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God the Son

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Editorial: Knowing, Adoring, and Proclaiming God the Son Incarnate.

Stephen J. Wellum

In this issue of *SBJT* we continue our year-long focus on the theme: Knowing our Triune God. Our attention now turns to "God the Son" with everything in some way contributing to thinking about, wrestling with, and coming to know and adore our great Redeemer more. There are many glorious truths in Christian theology but certainly the most profound one is the nature of the Incarnation and the glory of God the Son incarnate. To introduce this issue I want to make a few summary remarks to remind us about the wonder of our incarnate Lord.

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The word "incarnation" is derived from the Latin which literally means "in the flesh." When used in theology, the term refers to the supernatural act of God, effected by the Holy Spirit, whereby the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Triune Godhead, in the fullness of time, took into union with himself a complete human nature apart from sin and thus, as a result of that action, has now become God the Son incarnate forever (John 1:1, 14; Rom 1:3-4; 8:3; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:6-11; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 2:5-18).

The means whereby the Incarnation came about is the virgin conception—the miraculous action of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary—so that what was conceived was nothing less than the Lord Jesus who is fully God and fully man in one person forever (Matt 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38). He did this in order to become the Redeemer of the church, our prophet, priest, and king, and thus to save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21). By becoming one with us, the Lord of Glory, is not only able to share our sorrows and burdens, but he is also able to secure our redemption by bearing our sin on the cross as our substitute and being raised for our justification (see Heb 2:17-18; 4:14-16; Rom 4:25; 1 Pet 3:18).

Biblical evidence for the full deity and humanity of Christ is abundant. In regard to his humanity, Jesus is presented as a Jewish man who was born, underwent the normal process of develop-

ment (Luke 2:52), who experienced a full range of human experiences (e.g. Matt 8:10, 24; 9:36; Luke 22:44; John 19:28) including growth in knowledge (Mark 13:32) and the experience of death. Apart from his sinlessness, which Scripture unequivocally affirms (2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 Pet 1:19), he is one with us in every way. However, Scripture also affirms that the *man* Christ Jesus is also the eternal Son and thus God equal with the Father and Spirit. From the opening pages of the NT, Jesus is identified and presented as the Lord: the one who establishes the divine rule and who inaugurates the new covenant era in fulfillment of OT expectation—something only God can do (e.g. Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 34). That is why his miracles are not merely human acts empowered by the Spirit; rather they are demonstrations of his own divine authority as the one who inaugurates the kingdom, over creation (e.g. Matt 8:23-27; 14:22-23), Satan and his hosts (Matt 12:27-28), and all things (Eph 1:9-10, 19-23). That is why Jesus has the authority to forgive sin (Mark 2:3-12), to view the Scripture as that which is fulfilled in him (Matt 5:17-19), to view his relationship with the Father as one of equality and reciprocity (Matt 11:25-27; John 5:16-30; 10:14-30), and to do the very works of God in creation, providence and redemption (John 1:1-18; Col 1:15-20; Phil 2:6-11; Heb 1:1-3).

Later church reflection on this biblical data, especially at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, correctly affirmed that we cannot do justice to the Scripture without confessing that Jesus was fully God and man and that God the Son, who gave personal identity to the human nature he had assumed, did so without putting aside or compromising his divine nature. As a result, our Lord Jesus must be confessed as one person, namely, the divine Son, who now subsists in two natures. Additionally, Chalcedon affirmed that the Incarnation did not involve a change in the attributes of each nature so some kind of blending resulted, rather that the attributes of each nature were fully preserved.

This affirmation entails at least two important points. First, *the man* Jesus from the moment of conception was personal by virtue of the union of the human nature in the person of the divine Son. At no point were there two persons or active subjects. That is why in our Lord Jesus we come face to face with God. We meet him, not subsumed under human flesh, not merely associated with it, but in undiminished moral splendor. The deity and humanity coincide, not because the human has grown into the divine, but because the divine Son has taken to himself a human nature for our salvation. It is he, as the Son, who subsists in two natures, who has lived his life for us as our representative head, died our death as our substitute, and been raised for our eternal salvation. This is why the Lord Jesus is utterly unique and without parallel and thus the only Lord and Savior. Second, since the "who" of the Incarnation is the eternal Son, and since he has taken to himself a human nature alongside his divine nature, the Son can now live a fully human life yet not be totally confined or limited to that human nature. That is why Scripture affirms that even as the Incarnate One, the divine Son continued to uphold and sustain the universe (Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:1-3) while simultaneously living his life on earth, as a man, in dependence upon the Father and by the power of the Spirit (John 5:19-27; Acts 10:38).

Our affirmation of the biblical Jesus is beyond our full comprehension, yet it is only he who can meet our every need. Apart from him we do not have a Redeemer who can stand on our behalf as a man, let alone satisfy God's own righteous demand upon us due to our sin, for after all, it is only God who can save and God alone. By becoming one with us, our Lord not only becomes our sympathetic Savior, he also accomplishes a work that saves us fully, completely, and finally. Hallelujah! what a Savior.

The Typology of David's Rise to Power: Messianic Patterns in the Book of Samuel[1]

James M. Hamilton, Jr.

This essay is dedicated to Professor E. Earle Ellis in gratitude for his many contributions to the study of the Bible, and especially for his clear statements on the subject of typology.

Daniel Treier has asserted that "the issue of how we may read the Old Testament Christianly" is "the most acute tension with which academic biblical theology faces us."[2] This recent statement reflects a long-standing question, as can be seen from the fact that the relationship between the Old and New Testaments is the major issue dealt with in Reventlow's *Problems of Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century*.[3] Progress on this question will only be made by those who embrace an interpretive method practiced by the biblical authors themselves as they interpreted earlier passages of Scripture: typology.[4] As Francis Watson puts it, "What is proposed is not an anachronistic return to pre-critical exegesis but a radicalization of the modern theological and exegetical concern to identify ever more precisely those characteristics that are peculiar to the biblical texts."[5]

After briefly stating the significance of typology and defining what it is, this presentation will consider whether we are limited to the examples of typological interpretation seen in the Old and New Testaments,[6] or whether, taking our cues from those examples, we can build upon them. The theory that we can learn to interpret the Bible typologically from the authors of the New Testament *and apply the method to passages they themselves do not specifically address* will then be tested against the narratives of David's rise to power in the book of Samuel.

TYPOLOGY: SIGNIFICANCE AND DEFINITION

Significance

Understