the Books of the Bible*, 4 vols. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1912.
- Ward, Ronald A. *The Epistle of John and Jude: A Study Manual, Shield Bible Study Series*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1965.
- Woods, Guy N. *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles of Peter, John, and Jude*. Nashville: gospel Advance, 1954.

THE NECESSITY OF A LITERAL ADAM IN PAULINE SOTERIOLOGY

J. Thad Harless, PhD, DMIN*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Christian Church for nearly two millennia has largely considered the Hexaemeron narratives, including the Edenic story of Adam and Eve, as a literal revelation from God.¹ Nevertheless, from roughly the nineteenth century to our current era, the literal understanding of the creation narrative and the first inhabitants of Eden has largely waned in favor of a more scientifically involved, allegorical, mythological or archetypal understanding.² Rather than submissively accepting these more recent frames of modern understanding, this author contends that historical investigation coupled with carefully examined biblical texts demand that these more liberal interpretations be questioned in regards to their theological, historical-contextual and exegetical integrity. The contentions of this author originated and are heightened by his comprehending of the potentially severe ramifications to Pauline soteriology should these non-literal understandings be accepted. The author, therefore, will argue in this effort for the necessity of understanding Adam as a literal, historical figure and fountainhead of humanity, through a historical and theological defense preserving historically orthodox, evangelical Pauline soteriology.

The forthcoming argument of the author is necessary in evangelical academia as it can rightfully be asserted that other than Jesus of Nazareth, there is no more important figure to Pauline soteriology than the biblical character of Adam. Indeed, one could posit that without a

*J. Thad Harless is an adjunct professor of leadership at Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, NC and the senior pastor of New Life Christian Church, Morton, IL.

¹ C. John Collins, *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 11.

² Terry Mortenson, *The Great Turning Point: The Churches Catastrophic Mistake on Geology Before Darwin*, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2004), Kindle Location 8171, 8181 of 11271.

literal Adam, the Pauline doctrine encompassing sin and salvation would be diminished or perhaps even destroy Paul's explanatory power in describing Christ's soteriological work.³ A recent article in *Christianity Today* has captured the truth of this alarming possibility within the title of the article, *No Adam, No Eve, No Gospel*.⁴

It is with great concern, therefore, that the author will attempt to achieve a defense of the literal Adam, and the preservation of historically orthodox evangelical Pauline soteriology by way of a three-pronged argument. First, the author will consider briefly the modern origins and evolving impact of the seemingly unquestioned trend of non-literal, mythical, metaphorical or archetypal views of Adam and their non-biblical derivations. These non-biblical derivations, of course, being that these understandings were first derived not from a proper biblical-theological or historical-contextual interpretation of Scripture or understanding of Church history, but rather dictated by the influence of scientific theory and naturalism. In other words, the origins of doubt concerning a literal, biblical Adam, stem not from a careful study of the biblical text or historical understanding, but a largely uniform concession to unobservable and disputable scientific theories. The author hopes that with the former understood, even as it is only briefly reviewed due to the constraints of this assignment, that a reasonable searching out of Paul's understanding of Adam in regards to his soteriological theology can be entertained without first conceding the ownership of truth to theoretical science.

Second, the author will review the historical understanding of several of the early Church Fathers regarding the biblical Adam and transition to discover the views of Adam by those most potentially influential to and contemporaneous with the apostle Paul. This second step, the author theorizes, will vindicate the high probability of Paul's literal understanding of Adam as this was

³ John C. Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 76.

⁴ No Adam, No Eve, No Gospel, *Christianity Today*, 6/6/2011, 55.

the understanding of many within the era prior to and by his historical contemporaries during and just after his New Testament writings.

The author will conclude his defense by examining several New Testament texts which will essentially eliminate the possibility of a non-literal interpretation of the biblical Adam. Indeed, the author hopes that in this work he might preserve and hold a proper exegesis and interpretation of Scripture, a correct view of historical doctrines concerning Adam and a more literal understanding of these texts freed from the inappropriate and theoretical influence of scientific theory and naturalism, thereby preserving a conservative, evangelical Pauline soteriology.

II. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF A NON-LITERAL ADAM

The Beginning Of Doubt

The questioning of the literal truth of Scripture arose slowly in modernity, particularly with the rise of Deism in Great Britain during the seventeenth century.⁵ Strengthening Deism, was the wonder of Newtonian physics, championed by Isaac Newton (1642-1727), which successfully formulated the laws of gravity, physics, and mathematics. Newtonian theories allowed Deists of this era to propagate their belief in the eternalism of matter, which in turn would play a crucial role in the eventual acceptance of evolution as a scientific theory.⁶ Timothy Hutton (1726-1797) would provide another key role for the future acceptance of evolutionary theory and a growing distrust of the biblical record of origins. Hutton's publication of the *Theory of the Earth* (1795) is held by many historians of science to be the beginning of modern geology. Hutton proposed uniformitarianism, or the principle of uniformity, as an alternative to catastrophism, holding that

⁵ Don Thorsen and Keith H. Reeves, *What Christians Believe About the Bible: A Concise Guide for Students* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 143.

⁶ Kenneth D. Keathley and Mark F. Rooker, *40 Questions About Creation and Evolution*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic Publishing, 2014), 182.

all geological history can be explained by the same gradual processes observable by modern man. Geologist who would follow Hutton would argue for an ancient earth and none of these advocates was more popular than Charles Lyell (1791-1875). Lyell in his work, *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833), persuasively argued that the geologic column demonstrated that the earth was very old and had changed its form slowly through conditions such as erosion.⁷ Lyell's argument would have a tremendous impact on Charles Darwin (1809-1882), who would pen *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which would forever impact man's understanding of humanity's origins and opened the Pandora's Box of evolutionary theory.

Indeed, while the seventeenth century saw the origins of western biblical skepticism, the true ascension of biblical doubt launched with the rising influence of Darwinism, emerging geological theories of earth history and the critical methods of biblical interpretation to follow in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁸ These emerging fields of research combined in modernity to form a trident, stabbing into the heart of biblical literalism and the trustworthiness of the sacred text.⁹ Until this modern period, there was a general consensus that the Bible was literally true and even that the Pentateuch was a unified, coherent work that came substantially from the pen of Moses.¹⁰ In other words, until this modern era, the Bible, including Genesis and its characters, was largely understood to be a literal, historical record of the universe and mankind. There can be no doubt that the influence of scientific theory and naturalism led to new theories and conceptualizations regarding the formerly literal understandings of the Hexaemeron narratives and humanities origins.

⁷ Ibid., 183.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ken Ham, *The New Answers Book I* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2011), 25.

¹⁰ Kenneth A. Matthews, Genesis 1-11:26 v. 1A, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Scripture*, (B &H Publishing: Nashville, TN, 1996), 67.

The literal understanding of humanity's origins and the Hexaemeron narratives as recorded in the Bible would not be championed effectively again until the rise of young-earth creationism in the middle of the twentieth century.¹¹ A large number of creationists would point to the launch of the movement with the release of *The Genesis Flood*, written by John Whitcomb (1924-) and Henry Morris (1918-2006). Combining flood geology with the mature creation hypothesis, *The Genesis Flood* presented a compelling argument against eternalism and evolutionary science, invigorating conservative theologians to once more unashamedly promote the literal interpretations of Scripture, particularly those found in the early chapters of Genesis. This author is one who is indebted to these men that wedded together exemplary faith in the Word of God with higher level thinking, providing the foundation for conservative creationism scholarship.

Evolved Understandings Of A Non-literal Adam

From the nineteenth century onward, more liberal interpretations of the biblical texts have evolved and are multitudinous. In regards to these evolutions, the mythological, allegorical or archetypal views of the early accounts of Genesis and the Hexaemeron narratives are among the most advocated. Many biblical scholars who hold to these positions find that the creation accounts are purely fictional literary devices and are not historical, yet to some degree maintain a vestige of truthfulness and are advantageous for understanding mankind. Others understand Adam's importance as purely representative of mankind and if he existed, his position as the literal fountainhead of humanity is untenable, unprovable or inconsequential.

Mythological or allegorical theologians such as Karl Hand, attempt to seek out the anthropological understanding of myth or pseudo-truth in holding that the Genesis account of origins is true in the sense that it demonstrates humanities condition through story or literary

¹¹ Keathley and Rooker, 187.

device, but not true in regards to empirical history.¹² Dundes¹³ and Kirk¹⁴ prefer to understand this mytholization or pseudo-truth in a similar fashion, as they define this type of truth as a sacred narrative, explaining the worldview or practice of a people through purportedly historical events that are in their entirety, mythological. Borg comments on this type of metaphysical truthfulness in that,

The Genesis stories of creation, the garden of Eden, the expulsion of Adam and Eve...Noah and the flood and the tower of Babel are what might be called “purely metaphorical narratives.” They are not reporting the early history of the earth and humankind; they are not history remembered. Yet as metaphorical narratives, they can be profoundly truthful, even though not literally factual.¹⁵

Walton describes his archetypal view of Adam as a potential historical person, “in a real past...[yet is] persuaded that the biblical text is more interested in [Adam] as an archetypal figure who represents all of humanity...[and the Bible is] not addressing the material formation of Adam as a biological specimen...Adam and Eve may or may not be the first humans or the parents of the entire human race”.¹⁶ Whether allegorical, mythological or archetypal, biblical scholarship since the nineteenth century has evolved, producing enormous volumes of research trending away from the belief of a literal, historical Adam.

Ian Barbour, noted scientist and theologian, discerns well how these scholars might first have evolved and cemented their allegorical, mythological or archetypal understandings of the biblical figure of Adam. As the author has previously contended, Barbour’s understandings of the

¹² Karl Hand, *Covenant and Myth: Can Reformed Theology Survive Without Adam and Eve*, *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 19.1 (April 2012).

¹³ Alan Dundes, *Sacred Narrative: Reading in the Theory of Myth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 45.

¹⁴ G.S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 57.

¹⁵ Marcus J. Borg, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003), 49-52.

¹⁶ Stanley Gundry, *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 894 of 5617.

historical Adam, like his peers, have expressed reservations over the literalness of the Genesis account remarking that,

Because of evolutionary history, the fall of Adam and Eve cannot be taken literally. There was no garden of Eden, no original state of innocence free of death and suffering from which humanity fell. The fall can be taken as a powerful symbolic expression of human sinfulness, where sin is understood as self-centeredness and estrangement from God and other people, and one might add, from the world of nature.¹⁷

Lamoureux similarly, would add that the biblical understanding of Adam is predicated upon God's accommodating to man's phenomenological perspective and that, "Adam's existence is based ultimately on an ancient conceptualization of human origins...to use technical terminology, Adam is the retrojective conclusion of an ancient taxonomy...ancient science does not align with physical reality, it follows that Adam never existed."¹⁸ One should note from these quotes that it would appear that the belief that Adam cannot be the literal progenitor of humanity is not first derived from the scholarly theological, or exegetical interpretation of the early Genesis narrative, but rather first stems from a premise found within evolutionary or natural science. Hence proving the authors previous contention and solidifies the influence of other fields of inquiry, beyond what is permissible.

R.J. Berry has found that the assumption of the liberal scholarship is that our first parents were mythical or illustrative because of a unnecessary and misplaced attempt allow evolutionary science to determine the meaning of Scripture.¹⁹ Certainly, the allegorical, mythological or archetypal understandings espoused by theologians and scientists press a type of accommodated truth, relegating the figure of Adam to a figment of ancient storytelling or only a singular

¹⁷ Ian Barbour, *When Science Meets Religion* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2000), 133.

¹⁸ Denis Lamoureux *Four Views on the Historical Adam: Evolutionary Creation View*, ed. Gundry, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), location 892 of 5617.

¹⁹ R.J. Berry, "Adam or Adamah?", *Science & Christian Belief* 23, no 1 (2011), 41.

individual, from a long line of individuals, that has been selected as a metaphorical basis of general or hypothetical comparison. The author certainly does not hold that thinking men should eschew science or scientific insight, but rather seek to give scientific insight its proper weight. The brief, liberal interpretive history presented by the author of the historical and biblical figure of Adam from the modern era forward should challenge the conservative scholar to point out liberal understandings historicity and evidentiary theories, noting its recent development and propensity to conjecture scientific fact to uncomfortable levels. If followed, this advice would allow the weight of the Church's historical understanding of Adam and biblical scholarship to converse with these modern contentions on equal footing, providing for a proper and robust consideration of the historical Adam, literal or not. It is the intention of the author to now develop that conversation.

III. THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY

The Position Of The Church Fathers

The Church Fathers are those early Christians, theologians, teachers and bishops who wrote Christian theologies and apologetics, often in times of pressing heresy. These were ancient thinkers who were often well versed in the Jewish Scriptures and guided the understanding of the nascent Church as the New Testament emerged as an authoritative witness of faith history.²⁰ As such, the understandings of these men provided by the author will illuminate interpretations regarding the biblical Adam within two to three generations after the apostle Paul's writing. This proximity to Paul's writings should enlighten the reader to Paul's most probable understanding regarding the biblical figure of Adam. Indeed, Christian thinkers should be aware of the, "great cloud of witnesses in Church history, and realize that a judicious use of the fathers can be both

²⁰ Peter C. Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2008), 57-58.

relevant and edifying...In being tutored by the fathers, we will be better armed to discern and respond to the novel theological heterodoxies in their day and ours.”²¹

Justin Martyr. Justin Martyr (AD 100-165) was converted to Christianity in about AD 190 and became an early apologist for the Christian faith.²² He is known for his works the *Apologia* and *Dialogues with Trypho*.²³ In relation to the Hexaemeron narratives, a literal Adam figures prominently in Justin’s writings. Consider from Justin’s Dialogue 124 as he writes concerning mankind that they may become sons of God “like Adam and Eve,” and speaks of their personal judgement by God.²⁴ Consider also another chapter in which Justin refers to Eve being made “from one of Adam’s ribs.”²⁵ It would appear conclusively then, that this Church Father, from no more than a hundred years from Paul’s writing in the New Testament, maintained Adam to be a literal human being.

Melita of Sardis. Melita of Sardis (died AD 180) was a second century bishop of Sardis and also had a literal view of Adam. In his *On Pascha*, line 83, Melita genealogically writes that,

The one who set in motion the stars of heaven, the one who caused those luminaries to shine, the one who made the angels in heaven, the one who established their thrones in that place, the one who by himself fashioned man upon earth. This was the one who chose you, the one who guided you from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Isaac and Jacob and the Twelve Patriarchs. (PP 83)²⁶

²¹ James R. Mook, *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2012), 25.

²² Jonathan Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise: A Biblical and Scientific Refutation of Progressive Creationism as Popularized by Astronomer Hugh Ross*, (Atlanta: Creation Book Publishers, 2011), 114.

²³ Bouteneff, 57-58.

²⁴ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Dial. 124, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathes/01286.htm> (accessed December, 20, 2017).

²⁵ Ibid., 84.

²⁶ Melita, *On Pascha*.

Interestingly, neither Fathers Justin nor Melito, who were both lovers of typology, listed Adam as a type of Christ.²⁷ Rather, they understood and described Adam as a literal figure and the first father of humanity.

Irenaeus. Irenaeus (AD 125-202) was a disciple of Polycarp (c AD 69-155), who in turn was known as a disciple of the apostle John.²⁸ Irenaeus became bishop of Lyons, and was an early apologist of the faith who would become a martyr. He is remembered for his brilliance in his extant works of *Against Heresies* and the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*. These are works in which Bouteneff writes that, “we witness a parabolic leap both in the exegesis of Scripture and in the identification of its canonical books”.²⁹ This early Father actually began to mold the unification of Scripture and was the first to call these compilations the Old and New Testaments.³⁰

Irenaeus held, in respect to his writings, that Adam was a literal figure and fell, and had to be recapitulated by the work of Christ.³¹ Irenaeus penned of the literal Adam that he had to both bear out the sentence of his sin and his death within history.³² Further, in *Demonstration of the Gospel*, Irenaeus wrote that Adam, “disobeyed God...and made man a sinner”.³³ Irenaeus, therefore, believed not only that Adam was a literal character in history, but was involved in the soteriological fall or great need of man. It should be noted here that within one hundred and fifty

²⁷ Bouteneff, 67.

²⁸ Sarfati, 113.

²⁹ Bouteneff, 75

³⁰ Ibid., 74.

³¹ A. Kenneth Curtis, J. Stephen Lang and Randy Petersen, *The 100 Most Important Events in Christian History* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1991) 27.

³² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5, 28.3 (Ante-Nicene Fathers, 1:557).

³³ Irenaeus, *Demonstration of the Gospel*, 16.

years of Church history, Adam had already been considered widely as a literal human being who became the fount of humanity, fell into sin and transferred sins dilemma to all mankind.

Augustine. Augustine, the famed bishop of Hippo (AD 354-430) and perhaps the most heralded theologian since the apostle Paul, penned three commentaries on the book of Genesis, with one being left incomplete. His work, however, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, is the most significant attempt made in the patristic period to clarify the meaning and proper interpretive context for the book of Genesis. *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* focused upon the literal and historical truth of the Genesis account of creation, including the creation, union, and first sin of man.³⁴ In addition, the infamous theological debate between Augustine and Pelagius (AD 360-418) highlighted Augustine's understanding of a literal Adam, and his role in sin's impact through procreation on the human race contra the views of Pelagius.³⁵ As such, Augustine viewed Adam as literal figure and the fountainhead of humanity and foundational to man's dilemma with sin.

In understanding the views of only the first two and a half centuries of the Church Fathers, or at least those represented by the Fathers presented, there is ample evidence for the literal understanding of Adam, and for that matter the literal truthfulness of the Hexaemeron narrative. Indeed, just a few generations removed from Paul until Augustine, it would appear that the Church Father's understanding, predicated on Scripture, was that the Genesis account regarded Adam as a literal, historical figure, the fountainhead of humanity and via Paul's writing the progenitor of mankind's great issue with sin. It is almost certain therefore, that this was Paul's understanding regarding Adam and was rightly interpreted by these Fathers and passed on to future generations of those who would defend orthodox theology. This understanding of a literal Adam would be the dominating view until the modern era described above.

³⁴ Kenneth. A Matthews, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Scripture* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 1996), 67.

³⁵ Curtis, Lang and Peterson, 42.

The author, before transitioning to Paul's own writings in order to affirm his understanding of the literal Adam, will first briefly consider those writings that were prior to Paul's and relatively contemporaneous with his New Testament works, in order to further reinforce the certitude of his era's understanding of the biblical Adam.

Writings Of The Second Temple Era And The Talmud

Historically, and roughly 200 years before the appearance of Paul and his missionary activities in the New Testament, the understandings regarding the biblical Adam were just beginning to surface and solidify theologically.³⁶ The author will consider briefly, therefore, the Apocrypha *Book of Tobit* (c.250-175 BC), the *Wisdom of Solomon* (c. 200 BC), and the *Book of Sirach* (c.196-175 BC) before transitioning to consider the later works of *2 Baruch*, *Ezra 4*, and a contemporary historian of Paul's time, Josephus (c. AD 37-100). The author hopes that by unveiling the understanding of those prior to and contemporaneous with Paul, one will have a more comprehensive understanding of Adam in Paul's day, further cementing the probability of Paul writing regarding a literal Adam.

The Book of Tobit. The *Book of Tobit* provides perhaps the earliest and most complete statement about Adam and Eve in relation to the Jewish Apocrypha.³⁷ In the *Book of Tobit*, the character Tobias is taking Sarah to be his wife and the angel Raphael instructs him on how to protect himself and his wife from an evil intending demon. Tobias recites these words as part of his prayer referencing Genesis 2:18, praying, "You made Adam and gave him Eve his wife as a helper and support. From them the race of mankind sprung." (Tob. 8:6) Here is an obvious reference to a literal Adam and Eve from approximately 200 years before Paul began writing his

³⁶ Bouteneff, 16.

³⁷ Collins, 73.

letters recorded in the New Testament. This equates to further evidence that Paul's understanding would most likely not be that of an allegorical, mythological or archetypical Adam.

The Wisdom of Solomon. In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, the author appears to be attempting to relate Jewish faith to the higher elements of Hellenistic culture.³⁸ The author of this book writes that, "I myself also am a mortal man, like to all, an offspring of him who was first made of the earth". (Wis. 7:1) The author is recounting a veiled allusion to the story of Genesis 2, understanding them as literal events, giving testimony to a literal first made man of the earth. Once again, another early text providing weight for the probability of Paul's literal understanding of Adam.

Sirach. The book known as *Sirach* or *Ecclesiasticus* was compiled roughly between 196 and 175 BC and translated into Greek around 132BC. The author of this work, in writing a list of Israel's most notable men, includes Adam genealogically. The author writes, "Shem and Seth were honored among men, and Adam above every living being in the creation." (Sir. 49:16) Certainly, the recounting of these men of renown demonstrates the literal nature of the authors understanding of Adam and once more contributes to our understanding of Paul's probable understanding.

4 Ezra. This apocalyptic text, along with *2 Baruch*, was composed just after Paul's own time, dating from the aftermath of the Jewish Temple's destruction (c AD 70). The proximity of these writings, however, make them extremely valuable in understanding the prevailing sentiment in Adamic thought within contemporary Jewish life. In *4 Ezra*, Adam is described through his historical lineage. While Adam is portrayed negatively in this work, he is none the less portrayed historically. In *4 Ezra* 3:5-7 it is written:

And gavest a body unto Adam...and unto him thou gavest commandment to love thy way:
which he transgressed, and immediately thou appointedst death in him and in his

³⁸ Ibid.

generations, of who came all nations, tribes, people, and kindreds, out of number. (Ezra 3:5-7)

As cited in this text God gave Adam an individual body, thus necessitating that he was a literal person, and in addition, this text spoke of Adam affecting his heritage in death. Certainly, Paul would have no basis from this text, or the texts referenced earlier, to understand Adam as an allegorical, metaphorical or archetypical figure.

2 Baruch. Composed in Greek, *2 Baruch* has a threefold function for Adam: genealogical, moral, and cosmological. For the purposes of this paper, however, we need only to see Adam's function as a historical or literal person. In *2 Baruch* 4:3 it reads:

This building now built in your midst is not that which is revealed with me, that which prepared beforehand here from the time when I took counsel to make Paradise, and showed Adam before he sinned, but when he transgressed the commandment it was removed from him, as also Paradise. (2 Bar. 4:3)

Clearly and once again, Adam is seen here as a singular historical person who God chose to, in this text, reveal the heavenly Jerusalem so as to encourage him not to sin.³⁹

Josephus. In providing more contemporaneous understandings of the Hexaemeron narratives in regards to the Jewish culture of Paul's time and that are not pseudo-biblical, the writings of Josephus (c. AD 37-100) are of prime importance. This is because of Josephus' potential influence upon the early Fathers of the Church and his considerable knowledge as a historian of the era.⁴⁰ Josephus provides a definitive stance towards Adam as he commends Adam in *Antiquities* 1.2.3., line 67, as the "first man, made from the earth."⁴¹ It is fascinating and encouraging, even evidentiary, that a "secular" historian chronicling the Jewish history, would make note of the common understanding of a literal Adam, most notably for this effort because

³⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁰ Bouteneff, 16.

⁴¹ Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* (Trans. William Whiston, 2010).

such understanding was widely common. Josephus as a historian provides great insight into the comprehensions of the Jewish culture regarding biblical Adam during the writings of the apostle Paul, yet there is one more text that also captures the thinking of the Jewish religious community that should be consulted for a more robust understanding, the Talmud.

The Talmud. The Talmud is a central text of Rabbinic Judaism, considered second only to the Torah. The Talmud is a compilation of Judaism's oral law or Mishnah (c A.D. 200) and the Gemara (c. A.D. 500), an elucidation of the Mishnah and related writings. The Talmud was roughly written and compiled between the second and fifth centuries and is an authority in relation to Jewish thought. As such, what does the Talmud say in regards to a literal Adam? A Midrash, Sanhedrin 38b within the Talmud states that,

The day consisted of twelve hours. In the first hour, his [Adam's] dust was gathered; in the second, it was kneaded into a shapeless mass. In the third, his limbs were shaped; in the fourth, a soul was infused into him; in the fifth, he arose and stood on his feet; in the sixth, he gave [the animals] their names; in the seventh, Eve became his mate (Sanh.38b).

The Talmud expounds other ideas in regards to the creation of Adam and other matters related to Eve. The Talmud however, distinctly expresses the rabbinic view that Adam was a literal person. This document of historic Jewish thought, once again provides evidence towards Paul understanding Adam to be a literal figure of history and the fountainhead of mankind.

In concluding these sections that bridge the gap between the Old and the New Testaments and beyond (including the Talmud), the authors presented are largely representative of the whole of Jewish literature of the time and overwhelmingly treated Adam as an actual person, at the head of the human race.⁴² Indeed, before, during and after the time of Paul, the overwhelming majority of Jewish writers considered Adam, as interpreted from the biblical text, to be a literal figure in agreement with the contention of this paper. Indeed, the Church Fathers, pseudo-biblical and

⁴² Collins, 76.

historical authors of Paul's time overwhelmingly understand Adam to be a literal historical figure. This lends great weight to the conclusion of this author that the apostle Paul always understood Adam to be a literal figure with soteriological ramifications and consequences, disallowing any other reading of the biblical text, which would require a superimposed naturalistic and modern influence upon its meaning. Intrusions of this kind finds little to no grounding historically, and as we shall see, neither does it stand with a proper handling of the biblical text.

IV. THE WEIGHT OF SCRIPTURE

Adamic Soteriological Scriptures Penned By The Apostle Paul

1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 42-49. James Dunn, a renowned Pauline scholar has written that Paul's soteriological argument does not unequivocally call for a historical Adam but rather that, "and act in mythic history can be paralleled to an act in living history without the point of the comparison being lost...the effect of the comparison between Adam and Christ is not so much to historicize the original Adam as to bring out the individual significance of the historic Christ"⁴³. Yet one wonders, considering the previous evidences of this effort, whether this can be an accurate or even possible understanding of Paul's writings regarding the biblical Adam. If Dunn's contentions are true, his case cannot be argued persuasively from historical precedence, and his argument therefore, must be derived in some fashion by his exegeting and interpreting Paul's writing. The author will review and consider the Adamic Pauline texts and provide a defense against Dunn's improbable contentions.

The first soteriological mention of Adam by Paul chronologically is found in 1 Corinthians 15: 20-23; 42-49. We begin our discussion here not only for chronological reasons, but to argue from the implicit to explicit, as the text of 1 Corinthians 15 will be further explained by the text of Romans 5. Paul writes in comparing Christ and Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 45-49 that,

⁴³ James D.G. Dunn, *World Bible Commentary*, Romans 1-8 (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988). 272-290.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the first fruits, then when he comes, those who belong to him...So it is written: The first man Adam became a living being, the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. (1 Co. 15:20-23; 45-49, NIV)

Immediately, a singularly dominating point can be determined for our contention on the literalness of Paul's understanding of Adam and its effects upon Paul's soteriological theology. When Paul refers to "a man" (Gr. *anthropos*), he is referring to a literal, single human being, as verse 22 clarifies: Adam is the human being by who death came. Therefore, as C. John Collins notes, Paul "presents Adam as having introduced a problem for mankind, which Jesus has now addressed... That is, the "empirical fact" that all humans share a sinful condition [and] has an explanation in a particular event."⁴⁴ Interestingly, as we remember our first point of tension with Dunn's understanding, Collins contends that Paul is explaining mankind's sinful condition leading to death and is not comparing or illustrating, rather, he is writing of an event and providing an explanation that requires a literal-historical Adam as found in Genesis 1-3.

Gordon Fee has also noted in this context that, "Although Paul's stress is on the common humanity all share in Adam, there can be little question that he considered Adam to be a real person in the same sense as Christ."⁴⁵ Certainly Paul's argument is not just an attempt to show a common reality of man but rather, Paul's argument is historical and narrativel: one person did something to cause the problem for those he represented, a later person did something to rescue

⁴⁴ Ibid., 80.

⁴⁵ Gordon Fee, *1 Corinthians, New International Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 23.

him from the problem of those he represented.⁴⁶ N. T. Wright in *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, rejects any typological argument as some have maintained as he has commented that, “this [argument from Gen. 2:7] is not typological (two events related in pattern but not necessarily in narrative sequence), but narrative: Genesis 2:7 begins a story which, in the light of vv. 20-28, and the analogies of vv. 35-41, Paul is now in a position to complete.”⁴⁷

These verses unequivocally communicate that Adam was a real person who created a real problem for humanity for which a real person (Jesus Christ) became the solution. In order to have a real solution, one must have a real problem, with an explanation found in a real history. Even James D. G. Dunn communicates that from Paul’s use of Gen. 1-3, we have an explanation of Human sin and death, even though he refrains from conclusively commenting that Paul considered Adam as historical.⁴⁸ Dr. Terry Mortenson goes so far as to contend that this passage reflects the point that Paul built his entire doctrine of sin and salvation on the fact that sin and death entered the world through Adam and that Jesus came to undo that damage.⁴⁹ This monumental, explanatory passage decries any attempt to make this passage reflective only of typology or for comparison towards emphasis. Indeed, comparison towards emphasis may demonstrate a truth, but has no cause and effect quality that is present in this passage. Therefore, for Paul, Adam is unquestionably a literal and historical character which provides the explanation and the necessity for Jesus Christ and the gospel. As understood from this passage, there can be no Pauline soteriology without a literal Adam.

⁴⁶ Collins, 81.

⁴⁷ N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 354.

⁴⁸ James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 94.

⁴⁹ Ken Ham, *The New Answers Book 3* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009), 85.

Romans 5:12-19. In Romans 5:12-19 we have the second clear soteriological statement by Paul regarding the historical Adam. An explanation that clarifies his statements in 1 Corinthians 15 as Romans 5: 12-19 reads,

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned. To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come. But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ! Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. (Rom. 5:12-19, NIV)

Here Paul encapsulates all of human history under two archetypal figures, Adam and Christ.⁵⁰ The allusion to Genesis 3 is once more made clear and provides explanation for how death became inescapable for humankind. Indeed, from this passage we find that death was not part of the divine plan initially intended by God for man, but entered the world through the sin of one man, Adam.⁵¹

Interestingly, Paul also makes his appeal to those who are not Jewish by way of all humanity being related through Adam. Genealogically speaking, Paul says that death reigned from Adam to Moses, even before the law, for death reigned through Adam's sin. Death, therefore, and its consequences are universal for both Jew and Gentile and require Jesus Christ's

⁵⁰ Dunn, 94.

⁵¹ Ibid., 95.

work on the cross because of our relation in Adam.⁵² Once more, for this universal problem of humanity to exist, it must be derived, says Paul, or explained from our common ancestor in Adam. Adam, therefore, is the apt foil to Christ, the one who stands as the ultimate origin of Jew and Gentile alike, as Christ will unite Jew and Gentile in salvation.⁵³ Indeed then, as Christ must be literal to save, then Adam must have been literal to have required so great a salvation. It should be clear then, where Adam's trespass was implicit in 1 Corinthians 15 it has now been made explicit in Romans 5 and markedly demonstrates the absolute necessity of a literal Adam for Pauline soteriology. Without question, the explanative nature of Paul's argument requires a literal Adam.

Other Corroborating Pauline Scriptures

1 Timothy 2:12-13. Briefly, the author will consider three other corroborating Scriptures that are traditionally associated with the apostle Paul and will demonstrate further his understanding of a literal Adam. Consider 1 Timothy 2:12-13 which reads,

I do not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man; she must be quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. (1 Tim. 2:12-13, NIV)

Here Paul explains his reasons for roles of authority between men and women in the church, based upon the literal-historical fact that Adam was formed first. Here there is no comparison, but explanation alone. Again, the emphasis of explanation is clear and requires historical characters or events.

1 Corinthians 11:7-9. Another Scripture in leading to our understanding of Paul's literal biblical Adam is 1 Corinthians 11:7-9 which reads,

⁵² Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in It's Context: The Arguments of Romans* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 180.

⁵³ Ibid., 181.

A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

Paul is here teaching on head-coverings and once more, his reasoning is that man, Adam, did not come from woman, Eve, but woman came from man as Genesis 2 records. Again, an explanatory group of Scriptures which demonstrates that Paul believed in a literal Adam within the Hexaemeron narrative.

V. CONCLUSION

In summing up the contentions of this author, it has been evidenced that that the mythical, allegorical and archetypal understandings of the Genesis account of Adam is predicated upon evolutionary, naturalistic science, attempting to explain away the apparent contradictions between evolutionary sciences and the traditional, historical and literal interpretations of Scripture. This liberalism is in conflict with the overall historical testimony of the Church, its early Fathers and the numerous other authors of antiquity presented just before, during and shortly after the time of Paul. In addition, Paul's writings do not provide for these liberal interpretations of the biblical Adam as myth, allegory or his story as some creative, comparative-illustrative literature. Pauline soteriology consistently underlines the need for a literal Christ, stemming from an equally attested to literal Adam, the fountainhead of humanity and the progenitor of the sin heritage of man.

Without a literal Adam, Paul's explanation for sin and the need for Christ are destroyed and the absolute nature of salvation through Christ alone is lost. It is lost because without a literal Adam, sin did not bring death through Adam and Paul's antithetically necessary explanation and argument for Christ in salvation is unraveled. A literal Adam, therefore, is a necessity for Pauline soteriology. Indeed, original sin, the image of god, redemption in Christ and the reliability of Scripture and biblical history itself are all connected to one degree or another with Adam's existence historically and literally. To reinterpret Adam as myth, allegory or as a comparative

literary tool is not without the potential for serious consequence and is in the opinion of this author a great detriment to Pauline soteriology.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Augustine. *The Retractions, Translated by Mary Inez Bogan*.
- Barbour, Ian. *When Science Meets Religion*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 200.
- Berry, R. J. "Adam or Adamah?" *Science & Christian Belief* 23, no. 1 (2011).
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1-3*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997.
- Borg, Marcus J. *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith*. San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003.
- Bouteneff, Peter C. *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Collin, C. John. *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011.
- Curtis, A. Kenneth, J Stephen Lang, and Randy Petersen. *The 100 Most Important Events in Christian History*. Grand Rapids: Revell, 1991.
- Deane-Drummond, Celia. *Christ and Evolution*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009.
- Dundes, Alan. *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Dunn, James D.G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.
- Fee, Gordon. *1 Corinthians, New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Gundry, Stanley N. *Four Views on the Historical Adam*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.
- Hand, Karl. "Covenant and Myth: Can Reformed Theology Survive Without Adam and Eve." *Australian eJournal of Theology* 19.1 (April 2012).
- Hayes, Daniel. "The Transgression of Adam and Christ the New Adam: St. Augustine and St. Maximus the Confessor on the Doctrine of Sin." *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 55 3 (January 2011).
- Irenaeus. *Against Heresies*.
- . *Demonstration of the Gospel*.

- Josephus. *The Antiquities of the Jews*: Trans. William Whiston, 2010.
- Kirk, G.S. *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures*. Berkeley: Cambridge University Press, 1973.
- Keathley, K.D and Rooker, Mark F. *40 Questions about Creation and Evolution*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2014.
- Lennox, John C. *Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning According to Genesis and Science*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Mook, James R. *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2012.
- Mortenson, Terry. *The Great Turning Point: The Churches Catastrophic Mistake on Geology before Darwin*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2004.
- “No Adam, No Eve, No Gospel.” *Christianity Today*, 6/6/2011.
- Ham, Ken. *The New Answers Book 1*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2011.
- . *The New Answers Book 3*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2009.
- Martyr, Justin. *Dialogue with Trypho*. Dial. 124, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/01286.htm> (accessed November 13, 2012).
- Mathews, Kenneth A. *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Scripture*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1996.
- Melita. *On Pascha*.
- Mettinger. *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-historical Study of Genesis 2-3*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006.
- Papageorgiou, Panayiotis. “Chrysostom and Augustine on the Sin of Adam and Its Consequences.” *St. Valdimir's Theological Quarterly* 39 4 (January 1995).
- Pretorius, Mark. “The Creation and the Fall of Adam and Eve: Literal, Symbolic, or Myth?”
- Quasten, Johannes, Walter J. Burghard, and Thomas Comerford Lawler. *The Literal Meaning of Genesis Vol. 2 in Ancient Christian Writers*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1982.
- Sarfati, Jonathan. *Refuting Compromise: A Biblical and Scientific Refutation of Progressive Creationism as Popularized by Astronomer Hugh Ross*. Atlanta: Creation Book Publishers, 2011.

Thorsen, Don and Keith H. Reeves. *What Christians Believe about the Bible: A Concise Guide for Students*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.

Tobin, Thomas H. *Paul's Rhetoric in It's Contexts: The Arguments of Romans*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004.

Wright, N. T. *The Ressurrection of the Son of God*. Minneanapolis: Fortress, 2003.

LOST OR FOUND? THE IMPACT OF SIN UPON THE DEATH OF A CHILD

Daryl A. Neipp, Ph.D.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Few things in life, if any, can compare to the loss of a child. Humans instinctively respect the cycle of life and can accept the death of an aging grandparent, but the loss of an innocent child is something altogether different. Bill Hybels' daughter, Shauna Niequist, reflects upon her own experience in the book *Bittersweet*:

I understand, a little, why people sometimes have memorial services after miscarriages. You wake up from surgery, and it's over. There's no gathering of friends and family, no prayers, no final moment when you walk away from a grave. I emerged from anesthesia, and it was over. Theoretically, it was over. Medically, it was over. But a medical procedure didn't put this life to rest, as much as I hoped it would. The wounds still felt open, and I didn't know what to do to close them.¹

Those who have experienced the loss of a child understand these sentiments and know what it is like to not only grieve but also to relive those memories at least once every calendar year when that baby's birthday arrives right on schedule. It is normal and natural then to question God and seek answers from the giver of life. At times these questions can be filled with emotion and anger, but in many cases the questioning is a cry for understanding—activity that attempts to reconcile one's belief that God is truly good with the experience of what can only be characterized as bad. The problem is that sometimes well-meaning people can get so caught up in their emotion that they begin to make Scripture say something it does not. In other words, out of a sense of desperation, a parent who has lost a child may make assumptions about God and the

*Daryl A. Neipp is an adjunct professor at Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, NC.

¹ Shauna Niequist, *Bittersweet: Thoughts on Change, Grace, and Learning the Hard Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 44.

destiny of their baby simply because they dare not allow themselves to consider the alternative. Hence, a wide spectrum of viewpoints has been created that may help parents cope, yet contain no Scriptural foundation. For example, Pat Schwiebert wrote a children's book titled *We Were Gonna Have a Baby, But We Had an Angel Instead*. Certainly no one would argue with the intentions of the author; however, this approach only ends up being a disservice to parents and in the process undermines the integrity of Scripture. Like a host of other issues, a great harm is enacted against the veracity of Scripture when individuals read their own ideas into the Bible instead of allowing God to speak for himself.

The purpose of this article is to set emotion aside, as much as is humanly possible, in an attempt to consider the destiny of babies from an objective point of view. For the purpose of simplicity, this discussion will present two main positions (though several variations do exist); one of which is in the majority for obvious reasons. However, it is important for thinkers to step beyond what they desire the Bible to say and see if that particular view stands up against scrutiny. Unfortunately, in this case, the Bible does not contain any direct statements in this regard. However, the same could be said for the Trinity, yet few in evangelical circles would question its validity. What this means though is that a case for or against a baby going to heaven when he or she dies must be made in an indirect fashion.

II. POSITION ONE: BABIES DO NOT GO TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY DIE

Certainly this is an unpopular position to take, but it is not without rationale. In fact, a level of respect should be granted to those who hold this viewpoint because they in essence have attempted to make logical sense of Scripture without acquiescing to popular belief. It should also be noted that those who take this position are not baby-haters, nor are they unsympathetic to parents who have lost loved ones. Furthermore, they should not be characterized as closed-minded extremists who view God as some rage-filled creature who is only out to exact his vengeance

upon those who are marred by sin. Instead, those who hold this position are simply attempting to allow their theology to drive what they ultimately believe. They have formed specific tenets of belief about God that they have logically drawn from the pages of Scripture and then allowed the natural effects of that train of thought to play out in a rational sequence. Though a person may not fully agree with the end result, by studying the logical thought process, good thinkers should be able to come to a better understanding of why there are in fact differing views on this issue. The second thing that should be pointed out at the offset is that though relatively few theologians support this first position, many are quick to point out that they also cannot be dogmatic about their view.

Undoubtedly, the crux of this issue lies with how a person views original sin and its effects. However, that is really only part of the equation on both sides of the debate. In fact, some of the strongest evidence against a child going to heaven comes from the normal soteriological arguments evangelicals have been using for years. Scripture has some very clear things to say about the plight of humanity and their need for salvation from God that comes about in a very specific manner.

First, the Bible is clear that all humanity stands guilty before a holy God, not only because they commit sinful acts, but also because they are sinners by nature (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 3:10-18; Eph. 2:1-4). The problem here is two-fold: First, people are sinners. Second, God's holiness and justice separates man from himself and requires a penalty to be paid (Rom. 3:23; Rom. 6:23). This is the essence of the gospel message—that man is born into sin and by default is on a path to hell except for the grace of God. A way out is offered, as a grace-filled act of God, and can be accepted by faith on the part of the damned (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 6:23). The penalty was paid through the death of Jesus (Rom. 5:8; Titus 3:5) and reconciliation with a holy God is made possible with the judgment of hell being averted in the process.

Most evangelicals are on the same page, not only with the message of the gospel, but also with the process. There is general agreement that although salvation is offered freely to the sinner, and although the penalty for sin has been paid by the atoning work of Christ on the cross, it only becomes effective when a person places faith in him as his or her redeemer. This is the standard for all people because all people share the same guilt and separation from God's holiness. The contingency for becoming regenerated and cleared from the penalty of sin is a volitional act of faith. In fact, many gospel presentations make a point to emphasize that faith is an act of the will and not simply intellectual assent since even the demons believe (Jas. 2:19).

The problem then, as it relates to the topic at hand, is that the strong emphasis evangelicals have placed upon the need and the process for salvation actually ends up working against the argument that unsaved children will end up in heaven. This *one-way* approach has been the source of great tension between Christianity and other religions because it defends the exclusivity of faith in Jesus. If faith in Christ's finished work upon the cross is the sole requirement for salvation, and a child has not accepted this gift of God, then it stands to reason that the child would stand guilty before the holiness and justice of God just as anyone else would. Furthermore, it should be noted that nowhere in Scripture is an argument for salvation made for any means other than the prescribed method of surrendering in repentance and placing one's faith in Christ. Jesus' words to Nicodemus in John 3:3-7 (ESV, emphasis added) contain several qualifiers that makes this point abundantly clear:

Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, *unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, *unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*"

Twice the word *unless* is utilized as restrictive terminology. First Jesus instructed Nicodemus that there is only one means of entering the kingdom of God, and that is through regeneration, or being born again as the text states it. This assertion obviously confused Nicodemus since he questioned the viability of reentering the womb. Therefore Jesus clarifies his remark by saying a person must be born twice—once naturally in childbirth and once spiritually through the process of regeneration. Again, the qualifier *unless* is used in conjunction with entering the kingdom of God to emphasize that natural, physical birth alone is not enough to get a person into heaven. Jesus ends this short dialogue by making a distinction between being born in the flesh and being born in the spirit and then emphatically declared, “You must be born again.”

The point to see in this exchange is that entrance into the kingdom of God hinges upon some specific conditions—conditions that evangelicals have no problem calling adults to. In fact, churches and denominations are only far too happy to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to send missionaries all over the world so every person can hear the gospel and be given the chance to respond in faith to God’s offer of eternal life for those who will believe. Yet an exception seems to be made to children even though the conditions of salvation are made very clear in the pages of Scripture. The problem with this line of thinking is that it creates for humanity two different kinds of salvation. Of course mankind is very good at creating good/bad, better/worse, and best/worst kinds of categories for sin. But is that what is being advocated here? Different classes of people? The obvious answer is no. However, that is exactly how this line of thinking logically plays out. Instead, Scripture makes the point that all people are morally bankrupt and in need of a Savior. A case may be made regarding differing consequences for sin, but all sin is also equal in the sense that it makes a person guilty before a holy God. Perhaps a straightforward question needs to be asked at this juncture of those who do believe babies go to heaven when they die: Are you saying a person can be saved without being born again? If so, what do you do with

the passages that clearly create this requirement? If not, then are you saying there are two different kinds of salvation? It seems that either case is problematic at best.

In addition to the state of humanity and the clear requirements for salvation, Scripture also offers up examples of situations when children were included in the penalty for sin. The Flood is a prime example, as God chose to destroy all people, save Noah and his family, because of their iniquity (1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5). The judgment was not based upon age; rather, every man, woman, and child was destroyed because of their sin and God's intrinsic standard of holiness. Many evangelicals even go a step further and view the ark as representative of the future work of Jesus Christ, making the point that there is no salvation outside of the ark or outside of Christ. But by advocating for the salvation of children, this rationale sets up the idea that a person can in fact be saved apart from Christ. Yet the children in Noah's time were not saved from judgment. Scripture is clear that with the exception of eight people, all met the same fate.

The same could be said for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. In this case, Abraham pleaded with God over the city. In this amazing exchange, Abraham pleads for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and God says he will relent if there are as few as ten righteous people in the city. However, it seems apparent that children were not viewed as innocents, otherwise they would have been spared. Instead, even though the children may not have been guilty of the same kinds of sins as the other residents of the city, still, they were sinners, and therefore were included in the resulting judgment.

One other example that should be noted is the way God dealt with the pagan nations in the Old Testament. The most prolific instance was the advent of the tenth plague just before the Exodus in which case the firstborn son of every Egyptian household was killed. The Israelites who had applied blood to their doorposts were *passed over* while the Egyptians faced incredible loss. Undoubtedly, many of those firstborn sons were infants, yet there is no indication that they

were saved either in the physical sense or in the spiritual sense. Furthermore, other passages about how the Israelites were to deal with pagan nations were even more specific:

And we captured all his cities at that time and devoted to destruction every city, men, women, and *children*. We left *no survivors* (Deut. 2:34, ESV, emphasis added).

Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, *young* and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword (Josh. 6:21, ESV, emphasis added). And to the others he said in my hearing, “Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity. Kill old men outright, young men and maidens, *little children* and women, but touch no one on whom is the mark. And begin at my sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were before the house (Ezek. 9:5-6, ESV, emphasis added).

As difficult as these passages are to understand, the point as it relates to the topic is that God did not show partiality to children. While a case might be made that the consequences of a parent’s sin affect others, including their children, these passages make no attempt to create classifications.

When it comes to the effects of original sin, Genesis makes it clear that the penalty for Adam and Eve’s sin was death. This includes spiritual death (Eph. 2:1), physical death (Heb. 9:27), and eternal death, (Rev. 20:15), with the repercussions of Adam’s sin touching every human being born ever since. Just the fact that every human being faces physical death is evidence in and of itself that sin has impacted the whole of humanity and that no one is truly innocent. Simply put, before sin, there was no death. But the fact that death now breeches all of humanity also speaks to the far reaching impact of sin. Charles Hodge puts it this way: “The death of infants is a Scriptural and decisive proof of their being born destitute of original righteousness and infected with a sinful corruption of nature. Their physical death is proof that they are involved in the penalty the principle element of which is the spiritual death of the soul.”² The argument is that people sin because they are already sinners from birth. This is not a condition of the environment; rather, it is inbred. While it is true that much of what children do can be attributed to

² Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner & Co., 1872), 249.

learned behavior, a child begins to do wrong things at a very early age without even realizing it. This is due to the fact that the sin nature was passed down to each baby at the moment of conception through his or her parents, tracing all the way back to Adam. Scripture certainly affirms this truth:

And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, for *the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth*. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done (Gen. 8:21, ESV, emphasis added).

The wicked are estranged from the womb; *they go astray from birth*, speaking lies (Ps. 58:3, ESV, emphasis added).

But the Scriptures declare that we are *all* prisoners of sin, so we receive God’s promise of freedom *only* by believing in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:22, NLT, emphasis added).

Even the miracle of the Virgin Birth affirms the widespread effect of original sin. According to Romans 5:12, the sin nature is passed through the man, not the woman. If Jesus had a biological father then the sin nature would have been passed on to him as well. The miracle of the Virgin Birth is not only the conception of the Christ Child but also what was avoided in the process. While Jesus did indeed become human in the flesh, he also maintained his ability to become the perfect substitute.

The implications of original sin are masterfully defended by Toby Jennings in his dissertation “A Biblical Portrait of Death as the Qualifier of Both the Ethic and Value of Human Life.” In this work, he rightly points out that “the church’s understanding of paedosoterism (child salvation) has been influenced by the doctrine of original sin, more than any other doctrine; and the church’s understanding of the doctrine of original sin has been influenced by Augustine, more than any other teacher.”³ This is significant because Augustine, along with many other church

³ Toby Jennings, “A Biblical Portrait of Death as the Qualifier of Both the Ethic and Value of Human Life” (PhD Diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012), 261.

fathers and reformers, believed that what is commuted from Adam to the rest of humanity is not just depravity but also condemnation; not just a sin nature but also guilt.

Augustine:

The infant who is lost is punished because he belongs to the mass of perdition, and as a child of Adam is justly condemned on the ground of the ancient obligation.⁴

Everyone, even little children, have broken God's covenant, not indeed in virtue of any personal action but in virtue of mankind's common origin in that single ancestor in who all have sinned.⁵

Luther:

The words "and death by sin" show clearly that he is speaking of original sin; for if death comes by sin, then also the little children have sinned who die. So this must not be understood in the sense of actual sin.⁶

Calvin:

Rotten branches came forth from a rotten root, which transmitted their rottenness to the other twigs sprouting from them. For thus were the children corrupted in the parent, so that they brought disease upon their children's children. That is, the beginning of corruption in Adam was such that it conveyed in a perpetual stream from the ancestors into their descendants. For the contagion does not take its origin from the substance of the flesh or soul, but because it had been so ordained by God that the first man should at one and the same time have and lose, both for himself and for his descendants, the gifts that God had bestowed upon him.⁷

Edwards:

To suppose, God imputes not all the guilt of Adam's sin, but only some little part of it, relieves nothing but one's imagination. To think of poor little infants bearing such torments for Adam's sin, as they sometimes do in this world, and these torments ending in death and annihilation, may sit easier on the imagination, than to conceive of their suffering eternal misery for it. But it does not at all relieve one's reason.⁸

⁴ Joe M. Easterling, "Defending the Defenseless," (Doctoral Essay, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007), 12, quoting Henry E. Robins, *The Harmony of Ethics with Theology: An Essay in Revision* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1891), 63-64.

⁵ Easterling, 12-13, quoting Gerald Bray, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*, vol. 6 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998), 137.

⁶ Easterling, 16, quoting Martin Luther, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 93.

⁷ John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*; ed. John T. McNeill (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), Vol. 1, 250.

⁸ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of President Edwards*, vol. 2 (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1881), 494.

Ironically, many of these same theologians still support the salvation of children, but they do so as an exception to the rule. In other words, even though they do believe that original sin condemns children, they posit an alternative way out. Both Augustine and Luther believed that infant baptism, in some form or fashion, alleviated the problem. John Calvin's explanation is election, and Edwards concludes that a child's salvation is based upon his or her inevitable decision.⁹ Regardless of their ultimate conclusion, the previous statements make it clear that the effect of original sin upon humanity is all-encompassing, and that is the point that needs to be made. The sin of Adam has infected every single child at the point of conception—enough so that even an infant cannot be considered innocent and is thus deserving of God's wrath and judgment (Rom. 5:18).

Undoubtedly, the argument against babies going to heaven when they die comes across as harsh and unloving. However, there is a softer explanation that should be considered as well. The easier of the two views to accept is obviously that all babies go to heaven when they die; this provides hope for grieving parents. Still, the opposing view is not void of hope either. If nothing else, the book of Job teaches that sometimes things that go on behind the scenes of which humanity is kept unaware. Mankind has a one-dimensional view of life and can see realities only from that perspective. In Job's case, all of his friends attempted to explain life's circumstances without understanding the full picture of what was taking place. For parents who have lost a child, they can be confident that nothing catches God by surprise. Though grief and loss are very real, parents can also have hope that there is an explanation in the overall plan of God. The book of Job ends with the implication that he never was given an explanation for the deep pain and suffering he had experienced.

⁹ Joe Easterling has written an extremely helpful essay that compares these viewpoints in "Defending the Defenseless: What Happens to Children and the Mentally Impaired Who Suffer an Untimely Death?" (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007).

Similarly, in John 9 the disciples pass by a blind man and inquire who had sinned—the blind man or his parents—as the cause of the blindness. Verse three says: “Jesus answered, ‘It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him’” (ESV). Here a man had faced the incredible hardship of going through life without his sight, and it is discovered that it was not a punishment but rather filled with purpose. Even more than that, God had prepared this man to be used by him in a very specific way that would not have been possible otherwise. This could also be said of the Old Testament patriarch Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers. Yet years later, in spite of being mistreated and imprisoned, he was able to see the hand of God upon his life. His response to his brothers is found in Deuteronomy 50:20 (ESV): “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”

The hope for parents is that while God’s plan is not always understood, it is best. Humanity is not always privy to what God is attempting to do behind the scenes, but the untimely death of a child is not untimely to God. Perhaps, as in the case of these three examples, the sting of death will result in something good. As this is being written, it is exactly one week after twenty-six people, twenty of whom were between the ages of five and ten, were senselessly murdered by a gunman at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. As painful as this tragedy is, the reality is that because it is so painful, the American people are waking up to some realities as a result. Where that leads remains to be seen, but there is the possibility that God will take loss and make something useful out of it.

III. POSITION TWO: BABIES DO GO TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY DIE

Just as those who hold the first position can be painted as harsh and unloving, so those who hold the second position can often be painted with broad strokes as only appealing to emotion. However, just as a piece-by-piece argument has been made for the first position, so a

strong argument can be made for the second. Still, both arguments are formulated in an indirect fashion which must be kept in mind as the positions are considered.

Ironically, most theologians who believe babies do go to heaven when they die do not deny the impact of original sin, though they may differ on the substance of what is transferred. They still hold that the sin of Adam does in fact influence all of mankind, so alternative explanations must be offered in order to offset the penalty for sin. In most arguments, a distinction is made between imputed sin and the transfer of guilt. John Piper, Al Mohler, Thomas Cragoe, Ronald Nash, and Robert Lightner all state in some form or fashion that judgment is based on actual sin, not imputed sin. Lightner elaborates this point:

In a day still to come, all who are regenerate will first stand before God for judgment at the Great White Throne. We can be sure that those who died without ever being able to believe will not be there. But how can we be so sure of that? They have no works, having done neither good nor evil—that is why. Clearly the basis of judgment at this future time will be what the dead have done.¹⁰

Nash, reiterates this point by using 2 Corinthians 5:10 as his basis and then concluding: “Note the clear statement that the final judgment is based on sins committed during our earthly existence... deceased infants cannot be judged on the criterion specified in this verse.”¹¹

The point of these examples is not to subvert the Scriptural teaching on original sin. Most of these theologians are not saying children are completely innocent (though the term itself is problematic), which is why many of the effects of sin, including death, are still part of the picture for all who exist in a fallen world. The argument that is made then is that children do not automatically fall under God’s condemnation because his judgment seems to be restricted against those who act sinfully and not simply against those who have inherited the sinful nature.

¹⁰ Robert P. Lightner, *Safe in the Arms of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000), 39-40.

¹¹ Ronald H. Nash, *When a Baby Dies* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 60-61.

Another important aspect of this argument falls specifically within the framework of soteriology. While a few biblical characters, such as Jeremiah and John the Baptist, appear to have been saved from infancy, this is certainly not the norm. Those examples should not be discounted, however, as they do provide evidence of the relationships that are possible even from birth. Jeremiah 1:5 (ESV) says, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you...” and Luke 1:15 (ESV) says of John the Baptist, “He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” Again, these isolated examples should not set the standard. Furthermore, a discussion on the role of Holy Spirit filling is certainly relevant to this argument. The point, however, is that the impact of original sin apparently was limited in the sense that these infants were not condemned from birth but rather set apart for God’s service.

Since original sin has impacted every living soul, perhaps the most important aspect of this argument pertains to the basis for salvation. As was demonstrated previously from John 3, regeneration is the necessary criteria for being born again. What is important to recognize, however, is that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is why in the case of Jeremiah and John the Baptist, salvation from birth was a possibility. It is also why an argument for infant salvation can be made—because it is the Holy Spirit who brings about the new birth. Charles Ryrie makes this important distinction:

Faith is not strictly the means of regeneration, although it is the human requirement which when met enables the Spirit to bring about the new birth. Though faith is closely associated with the new birth, the two ideas are distinct, the one being the human responsibility and channel and the other the work of God.¹²

As Ryrie, described, there are two sides of a coin with salvation. One side is the actual work of regeneration, which comes solely from God. Under most circumstances, that regeneration is enacted when the condition of faith (the second side of the coin) is met. Clearly, according to

¹² Charles C. Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody, 1997), 90.

Scripture, faith is an essential component to salvation.¹³ However, in the case of children and the mentally disabled, they are unable to understand and exercise faith. This is not a situation where an understanding adult is being called to account; rather, these categories of individuals do not fit the same criteria for judgment because they do not have the capacity to respond.

The faith of the Bible is often placed in terms of a choice. This was true in the Old Testament (Abraham comes to mind) as well as the New Testament, whose commands to believe iterate this point (Acts 16:31). Faith is a conscious and intellectual selection on the part of the individual. However, a child is not capable of making moral assessments and distinguishing right from wrong and therefore is not held to account. John MacArthur believes Jonah 4:11 illustrates this point. In this verse, the Lord replies, “Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left?” (NKJV). MacArthur opines: “The Lord was referring to the sparing of 120,000 children, little ones incapable of knowing right from left, much less right from wrong.”¹⁴ While MacArthur’s interpretation may be up for debate, the point is still a valid one: God was merciful in cases when belief was not possible.

The problem for children and the mentally handicapped is that they are incapable of grasping the essence of the gospel and consequently responding in repentance and faith. This does not mean that they never engage in what could be considered sinful behavior. But the child has no way of assessing those acts for what they are. R. A. Webb makes this observation:

If a dead infant were sent to hell on no other account than that of original sin, there would be a good reason to the Divine Mind for the judgment, because sin is a reality. But the child’s mind would be a perfect blank as to the reason of its suffering. Under such circumstances, it would know suffering but it would have no understanding of the reason

¹³ Robert Lightner points out that in 150 references, faith is the only human condition for salvation. Lightner, 44.

¹⁴ John MacArthur, *Safe in the Arms of God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 82.

for its suffering. It could not tell itself why it was so awfully smitten, and consequently, the whole meaning and significance of its sufferings, being to it a conscious enigma, the very essence of the penalty would be absent and justice would be disappointed, cheated of its validation.¹⁵

It simply makes no sense to hold children accountable for what they are incapable of doing in the first place. Furthermore, it should be noted that they are never called upon to believe—every salvific reference in Scripture that calls people to repentance is directed towards adults. While this could be considered an argument from silence, it also follows the logical progression of what has already been presented. Even beyond that though, the way Jesus interacted with children further supports this point. Three parallel passages in the Gospels (Matt. 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17) refer to the Kingdom of God as belonging to children. Thomas Cragoe, in his exegetical analysis of these texts, concludes not only that the children were likely infants but also that the grammar emphasizes their age along with their right standing before God. Therefore, Cragoe deduces that Christ was in fact declaring these children to be possessors of the Kingdom. This is further supported by the fact that he went on to bless them. Cragoe again points out the distinction that “God is only seen to bless those people who are rightly related to him.”¹⁶

One of the best Old Testament examples that support the notion of children going to heaven when they die comes from the life of King David. David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, discovered she was pregnant, and subsequently had her husband, Uriah, killed. Shortly thereafter, the prophet Nathan confronted David, exposed his sin, and declared that the child would die as a result. When the baby was born, David petitioned the Lord for mercy but the baby died seven days later.

¹⁵ R. A. Webb, *The Theology of Infant Salvation* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publications, 1907), 42.

¹⁶ Thomas Cragoe, “An Examination of the Issue of Infant Salvation” (ThD Diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1987), 97-102.

In the midst of this tragedy, the response and words of David reveal the truth about the destiny of children. 2 Samuel 12:22-23 (NASB) says these words: “And he said, ‘While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, that the child may live.’ But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.’” It is clear from these verses that David fully expected to be reunited with his child at some point in the future. This is evident, not only from the specific wording, but also from the tone of the passage. David did not mourn the loss of his child because he believed the baby was in God’s presence and because he fully anticipated seeing that little one again. This stands in stark contrast to David’s response to the death of his son Absalom. Absalom was rebellious, both against God and his father. Yet when this son died, David grieved and wept uncontrollably for him (2 Sam. 18:32-33; 19:2-4). In the first case, David was secure in the fact that his baby would be heaven; however, Absalom’s death brought great grief into the life of his father because his eternal destiny was uncertain.

IV. CONCLUSION

The topic at hand is a difficult one, not only because Scripture does not definitively state a position, but also because of the intrinsic emotion that is present in such a discussion. Even though one’s position on this matter must be made in an indirect fashion that does not mean supporting evidence cannot be found. In fact, it seems that the two positions find much in the way of overlap. Where the two depart is not with the transference of sin but with the definition of what is imputed. Additionally, since the condition of salvation requires choice and cognitive recognition of sin, there does seem to be an exception made for those who are unable to believe. This is further supported by Jesus’ response to children and the example of King David.

Though Scripture does seem to support the second position, a word of caution should be noted at this point. There is a reason why this particular topic is debated and hopefully the

presentation of both sides has been helpful in better understanding the differences. However, God is loving and God is just. With this, there must be no debate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bray, Gerald. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament*. vol. 6. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998.
- Calvin, John. *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*; ed. John T. McNeill, vol. 1. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1960.
- Cragoe, Thomas. "An Examination of the Issue of Infant Salvation." ThD Diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1987.
- Easterling, Joe. "Defending the Defenseless: What Happens to Children and the Mentally Impaired Who Suffer an Untimely Death?" Doctoral Essay, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007.
- Edwards, Jonathan. *The Works of President Edwards*, vol. 2. New York, NY: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1881.
- Harwood, Adam. *The Spiritual Condition of Infants*. Eugene, OR: WIPF & Stock, 2011.
- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*. vol. 2. New York, NY: Charles Scribner & Co., 1872.
- Jennings, Toby. "A Biblical Portrait of Death as the Qualifier of Both the Ethic and Value of Human Life." PhD Diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2012.
- Lightner, Robert P. *Safe in the Arms of Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2000).
- Luther, Martin. *Commentary on Romans*, trans. J. Theodore Mueller. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1954.
- MacArthur, John. *Safe in the Arms of God*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003.
- Mohler, R. Albert, and Daniel L. Akin. "The Salvation of the 'Little Ones': Do Infants Who Die Go to Heaven?" AlbertMohler.com. <http://www.albertmohler.com/2009/07/16/the-salvation-of-the-little-ones-do-infants-who-die-go-to-heaven/> (accessed January 5, 2013).
- Nash, Ronald H. *When a Baby Dies*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.
- Niequist, Shauna. *Bittersweet: Thoughts on Change, Grace, and Learning the Hard Way*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010.
- Perman, Matt. "What Happens to Infants Who Die?" desiringGod. <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/articles/what-happens-to-infants-who-die> (accessed January 5, 2013).
- Robins, Henry E. *The Harmony of Ethics with Theology: An Essay in Revision*. New York, NY: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1891.

Ryre, Charles C. *The Holy Spirit*. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1997.

Schwiebert, Pat. *We Were Gonna Have a Baby, But We Had an Angel Instead*. Portland, OR: Grief Watch, 2003.

Webb, R. A. *The Theology of Infant Salvation*. Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publications, 1907.

THE HUMILIATION OF DINAH AND THE SLAUGHTER OF THE SHECHEMITES: THEOLOGICAL TRAJECTORIES AND IMPLICATIONS FROM A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF GENESIS 34

G. Wayne Willis, PhD (Candidate)*

I. INTRODUCTION

In providing a theological and philosophical context relevant to the exegetical analysis of Genesis 34 some pre-understandings are enumerated that describe the perspective of the author. The list of presuppositions is minimal in an effort to focus primarily on the issues that are pertinent to the topic. The *first* and basic pre-supposition is that Genesis, as part of the OT canon, is inspired (e.g. Πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος 2 Tim. 3:16) and, therefore, infallible, historically accurate, and trustworthy as originally written by Moses.¹ Relevant to Genesis 34 such a pre-understanding regards Old Testament biblical narrative as having its basis in historical fact. The writer views biblical narrative as prose non-fiction constructed with some of the literary devices and grammatical tools but guarded from historical and factual inaccuracies by the process of inspiration.

The *second* pre-supposition is the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Such a pre-understanding does not mean that other unnamed authors did not contribute to the completed manuscripts. For example, someone other than Moses wrote about Moses' death (cf. Deut. 34:1-8). Also this does not mean Moses refrained from using other sources (e.g. "the book of wars" Num. 21:14).² Joshua 1:7-8 attributes the authorship of the Pentateuch to Moses. Jesus affirms the

*G. Wayne Willis is professor of theology at Temple Baptist Seminary of Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, NC.

¹ Paul is referring primarily to the Old Testament Scriptures in the 2 Timothy 3:16 passage. 2 Peter 1:21 describes the process by which the OT Scriptures were inspired.

² John Davis comments "...while it is conceded that small portions were written later, we must conclude that Genesis was essentially written by Moses himself or a scribe under his immediate control. Whatever was added, was added by a scribe fully inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Tim. 3:16)." John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison*, Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1975, 26.

Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in such passages as Mark 12:26 and other references in the New Testament (i.e. Lk. 2:22; 24:27). Bruce Waltke writes, “Moses’ superb training, exceptional spiritual gifts and divine call uniquely qualified him to compose the essential content and shape of Genesis and the Pentateuch.”³

The *third* presupposition presented as relevant to the study of Genesis 34 is the assumption of the unity of the Old Testament canon due ultimately to the single authorship of the Holy Spirit. It is posited that Genesis 34 is in canonical congruity with the rest of the book of Genesis. In his commentary on Genesis 16-50 Gordon Wenham reviews Jacob’s family background interwoven throughout the corpus of Genesis especially as it is related to Dinah and the immediate context of Genesis 34. He concludes, “These general observations show that chap. 34 presupposes the earlier narratives in Genesis, but there are also explicit links within the surrounding material that show that the editor viewed this narrative as integral to Genesis.”⁴ A *fourth* presupposition is the adaptation of a theological methodology that develops its biblical theology beginning with a literal interpretation of the Old Testament.⁵ A key component in the theological methodology adopted is a consistent application of the grammatical-historical method of interpretation with an

³ Bruce Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001, 22. Waltke cites Eichrodt and writes, “Walter Eichrodt, who wrote a classic theology of the Old Testament, contends that Moses is best described as founder of the theocracy to bring in a new world order. As such, Moses of necessity would have given Israel its prior history, meaning, and destiny as well as its laws.”

⁴ Gordon Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 16-50*, Dallas, Texas: Word Books Publisher, David Hubbard and Glenn Barker, gen. eds., 1994, 308. While Wenham may ascribe the unity of Genesis to sources other than the single authorship of Moses, the fact remains that the unity of Genesis and the part that the Genesis 34 passage plays in the tapestry of that unity is apparent on several different levels. Some of the unifying elements will be pointed out in our exegetical study of the passage.

⁵ This means reading into the New Testament from an Old Testament perspective while applying the same grammatical-historical “literal” hermeneutic to the New Testament.

understanding that “literal” incorporates the proper use of figures of speech in the interpretative process.⁶

II. THE CONTEXT OF GENESIS 34

Broader Context Of Genesis

Jacob is a primary figure in the patriarchal section (Gen. 12-50) of the book of Genesis.⁷ The journeys of Jacob described in Genesis from leaving Isaac, his father (e.g. Gen. 28:5) in Beersheba, to his return to Isaac in Hebron (Gen. 35:27-29) depicts, in some degree, Jacob’s development as well as his relapses in regard to his relationship to God.⁸ The apparent place of approval for Jacob is Bethel where God, on two occasions, reiterates the covenant blessings that belong to Jacob and his descendants.⁹ Jacob’s primary story begins with his hasty departure from Beersheba on his way to Paddan-aram (Haran in Mesopotamia) and his first experience at Bethel

⁶ Priority of the OT as the “starting place” for doing biblical theology is an outstanding characteristic of dispensational theology whereas reading the NT back into the OT is a characteristic of non-dispensational theological methodology. In regard to the application of a literal hermeneutic, non-dispensationalists such as Vern Poythress claim that they apply a literal hermeneutic as well. However, it is posited that non-dispensationalists do not apply the grammatical-historical hermeneutic as *consistently* as dispensationalists as evident by such theological differences between dispensationalists and non-dispensationalists as a distinction between Israel and the Church.

⁷ Beginning with Gen. 27 through Gen. 36 the focus is primarily on Jacob. Although the emphasis shifts from Jacob to Joseph beginning in Gen. 37, Jacob is still in the background until his death scene in Gen. 49:29-33. The name, “Jacob,” of course is prominent throughout the Old Testament and New as representing the nation, “Israel,” (e.g. Isa. 49:6; Amos 9:8, “the house of Israel”), with the person, Jacob, as the father of the nation (e.g. Isa. 58:14; Jo. 4:12), as the historical person (e.g. Hos. 12:12; Matt. 1:2).

⁸ According to the *Baker’s Bible Atlas* Beersheba is 27 miles southwest of Hebron. He was at Beersheba where Abraham took an oath with Abimelech. It is here where Abraham called on the everlasting God. Abimelech named it “Beersheba” (or “well of seven,” Gen. 21:31). Isaac, according to Genesis 26:31-33, also took an oath with Abimelech years later in the same location. It was also at Beersheba where Jacob took Esau’s birthright and blessing. Pfeiffer, *Baker’s Bible Atlas*, Chicago: Baker Book House, 1961, 58.

⁹ Bethel is located about 12 miles north of Jerusalem. It was here Jacob dreamed of the ladder extending to heaven. The interpretation of the dream may have been God’s promise of protection given in Gen. 28:15 (cf. Jn. 1:51). Jacob gave the city of Luz the new name of “Bethel” (Gen. 28:19, בֵּית־אֵל, “house of God”). According to Charles Pfeiffer the occupation of Bethel is thought to have begun about 2200 B.C. He writes, “Excavations of the mound known as *Beitin*, were begun in 1934 by an expedition sponsored by the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary and the American School of Oriental Research.” Charles Pfeiffer, *Baker’s Bible Atlas*, 60-61. The second occasion when God appears to Jacob (יַעֲקֹב) comes on his return to Bethel after the events of the Genesis 34 narrative. It is on this occasion God again renames him, “Israel.” God also reminds Jacob of his unilateral covenant made to Abraham and his father, Isaac. It appears that Genesis 35 records the actions of a man who is making a recommitment to his God (i.e. the altar to אֵל, the putting away of idols to foreign gods, the drink offering at Bethel) after the tragic events at Shechem.

(e.g. Gen. 28:11) where God reiterated the promises of the covenant to him regarding the land and the future inhabitants of the land along with the blessing through them. God provided Jacob assurance of His presence and safe passage back to the land of his ancestors (Genesis 28:15). Jacob ultimately arrived at his target destination, Haran, where he acquired two wives (Leah and Rachel along with their maids). From Haran Jacob's travels led him to a place he named Mahannaim (cf. "two camps," Gen. 32:1) where the "angels" met him. According to R. O. Rigsby the incident at Mahannaim occurred approximately 20 years after his dream at Bethel.¹⁰ At Peniel (cf. "face of God"), by the river Jabbok, Jacob encountered an angel and wrestled (אִבֵּק Gen. 32:24) with him and would not let go until he received a "blessing." It was here that Jacob's name was initially changed to "Israel" (cf. Gen. 32:28, Israel can be interpreted "Prince of God").

Immediate Context Of Genesis 34

At Succoth (Gen. 33:17), after reconciliation with Esau, Jacob erects a house and "booths" for his cattle. Succoth is located east of the Jordan and 1 ¼ miles north of the Jabbok river.¹¹ Genesis 34:18-20 records Jacob's re-entry into Canaan at Shechem, the city, where he purchased property from the "sons of Hamor."¹² It is here that we are introduced to the place and persons that connect us to the story of the sexual assault upon Dinah and the revenge exacted by her brothers. The statement recorded in Genesis 33:18 that "Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem" (cf. וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב שָׁלֵם עִיר שֶׁכֶּם) is ironic. Sailhamer comments regarding Jacob's safe

¹⁰ R. O. Rigsby, "Jacob," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, T. Desmond Alexander and David Baker, eds., Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003, 465.

¹¹ Charles Pfeiffer, *Baker's Bible Atlas*, Grand Rapids: Baker's House, 1961, 320. According to *Baker's Bible Atlas*, Succoth can be most likely identified as *Tell Deir 'Alla* near the river Jabbok east of Shechem.

¹² The site of Shechem is identified by *Baker's Bible Atlas*, page 60, as *Tell-Balatah* and located between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. It was the first destination of Abraham after he entered Canaan (שָׁכַם עַד אֵלֶיךָ מִדֶּרֶךְ) and it was at this location the LORD appeared to him and reiterated his promise of the land (cf. Gen. 12:6).

return to Canaan, “As he left Canaan in chapter 28, Jacob vowed that if God would be with him and watch over him so that he returned to the land ‘in peace’ (*bešālôm*; NIV, ‘safely’), he would give to God a tenth of all he had (28:120-22). The narrative has been careful to follow the events of Jacob’s life that have shown the Lord’s faithfulness to this vow. Thus here we are told that Jacob returned ‘safely’ (*šālēm*, v.18) to the land of Canaan.”¹³ The statement is a particularly ironic in regard to the city of Shechem because even though Jacob enters the city “safely” his exit from Shechem will be in the context of violence and not peace.

III. STRUCTURE

Of The Book Of Genesis

The literary genre of Genesis can be described as historical narrative prose. It is posited that the narratives presented in Genesis are not fictitious but accurate with regard to historical detail. Sailhamer describes the literary genre and structure of Genesis as “heroic narrative.” He writes, “Genesis is a collection of hero stories – stories built around the representative and exemplary life of a protagonist whose experience reenacts the conflicts and celebrates the values of the community producing the stories. Heroes capture the popular imagination and focus a culture’s self-awareness, and the heroes of Genesis are no exception.”¹⁴ John Davis has observed

¹³ John Sailhamer, “Genesis,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Volume 2, Frank E. Gaebelein, gen. ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1990, 213.

¹⁴ John Sailhamer, “Genesis,” *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III, eds., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 108. Sailhamer lists Genesis 34 as an example of one of the narrative techniques in Genesis he discusses in his article. He explains the technique as recounting “...events in such a way as to foreshadow and anticipate later events.” He writes, “For example, the account of Abraham’s entry into the land of Canaan is notably selective. Only three sites in the land are mentioned, and at these sites Abraham built an altar – at Shechem (12:6), between Bethel and Ai (12:8), and in the Negev (12:9). As Cassuto has pointed out, it can hardly be accidental that these are the same three locations visited by Jacob when he returns to Canaan from Haran (Gen. 34-35), as well as the sites occupied in the conquest of the land under Joshua (Josh. 1-11). Jacob and Joshua built altars at these very same sites.”

that “Genesis is an example of classical Hebrew prose and generally reads with considerable consistency and smoothness.”¹⁵

A broader outline suggested is to divide the book of Genesis into the two divisions, namely, the pre-patriarchal or primeval period (cf. Gen. 1:1-11:26) and the patriarchal period (cf. Gen. 11:27-50:26). The pre-patriarchal period is broader in scope in regard to its perspective beginning with the creation of the material universe and all that exists in it and culminating in the story of the city of Babel and confusion of tongues that caused the descendants of Noah to scatter over the earth.¹⁶ This section introduces the sovereign אֱלֹהִים as creator of the material universe and quickly focuses on the crown of his creation, man (אָדָם cf. Gen. 1:26, 27). Man is created in the *imago dei* (cf. “image of God”) and for the purpose of exercising dominion over God’s creation. The historical, family, and spiritual background for God’s choice of Abraham and His covenant with the forefather of the Hebrew nation (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 15; 17:1-8) is provided in the primeval section of Genesis (cf. Gen 1:1 – 11:26). Theological ramifications extend from ancient history into the persons and events addressed in the patriarch division of Genesis. The entrance of sin is depicted in Genesis three. It becomes the disrupter of the close relationship between man and his creator. Sin’s devastation is evident in the persistent cycle of obedience and disobedience to God exhibited in the lives of the patriarchs and their offspring.¹⁷ In the book of Genesis the

¹⁵ John J. Davis, *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis*, Winona Lake, IND: BMH Books, 1975, 33. In addition he writes, “The original text of Genesis, unlike that of some other Old Testament books, is quite free from transcriptional errors. The errors that are present are of little consequence to the meaning and significance of the text as a whole. The six manuscripts of Genesis that are part of the Dead Sea Scroll collection generally follow the traditional reading of the Masoretic text.”

¹⁶ Genesis 11:1-9 most likely records events that occurred before Genesis 10 which records the genealogies of the sons of Noah and the location of their settlement throughout the earth. Genesis 11:1-9 seems to provide the reason why the descendants of Noah (esp. Japheth and Ham) scattered throughout the earth. Special emphasis is given to Shem (cf. Gen. 11:10-31) as the focused line through which God’s covenant would be fulfilled.

patriarchal period begins with the introduction of Terah's genealogical record in Genesis 11:27 and ends with the death of Jacob (cf. Gen. 49:29-33) and Joseph (cf. 50:22-26).¹⁸ Gordon Wenham comments on the significant place of the patriarchal division in Genesis. He writes,

The length and detail of the patriarchal narratives show that the origin of Israel and the twelve tribes is the chief concern of Genesis. However, this analysis of the promises and their relationship to the story line shows that Israel's special relationship with God – and through that relationship their connection with land and to the nations – is even more important. It justifies Israel's claim to the land: God promised it to them, and the Canaanites forfeited their right to it through their misbehavior (Gen. 19).¹⁹

This quote is pertinent, in the opinion of the writer, to the Genesis 34 passage, in that Jacob and his sons were heirs to the covenant promises God made to Abraham and, because of this special status, were not to associate with Canaanites who worshipped other gods. This writer disagrees with the last phrase in Wenham's quote, namely, that "the Canaanites forfeited their right to it (cf. the land, *mine*) through their misbehavior (Gen. 19)." Nowhere in Genesis 19 does it indicate a loss of land rights to the Canaanites because of the sins committed in Sodom and Gomorrah. The covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants was sovereign, unilateral (cf. Gen. 15:8-21), and irrevocable and in no sense did the Canaanites forfeit their right to the land (which was not granted to them by God as it was to Abraham's descendants) by their "misbehavior."

¹⁷ The consequences of sin are immediately evident in Genesis 3 beginning with Adam and Eve and God's judgment pronouncements upon them. The consequences continue upon the whole human race as the constant refrain "and he died," in Genesis 5, illustrates. Hebrews 2:8, in the writer's opinion, describes the disruptive nature of sin and the devastating impact it had on God's purpose in regard to the dominion of man over His creation.

¹⁸ In his article on Genesis in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, L. A. Turner comments, "The majority position (e.g. Westermann, Wenham) is that the first section, the primeval history, which begins with creation (Gen. 1:1-2:4a), concludes with the genealogy of Shem (Gen. 11:10-26). Others have suggested that it terminates with the story of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9 (e.g. Coats), the genealogy of Terah in Genesis 11:27-32 (e.g. Whybair) or Abraham's departure in Genesis 12:4-9 (e.g. von Rad)." *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003, 350.

¹⁹ Gordon Wenham, "Genesis," in *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament: A Book by Book Survey*, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, Kevin Vanhoozer, gen. ed., 2008, 37.

A more detailed outline can be based on the assumption that תִּלְדוֹת (cf. *toledoth*, “generations,” “record”) indicates primary divisions in the Hebrew text.²⁰ Edward Young writes that the usage of תִּלְדוֹת is “extremely important for a correct understanding of the framework of Genesis. It occurs eleven times in Genesis and always as the heading of the section which it follows.”²¹ It is the view of L. A. Turner that the תִּלְדוֹת formula is used both as conclusions as well as introductions. He writes,

...the *toledot* formulas have different functions, acting as a conclusion in Genesis 2:4a and as introductions elsewhere, initiating genealogical lists (e.g. Gen 5:1; 11:10) or narratives (e.g. Gen 37:2), and governing larger (e.g. Gen 25:19-35:29) or smaller sections (e.g. Gen 25:12-18) of the book. Their function and content is flexible, but essentially they serve to divide the texts in to blocks, while providing reminders of the genealogical succession essential to the continuation of the plot of the book as a whole.²²

Even though Genesis 25:19 is the *toledot* or “records of the generations of Isaac” it appears that the focus of the narrative is on Jacob since he becomes the integral part of God’s answer to Isaac’s prayer in behalf of Rebecca. From this reference through Genesis 37:1 Jacob remains the dominant character with reference to the promise of God made to Abraham.

²⁰ The occurrences of תִּלְדוֹת in Genesis are as follows: (1) Genesis 2:4 = heaven and earth; (2) 5:1 = Adam; (3) 6:9 = Noah; (4) 10:1 = Shem, Ham, and Japheth; (5) 11:10 = Shem; (6) 11:27 = Terah; (7) 25:12 = Ishmael; (8) 25:19 = Isaac; (9) 36:1 = Esau; (10) 36:9 = Esau; (11) 37:2 = Jacob. According to V. J. Steiner, “*Tòlèdôt* serves...not to define Genesis as a discrete book (the term occurs sixteen additional times in the Pentateuch, twelve of these being in Num. 1) but to render programmatic a focusing and forwardly directed orientation to the whole...This proleptic function, clearly established in the first pentad (Gen. 2:4-11:26), continues into the second (Gen 11:27-50:26), which, as the opening movement in the actual pentateuchal body (Gen. 11:27 – Num. 36:13), successfully fixes the reader’s perspective for the whole.” V. J. Steiner, “Literary Structure of the Pentateuch,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, eds., Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003, 551.

²¹ Edward J. Young, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953, 54. John Davis posits a different view and comments that “the phrase seems to constitute a formal introduction to a passage, although some older writers regarded it instead as a conclusion.” John Davis, *Paradise to Prison*, Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1976, 136. It appears from my own observation that there are references to support Young’s contention with regard to the positioning of תִּלְדוֹת in the text and there are references to support Davis’ conclusion as well.

²² L. A. Turner, “Book of Genesis,” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, eds., Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003, 350.

Beginning with Genesis 37:2 there is a shift in emphasis from Jacob to Joseph, the favored son of Jacob.²³

Of Genesis 34

Bruce Waltke, in his Genesis commentary, uses the *toledot* occurrences as the basis of his outline of Genesis. Genesis 34 is included in book 8 corresponding to its usage in Genesis (cf. Gen. 25:19-35:29). Waltke labels Genesis 34 as “Book 8, Act 3, Scene 1: Digression: Dinah in Foreign Palace, Pact with Foreigners.” For Waltke the entire chapter of Genesis 34 is Act 3, scene 1 within the division of Genesis he calls “The account of Isaac’s descendants.”²⁴

Two acts of violence constitute the beginning and end of the Genesis 34 narrative, namely, the rape of Dinah (cf. 34:2) in the opening scene and the more intense and massive revenge exacted on the city by the brothers of Dinah (cf. 34:25-29). The literary structure of Genesis 34 seems to be sequential historical narrative prose as the 20 qal imperfect waw consecutives in the passage suggests. Included in the narrative is dialogue from Shechem and his father (Hamor), the brothers of Dinah (Simeon and Levi), and Jacob.²⁵

IV. THEOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS

The theological center in the book of Genesis is the sovereignty of God (i.e. the creation of the cosmos and man, Gen. 1-2; the judgment upon mankind with a catastrophic global flood, Gen 6-9; God’s judgment at the city of Babel and the dispersing of the people, Gen. 10-11). A primary

²³ L. A. Turner labels Genesis 37:2-50:26 as the “story of Jacob’s family.” Turner provides an overall summary regarding the structure of Genesis. He writes, “The book can be read as a coherent whole, with detailed correspondences between its parts, but in the main this is achieved through a detailed study of the plot development and repeated themes and motifs rather than through occasional parallel or concentric structures that might occur.” Turner, “The Book of Genesis,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, eds., Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003, 352.

²⁴ Bruce Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001, 458.

²⁵ What is particularly noticeable in the Genesis 34 narrative is the complete silence of Dinah throughout the entire narrative as well as the apparent silence (e.g. וְיַעֲקֹב) of Jacob with regard to interaction with Shechem and his father, Hamor. Jacob only breaks his silence in verse 30 to complain to Simeon and Levi regarding the dangerous situation in which their violence against the men of city has placed him.

purpose for Genesis 1-11 obviously is to provide the historical context for God's covenant people, Israel. In Genesis 12-50 God's sovereignty is especially displayed through the performance of His promises made unilaterally to Abraham and his descendants in the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 15:4-21; 17:4-14).²⁶ For example, God issued a sovereign call to Abraham while he was in Ur (Gen. 12:1, the NIV translates **וַיֹּאמֶר** as a pluperfect, "had said" [cf. Acts 7:2]) serving other gods as did his ancestors before him [cf. Josh. 24:2]). The protection, direction, and oversight of God in the life experiences of Abraham's descendants like Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, because of the covenant, is evident throughout the book of Genesis. It is not, therefore, surprising that Eugene Merrill would suggest "Covenant Purpose" generally as the theological center for the book of Genesis.²⁷

Regarding the theological purpose of Genesis, specifically, Merrill posits that God, in Genesis, instructs His people, Israel, regarding its ultimate purpose and design and that the nation is a "means" to accomplish His purpose for the earth through the domination of His creation *imago dei*, namely, mankind. The dispensational premillenarian has not forfeited the prospect of God accomplishing this purpose on the material earth in real time and space.²⁸

Speaking of the "divine-human relationship" in Genesis and particularly in the lives of the patriarchs L. A. Turner comments,

²⁶ God appears to be progressively less overtly manifested in the Patriarchal section of Genesis (cf. 12-50) as He is in the first eleven chapters of Genesis but, nonetheless, exercising sovereign control in even the minutia of circumstances in the lives of the patriarchs.

²⁷ Eugene Merrill, "A Theology of the Pentateuch," Roy B. Zuck, *Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1991. 30.

²⁸ Merrill, 30. Merrill writes, "The book of Genesis, written presumably on the eve of Israel's conquest of Canaan, serves at least two clear canonical and theological purposes. First, it satisfies Israel's immediate need to know of her origins, her purpose, her prospects, and her destiny. These questions are explicitly or implicitly addressed in such a way as to leave Israel in no doubt that she came into existence in fulfillment of divine purpose and promise. But that purpose and promise are hinged to a more ultimate design, an overarching plan of which Israel is not the object but the means: namely, the creation and domination of the earth and all other things by God through His image, the human race."

...a coherent development is suggested by the narrative thrust of Genesis. It begins with the ever-present, anthropomorphic God of the primeval history and moves on to Abraham, in whose story God appears and acts in the majority of episodes, with Abraham acknowledging God's presence and actions at regular intervals. In the Jacob story, God's involvement with Jacob and the latter's response is less frequent and more enigmatic. In the Joseph story God hardly ever speaks or acts explicitly, and his involvement is conveyed largely through the infrequent reflections of Joseph (Cohn). Thus Genesis does not present a static theology of God's involvement with humanity, but regardless of his mode of engagement, God is present and active, if sometimes only to the eye of faith.²⁹

In the patriarchal narratives what is apparent is the tension that exists between's God's purpose rooted in His sovereign ability to perform the promises contained in the covenant (i.e. "I will," cf. Gen. 12:2-3; 13:15-17; 17:6-8; 26:3-4; 28:13; 35:12) and the human frailty exhibited in the lives of the patriarchs through a pattern of a consistent propensity for disobedience. The juxtaposition between God's sovereign purpose and man's inadequate response can be observed throughout the Jacob narratives. Genesis 34 is no exception. There is an absence of any explicit mention of God, for that matter, in the Genesis 34 narrative. Perhaps there is an implicit reference to God in the condition imposed upon the Shechemites to be circumcised.³⁰ Such a suggestion, however, may be a stretch. It is significant to note that when Jacob came to the city of Shechem

²⁹ L. A. Turner, "Book of Genesis," Alexander, T. Desmond and David W. Baker, *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003, 358. Examples in the life of Joseph with regard to "behind the scenes" sovereign acts of God are abundant. For example, with what is almost presented as coincidences, the events in Genesis 37 are illustrative of God's sovereign oversight (i.e. 37:14-17, the man in the field who overheard the brothers say they were going to Dothan; 37:21, Reuben's suggestion to throw Joseph in the pit; 37:25, the Ishmaelite caravan from Gilead going to Egypt; 37:36, the Midianites sell Joseph to the Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh). Joseph's summation of God's sovereign control of the events surrounding Joseph's life and for the posterity of the nation of Israel (i.e. the famine to provide the impetus for Jacob and the 70 souls to come down to Egypt) is instructive (cf. Gen. 50:19-21).

³⁰ As referenced earlier, even in stating the condition of circumcision to the Shechemites, the sons of Jacob do not reference the Abrahamic Covenant or any of the obligations that accompany it.

he erected an altar to the almighty God of Israel (Gen. 33:20, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). Yet, even when Jacob reaches the point of desperation in the Genesis 34 narrative (cf. 34:30) there is no prayer or appeal of any kind made to God for help. What is significant with regard to this observation is that the actions of Jacob and his sons during their occupation of Shechem were inconsistent with how God's purpose should have been accomplished through them as His representatives on earth. But, in spite of the fact that the actions of Jacob and his sons were incongruous with God's good pleasure, God was consistent in keeping the promises He made to them (cf. Gen. 35:10-13).

Couched in the broad context of Genesis 34 is Israel's unique status before God as His chosen nation.³¹ Israel was to be separated from other nations who worshipped false gods and performed the evil practices associated with the Canaanite religions of the ancient Near East. In fact, in the view of the writer the issue for Israel's uniqueness was not about racial purity but rather more about being separated by theological and religious purity as a consequence of their relationship to the true God (e.g. Deut. 6:4-5; 13-15). Directly related to the Genesis 34 narrative, Israel is forbidden to intermarry with foreign nations who worship other gods because such a union potentially would turn the hearts of God's chosen people toward the false gods of the Canaanites and threaten to corrupt the holy lifestyle God had so prescribed for them (e.g. Deut. 7:3-4; Josh. 23:12 with Lev. 18:24-30; 9:4-5; 18:9-14). Indeed, the proposal for intermarriage between the sons of Jacob and the men of Shechem, the city, (cf. Gen. 34:9, 16, 21) was contrary to God's purpose and command for Israel. However, even though theological and religious segregation was essential for receiving God's continued blessing on the nation there were no warnings in the Genesis 34 narrative. It seems that it is left to the reader to conclude, based upon earlier prohibitions against such relationships (e.g. Gen. 24:2-4; 27:24; 28:1-3) and, in the context

³¹ An essential in Charles Ryrie's *sine qua non* of dispensationalism is the distinction between Israel and the Church. Such a distinction appears to be the natural by-product of a consistent application of the historical-grammatical hermeneutic applied to the Scriptures. Nowhere in the Scriptures does the word, "Israel," mean the Church. One has to apply a different hermeneutic in order to arrive at such a conclusion.

of the corpus of Scripture (e.g. Deut. 7:3), to conclude that such unions are contrary to God's plan and purpose for Israel (e.g. Deut. 30:15-20). The sons of Jacob agree to the proposal for intermarriage and the prospect for becoming "one people" but only because the agreement was a façade for deceit.

The central theological motif of Walter Kaiser, namely, "promise," appears as a strong thread running through the book of Genesis. As a dispensationalist the writer would not be in agreement with Kaiser on the eschatological details related to Israel's future, however, the promise of land (אֶרֶץ) has no small significance in the Genesis 34 narrative.³² It is not just land but it is the land which the Canaanites occupied during the lifetime of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and would stay in Canaanite hands until the time of Joshua (cf. Gen. 15:13-16) when the "iniquity of the Amorite" becomes full. The land component in the Abrahamic covenant is prominent throughout Genesis and the Pentateuch (e.g. Gen. 12:7; 13:17; 15:7, 18; 17:8; 26:3; 28:13; 35:12; Lev. 26:42). God's promises related to the land have not already been fulfilled to their fullest extent with the conquest of Canaan by Joshua but will be ultimately realized in the yet future eschaton at the Second Coming of Christ (cf. Ezek. 36:6-12).³³ At this time Israel will no longer be dislodged from the land but will permanently occupy the land promised to their forefathers (cf. Ezek. 36:28-36; 37:22-28; Joel 3:17-20).

With regard to contemporary theological issues evangelical feminism is a force to be reckoned with as one of the theological challenges for the Church in the 21st century. In the light of such a challenge Genesis 34 and the theological trajectories from it are not to be taken lightly.

³² The land is a strong component in the Abrahamic Covenant and the three other unilateral covenants coming out of it (e.g. Palestinian, Davidic, and New). It remains a key element with reference to the future of Israel as it is portrayed in predictive prophecy. The "conquering of the land" under Joshua was not the ultimate fulfillment of the land promises as such passages as Ezekiel 36-39 clearly reveal.

³³ The land parameters defined in Genesis 15:18-21 will not be realized before the future Mediatorial Kingdom in which Christ personally reigns on the earth.

Extreme feminists consider the Scriptures to be hopelessly contaminated by patriarchal influences that subjugate women. Liberal feminism rejects the authority of the Old Testament because of this perceived “contamination.” As Elisabeth Fiorenza (liberal feminist author and spokesperson) writes, “Feminist biblical interpretation must therefore challenge the scriptural authority of patriarchal texts and explore how the bible is used as a weapon against women in our struggles for liberation.”³⁴ Since liberal feminism rejects biblical authority the hottest part of the battle for the evangelical egalitarian and complementarian debate is in the arena of biblical interpretation, hermeneutics. Genesis 34 is a test case for the liberal and evangelical feminists as it can represent for them an example of silencing the rape victim, Dinah. Is Genesis 34 an example of minimizing rape and the rape victim in a male dominated ancient Near-Eastern culture as the feminists charge?

It would appear that the focus of the Genesis 34 narrative is not the mistreatment of Dinah and, therefore, does not represent an example of the mistreatment of rape victims by “a male dominated society bent on the subjugation of women.”³⁵ While Jewish and Christian commentators have faulted Dinah heavily at times, there is no explicit condemnation of Dinah in the Genesis 34 narrative. In fact, there is no explicit criticism of Dinah in the entire corpus of Scripture with regard to this incident. The only words of condemnation, related to the events of Genesis 34, are uttered by Jacob against Simeon and Levi near the end of his life (cf. Gen. 49:5-7). It may be posited, in fact, that a primary reason for the inclusion of the Genesis 34 narrative is realized in the rebuke and curse pronounced upon Simeon and Levi by Jacob at the end of his life as recorded in Genesis 49:5-7. In spite of Jacob’s apparent docile reaction to the assault upon

³⁴ Elisabeth Fiorenza, “The Will to Choose or Reject: Continuing Our Critical Work,” *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, Letty M. Russell, ed., Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985, 127. She adds, “Feminist biblical interpretation must therefore challenge the scriptural authority of patriarchal texts and explore how the Bible is used as a weapon against women in our struggles for liberation.”

³⁵ See *The Narrative of Rape in Genesis 34* by Coralyn Blyth.

Dinah by Shechem, the rape of Dinah is not minimized in the text. The objective statement interjected by the narrator provides an unbiased verdict regarding the incident, namely, such a thing “should not be done” (Gen. 34:7, **לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה**). In fact, reaction to the sexual assault upon Dinah is expressed in the strongest terms as reflected by the sons of Jacob not only through their emotional response (cf. Gen. 34:7, **וַיִּתְעַצְּבוּ**, and **כִּי־נִבְלָה**) but in the bloody revenge killing carried out against Hamor and Shechem as well as all of the men of the city (cf. 34:25-26). The hanging rhetorical question in Gen. 34:31 leaves no doubt that the primary focus of the sons of Jacob was the honor of their sister.

V. PRACTICAL RAMIFICATIONS

The consequences of veering away from the divine template for marriage provided before the Fall of man in Genesis 2:24 are perceptible at least implicitly in the Dinah narrative of Genesis 34. The biblical pattern is reiterated by Jesus in Matthew 19:4-5. Genesis 34 highlights the inter-family intrigue, jealousies, and divided loyalties that are the by-products of polygamy which is contrary to God’s marriage template. Although no explicit reference is made to such consequences specifically they are, nonetheless, apparent in Jacob’s low-key response to the abduction and rape of his daughter. Dinah is the daughter of Leah, the unloved wife. The more proper response comes from Dinah’s full brothers, born to Leah. There is no unambiguous mention of the sons born to Rachel or to the other handmaids. Family loyalty tensions will again come to the forefront in the Joseph narrative of Genesis (cf. Gen. 36-50) as conflict between the brothers in the context of familial loyalties surface.

As mentioned previously the devastating impact of the introduction of sin into the human race in Genesis three is illustrated in Genesis 34. There are no heroes because it appears that everyone supplies elements in the narrative that are disappointing to the reader in one way or another due to their sin nature. For example, the “family tradition” of deception is carried on by

the sons of Jacob in a premeditated and deliberative manner against Hamor and Shechem and all of the men of the city (cf. Gen. 34:13). Deception was present even with Abraham as apparent in his request of Sarai to provide false information to the Egyptians because of Abraham's fear of losing his life (cf. Gen. 12:11-13). Certainly Abraham should have been comforted by God's promises recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 but it seemed, at least in this one case, for Abraham fear trumped faith. Jacob's own notorious pattern of deceit beginning with deception to his father, Isaac, apparently comes back to haunt him in the Genesis 34 narrative.

Also present but unseen is the vivid contrast between the faithfulness of God and the unfaithfulness of His chosen people. God's faithfulness in providing protection for the seed of Abraham, as promised in Genesis 12:2-3, is demonstrated in Genesis 34. Even though Jacob seems to be, at first, inconsolable with regard to his fear of reprisal from the nations surrounding him (cf. Canaanites and Perizzites) he has enough spiritual sensitivity to acknowledge God's protection and presence (cf. Gen. 35:2-3).³⁶ Moses reminds the reader that God was, indeed, behind the scenes providing defense for Israel (cf. Gen. 35:5). The believer today, in the Church age, can be comforted in the realization that God is faithful to perform His promises. As the Apostle Paul illustrates in the Romans 9-11 section concerning Israel, God will keep His covenant promises to that nation (cf. Rom. 11:25-29) and, therefore, we can be assured that He will keep His promises to us who are the recipients of His imputed righteousness through the by-grace-through-faith kind of salvation expounded upon in that same book.

³⁶ Jacob's fear of reprisal from the area nations can be compared to the fear of the Egyptians by Abraham as recorded in Genesis 12:11-13 and referred to earlier.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alexander, T. Desmond and David W. Baker, *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Alter, Robert, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Basic Books, 1981.
- Botterweck, G. Johannes and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, Mich: W. B. Eerdmans, 1974.
- Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, eds., *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, London: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Derouchie, Jason S., "Circumcision in the Hebrew Bible and Targums: Theology, Rhetoric, and the Handling of Metaphor," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 14.2, 2004.
- Gaebelein, Frank E., *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 2, Genesis – Numbers, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990.
- Hamilton, Victor P., *The Book of Genesis*, The New International Commentary On the Old Testament, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.
- Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 1980.
- Holladay, William Lee, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament: Based Upon The Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1971.
- Hubbard, David Allen and Glen W. Barker, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 16-50*, Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2011.
- Josephus, Flavius, *Complete Works*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1960.
- Kittel, Rudolf, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, edito quinta emendate boper ed., Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.
- Matthews, K. A., *The New American Commentary*, Vol. v, 1A-1B, *Genesis*, Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman and Holmann Publishers, 1996-2005.
- Parry, Robin, *Old Testament Story and Christian Ethics: The Rape of Dinah as a Case Study*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs, Bletchey: Paternoster Press, 2004.
- _____, "Source Criticism & Genesis 34," *Tyndale Bulletin*, 51.1, 2000.
- Pfeiffer, Charles, *Baker's Bible Atlas*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961.

- Rad, Gerhard von, *Genesis: A Commentary*, Rev. ed., Translated by John M. Marks, The Old Testament Library, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972.
- Ryken, Leland and Tremper Longman III, eds., *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993.
- Spence, Rev. H. D. M and Rev. Joseph S. Exell, eds., *The Pulpit Commentary: Genesis*, New York and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalis Company, 1909-19.
- The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament with an English Translation*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.
- VanGemenen, Willen, *A Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: The Introductory Articles from the New Testament Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Grand Rapids Mich: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1997.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J., *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Waltke, Bruce K., *Genesis: A Commentary*, Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2001.
- Waltke, Bruce K. and Michael Patrick O'Conner, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- Zuck, Roy B., *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1991.

JOSHUA: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF LEADERSHIP

John F. Klem, Th.D.*

I. LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP

History has given us both heroes and villains in leadership roles. The biblical record for example inspires us with the leadership of Moses and David and enrages us with the antics of the Judges and the Kings. In our own American history we celebrate the courageous leadership of men like Washington and Lincoln. But, we abhor of our leaders who misused the authority of their office.

II. THE LEADERSHIP THEME

Leadership is a significant concern in the biblical material.¹ Deuteronomy 17-19 established the leadership roles of prophet, priest, and king for the nation of Israel. The Pastoral Epistles (1-2 Timothy, Titus) detail the leadership positions of pastors and deacons for the church. In addition, both Testaments teach us how to be a mom and a dad, a husband and a wife, a family member, and a servant (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16; Prov 31:10-31; Eph 5-6). The biblical material also prioritizes the character of leaders with virtue lists (Deut 17:14-20; 1 Tim 3:1-6; Titus 1:5-16) and exposes the vices of self-serving leaders (cf., Judges and Kings). Most importantly, the incarnate Lord Jesus Christ models for us the ideals of servant leadership resourced for us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Phil 2:1-11; Eph 5:22-24).

Now, the author must admit that his attitude toward leadership studies has not always been positive. Through the years, he often wearied over leadership messages and lectures. Many were just unrealistic moral lessons imposed on a biblical text. Others were more human

* John F. Klem is an adjunct professor at Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, NC.

¹ This article is adaptation of sections of the author's Th.D. dissertation. John F. Klem, "A Genre Analysis of Joshua 1-12 as Covenant Military History." Th.D. dissertation. Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999.

psychology than Bible. However, once he assumed various leadership roles, he realized his own personal need for a robust biblical theology of leadership. This study is an attempted contribution to the theology of leadership from the book of Joshua.

The Leadership Theme In The Book of Joshua

The opening verses of Joshua provide us a literary map into the whole story of the book. Joshua is a war story told from the perspective of God's covenant relationship with His people Israel. The big ideas of land, leadership, a mighty and faithful God, and obedience to His Word shape the Joshua story.² Our purpose is to follow this literary map of Joshua 1:1-9 into the book with a limited focus on the leadership theme. During this journey, we will see the good news of how God calls and equips leaders to fulfill His kingdom objectives.

The Appointment Of Joshua To A Leadership Role

The book of Joshua begins with the announcement of Moses's death and the transference of his leadership to Joshua (Deut 34).³ It is now Joshua's responsibility to bring the nation across

² See Brevard S. Childs, *An Introduction to the Old Testament As Scripture*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), pp. 244-47; C. J. Goslinga, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, Edited by Ray Togtman, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), p. 20; C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel*, Translated by James Martin, Vol. II, Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), p. 27; and Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*, Vol. 7, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glen W. Baker, (Waco: TX: Word Books, 1983), p. 5 for discussion of the programmatic nature of Joshua 1:1-9. See also Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), p. 346. According to Vanhoozer, "Generic markers at the beginning of a work are particularly important in guiding the reader into a particular rule-governed communicative activity represented by the text. Compare Mark 1:1; Romans 1:1; Ruth 1:1; Proverbs 1:1. The generic markers of Joshua 1:1-9 are land, leadership, a mighty and faithful God, and obedience to His Word.

³ Gerhard Hauch, "Text and Contexts: A Literary Reading of the Conquest Narrative (Joshua 1-11)." Ph.D. Dissertation. Princeton Theological Seminary, 1991, p. 113. Joshua was repeatedly told that he would be the successor of Moses (Deut 1:38; 3:21ff; 31:1-8, 14-15, 23 cf. Num 27:12-23). He served Moses faithfully during the wilderness wanderings (Exod 17:9ff; 24:13; 32:11; Num 11:28; Deut 1:38) and stood with Moses on Sinai (Exod 24:13; 32:17. Joshua was commissioned by Moses (Deut 31:1-8, 14-15 cf. Deut 1:38; 3:21ff; Num 27:12-23) and shortly before Moses' death Joshua was filled with the spirit of wisdom by the laying on of Moses' hands (Deut 34:9). In light of these biblical details, Hauch develops the similarities and differences in the leadership of Moses and Joshua. See also Klaus Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary in the Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings*, Translated by David E. Green, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), pp. 69-70. The installment of Joshua in chapter 1 is a fulfillment of YHWH's actions in Deuteronomy 31.

the Jordan into the promised land (1:2).⁴ After the LORD gave Joshua this monumental assignment, He immediately assured him of His assistance (1:5).

So, what happened to Moses? Why is Joshua needed at this point in Israel's journey to the promised land? These questions are answered in the historical account of Israel's journey through the wilderness of Zin (Num 20) to the promised land.⁵ The episode is dark and disappointing. After 40 years in the dessert (Num 20:28; 33:38) and after witnessing an older generation die off, not much has changed with the younger generation (Exod 17:8f).⁶

Between the death reports of Miriam and Aaron (Num 20:1, 23-29) the nation complained and contested the leadership of Moses. In response, the Lord gave Moses and Aaron clear instructions: assemble the congregation; speak to the rock so that it may yield its water (20:2-8). Now, instead of speaking to the rock as instructed by the Lord, Moses spoke rash words (Ps 106:32) and struck it twice (20:9-13). Although the Lord allowed the water to flow out abundantly to relieve the stressed situation of the nation and its livestock, He was not pleased with Moses and Aaron (20:12-13). The Lord judged what Moses did as an act of unbelief. When he struck the rock, Moses did not sanctify the Lord or demonstrate trust in Him in the eyes of the Israelites (Num 20:12; Deut 32:51). He did not treat the Lord as the Holy One He is. Noah, unlike Moses, led and built the ark with holy fear (Heb 11:7).

Moses' lack of leadership faith in the Holy One of Israel disqualified him from his guidance of the nation into the promised land. The Lord then selected Joshua for this role (Deut 1:37-38). In the process, Moses went from being the up front leader to being the sideline coach of Joshua in

⁴ The use of the qal participle and the qal perfect present the promise of land as unreal and real in the mind of the LORD, the speaker.

⁵ Robert G. Boling, *Joshua*. Vol. 6, The Anchor Bible Commentary, (New York: Doubleday, 1982), p. 118.

⁶ Gary E. Schnitjer, *The Torah Story*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), p. 412.

his newly assigned task as commander of land occupation (Deut 1:38; 3:28). Deuteronomy 31 (31:7, 23) is Moses' leadership exhortation to Joshua.

The succession of Moses by Joshua is in a covenant context and is supported by a literary context describing the succession of a covenant leader and the continuation of covenant history.⁷ The uniqueness of this succession in covenant administrators is its authentication by means of the LORD's immediate involvement, whose address is recorded in Joshua 1:1-9. The LORD's direct speech to Joshua introduces the reader to a new stage in covenant history—inaugural stories of people entering a new land under the leadership of Joshua⁸

The installation of Joshua as the Mosaic successor includes basically three parts: encouragement given to the new officer, a statement of the divine will, the task, and assurance of divine presence and or aid.⁹ These literary components signal an important event and are evident in other leadership changes throughout biblical history. Porter, for example, identifies David's speech to Solomon in 1 Kings 2:1-9 as a close parallel to the succession between Moses and Joshua. Moses and Joshua are prototype Kings entrusted with maintaining the covenant along with the social and religious well-being of the nation.¹⁰ McCarthy identifies six Old Testament

⁷ John F. Klem, "A Genre Analysis of Joshua 1-12 As Covenant Military History," Th.D. Dissertation, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1999, p. 150.

⁸ Moshe Weinfeld, *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelite*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), pp.1-4. See also Gordon J. Wenham "Deuteronomistic Theology in Joshua," *JBL* 90 (1971): 145. According to Wenham the Deuteronomistic editor demonstrates that Joshua is a divinely appointed and authenticated successor of Moses in two ways: description of Joshua's appointment by means of accepted legal terminology and by drawing parallels between the careers of Moses and Joshua. See also Klem, p. 151.

⁹ D. J. McCarthy, "An Installation Genre?," *JBL* 90 (1971): 31-41.

¹⁰ J. R. Porter, "The Succession of Joshua," in *Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honor of Gwynne Henton Davies*, ed. J. Durham, (London: SCM Press, 1970), pp. 112-13, 17.

passages that have a similar literary form and function of installations (2 Chron 32:6-8; 2 Chron 19:5-7; 1 Chron 28:10; 1 Kgs 2; Hag 2:4; Ezra 10:4).¹¹

The Joshua 1:1 reference to the death (cf., 1:2, 18) of Moses recalls the Numbers 20 event with a second generation of Israelites in the wilderness. Moses was the appointed covenant leader held accountable for how he handled the divine objectives. The circumstances of his death prior to Israel's occupation of the land reminds the reader that the Lord God expects His appointed covenant administrators to lead, to influence with a heart of obedience to Him and His Word. The Numbers 20 episode is instructive. Leaders are warned about the consequences for not treating the Lord as holy and trustworthy. Leaders must objectify and therefore affirm the holiness of God with obedience to the Word of God. Regardless of Moses' failure, the hope associated with this story is that God will advance His promises despite the disobedience of individual leaders. God expressed mercy by giving Israel water and a new leader to accomplish His will.

The Joshua 1:1-9 literary format presents the transition from Moses to Joshua in the context of covenant history. In keeping with significant leadership transition in both the biblical and ancient world, Joshua is the new covenant leader assigned to bring the covenant nation of Israel into the land promised by the unchanging covenant LORD.¹²

Joshua's Leadership Task And Related Assurances

Joshua's leadership objective was clear: lead the sons Israel into the land the Lord was giving to them (Josh 1:2). The first covenant theme evident in Joshua 1:1-9 is the divine gift of land (Deut 1:8; 6:10; 18:7-8). Since the grant of land to the nation is one of the key components

¹¹ McCarthy, "An Installation Genre?," pp. 32-34.

¹² James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 449. See also the Oracle of Ninlit Concerning Ashurbanipal, pp. 450-51.

of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12, 15, 17), its presence in the programmatic introduction to the Joshua narrative is a generic signal regarding the literary nature of the conquest and settlement account. The grant of land is mentioned in both sections of Joshua 1:1-9 and given the greatest amount of detail in verses 1:1-5. According to Nelson,

Yahweh's gift of land is the core plot action of Joshua, constituting an arc of promise and fulfillment that begins in 1:2-6. This promise had originally been made to Israel's ancestors (1:6; 5:6; 21:43-44), and its realization is referred to persistently (2:9, 24; 3:10; 5:12; 10:40-42; 11:16-17, 23; 12:7-8; 14:5; 15b; 21:43-45; 23:4-5; 24:13, 28). Because it was none other than Yahweh the Divine Warrior who granted the land, Israel had inalienable right to it, unless Yahweh himself should choose otherwise (23:12, 15-16; 24:20).¹³

In 1:1-4, Joshua is commanded to cross over to the land that the LORD “is giving” (נָתַן) and “has given” (נָתַתִּי) to Israel. The covenant theme of land grant is developed in Joshua 1:1-9 in connection with repetition of the verb “to give.” Various forms of this verb are found three times in 1:1-9 (1:2, 3, 6) and five times in 1:10-18 (1:11, 13, 14, 15, 15). The LORD is the subject of all the give (נָתַן) verbs in 1:1-5. The first divine imperative issued to Joshua is to arise and to go over to the land being given to the nation of Israel. The participle form (נֹתֵן) is used to express present, unrealized action which reports the durative action of the divine actor the LORD.¹⁴ A qal perfect form (נָתַתִּי) is used in 1:3 to introduce the geographic boundaries of the land (1:3-4). The perfect views a situation as a whole globally complete event.¹⁵ According to Williams, the perfect expresses action either completed in reality or in the thought of the

¹³ Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), p. 15. See also Walter Brueggemann, *The Land*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp. 52-53. Brueggemann mentions that the gifted land is covenanted land, a covenanted place. He writes, “The Jordan is entry not into safe space but into a context of covenant.”

¹⁴ Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 37.6.

¹⁵ Ibid., 30, 30.5.1. See also Walter Brueggemann, *The Land*, pp. 47-53 for theological implications of a gift of land that is not anticipated but given.

speaker.¹⁶ The aoristic perfect is prophetic in emphasis indicating that the future event of land occupation is complete in the mind of God.¹⁷ In Joshua 1:6 an infinitive construct (*לָתֶת*) is used to rehearse the LORD's promise to the fathers regarding the promise of land. Literally the text reads "this (is) the land which I swore to their fathers to give to them." The success of Joshua's role as a covenant land distributor is directly related to the promise of God to give the land to Israel in keeping with a previous promise.¹⁸

The land-grant emphasis of Joshua 1:1-9 is also developed in terms of geographic boundaries. The general statement of 1:3, "Every place on which the sole of your foot treads" is followed by a more specific statement of boundary employing the use of "from . . . unto" (*מִן...עַד*) in 1:4 (cf., Deut 11:23).¹⁹ The territorial descriptions of the land in Joshua 1 are non-militaristic and do not mention the enemies to be destroyed by the Israelites. This, according to G. Mitchell, signifies that the land is a divine gift and Israel as right to it.²⁰

The LORD who grants land to the sons of Israel is also the LORD who will fight for them. The promise that no man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life is rooted in the phrases of the covenant document of Deuteronomy (7:24; 11:25 cf. Job 41:2) and is part of an ideology of covenant warfare. In the book of conquest (Josh 1-12), divine involvement in war is accomplished in a variety of ways, some of which are more dramatic (casting down hailstones, 10:11), and others of which are less dramatic (the repeated statement of "I will give . . ." 8:18). Divine terrorizing of the enemy (Josh 2:11, 24; 5:1; 10:2; 11:20) is one aspect of divine

¹⁶ Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), #162.

¹⁷ Waltke and O'Connor, 30.5.1.e., #37-38.

¹⁸ Klem, pp. 143-144.

¹⁹ B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, p. 245.

²⁰ Gordon Mitchell, *Together in the Land: A Reading of the Book of Joshua*. JSOTSup 134, ed. David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), p. 28. See also Klem, p. 150.

involvement in military operations highlighted in Joshua and the related ancient Near Eastern literature (Klem: 206). According to Joshua 1:5, the Lord will put to flight Israel's enemies (cf., Deut 28:7, 25). As part of the blessings, the LORD will act to cause the attacking enemies of Israel to flee in seven directions (Deut 28:7). However, in the curse section (Deut 28:25), the LORD will personally act to cause Israel to experience defeat before her enemies and to flee in seven directions in response to her covenant violation.

The issue of supernatural triumph over the land inhabitants is implied in the first half of Joshua 1:5, “no man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life” Land entrance (1:2), land description (1:3-4) and land occupation (1:5) are presented in the context of promise. The hortatory sequence of “arise” and “cross” (1:2) is followed by hortatory reason stated in terms of the LORD giving and chasing.²¹

The second half of Joshua 1:5 is introduced with the comparative “just as” (כַּאֲשֶׁר). The hortatory reason for entering the land is rooted in the divine promise that no one will be able to resist the advancing Israelites. The closing negatives have as their subject YHWH and the state by means of “no” (אֵין), the promise of divine presence. These verbs are a development of the “I will be” verb (הָיִיתִי), which is used in the comparative clause to underline the continuity of covenant history between Moses and Joshua.

The latter half of Joshua 1:5 is a declaration of the Lord's covenant faithfulness to Joshua and the nation, which becomes the substantive basis for the conquest promise of 1:5a.²² The prayer of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:6-12 reflects the content of Joshua 1:5 as the king calls

²¹ George Omerly II, “Verb Hierarchy and Discourse Structure in the Conquest Narrative: A Text Linguistic Commentary,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1997, pp. 68, 72.

²² J. Alberto Soggin, *Joshua, A Commentary*. OTL, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972), p. 31. According to Soggin, Joshua 1:5 is not just a matter of calling forth faith. Since guarantees must be given, a continuity of history is stressed: “with Moses,” “with you” (cf. 1:7, 13, 15). See also Klem, p. 221.

upon the Lord for help against Ammon, Moab, and Mt. Seir (cf. Ps 5:5). In his crisis, Jehoshaphat draws strength from the fact that no one can withstand the Lord, along with the fact that He drove out the land inhabitants in the days of Joshua, which is affirmation of divine presence in conquest. On the other hand, the perspective of Joshua 1:5 is that no one will be able to withstand Joshua/Israel, which is then followed by a promise of divine presence.²³

The Expectations Of Joshua's Leadership Role

The LORD's speech to Joshua, the newly appointed leader moves from promises to responsibilities in verse 6.²⁴ The speech includes three mandates, two of which are part of verses 6-9. The mandates are get ready to cross (1:2b); be strong and courageous (1:6), and be careful to obey all the law (1:7).²⁵ According to Omerly, compliance to the three commands is secured by promissory or reason texts which occur as independent, embedded paragraphs.²⁶

The divine speech to Joshua begins and ends with the command to be strong and courageous (1:6, 7, 9). The mandate of 1:6 is followed by the hortatory reason, "you will give this people possession" The 1:9 mandate introduces a hortatory sequence that includes, "do not be frightened" and "do not be dismayed."²⁷ The verbal pair also appears in Joshua 1:18 and

²³ Marten H. Woudstra, *Joshua*. NICOT, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), p. 61. Woudstra observes that the guarantee of success is YHWH's unfailing presence and aid. According to Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*. Vol 7, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glen W. Baker, (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), p. 12 this motif of divine presence, rooted in the nomadic life of the patriarchs Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, frames the second half of Joshua (1:5, 9, 17). The motif is then included in the holy war ideology (Judg 6:11-16; Num 14:43; 1 Sam 17:37; 2 Sam 7:9) and in law corpus of Deuteronomy in connection with the laws of battle (Deut 20:1-4 cf. 31:6, 8, 23). Elsewhere the motif functions in connection with divine guidance through the wilderness (Deut 2:7). In conclusion, Butler understands the motif to express the basic root of Israelite faith in YHWH, the God of Israel, who accompanies, leads, protects, fights, and goes with men chosen for this work. See also Klem, p. 220.

²⁴ Richard S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 6, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, ed., D. J. Wiseman, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), p. 79.

²⁵ Omerly, p. 72.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 80-81.

10:25. In the former, the Trans-Jordan tribes recognize Joshua as Moses' successor and affirm their allegiance to him as they obeyed Moses. They promise to put to death rebels (cf., Deut 1:26; 9:23; 21:18-21) and then exhort Joshua to be strong and courageous. In the latter reference (10:25) Joshua calls the sons of Israel to be strong and courageous in executing the five kings who took refuge in the cave of Makkedah.

Elsewhere in the biblical material, the command to be strong and courageous is used in connection with believing the promises of God for deliverance and land occupation (Deut 31:6, 7, 23), for obedience to the Lord's statutes and ordinances (1 Chron 22:13), for completion of an assigned task (1 Chron 28:20), and for battle preparation (2 Chron 32:7). Notably it appears in historic episodes between Moses, Israel, and Joshua; Joshua and Israel; David and Solomon; and Hezekiah and Israeli military. Two Psalms incorporate the verbal pair in connection with waiting on the Lord (Ps 27:14) and a courageous heart (Ps 31:25).

The verbal pair serves to focus Joshua, the newly appointed leader on the promise of God associated with his task (1:6), to encourage resolve in Word obedience (1:7, 18), and to instill confidence in the Lord's presence (1:9).²⁸ According to Butler, the divine presence motif has its roots in the nomadic lives of the patriarchs, particularly Isaac (Gen 26:3), Jacob (Gen 31:3), and Joseph (Gen 48:21). The same promise was stated to Moses (Exod 3:12) and Joshua (Deut 31:8, 23). The Lord promised to accompany a patriarch on a fearful journey.²⁹ This promise is also a

²⁸ David M. Howard, Jr., *Joshua*, Vol. 5, The New American Commentary, ed., Kenneth A. Matthews, (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1998), p. 84. According to Howard, "courage" is the best translation in the contexts of 1:6 and 9 which deal with conflict, while "strength" or "resoluteness" is more appropriate for keeping the God's commands.

²⁹ Butler, p. 12.

distinct part of the Holy War ideology (Deut 20:1-4; 31:6, 8, 23; Judg 6:11-16; 1 Sam 17:37; 2 Sam 7:9).³⁰

The second leadership expectation is resolve to obey the law (1:7), the book of the law (1:8), and everything written in it.³¹ The expectation is framed in a hortatory sequence (1:7-8b) that begins with the command to be strong and courageous for law watching and doing followed by the negated mandate, to not turn from it for the sake of success, followed by to not let the Torah depart from your mouth, and followed by to meditate in it.³²

Law observance is to be without deviation (Josh 1:7; Deut 5:32). This implies a biblical worldview that assumes the law can be kept (Josh 24:19). A prototype of covenant faithfulness, of the happy man is described in Psalm 1 (cf. Deut 17:20; 31:29).³³

Law observance also requires meditation which is focused on this book of the Torah (1:8). The written treaty document is to be read in an undertone (Ps 1:2).³⁴ Meditation, as

³⁰ Butler, p. 12. See also Paul Eugene Dion, "Fear Not Formula and Holy War." *CBQ* 32 (1970): 565-570; *Interpreter's Dictionary of Bible Supplement*, 1984 ed. s.v. "War, Holy" by Norman Gottwald, pp. 942-44.

³¹"The Joshua 1:7-8 literary unity refers to the Book of the Law as "everything written in it" (Josh 1:8c). This phrase is one of two descriptions of the law associated with the expression "Book of Law in the Hebrew text. YHWH's reference to the Law as what He commanded Moses and what is written encompasses everything from the origin of the Book of the Law to its inscripturation." Each descriptor underscores the nature of the covenant relationship. For example, the law commanded is the authoritative word of the Great King, the Book of the Law is the formal covenant document, and everything written refers to a codified document for the successful operation of covenant life. Klem, p. 171-72.

³² Omerly, p. 81.

³³ Woudstra, Joshua, p. 63. It cannot be stressed enough that work-righteousness is not the issue in Joshua 1:6-9. According to Tremper Longman III, *Making Sense of the Old Testament, Three Crucial Questions*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 1999), p. 65, "A covenant/treaty did not establish a relationship that was based on the observation of law, though it did enforce it. The great king had already conquered or cowed the other king into vassalage by the time the treaty was written. In the case of the Mosaic covenant, God had already established his relationship with Israel by means of grace before giving them the law. Indeed, the preface to the Ten Commandments indicates as much when God introduces himself as the one "who rescued you from slavery in Egypt" (Exod 20:1), p. 65.

³⁴ Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, s.v. **הגה**.

presented in the Scripture is never disassociated from the written word, the person of God Himself (Ps 63:7) or the works of God (Ps 77:13).³⁵

The next unit (1:8c-d) includes the hortatory reasons for the mandates: then you will have prosperity and success. The unit closes with a second hortatory sequence that mirrors the first (1:7-8b). The command to be strong and courageous is followed by the mandates to not tremble or be dismayed because the Lord God is with you wherever you go.³⁶

The leadership expectation of obedience to the Word is the key to Joshua's success. The expectation is detailed with the verbs "keep," "observe" and "obey," "do" (לִשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת). This word duo appears most often in the Old Covenant contexts of Leviticus and Deuteronomy³⁷ and the New Covenant prophetic passages (Ezekiel).³⁸ As such the combo defines the way of life desired by the covenant Lord for the covenant people. Leviticus 18:1-5 (cf., Exod 20:1; Deut 12:30) puts law keeping in the context of an established relationship with the covenant Lord: I am the Lord your God; you shall not do; you are to perform My judgments and keep My statutes; I am the Lord.³⁹

Finally, the verbal pair details the key to success for the nation and its leaders (Lev 18:4; Deut 17:19; 1 Kgs 2:3). For the nation, loyalty to the covenant Lord is evidenced through keeping and doing the covenant commandments. The Lord expects His people not to live like the Egyptians or the Canaanites, but to live in accordance with His judgments and statutes (Lev

³⁵ Howard, *Joshua*, p. 86.

³⁶ Omerly, p. 81.

³⁷ Leviticus 18:4, 5, 26, 30; 19:37; 20:8, 2; Deuteronomy 4:6; 5:1, 10, 32; 6:3, 25; 7:12; 8:1; 11:22, 32; 12:1, 30; 15:5; 17:10, 19; 28:1, 13, 15, 58; 29:9; 31:12.

³⁸ Ezekiel 18:9, 19, 21; 20:19, 21; 36:27, 24. According to Ezekiel 36:27 the Lord will put His Spirit in you and will cause you to walk in His statutes.

³⁹ Tremper Longman III, *Making Sense of the Old Testament*, p. 65.

18:5). This will be their wisdom and understanding (Deut 4:6), their righteousness (Deut 6:25), and their well-being in the land of promise (Deut 6:3). Blessing and security in the land are promised for obedience (Deut 7:12; 28:12, 13). Wrath and exile, on the other hand, await lawbreakers (2 Kgs 21:8; 2 Chron 34:21).

For the patriarchs and national leaders, the Lord expects teaching the judgments and statutes in addition to their observance. God, for example chose Abraham (Gen 18:19) so he will command his children to keep the way of the Lord. Moses was expected to teach the statutes and judgments that they, the nation would observe them in the land which the Lord was giving them (Deut 5:32-33). Teaching was a significant part of the priestly role (Lev 17:11; Deut 33:10; Ezra 7:10).

In key passages the Israelite leader is promised prosperity and success in connection with law keeping (Josh 1:8; 1 Chron 22:13). The two terms involved in this promise include “success” (שכל) and “prosperity” (צלח). Both overlap in their range of meaning with the idea of success.⁴⁰ “Prosperity” (צלח) is used most often to document success in one’s life endeavors and is translated by the NASB, “prosperous.” Successful life efforts are often divinely caused or are because of divine presence. Abraham’s servant was given success by God in his mission to find a wife for Isaac (Gen 24:12, 40, 42, 56). Joseph succeeded in Potiphar’s household because God was with him (Gen 39:2, 3, 23). The people’s building efforts prospered in Ezra and Nehemiah because God favored them (Ezra 5:8; 6:14; Neh 1:11; 2:20). The Lord promised Solomon that he will prosper him if he carefully observed His statutes and ordinances (1 Chron 22:13 cf., 2 Chron

⁴⁰ Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon of Old Testament, s.v. שכל, צלח.

7:11).⁴¹ For Joshua, success in conquest and acquisition of the land is intimately tied to Word keeping and Word meditation.

The promise of “success” (שכל) is stated twice in Joshua 1:7-8. The causative nature of the promise is also tied to the Word keeping and Word meditation. In the Joshua 1 context, “success” (שכל) involves having insight, understanding, and wisdom. The causative agent of the verbal promise is the Word of God. Elsewhere it is the fear of the Lord (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:3). According to Goldberg, “success” (שכל) can refer to “the process of thinking through a complex arrangement of thoughts resulting in a wise dealing and use of good practical common sense.”⁴²

When taken together in the larger covenant context, prosperity and success are relational. The covenant Lord desires that His covenant leader sincerely depend on Him for wisdom, insight, and understanding in the successful accomplishment of the conquest task. According to Woudstra, the Old Testament, more than the New, makes a direct connection between law observance and prosperity.⁴³ This, according to Soggin, is a typical theme in the book of Deuteronomy (Deut 5:32; 29:8; cf., 17:11).⁴⁴ However, there is not an automatic connection between the two as is illustrated in the book of Job and in Psalm 73.⁴⁵

The lack of mechanical connection between law observance and success is also evident in the Joshua narrative. One illustration is seen in the Joshua 9 narrative which documents the covenant with the Gibeonites. The narrative indicts Israel in verse 14 for not consulting the mouth of the Lord. It is interesting that this indictment comes even though Joshua and the

⁴¹ Howard, p. 88.

⁴² Theological Wordbook of Old Testament, s.v. שכל, by Louis Goldberg, II: 877.

⁴³ Woudstra, p. 63.

⁴⁴ Albert J. Soggin, *Joshua*, OTL, p. 32.

⁴⁵ Woudstra, p. 63; Klem, p. 176.

leadership conducted an investigation of the Gibeonites in accord with the laws of Deuteronomy (20:10-18). The Gibeonite deception was successful because Israel did not ask the Lord for counsel. It is also ironic that the deception follows the covenant renewal ceremony of Joshua 8:24-25. Just as Israel's relationship with the Lord is not mechanical, the same is true in the Lord's relationship with Israel. For example, the different applications of the ban in Joshua 6 and 8 are better understood in terms of the dynamics of a covenant relationship than as a temporary suspension of the ban or a contradiction in the composition of the conquest account.⁴⁶

The Recognition Of Joshua's Leadership Role

God favored and verified Joshua as the new commander of land occupation (1:6, 9; 3:7, 10; 4:14; 6:7). Who is this man and how is he verified or favored by God? Joshua initially appears in biblical history as an assistant of Moses and an Israelite warrior (Exod 17:8-13; 24:13; 32:17). He is then one of twelve spies who returned an optimistic reconnaissance report on the land of Canaan (Num 14) for its conquest. Overall, Joshua is as an example of God-given leadership, consistently faithful to the LORD. The Bible makes no explicit criticism of him.⁴⁷

The Joshua narrative highlights the Lord's favor and affirmation of him in several ways. First, God communicated with Joshua like He talked with Moses. This is important because Moses was the first in a succession of prophets (Deut 18:15) that eventuated in the coming of Christ (Num 27:18-23; 34:17; Deut 1:38; 3:28; 31:6-7, 23; 34:9; Jn 1:17; Acts 7:37). God made Himself known to Israel through Joshua just like He did with Moses.

⁴⁶ Klem, p. 177; see also Hess, p. 160; Robert Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of Deuteronomic History*. Part One Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1993), pp. 125-26.

⁴⁷ *The Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 2000 ed., s.v. "Joshua" by R. S. Hess, p. 165.

In the monologue of Joshua 1:2-5, God spoke to Joshua about Himself. He affirmed to Joshua His lordship over His leaders (1:1-2), His faithfulness to covenant promises (1:3-4), that He is the mighty One (1:5), and that He is the Lord forever present with His leaders (1:5).

Throughout the next unit (1:6-9), God spoke to Joshua about Joshua. Here the Lord challenged him as a newly appointed leader to be strong and courageous in his conquest task (1:6), in law keeping (1:7-8), and in his knowledge of the Lord's unfailing presence (1:9) with him. The final verses of chapter 1 document the nation's acknowledgement of Joshua as the Lord's choice to succeed Moses (1:16-18).

Second, God promised to make Joshua great (3:7; 4:14; 6:27). These acts of grace assured Israel that the Lord was with Joshua as He was with Moses (3:7). God exalted Joshua as he led the nation across the Jordan River (4:14) in the same manner that God affirmed Moses when he led the nation out of Egypt (Exodus 14-15). He is recognized as the general sending (2:1, 23) and commanding (4:17). Before the first conquest battle, the Captain of the Lord's Host appeared to him (5:13-15) to assure him and challenge him. This event is similar in design and intent to God's appearance to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3). After the conquest of Jericho he was acknowledged as a successful military leader (6:27). Finally, He was affirmed as a land distributor in his work with Eleazar, the priest (14:1).

The exaltation of Joshua in the conquest and settlement narratives is developed in connection with the promise of divine presence (1:5, 9) and the matter of fame (6:27). It is interesting to note that the use of "make great" (גָּדַל) is limited to Joshua 3:7 and 4:14. In these two uses God promises to make Joshua great in the sight of all Israel. However, the appearance of the divine warrior (5:14) results in Joshua falling down on the face (פָּלָה). From this point on the narrative describes Joshua in connection with the spreading of his fame (6:27; 10:4; cf., the

fame of YHWH 9:9). The exaltation Joshua confirms his appointment as a covenant leader at this juncture of covenant history.⁴⁸ God's communication with Joshua and exaltation of him are in keeping with the Deuteronomy 18:15 promise to raise up Moses-like prophets in the nation. Like Moses, God called and equipped Joshua into a leadership role by means of His Word and by means of His divine presence to do something historic in His kingdom. In return, the Lord God expects His leaders to obey His Word and to courageously trust His unfailing presence.

Summary And Conclusion: An Applied Biblical Theology Of Leadership

What is the contribution of Joshua 1:1-9 to a biblical theology of leadership? Assuming the distance between us as New Testament readers and the Joshua narrative and recognizing the differences in task, the Joshua narrative contributes in a two-fold manner to the theology of leadership. First, from a divine perspective the covenant history up to Joshua 1 presents leaders as administrators of a grand narrative that is moving to a pre-determined end. Joshua 1:1-5 affirms the sovereign authority of the Lord. His Word is moving history, His promises are being realized, His presence is the assurance of a completed mission.

Second, from a human perspective, leaders serve under the authority of the covenant Lord as individuals with delegated responsibility. As actors in a grand narrative, leaders must be individuals distinguished with the essentials of character and virtue. These essentials are applicable at every level of leadership and appropriate for leadership task.

Although an objective measurement of Joshua's success as a covenant leader is beyond the scope of this paper, some cite the evaluation of Josephus with regard to Joshua's character. According to Louis Feldman, the writings of Josephus describe Joshua in terms of wisdom,

⁴⁸ See Moshe Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 200.

courage, temperance, and justice.⁴⁹ As such, Joshua is presented as loyal to His covenant Lord and His covenant Word. The Joshua narrative clearly emphasizes the importance of strength and courage for a leadership role. The call for it is grounded in divine promise (1:6), is associated with Word performance and the promise of success (1:7), and placed within the assurance of the Lord God's unfailing presence (1:9).

Third, leaders are people of conviction (1:7-8). According to Al Mohler, leadership is deeply convictional. "This quality of leadership springs from those foundational beliefs that shape who we are and establish our beliefs about everything else."⁵⁰ The convictional leadership of Joshua 1:7-8 is rooted in the Word of God which ultimately yields wisdom and understanding for the accomplishment of life tasks. Again, it is worth restating, "Joshua will not succeed because He obeys God's instructions; he will succeed because God is with him to enable him to obey His instructions."⁵¹ Convictional leaders submitted to their covenant Lord, ultimately trust Him for the determination of success.

Finally, the theology of leadership in Joshua points us forward to Christ and the gospel. The Lord Jesus Christ is indeed a greater Joshua who embodies the leadership essentials of Joshua 1:1-9. The task assigned by Him to us is twofold. We are called to the great commission work of evangelism and discipleship (Matt 28:19-20) and to the great commandment life of loving God and one another (Matt 22:34-40). In connection with these tasks we are called to live worthy of the Gospel (Phil 1:27), even in suffering (1 Pt 2:21; 1 Thess 1).

⁴⁹ Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus's Portrait of Joshua," *HTR* 82:4 (1989): 351-66; Klem, p. 161.

⁵⁰ Albert Mohler, *The Conviction to Lead, 25 Principles for Leadership that Matters*, (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2012), p. 21.

⁵¹ Hess, *Joshua*, p. 80.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baltzer, Klaus. *The Covenant Formulary in the Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings*. Translated by David E. Green. Oxford: Clarendon, 1971.
- Boling, Robert G. *Joshua*. Vol. 6, The Anchor Bible Commentary. New York: Doubleday, 1982.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977.
- Butler, Trent C. *Joshua*. Vol. 7, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glen W. Baker. Waco: TX: Word Books, 1983.
- Childs, Brevard S. *An Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979.
- Dion, Paul Eugene. "Fear Not Formula and Holy War." *CBQ* 32 (1970): 565-570.
- Feldman, Louis H. "Josephus's Portrait of Joshua," *HTR* 82:4 (1989): 351-66.
- Goslinga, C. J. *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*. Edited by Ray Togtman. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986.
- Hauch, Gerhard. "Text and Contexts: A Literary Reading of the Conquest Narrative (Joshua 1-11)." Ph.D. Dissertation. Princeton Theological Seminary, 1991.
- Hess, Richard S. *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 6, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. Edited by D. J. Wiseman. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.
- Howard, Jr., David M. *Joshua*, Vol. 5, The New American Commentary. Edited by Kenneth A. Matthews. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1998.
- Interpreter's Dictionary of Bible Supplement*, 1984 ed. s.v. "War, Holy" by Norman Gottwald, pp. 942-44
- Keil, C. F. and Delitzsch, F. *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I and II Samuel*, Translated by James Martin. Vol. II, Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980.
- Kohler, Ludwig and Baumgartner, Walter. *Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated and Edited by M.E.J. Richardson, G. J. Jongeling-Vos, and L. J. DeRegt. New York: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2000.
- Longman III, Tremper. *Making Sense of the Old Testament, Three Crucial Questions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 1999.
- McCarthy, D. J. "An Installation Genre?," *JBL* 90 (1971): 31-41.

- Mitchell, Gordon. *Together in the Land: A Reading of the Book of Joshua*. JSOTSup 134. Edited by David J. A. Clines and Philip R. Davies. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.
- Mohler, Albert. *The Conviction to Lead, 25 Principles for Leadership that Matters*. Bloomington, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2012.
- Nelson, Richard D. *Joshua: A Commentary*, OTL. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.
- Omerly II, George. "Verb Hierarchy and Discourse Structure in the Conquest Narrative: A Text Linguistic Commentary," Ph.D. Dissertation, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1997.
- Polzin, Robert. *Moses and the Deuteronomist: A Literary Study of Deuteronomistic History*. Part One Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges. Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1993.
- Porter, J. R. "The Succession of Joshua," in *Proclamation and Presence: Old Testament Essays in Honor of Gwynne Henton Davies*. Edited by J. Durham. London: SCM Press, 1970.
- Pritchard, ed., James B. *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969.
- Schnitjer, Gary E. *The Torah Story*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.
- Soggin, J. Alberto. *Joshua, A Commentary*. OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972.
- The Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, 2000 ed., s.v. "Joshua" by R. S. Hess, p. 165.
- Theological Wordbook of Old Testament, s.v. שָׁכַל, by Louis Goldberg, II: 877.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998.
- Waltke, Bruce K. and O'Connor, M. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS* 90 (1970): 184-203.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *The Promise of the Land: The Inheritance of the Land of Canaan by the Israelite*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.
- Williams, Ronald J. *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.
- Woudstra, Marten H. *Joshua*. NICOT. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981.

DEFENDING THE FAITH THROUGH MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN YOUTH MINISTRY

Gregory N. Kaufman, D.Min.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The teenage years are a time of great change as people make the transition from childhood to adulthood. While adolescence did not exist in bible times as it does in Western culture, the differences between child and adult maturity are addressed in scripture in such passages as Lk 2:40, 52 and 1 Cor 13:11.¹ Recorded in Lk 2:40 and 2:52 are general statements regarding the growth and development of Jesus. He is stated as having made advancements physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially. While Jesus is undoubtedly unique as compared to all other human beings, he experienced a genuine human life nonetheless (Heb 4:15). In reference to the human development of Jesus, Lk 2:40 “concludes the infancy section with Jesus as an emerging young man who is thinking for himself,” while Lk 2:52 “reveal(s) Luke’s very human portrait of Jesus.”² As such, information about human development can be gleaned from these texts. Specifically, it is stated that Jesus “grew,” “waxed strong in spirit,” and “filled with wisdom” in Lk 2:40 and that he developed in “wisdom and stature” as well as “in favour with God and man” in Lk 2:52.³ Jesus’ physical development is mentioned using the words “grew” and “stature.” The word translated “grew” means “to increase in size” and “stature” simply refers

* Gregory N. Kaufman is a 2017 alumnus of Piedmont International University and the Youth Director at Beacon Baptist Church in Cambridge, ON.

¹ Andrew Root, *Taking Theology to Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2012), 32.

² Darrell L. Brock, *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2002), 74, 75.

³ All Scripture references are taken from the Authorized King James Version.

to proportions.⁴ As Jesus aged, he became physically larger and, presumably, stronger. He is also stated as developing mentally as his advances in “wisdom” are noted in both verses. “Wisdom” refers to “the capacity to understand and, as a result, to act wisely.”⁵ The apostle Paul offers additional depth to the discussion of mental maturation in 1 Cor 13:11 by stating he “understood” and “thought as a child” before developing into an adult. In this passage, “understood” refers to “thoughtful planning” and “thought” has the idea of reasoning.⁶ While metaphorically explaining the progression of cessationism, Paul contrasts his own development from the immature reasoning of his childhood days – the word “child” refers to “a small child” of “probably not more than three or four years of age” – to that of his adult self.⁷ He explains that he “put away” or “cause[d] to cease to happen” those “childish things” at such time as he matured into a “man” or “an adult male person of marriageable age.”⁸ Thus, in understanding Paul’s message to the Corinthians, the reader is expected to appreciate the difference between the typically immature mentality of a child as opposed to the typically matured mentality of an adult.⁹ Therefore, as Jesus mentally matured as well as physically matured, he gained a greater capacity for wisdom, reasoning, and understanding.

He also spiritually and socially matured as it is recorded he “waxed strong in the spirit” as well as “increased... in favour with God and man.” To “wax strong in the spirit” refers to the

⁴ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 273, 707. All references to the original Greek are from F.H.A. Scrivener, *The New Testament in Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1881).

⁵ Louw and Nida, 383.

⁶ Ibid., 324, 350.

⁷ Ibid., 109.

⁸ Ibid., 165, 106.

⁹ It should be noted that Jesus was actually exceptional in his mental development – at least as it pertained to his understanding of theology – as can be understood from his ability to “astonish” the doctors with his “understanding and answers” as recorded in Lk 2:46-47.

strengthening of oneself spiritually in a similar fashion as one could become strong physically. The word translated “strong” carries the idea of being “strong and healthy, with the implication of physical vigor.”¹⁰ In this passage, however, Jesus is becoming more spiritually vigorous as opposed physically vigorous. He is also stated to have “increased... in favour with God.” The term “favour” refers to “a favourable attitude toward someone or something.”¹¹ Jesus’ spiritual development lead to an improved relationship with God as he advanced toward maturity. Jesus’ well-established relationship with God is pronounced clearly in Lk 3:22 where God states he is “well pleased” with Jesus. Furthermore, Jesus also “increased... in favor with...man.” Not only was Jesus making spiritual advances, he was also making social advances. As the term “favour” is used in reference to both Jesus’ relationship with God and his fellow humans, it can be determined that both Jesus’ spiritual and social development were consistent. Thus, Jesus was neither spiritually nor socially awkward as he matured at a normal rate.

Thus, the teenage years are biblically recognized as an era of special development as humans make the transition from childhood to adulthood. In an effort to better understand the intricacies of adolescent development, psychology theorists have produced findings that should gain the attention of those concerned with the discipleship of youth. Of particular interest to the author of this paper are the advancements young people make psychosocially, morally, in regard to their faith, and during the early adult transition because of the impact these areas of development can have on an adolescent’s Christian walk. Robert S. Feldman states, “after having accepted their religious identity... during childhood, adolescents may view religion more

¹⁰ Louw and Nida, 268.

¹¹ Ibid., 298.

critically and seek to distance themselves from formal religion.”¹² Thus, for the youth leader, understanding the changing mentality of young people as they progress through adolescence is extremely important as they endeavor to minister to them during an era of potential spiritual fragility.

In this study, the researcher will examine the changes in human mentality as Western young people enter and exit adolescence, and consider the implications these natural advancements have on their faith, as well as the role meaningful relationships in youth ministry have in maintaining the spiritual vitality of teenagers based on said implications. Specifically, the researcher will examine the changes which occur in the mentality of a typical young person as one progresses from childhood to adolescence then from adolescence to adulthood. Once these changes are examined, the role of meaningful relationships in defending the faith in the lives of young people and how youth leaders can help foster those relationships will be examined in consideration of the natural, psychological development of youth.

II. ADOLESCENT MENTALITY

There are two developmental phases about which a youth leader should be particularly concerned: 1) the transition from childhood to adolescence and 2) the transition from adolescence to adulthood. These two developmental phases are important because of how a young person adjusts their priorities and the potential for said adjustments to affect the young person’s faith. In order to understand the natural, psychological development of young people and how these advancements can affect the faith of a young person, the theories of Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg, James Fowler, and Daniel Levinson will be considered.

¹² Robert S. Feldman, *Development Across the Life Span*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011), 389.

Transition From Childhood To Adolescence

According to Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, around the age of thirteen young people switch from prioritizing productivity to prioritizing social acceptance. Whereas the acquisition of useful skills and being considered productive was important for young people up to the age of twelve, the thirteenth year brings an entirely new mindset to the typical, Western teenager.¹³ Erikson states, "The growing and developing young people, faced with the physiological revolution within them, are now primarily concerned with attempts at consolidating their social roles."¹⁴ While still children, these budding teenagers were content to focus on learning how to become productive members of society. Once children enter the transitional phase of adolescence – which serves as an era of gradual maturation between childhood and adulthood – the typical youth becomes "sometimes morbidly, often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others."¹⁵ Thus, these freshly minted teenagers begin to focus on their social acceptability as opposed to their productivity which has far-reaching effects on their decision-making process and religious views.

With this new emphasis on social acceptance comes a new approach to morality. Whereas younger people are considered "preconventional" in their moral development, Lawrence Kohlberg states, "The conventional level is the level of most adolescents and adults in our society and in other societies."¹⁶ Being a conventional moralist consists of two different levels: 1) being perceived as "good" within one's own "family, group, or nation" and 2)

¹³ Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980), 87.

¹⁴ Ibid., 94.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1984), 172.

“maintain[ing] the rules of society.”¹⁷ Those whose morals are founded on these ideas leave themselves highly susceptible to social manipulation as they operate “regardless of immediate or obvious consequences” in an effort to “gain approval from others.”¹⁸ Thus, at both levels of conventional morality, those who occupy this developmental stage temper their decision-making process toward gaining social approval – either from a desired social circle or society at large. In either case, these thinkers are basing their ethical conduct upon pre-constructed notions of right and wrong as opposed to sound reason. In short, conventional moralists make decisions based on their reputation within an applicable social system. This perspective on morality, coupled with a teenager’s preoccupation with social acceptance, means a young person will make moral determinations in an effort to win the approval of their chosen peer group. As a result, their behaviors may radically change as they attempt to “fit in” with a particular crowd.

The young teenager also has an internal change regarding their approach to faith. Part of other people becoming more important to them is the recognition of the profundity of each person’s humanity. James W. Fowler states, “Both the self and the chum or young love come to be experienced as having . . . inaccessible depth of personality. God . . . must also be re-imaged as having inexhaustible depths.”¹⁹ As young people pass from childhood to adolescence, “personality. . . becomes an absorbing concern. Values, commitments, and relationships are seen as central to identity and worth” which applies to both God as well as their peers.²⁰ Young teenagers are no longer content to consider God as some entity in which they are to place their

¹⁷ James Riley Estep Jr. and Alvin W. Kuest, “Moral Development Through Christian Education,” in *Introducing Christian Education*, ed. Michael J. Anthony (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 76.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: HarperOne, 1981), 153.

²⁰ James W. Fowler, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 65.

faith or willing to believe in the character they have been taught about in Sunday school. If God is going to factor into their life beyond the onset of adolescence, he cannot be superficial. Instead, “the adolescent’s religious hunger is for a God who knows, accepts and confirms.”²¹ Furthermore, an adolescent’s maturing mind allows one to think beyond the narratives that define their faith.²² This ability to think deeper causes adolescents to seek personal significance in religious teachings. Referring to it as a simple matter of egocentricity, Johnny Derouen states, “They will understand most biblical truths in light of how it affects their lives.”²³

Transition From Adolescence To Adulthood

From the age of thirteen through a youth’s sixteenth year, a teenager tends to remain immersed in the culture of adolescence. During these years, the notable differences between youth are their physical maturation and their accumulation of experiences. However, throughout this period, their motivation remains consistent: take actions to bolster social status. Erikson summarizes this era as “almost a way of life between childhood and adulthood.”²⁴ However, at roughly the age of seventeen, an adolescent will begin to become dissatisfied with their current set of priorities and begin to focus on becoming an adult. This is known as “the early adult transition.”²⁵ During the early adult transition, teenagers will seek to withdraw from adolescent culture in favor of focusing on the beginning of their adult life. This transition is a gradual one,

²¹ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 153.

²² Ibid., 152.

²³ Johnny Derouen, “Teaching Youth,” in *The Teaching Ministry of the Church*, 2d ed., ed. William R. Yount (Nashville: B&H, 2008), 334.

²⁴ Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968), 128.

²⁵ Daniel J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man’s Life* (New York: Battaline Books, 1978), 73.

typically lasting four to seven years, but averaging about five.²⁶ As such, while a teenager is transitioning, the young person remains an adolescent for a matter of years before establishing oneself as an adult.²⁷ Therefore, teenagers experiencing the early adult transition may not be immediately identifiable and should not be expected to immediately exit the adolescent lifestyle.

However, one of the major tasks for those experiencing the early adult transition is an adjustment in social relationships. Daniel Levinson states, “It is necessary to modify existing relationships with important persons and institutions, and to modify the self that formed in pre-adulthood.”²⁸ These teenagers will begin to focus more on their future careers, families, and gaining acceptance among adults than on maintaining their current scenario. In terms of their psychosocial development, teenagers experiencing the early adult transition are still concerned with acceptance, but are now more concerned with being accepted by adults within the realms they hope to enter as opposed to being accepted by those teenagers still engulfed in the adolescent lifestyle. As such, their decision-making process is modified. While transitioning teenagers can be expected to remain conventional moralists, the approval they seek will have a new target. It is notable that this desire for belonging among particular adult cultures makes these young people just as vulnerable to social manipulation as did their previous desire to win the approval of their adolescent peers. Symptomatic of this new perspective are the social rifts which may start to form between younger teenagers and older ones as the younger ones are content to have advanced beyond childhood while the older ones long for the maturity of adulthood.

Young people making their way through the early adult transition are also making changes in regard to their faith. Fowler states that the early adult transition “corresponds with

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

what appears to be the optimal time for beginning a transition... toward an Individuative-Reflective stage of faith.”²⁹ While many remain at the synthetic-conventional level of faith, a young person’s approach to their faith may become markedly different as they venture into adulthood.³⁰ Whereas teenagers and adults who occupy the synthetic-conventional level of faith “have their values and self-images... largely chosen [for] them,” those who have advanced to the individuative-reflective stage have severed their dependence upon their environment as a source of confirmation.³¹ Fowler requires two things for the development on individuative-reflective faith: 1) the lack of reliance upon others for discernment and 2) the assumption of one’s own right to make determinations and be responsible for them.³² When both of these become part of a young person’s approach to faith, they are far less susceptible to the influence of others and will view all aspects of their faith more critically.

Conclusion

In order to foster meaningful relationships in youth ministry, the youth leader would be wise to seek to understand the fashion in which a young person will alter their value system during both the transition to adolescence as well as the early adult transition. During the transition from childhood to adolescence, a young person will both become consumed with the desire to be accepted by their peers and seek a more substantive relationship with God. While the desire to obtain the approval of their peers may lead to a radical shift in social behavior – effecting their vocabulary, wardrobe, mannerisms, etc. – they are also developing the ability of higher thought. This higher thought now drives them to seek more meaningful explanations from

²⁹ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 112.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 154.

³² Ibid., 179.

religious lessons and a more relatable view of God. During the early adult transition, young people slowly abandon their adolescent lifestyle in favor of assuming a role within adult society. Essentially, these teenagers are exchanging their vulnerability to their adolescent peers for a vulnerability to adults in terms of their desire to be accepted. As they slowly focus more on adulthood, some transitioning teenagers will also advance in their faith and become more self-reliant in terms of their beliefs making them more critical of their faith in every aspect. Thus, adolescents involved in both transitional periods crave relationships with their peers and God. For those transitioning into adolescence, a sense of belonging is extremely important as they vie for social acceptance among their fellow teenagers while those involved in the early adult transition seek to belong amongst adults. God is also important as he is no longer accepted as a character from lessons, but is sought out to be a real personality with relational depth.

III. THE ROLE OF MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Knowing teenagers transitioning both into and out of adolescence desire relationships with their peers and God, the role meaningful relationships in youth ministry can play in defending the faith in the lives of young people can come into view. The relationships to be examined are those between peers – adolescents to adolescents and adolescents to adults – the relationship between adolescents and God, as well as adolescents and youth leaders. Each of these relationships will be examined to discern their importance to the spiritual vitality of the typical adolescent.

Adolescent To Adolescent Relationships

The adolescent desire for belonging among their peers makes this relationship critical to the defense of the Christian faith in the lives of youth. Discussing what encourages “youth group kids” to remain faithful to a youth ministry, Mark Devries states, “as we look at what causes kids

to stay in groups, peers play a central role, a role that most adults simply can't play."³³ There simply is no substitute in the mind of a teenager for being accepted by their fellow adolescents. Johnny Derouen states, "youth want desperately to belong to a group – to be wanted and needed. In other words, relationships are the key to teaching teenagers."³⁴ The youth leader can construct a ministry that capitalizes in this natural desire by giving the youth group an identity of its own – with a name, a logo, and a restrictive entry requirement such as either an age or school grade. To give the group a team atmosphere, have custom gear made (such as hoodies and t-shirts) with the logo on it and disseminate it at appropriate times. For example, the author of this paper takes youth from Beacon Baptist Church to compete in the annual Ontario Dodgeball Tournament each year. For those who participate, the author of this paper has jerseys made bearing the youth group logo on the front and the teenager's last name and a number on the back which is to be worn during the tournament and is theirs to keep afterward. Having this bit of functional memorabilia not only adds to the team spirit amongst the youth, but also gives them a sense of belonging as "a member of the team." The goal is to make being a member of the group both important and desirable.

Furthermore, the adolescent to adolescent relationship requires the teenagers to be accepting of one another as well as the group itself. To facilitate this, the activities should be designed to require the youth to interact with one another in general, thereby discouraging and opening currently extant cliques by causing a variety of the teenagers within the group to build memories together. Also, a "buddy system" could be adopted wherein new attendees are paired up with more seasoned and sociable adherents in an effort to initiate their acceptance by the greater assembly. "If our youth ministries don't provide students with the opportunity to be with

³³ Mark Devries, *Sustainable Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2008), 161.

³⁴ Derouen, 332.

the kinds of friends they want... kids will not stick.”³⁵ Thus, the more the youth embrace one another, the more they will embrace the youth ministry.

Adolescent To Adult Relationships

While the adolescent to adolescent relationship is important, the adolescent to adult relationship may be even more influential. Adolescents of all ages have a relationship with adults who serve as either their parents, role models, or desired peers – for those transitioning into adulthood – or multiple of these roles. Thus, these are the relationships to be considered.

Adolescents And Their Parents. The relationship between adolescents and their parents is an extremely important one in terms of defending the faith in the lives of young people. Kendra Creasy Dean states, “Research is nearly unanimous on this point: parents matter most in shaping the religious lives of their children.”³⁶ Scripture emphasizes the parental responsibility for teaching their offspring about the faith in passages such as Dt 11:19 and Eph 6:1-4. In Dt 11:19, Moses is encouraging the Hebrews to obey God based upon their observance of his power. Recorded in verse one is Moses’ commandment for the people to obey God followed by numerous examples of deeds the Hebrew adults had witnessed God perform to that point. This is followed by Moses’ conclusion in verses seven and eight, “your eyes have seen all the great acts of the LORD.... Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments.” Relevant to the discussion of the influence of parents on their offspring is the fact Moses points out the responsibility of parents to teach their children. In verse two, Moses states, “I speak not with your children which have not known” followed in verse nineteen with his command to “teach them your children.” Thus, Moses made the Hebrew parents responsible for teaching their offspring about God and

³⁵ Devries, 164.

³⁶ Kendra Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 112.

helping them reach the same conclusion in regard to following him. “Again, the primary principle was to constantly remind themselves and their children of God’s Word to the end they obeyed it.”³⁷ Moses intended for the Hebrew parents to be key influencers in the lives of young people.

This principle continues in the New Testament as recorded in Eph 6:1-4. In this passage, the apostle Paul wrote about the familial hierarchy in regard to children and their parents. In verse four, he instructs fathers to “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The word translated “nurture” refers to “the discipline used to correct the transgression of the laws and ordinances of the Christian household” while the word translated “admonition” refers to “training by word.”³⁸ Thus, part of a father’s role within a family unit is to train his children to be followers of God via both verbal and physical means. However, fathers are cautioned in this passage – as well as in Col 3:21 – to avoid frustrating their offspring as they carry out their duties. In Eph 6:4, Paul writes, “fathers, provoke not your children to wrath” and in Col 3:21, “fathers, provoke not your children to anger.” The words translated “provoke to wrath” and “provoke to anger” are different.³⁹ The word translated “provoke to wrath” means “to cause someone to become provoked or quite angry” while the word translated “provoke to anger” means “to cause someone to feel resentment.”⁴⁰ The difference lies in the potential lasting effects of the mistreatment by fathers as they endeavor to disciple their children. While anger is a

³⁷ David H. Sorenson, *Understanding the Bible*, vol 1, *Genesis through Deuteronomy* (Duluth, MN: Northstar, 2005), 907.

³⁸ Cleon L. Rogers Jr and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 446.

³⁹ While the phrases “provoke to wrath” and “provoke to anger” do not appear in the text of the KJV, the words “provoke” and “to wrath” as well as “provoke” and “to anger” are taken from one Greek word in their respective texts. However In the English, these phrases are separated by other words while in the Greek, this is not the case.

⁴⁰ Louw and Nida, 760.

potentially short-term emotion (Eph 4:26), resentment has lasting effects (Heb 12:15). The consequence of causing children to be resentful is highlighted by the apostle Paul when he states that children pushed too far might “be discouraged.” The word translated “discouraged” means “to be disheartened and hence lack motivation.”⁴¹ Thus, the father is warned against producing the opposite than desired result by pushing his children too hard. Thus, parental training can determine whether or not a young person prospers spiritually. “Youth leaders can mistakenly consider themselves the most important role model in the lives of teenagers. The truth is that parents... are the most important influence on youth.”⁴² The responsibility to train their offspring with the potential for either amazing or devastating results is both a huge responsibility and opportunity for parents which is not assigned to anyone else.

Adolescents And Their Adult Role Models/Desired Peers. As they progress toward adulthood, adolescents learn from adult role models how to fulfill the roles they wish to play in society in the future. “Youth need competent, mature adult models in order to learn how to become adult.”⁴³ This makes the availability of adult role models particularly important for young people undergoing the early adult transition. From those who are already established in adult society, teenagers learn how they too can function within their desired realm. In Scripture, the need for people to associate with the right crowd is emphasized in passages such as Ps 1:1 and Prv 13:20. Furthermore, when the apostle Paul wrote to Titus, he included a section on role models in Ti 2:1-6. In this passage, Paul instructs Titus to disciple older believers in order to prepare them to train younger people. First, Paul instructs Titus to “speak thou the things that become sound

⁴¹ Ibid., 319.

⁴² Derouen, 333.

⁴³ Ibid., 336.

doctrine” in verse one. This serves as the basis for what follows. According to Thomas Lea and Hayne Griffin, “He asserted Titus’s personal responsibility for instructing the Cretan believers regarding their own appropriate behavior and responsibilities.”⁴⁴ Should the “aged women” be receptive to the teachings of Titus and acquire the character traits listed in verses two and three, the goal was for them to pass on what they learned to the younger generation as indicated by the phrase “That they may teach” in verse four. “Communicating Paul’s exhortations for the younger women was not Titus’s direct responsibility. Rather, this was to be the duty of the older women.”⁴⁵ Thus, the younger women were to benefit from the teachings of the older women in learning how to be Christian adults. For the men, Titus himself was urged by Paul to serve as their role model. Commenting on verse seven, Lea and Griffin further state, “Titus’s personal role in teaching the young men by example.... was to be a role model with regard to good works.”⁴⁶ Thus, the young men had Titus as a role model while the younger women had older women from whom to learn. In both cases, the next generation of young people was given an example of how to live the Christian life. While parents can undoubtedly serve as effective role models, parents are not the subject of this passage. It was the Apostle Paul’s expectation that the young men and women were to learn from Titus and the older women in accordance with their sex.

For teenagers seeking to shed their adolescence and join the ranks of adulthood, this makes the availability of Christian role models in a variety of workplaces extremely important. As young people prepare to take their place in adult society, they will begin to mimic the culture

⁴⁴ Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *The New American Commentary*, vol. 34, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 297.

⁴⁵ Lea and Griffin, 300.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 304.

they are endeavoring to join whether spiritually, occupationally, or socially. Also, the expectation should be for an adolescent's relationship with their parents to become less important as they proceed into adulthood.⁴⁷ Therefore, it is important for believers – in whatever occupational or social environment they may find themselves – to accept the personal responsibility for serving as a role model instead of relegating this duty to the teenager's parents exclusively. Adolescents need to be made aware of the fact that they can serve in a variety of careers without sacrificing their Christianity. In meeting this need, role models play a vital role defending the faith of youth.

Adolescents To God

Understanding the era of adolescence brings with it the ability of advanced thought as well as a general dissatisfaction with a simple understanding of the stories which make up one's religious beliefs, it can be acknowledged that the adolescent years are an extremely important time for teenagers in terms of their relationship with God. It is at this time teenagers have a strong desire to know God in more depth and it is important for the church to take advantage of this natural desire. Two things which need to be avoided, however, are 1) for teenagers to seek a deeper understanding and relationship with God and discover a lack of knowledge or spiritual depth on the part of their leadership and 2) catering to an adolescent's desire for a God to approve of their current perspectives. In regard to the depth of God's character, "youth are unlikely to take hold of a "god" who is too limp to take hold of them."⁴⁸ Teenagers need to be made aware of both God's personal concern for them as well as how he can affect their lives. They need to be made aware of how he is their shepherd and host (Ps 23), he has a personal

⁴⁷ Levinson, 74.

⁴⁸ Dean, 36.

interest in each of them individually (Mt 10:29-31; Jn 10:1-30), and he has provided humanity with methods of interacting with him via prayer, song, etc. Teenagers also need to see God affecting the lives of those they consider to be more matured believers. As they seek adult role models, adolescents will be examining, in part, the impact of one's commitment to the Lord. Dean comments, "their ability to discern God's ongoing movement in their lives and their communities are heavily influenced by *adult's* appreciation.... Teenager's ability to imitate Christ depends... on whether *we* do [emphasis in original]."⁴⁹ Thus, adolescents want to know more about God and explore his depth and should be expected to apply their advancing abilities of thought to the process. As such, if they find the faith of their role models to be shallow and cannot get adequate answers to their questions, the faith community cannot expect teenagers to mature spiritually.

A youth's spiritual growth will also be stunted if God is made to fit their preconceived ideas or made to serve as a legitimizer of current, potentially biblically incompatible behaviors. While adolescents seek "for a God who knows, accepts and confirms," it is impossible to disciple someone who does not allow God to shape their life.⁵⁰ "It would be unlikely for teenagers to develop any religious framework besides superficial Christianity... with a "god" who supports teenagers' decisions, makes them feel good, meets their needs when called upon but otherwise stays out of the way."⁵¹ In 2 Cor 5:17, the apostle Paul proclaims "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The word translated "creature" means "to make or create

⁴⁹ Dean, 112.

⁵⁰ Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 153.

⁵¹ Dean, 37.

something which has not existed before.”⁵² God is not interested in being made to fit the already extant lifestyles of adolescents, but desires for them to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind” according to the apostle Paul as recorded in Rom 12:2. This alteration is “a radical reorientation that begins deep within the human heart.”⁵³ While it is possible those responsible for the spiritual instruction of teenagers fear potentially losing prospective youth ministry adherents due to the seemingly undesirable positions of biblical truth, the alternative must be considered. Referring to a less invasive theology, Dean states, “If this is the god we offer young people, there may be little in Christianity to which they object, but there is even less to which they will be devoted.”⁵⁴ Thus, without demonstrating the depth of character teenagers naturally seek in God, the value to retaining attendees is minimal in regard to their spiritual well-being.

Adolescents To Youth Leaders

The final meaningful relationship to be considered is the one that exists between adolescents and the youth ministry leadership. The youth leaders in question may be a single ministry practitioner or a team, volunteer or on the payroll, full-time or part-time, bible college graduates or theology academic outsiders, seasoned veterans or upstarts. No matter who has been tasked with operating the youth-focused programming within a ministry setting, they must be made to understand the critical and time-sensitive nature of their work. The fact is, most adolescents offer a brief opportunity for a ministry to have a lasting effect on them. By the time many adolescents are permitted to attend youth events – the age of thirteen – forty-three percent

⁵² Louw and Nida, 513.

⁵³ Robert H. Mounce, *The New American Commentary*, vol 27, *Romans* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 232.

⁵⁴ Dean, 37.

of those who will come to the faith have already been converted.⁵⁵ “Two-thirds (64 percent) will accept Jesus before their eighteenth birthday and 77 percent by their twenty-first birthday.”⁵⁶ According to these numbers, between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, twenty-one percent of believers will be evangelized and thirty-four percent by the age of twenty-one. In total, thirty-four percent – over one third – of believers are converted during adolescents or shortly thereafter. Derouen further notes, “less than one out of four (23 percent) will accept Jesus Christ after age 21.”⁵⁷ Therefore, by the time a youth leader’s direct effect upon the lives of those within their ministry purview is finished, the vast majority of those who will be saved have already been converted.

Also, the majority of adolescents offer youth leaders the opportunity to minister to them. “George Barna discovered (2006) that more than four out of five teens (81 percent)... attended a church for at least two consecutive months during their teen years.”⁵⁸ Thus, at some point, adolescents are making a briefly sustained effort to explore Christianity. It is generally understood that this is motivated by a search for answers to life’s questions. Feldman states, adolescents “may be drawn more closely to their religious affiliation because it offers answers to such abstract questions as “Why am I here on this earth?” and “What is the meaning of life?”⁵⁹ Youth leaders need to be aware of this reality and be prepared to be as effective as possible in their ministry to youth while they are actively searching. This requires youth leaders to be educated enough to answer the questions youth may pose, socially skilled enough to pursue

⁵⁵ Derouen, 328.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Derouen, 328.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Feldman, 389.

intentional relationships with them without seeming overbearing, bold enough to teach the truth, and mature enough to exemplify their faith with their lifestyle.

Youth ministry has a fluidic nature: teenagers are ever coming and going, matriculating in and out, transforming from children to adolescents then from adolescents to adults. Through all of this change, a youth leader should be a constant; someone who is there throughout this critical era in life functioning as a servant, teacher, role model, and resource. The youth leader can be someone an adolescent remembers for the rest of their life as a key figure who remained relevant through this special stage. This can be accomplished by understanding what the youth are going through and helping them along as they grow and develop. While a youth leader can never take the place of a parent, one can assist in the spiritual development of a young person. As such, church leadership must adopt a supportive view of the youth ministry with the intent of keeping a consistent youth leader long-term.⁶⁰

Conclusion

The relationships that exist between adolescents, adolescents and adults, adolescents and God, and adolescents and the youth leader are all important ones in their own way. The need for acceptance by their peers serves as the motivation for many of the behaviors of young people transitioning both into and out of adolescents. While they have different target audiences, they act to impress an audience nonetheless. Adults play a key role in the lives of young people as well. Teenager's parents are considered the most influential people in a teenager's life and other adults serve as role models for youth – whether the adults realize it or not. Adolescents are curious about God and seek a deeper knowledge of him as they seek answers to life's big questions. As a result, the majority of teenagers willingly attend church for a brief period of time prepared to subject themselves to the influence of pastoral leadership. Youth leaders are also

⁶⁰ Devries, 12-13, 18.

important relational figures as they are the ones tasked with intercepting teenagers while they are willing to learn. They also need to be prepared to minister to adolescents while they are undergoing the natural developments of this special era in life.

IV. HOW YOUTH LEADERS CAN FOSTER MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Having examined the changing mentality of young people as they transition from childhood to adolescence to adulthood and having an understanding of the role meaningful relationships play in the lives of teenagers, the means for youth leaders to promote these relationships can be discussed. In an effort to defend the faith in the lives of youth, the youth leader would be wise to take advantage of the key elements of acceptance, the role of parents, personalized discipleship, the reality of God, and potential role models.

First and foremost, youth leaders should emphasize acceptance as they operate their ministries. The youth group should be a place where teenagers can satisfy their need for belonging amongst a welcoming group of people. While by no means does the author of this paper believe youth leaders should compromise doctrine to attract constituents, the youth leader should be prepared to welcome spiritually immature youth to their program. Understanding considerable discipleship will be necessary for many adolescents –especially those raised with little exposure to church – patience should be exercised in the form of not immediately requiring youth ministry initiates to conform to a high standard. Instead, the youth leader should be prepared to accept a certain level of immaturity for the time being in favor of incorporating them into the group where they can be evangelized and disciplined as necessary.

In order to promote acceptance, the youth leader should create the necessary social exposure for each attendee. This can be accomplished by creating situations wherein the youth are required to interact with a variety of people as opposed to remaining secluded within their

avored social crowd. It can also be done by publically, genuinely boasting on the services and exploits of youth group members. The goal should be to give everyone a reason to like and interact with everyone else.

Membership in the youth ministry should also be a point of pride for the teens if possible. Promoting the group on social media via pictures and videos from recent events can serve as both a reminder of the joy and excitement the youth have shared, as well as valuable advertising to attract new people. Youth leaders should make the group something teenagers can be proud of as opposed to being regarded some sort of secret society the revelation of which would be a source of embarrassment.

The influential position of parents must also be appreciated and used advantageously by youth leaders. There is simply no replacing a teenager's parents. Parents have more history, exposure, and teaching opportunities with an adolescent than a youth leader ever will. Thus, a youth leader would be wise to promote the stature of a teenager's parents as much as possible. While not every teenager is in an ideal parenting situation, if there is anything positive about the parent to be highlighted, the youth leader should try to emphasize it. Furthermore, parents should be cited as good sources of information and teenagers should be taught to have respect for them. Because a youth leader plays a secondary role to a young person's parents, it is unwise to attempt to compete with them. Instead, operate as an extension of the parent by helping them train their offspring in spiritual matters.

Since teenagers are generally egocentric, the youth leader should personalize their discipleship. This means being aware of what each teenager is experiencing in life and working to use it to their spiritual advantage. As much as possible, lessons offered to youth need to be immediately applicable and understood in the light of their current circumstances. Therefore,

refer often to the themes teenagers are interested in such as dating, getting a driver's license, high school social life, potential careers, etc. For the most part, adolescents are not interested in learning theology for the sake of mastering the subject. Therefore, address the general issues related to this age group thus demonstrating the relevancy of Scripture in their lives.

God needs to be emphasized heavily in the lives of teenagers. The youth leader must teach young people what it means to have a relationship with God and help them understand the rationale for God's actions. While a cold discussion of dispensationalism may induce sleep upon the adolescent, sharing God's process from creation to the new heaven and new earth in terms of his desire to relate to mankind may provide the answers for which adolescents are seeking. Credit must be given to God when he does something in the life of the youth leader or is observed as occurring in the life of one of the youth as well.

God must be portrayed accurately, however, since a misrepresentation of God as an all-accommodating deity is of little value to a teenager. Teenagers need to be informed about the realities of God's holiness and his expectations for mankind. The fact is, God calls on sinful man to seek forgiveness of sins and adolescents are no exception (1 Jn 1:8-9). Instead of attempting to minimize the message of Scripture regarding some of God's socially unacceptable perspectives, the youth leader should be prepared to share them in a compassionate and reasonable fashion allowing teenagers to decide for themselves.

As adolescents look toward the future, they are seeking to learn both how to be adults as well as how to be Christians in their ideal future situation. In order to help meet this need, the youth leader should maintain at least a mental inventory of mature believers who occupy a variety of social roles. This way, a youth leader could discuss the experiences of – or refer to those who – are homemakers, police officers, professional athletes, movie stars, athletes, etc.

who have maintained a good, Christian testimony. This provides adolescents with a template for maintaining their own spiritual vitality as they prepare to enter these social roles as well as proof that Christians can function in such areas. However, this must be done in such a fashion as to avoid encouraging teenagers to idolize a human being. Adolescents must be made aware of the potential for any human to fall into sin or otherwise become a disappointment.

V. CONCLUSION

Adolescence is a special developmental era between childhood and adulthood. Throughout this period, young people are advancing physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually. It is important for youth leaders to be wary of the changes that occur in the mindset of youth as they transition from childhood to adolescence and then from adolescence to adulthood as understanding what occurs during these transitions is key to defending the faith in their lives. Those elements which matter most to adolescence are acceptance, their parents, personalized discipleship, the reality of God, and potential role models. By providing teenagers with a sense of belonging within the youth program, partnering with parents in the spiritual training of their offspring, being mindful of the circumstances of each adolescent's life, explaining God's interest in each teenager on an individual level, and providing Christian role models in a variety of settings, the youth leader can be instrumental in meeting all of these needs thereby actively defending the faith in the hearts and minds of young people as they advance toward adulthood.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brock, Darrell L. *Jesus according to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002.
- Dean, Kendra Creasy. *Almost Christian*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Derouen, Johnny. "Teaching Youth." In *The Teaching Ministry of the Church*, 2d ed., ed. William R. Yount, 324-344. Nashville: B&H, 2008.
- Devries, Mark. *Sustainable Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2008.
- Erikson, Erik H. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980.
- _____. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1968.
- Estep, James Riley Jr. and Alvin W. Kuest. "Moral Development Through Christian Education." In *Introducing Christian Education*, ed. Michael J. Anthony, 73-82. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Feldman, Robert S. *Development Across the Life Span*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011.
- Fowler, James W. *Faith Development and Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.
- _____. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. New York: HarperOne, 1981.
- Kohlberg, Lawrence. *The Psychology of Moral Development*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1984.
- Lea, Thomas D. and Hayne P. Griffin Jr. *The New American Commentary*. Vol 34, 1, 2 *Timothy, Titus*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1992.
- Levinson, Daniel J. *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. New York: Battaline Books, 1978.
- Louw, Johannes P. and Eugene A. Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*. 2nd ed. New York: United Bible Societies, 1989.
- Mounce, Robert H. *The New American Commentary*. Vol 27, *Romans*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995.
- Rogers, Cleon L. Jr and Cleon L. Rogers III. *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998.

Root, Andrew. *Taking Theology to Youth Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 2012.

Scrivener, F.H.A. *The New Testament in Greek*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1881.

Sorenson, David H. *Understanding the Bible*. Vol 1, *Genesis through Deuteronomy*. Duluth, MN: Northstar, 2005.

THE WORLD HAS CHANGED: A REQUEST TO THE LOCAL CHURCH TO STRIVE FOR UNITY IN ORDER TO PROCLAIM FAITH IN THE MODERN WORLD

Briley A. Penner and Grant A. Penner*

I. INTRODUCTION

The world has changed. Since the birth of our nation, Americans have considered the terms ‘Christian’ and ‘American’ as synonymous. Christian values were considered American values. A Christian home was an American home. A Christian marriage was an American marriage. The Christian way of life was the American way of life. This is no longer the case. This is clearly depicted in an encounter Russell Moore recalls that he had with a woman:

She was most interested in our [Christianity’s] sexual ethic, and peppered me with questions about why we thought certain things were sinful ... She said I was the first person she’d ever actually talked to who believed that sexual expression ought only to take place within marriage, and that I was the only person she’d ever met in real life who thought that marriage could only happen with the union of a man to a woman. She said that if she ever met anyone who had seen someone for more than three or four weeks, without having sex, she would not first assume that this person had some sort of religious conviction, but rather that this person must bear the psychological scars of some sort of traumatic abuse. She followed this up by saying, “So do you see how strange what you’re saying sounds to us, to those of us out here in normal America?”¹

Moore’s encounter is not an exception. In our world today, many people see Christ only as a wise teacher who lived thousands of years ago, and Christians as the well-intentioned fools who follow him. He did not rescue humanity from sin, He did not rise from the dead, and He is not God. The local church can no longer passively stand by while the Devil continues to corrupt the community and culture. In order to be a church that reaches its community and proclaims faith, the local church must understand the dangers of disunity and understand the culture and community it is seated in.

* Briley A. Penner and Grant A. Penner are both Five Year Bachelor of Arts / Accelerated M.Div. students at Piedmont International University, Winston-Salem, NC.

¹ Moore, Russell, *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel* (Nashville: B&H Publishing), 2015, eBook.

II. THE CAUSE FOR DISUNITY: SIN

The Origin Of Sin

There was a time in the world where there was no disunity and all was perfect, harmonious, and at peace in all aspects of creation. Originally, the world was perfect and man had perfect unity with God. Genesis 1:31 describes it in this way, “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.”² However, all did not remain in this perfection and goodness. Genesis 3:1-7 describes the event of the Fall of Man and the entering of sin into the world:

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

In this singular event, all that was once perfect and good in the sight of God became a broken shadow of the beauty that once was.

The Results Of Sin

Before dealing with the results of sin, there is something that must be discussed first. Although evil and sin are similar, they remain two separate ideas. Chafer explains this concept when he states, "The terms evil and sin represent somewhat different ideas. Evil may refer to that which, though latent or not expressed, is ever conceivable as the opposite of that which is good,

² Unless otherwise stated, scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version. (ESV), copyright 2001 by Crossway bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

while sin is that which is concrete and actively opposed to the character of God."³ When discussing the results of sin, the conversation does not rest on some abstract notion of good versus evil. The discussion of sin must necessarily remain pointed to that which is contrary to the character of God. With this bearing on the topic, the results of sin are found throughout the entirety of human history. Genesis 4 records the account of the first sin of Adam's offspring, which is nothing short of fratricide in the murder of Abel, and the biblical account of mankind's sin does not come close to stopping there. Abraham lied twice in Genesis 12 and 20. Moses murdered an Egyptian in Exodus 2. David committed adultery in 2 Samuel 11. A brief survey of the kings of Israel shows a history of sin in Israel's royalty. Even the apostles were not without sin. Galatians 2 records Paul's recounting of Peter's hypocrisy which led others into sin.

The problem of sin does not start with the action committed. Before the action come the temptations. Naturally, the question must be asked, where do these temptations come from? Are they from God or from Satan? Although both might be tempting options, James 1:14 is clear in stating the origins of our sin. "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire." For example, Calvin writes on the process Eve underwent undergoing the temptation from Satan as such:

"She could previously behold the tree with such sincerity, that no desire to eat of it affected her mind; for the faith she had in the word of God was the best guardian of her heart, and of all her senses. But now, after the heart had declined from faith, and from obedience to the word, she corrupted both herself and all her senses, and depravity was diffused through all parts of her soul as well as her body."⁴

Adam and Eve, who were once the pinnacle of the creative work of God, were now sinful in all aspects of their being as there was not a portion on their soul left untainted by sin. Though the inherent worth of being a creation of God remained, the perfection once enjoyed was shattered,

³ Chafer, Lewis Sperry, *Chafer Systematic Theology*, (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press), 1947, 228.

⁴ Calvin, John, *Commentaries on the First book of Moses Called Genesis* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), 1948, 151.

the harmonious unity experienced by man with God was disrupted, and the peace between God and man was broken.

The statement often following a discussion on the original sin and the nature of man afterwards typically sounds like an ever resounding challenge to prove its validity. There is no need to look beyond the writing of Paul in the book of Romans. In Romans 1:18-3:20, the apostle explicitly deals with the natural state of mankind, and thus the effects of sin on humanity. Though much could be said about the first two chapters, Paul brings his discourse to a climax in Romans 3:9 where he writes, "What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin." The discussion so far has been Paul proving point by point that all people, no matter the background, lack the righteousness of God. In light of this, it is easy to concede that man lacks perfection, however, in the words of James Boice, "But this is far different from admitting that we are utterly depraved so far as our having any natural ability to please God is concerned."⁵ It is truly undeniable that mankind is in a dire state as a result of sin.

The Effects Of Sin In Our Communities

The practical application of the results of sin in history and day to day life is not hard to come by. Scripture alone provides numerous examples of mankind falling to sin time and time again. When extra-biblical text is included the sources seem endless. If modern news stations are useful for anything, it seems as though displaying the depravity of mankind is one of its uses. Just to give a few examples from the last twenty years, there have been a range of horrific shootings from the Las Vegas attack on October 1, 2017 to two middle schoolers, who were 13 and 11 years old at the time, killing five people at Westside Middle School on March 29, 1998.⁶ It was estimated in 2016 that there were over 20,000 people in forced labor, which is colloquially

⁵ Boice, James Montgomery, Romans, vol. 1, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books), 2005, 290.

⁶ Megan Garvey, Maloy Moore, and Evan Wagstaff, "Deadliest U.S. mass shootings, 1984-2017," Los Angeles Times, October 2, 2017.

understood as slavery.⁷ This does not touch on the multitude of historic sins involved with slavery in the history of the United States alone, let alone all of human history. Sickness, physical injuries, mental illness, divorce, psychological trauma, shootings, natural disasters, betrayal, death, and a wide variety of other horrible subjects and experiences can all be explained by understanding the results of sin, as it all stems from the effects of sin on humanity and creation as a whole. When looking at communities today, it would be foolish to assume that the sins of the past are not actively affecting local areas.

The Effects Of Sin In Christ's Church

Biblically, the effects of sin are seen infiltrating the church from the beginning. If believers today are too worried about all the new heresies and movements spreading and issues the church is dealing with, then odds are there is a lapse in understanding church history. Acts five records the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, which was directly against the actions of believers mentioned in Acts 4:32-37. The book of Galatians was occasioned by the spreading of a false gospel, as John MacArthur writes concerning the problem of the Galatian church, "The gospel of grace was being trampled, and in its place was being offered the gospel of works, which is no gospel at all but a distortion of God's truth (Gal. 1:6-7) that leads to damnation rather than salvation (Rom. 3:20)."⁸ Peter did nothing to help the issue at hand in Galatians 2, but instead seemed to be a catalyst of this problem. Paul's exact words describe the encounter is summarized in Galatians 2:11 which says, "But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned." Continuing on in verse 13, the effects of Peter's sin is seen: "And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy." The sin of a single man led many into the same sin, and this was no mere

⁷ "2017 Global Estimates," 2017 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery and Child Labour, 2017.

⁸ MacArthur, John, New Testament Commentary: Galatians (Chicago, IL: Moody Press), 1987, x.

Christian; this was an apostle of Jesus Christ. The same Apostle who witnessed the transfiguration, who was there when Jesus fed the 5,000, and who sat under and listened to the words of Christ being spoken from the lips of the Lord. Much like the apostolic era, on into the patristic, medieval, reformation, enlightenment, and modern eras, sin has continually been affecting the church of Christ. It is only the grace of God that the believers today remain in spite of the sins of the past.

In looking at all this, the question still remains, "What is it that sin does to the church specifically?" Of all the major effects of sin, disunity stands as a major effect rooted in the sins of Christ's church. Starting in the time of the apostles, the New Testament is full of exhortations to unity. It would stand to reason if disunity was not an issue, then the New Testament would not discuss it nearly as much as it does. Christ prays for the unity of believers in John 17. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to unity throughout the epistle. Paul addresses the lack of distinctions between believers in Galatians three. Philippians two speaks on the joy of Paul that would come from the unity within the church. These are far from isolated instances.

III. SCRIPTURE ON UNITY

From the beginning of human sin in Genesis 3, the people of God, from the Israelites of the Old Testament to the Christians of the New Testament, must recognize our natural inclinations and habits towards disunity. In light of this, Scripture addresses this in various areas:

Ephesians 4:1-6

This passage begins at a major turning point in the Epistle of Ephesians. Describing the first section (the first three chapters) of Ephesians and the turning point of 4:1, Martyn Lloyd-Jones states, "There is no greater display of the doctrines of the Christian faith than that found in the first three chapters of this Epistle. But having done that, the Apostle now moves on to the practical application of his doctrine; he goes on to show how it is related to daily life and living.

So we are really at a most important point in this Epistle, a point that marks a very real division."⁹ It is through the many truths Paul discusses in Ephesians 1-3 that we are to do the imperatives found in Ephesians 4-6. Harold Hoehner describes it this way, "Because of the new position in Christ both individually and corporately, unity should exist among the believers in Christ. Paul, therefore, exhorts them to maintain this unity."¹⁰

Ephesians 4:1-6

Ephesians 4:1-6 is another major section considering its placement in the epistle, which can be broken down into two major parts. As Frank Thielman states concerning the two sections of Ephesians 4:1-6, "The first part offers a general exhortation focused on loving deference to one another (4:1-3), and the second part grounds this general exhortation in the unity of God ("one Spirit...one Lord...one God and Father"), of God's people ("one body"), and of the response of God's people to God ("one hope...one faith, one baptism"; 4:16)."¹¹ When faced with various commands, people of all ages have a tendency to wonder why Christians should have unity? Why should Christians "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called?" The answer to the reason for the commands of 4:1-3 are found in 4:4-6.

As mentioned in the quote from Thielman, Paul uses three main methods to exhort his audience to unity. First, Paul draws on the unity within the Trinity with reference to one Spirit, Lord, and God and Father. Ephesians is laced with Trinitarian language throughout. For example, in the first section after the introduction, Ephesians 1:3-14, Paul describes the work of each person of the Trinity in salvation. In 4:3-6, the doctrine of the Trinity is used to give reason and purpose

⁹ Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn, *Christian unity: an exposition of Ephesians 4:1 to 16* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House), 1981, 11.

¹⁰ Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic), 2002, 501.

¹¹ Thielman, Frank, *Ephesians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic), 2010, 250.

for believers, and what greater example can Christians have than the Trinitarian God who created all that there is, guides the course of history according to his will, and is the very definition of good? In light of this, Hoehner writes, "One would think that a conjunction like γάρ, "for," would have been appropriate here because of the relationship of verses 4-6 to verses 1-3, that is, the basis or reason for the unity just mentioned. The abruptness is telling, for it appears to indicate the importance Paul places on the Trinity in conjunction with unity."¹² The emphasis could be stated in this way, just as the Trinity has perfect unity among the three persons, to the point that they could only ever be described as eternally one, believers are to mimic the God we serve through unity among each other. In all things believers are to emulate the character of God, and this includes the unity between the persons of the Trinity in their eternal fellowship.

Second, Paul draws on the idea of the body of Christ from Ephesians 2:16 as yet another basis of unity among believers. The larger context of this idea is found primarily in Ephesians 2:11-22 where Paul, after an explanation of the new life a believer has in Christ. Paul uses the foundation of new life as a basis for his statements on the unity now among Jews and Gentiles into a single body, the body of Christ. Lloyd-Jones comments on the idea of the body of Christ in stating, "There is only one perfect mystical Church, unseen and spiritual. There is only one body. This Church consists of people of all types and kinds and colours, from many continents and climes."¹³ Lloyd-Jones does not stop there with his explanation, he continues saying, "In the same manner time makes no difference to this fact. The early Christians are in this body. The martyrs of the Reformation are in this body. The Puritans, the Covenanters, the first Methodists, they are all

¹² Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic), 2002, 514.

¹³ Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn, *Christian unity: an exposition of Ephesians 4:1 to 16* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House), 1981. 52.

in this body; and you and I are in this body if we are truly in Christ."¹⁴ If this is true, why would believers, now one body in Christ (whether Jew or Gentile), not want to revel in this beautiful truth of God?

Third, Paul uses various aspects all believers have in common such as the hope that believers have in Christ, one common faith through which believers come to Christ, a singular baptism which believers are identified with Christ. All three of these are common threads that believers can draw on as basis for unity. The inheritance which is yet to come is a common hope that all believers look forward to together. The belief all believers place within Christ is a common grounding and necessity for all who claim the title of Christian. Although salvation comes apart from baptism, believers are called to baptism following placing their faith in Christ. In baptism, the believer is identified with the body of Christ, which Paul has already clearly stated is a singular body not divided by ethnicity. In response to the seven things mentioned in this passage, F.F. Bruce warns, "we should not interpret "unity" here by relating it to the recurring "one" of verses 4-6. In verses 4-6 it is uniqueness that is intended."¹⁵ The temptation could be that we instantly link the idea of unity with the consistent repetition of "one" in verse 4-6, but in doing so we miss the implications found in both places. Bruce describes the thrust of unity in verse three stating, "The expression here bears practically the same meaning as "the communion of the Holy Spirit" in 2 Corinthians 13:14. And those whom the unity of the Spirit is displayed will be joined together "in the bond of peace."¹⁶ Though the ideas are different, Paul is incredibly practical in verses 4-6 in giving example after example and reason after reason for believers to live out the communion shared with the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Bruce, F.F., *The Epistle to the Ephesians: a Verse by Verse Exposition by One of the Great Bible Scholars of Our Age* (Cork: Book Baby), 1961, Accessed February 16, 2018. Logos.

¹⁶ Ibid.

IV. CHRIST AND HIS PRAYER

Both the New and Old Testament speaks concerning unity, and there is no shortage of material to be had on explaining the Biblical text; however, there seems to be a continued thrust in today's circles to focus specifically on the letters in red, as it is colloquially referred to. Yet Scripture has such a focus on unity that even within the words of Christ himself, there is an blaring desire for the church to actively display the underlying spiritual unity that is present, whether it is admitted or not, among believers. The church is called to be unified. This is not a desire of the Apostles alone, but of Christ. This is displayed in his high priestly prayer, found in John 17:20-23:

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you send me and loved them even as you loved me.

In John 17:6-19, Jesus prays for his disciples, but in v.20-23, he moves to pray for those who will come to faith in him in the future.¹⁷ Jesus did not want his followers to be seen as separate parts of a whole; rather, he wanted them to be seen as a single, unified body. Morris comments, "just as His true glory was to follow the path of lowly service culminating in the cross, so for them [his followers] the true glory lay in the path of lowly service wherever it might lead them ... For them too, the way of the cross is the way of true glory."¹⁸

The single greatest thing that connects believers is Christ and his work on the cross as a propitiation for the sins of mankind. Matthew 16:24-25 tells us that this was not a burden that only Christ had to bear. "Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him

¹⁷ Morris, Leon, *The Gospel According to John: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans), 1971, 722-732.

¹⁸ Ibid., 734-735.

deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” This is what should unite Christians. Christ died on a cross to take on the punishment for the sins of man; a punishment that man rightfully deserved to suffer. Instead, he took that suffering upon himself and made a way for us to be declared righteous in the eyes of God. Now, believers have been called to stand united and take only a fraction of the burden that Jesus carried on his shoulder.

In John 17:14-19, Jesus prays to the Father asking Him to protect the disciples. “I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for my sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.” Christ understood that the world would fight against those who followed him. To be a follower of Christ is not easy. It requires, work, sacrifice, and a servant's heart. We must get low as Christ got low and be willing to serve when we would rather be served for to be a follower of Christ means to be a servant rather than a master.

V. CONCLUSION

If church members today are to be the ambassadors of the cause of Christ that we are called to be, there are many things that believers today must acknowledge. The process starts with always beginning with an understanding of where we are lacking. Though Christians today are in fact saved through their faith in Christ and have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, every Christian today is human. With this in mind, we see clearly why Scripture stresses unity. Christ desires for his church to be unified, for only a unified church can spread the Gospel which we have been commanded to proclaim.

APPENDIX #1: PROCLAIMING FAITH

This article is not without occasion. During the 2016-2017 school year, Piedmont International University focused on the theme of “Unleash Faith.” The faculty, staff, and student body sought to actively pursue ways to reach out into the community to show that we were not afraid of letting out faith be known. During the 2017-2018 school year, the theme has been “Defend Faith.” For the 2018-2019 school year, the theme will be “Proclaim Faith.” How do we as Christians answer to those who would seek to see the Word of God destroyed and muzzled?

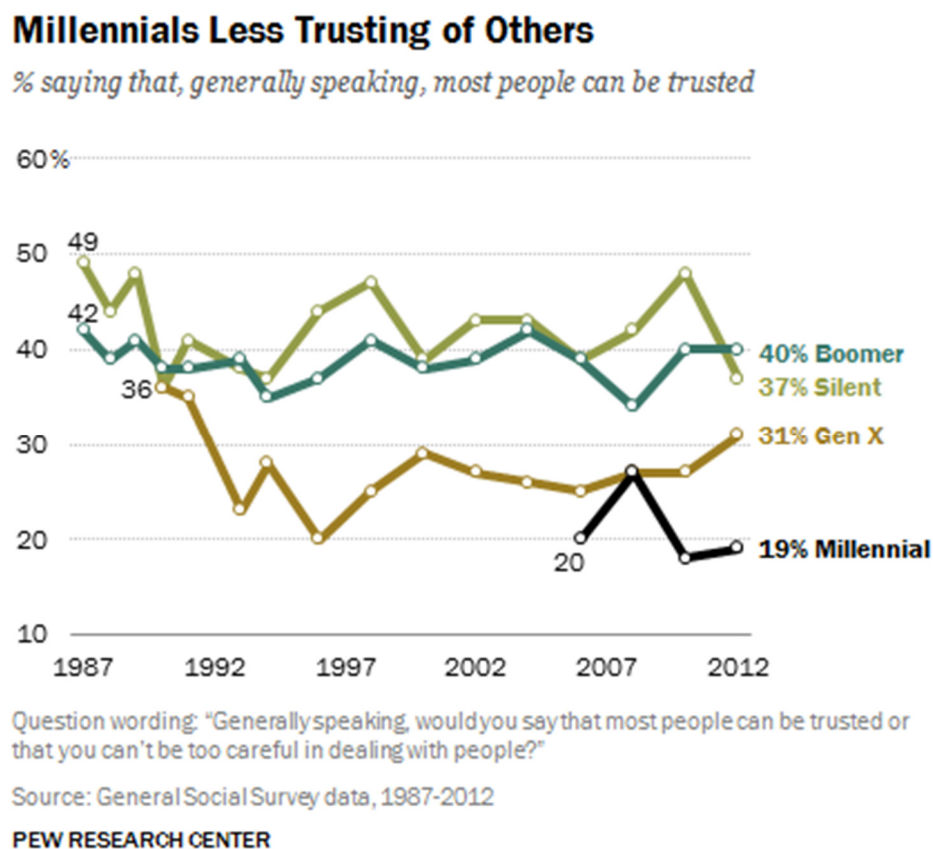
There are various ways to proclaim our faith in Christ and his work on the cross to the world, but we cannot do this without understanding that Christians must be unified in doing so. Every church is not the same. Some churches are located in rural areas, while others are located in urban areas. Some churches have congregations of less than 100, while others churches have congregations of 1,000's. There is no one set of characteristics that makes a church more successful reaching out to the community it is in than another; however, we do believe that there are three specific focus areas that are essential in reaching out to the community around a church: Cause, Community, and Christ.

Cause

In the local church, the goal is to serve a cause. This cause could also be likened to a mission statement or a ministry objective. For example, a church's mission statement could be “to glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission.”¹⁹ It is by the mission statement that a church does its ministry. While many churches have mission statements that are very biblical, the challenge is that people today simply do not inherently trust others. A Pew Research Study

¹⁹ This is the mission statement of Harvest Bible Chapel in Chicago, IL. See <http://www.harvestbiblechapel.org/what-we-believe/our-mission/> for more information on how they fulfill this mission.

discovered that most people today, but especially those from the Millennial generation that many churches are intentionally pursuing, do not trust other people.²⁰



The interesting thing to consider when looking at this stat is that, while millennials are less trusting than others, they are generally open and willing to listen to other people's religious beliefs. In fact, 76% of millennials would say this.²¹

It is not easy to gain a millennial's trust, but if the local church can gain the trust of a millennial, it will be very likely that the church will be able to share the Gospel. The question now is how do you reach millennials? There are many answers to this question, and many well-known

²⁰ Suh, Michael. "Millennials Less Trusting of Others." Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. March 05, 2014.

²¹ Marsteller, Joshua Stauter for Burson. "Telefónica Global Millennial Survey." Telefónica Global Millennial Survey.

Christian leaders that have answered it, but one more unorthodox way to reach the millennial is to serve the cause of the local church consistently. In North America alone, a little over half of all millennials want to change the world and they honestly believe that they can make a difference.²² If the local church wants to reach millennials, it must show millennials that it is serious about making a difference in the world.

Community

The cause or mission of the local church is the means through which the church reaches out to the people around them. The community of the church is the means through which the people learn what the church is about and hear the Word of God preached. The idea of community looks different in each church because there is an endless amount of ways that churches can foster community. Some churches foster community through small groups, while others do it through Wednesday night prayer groups.

Christians are called to community. Much is seen in Scripture. After the ascension of Christ, Acts 1:12-14 records that “they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away. And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of James. All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.” The author of Hebrews commands, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” It is in the community that those who do not know Christ see the results of following him on his followers. A Church that works for Christ and walks with Christ is a church that declares his promises to those who do not know him.

²² Ibid.

Christ

A church that fails to keep Christ at the center of everything they do is a church that fails in fulfilling its calling. Since the inception of Piedmont International University nearly eighty years ago, the focus of the university was that “in everything he might be preeminent (Col. 1:18).” In the local church, Christ must be preeminent in everything. A church that fails to keep Christ at the center will not be a church that makes an impact for the glory of God, but a church who makes an impact for their own selfish gain. To reach people in our ever-changing world, we must remember the words of Colossians 1:15-20:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

There is no one greater than the Savior who holds all things together and guides his people. If the local church wants to reach the people of today’s world, it must show people that they are willing to not just say the right words but do what they have been commanded to do. They must serve the cause of Christ. If the local church wants to reach the people of today’s world, it must show people that they have an established community that strives to push each other to walk with Christ. Finally, if the local church wants to reach the people of today’s world, it must show people the real Jesus; the Jesus of the Bible.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "2017 Global Estimates." 2017 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery and Child Labour. 2017. Accessed February 15, 2018.
- Boice, James Montgomery. *Romans*. Vol. 1. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005.
- Bruce, F. F. The Epistle to the Ephesians: a Verse by Verse Exposition by One of the Great Bible Scholars of Our Age. Cork: Book Baby, 1961. Accessed February 16, 2018. Logos.
- Calvin, John. *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*. Translated by John King. Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1948.
- _____. *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*. Translated by William Pringle. Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1948.
- Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Chafer Systematic Theology*. Volume Two. Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947. Print.
- Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997. Print.
- Garvey, Megan, Maloy Moore, and Evan Wagstaff. "Deadliest U.S. mass shootings, 1984-2017." Los Angeles Times, October 2, 2017. Accessed February 15, 2018.
- Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. Volume 1. Revised and Updated. New York: Harper Collins, 2010. Print.
- _____. *The Story of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present Day*. Volume 2. Revised and Updated. New York: Harper Collins, 2010. Print.
- Hoehner, Harold W. *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. Print.
- Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *God's Ultimate Purpose: An Exposition of Ephesians 1*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978. Print.
- _____. *God's Way of Reconciliation: An Exposition of Ephesians 2*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972. Print.
- _____. *Christian Unity: An Exposition of Ephesians 4:1 to 16*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981.
- MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1986. Print.
- _____. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Galatians*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1987. Print.

- Marsteller, Joshua Stauter for Burson. "Telefónica Global Millennial Survey." Telefónica Global Millennial Survey. Accessed February 15, 2018. <http://survey.telefonica.com/globalreports/>.
- Moore, Russell. *Onward: Engaging the Culture Without Losing the Gospel*. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2015. eBook.
- Morris, Leon, *The Gospel According to John: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans), 1971.
- Suh, Michael. "Millennials Less Trusting of Others." Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project. March 05, 2014. Accessed February 15, 2018. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/03/07/millennials-in-adulthood/sdt-next-america-03-07-2014-0-05/>.
- Thielman, Frank. *Ephesians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. Print.
- Wood, A. Skevington. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Volume 11: Ephesians-Philemon. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978. Print.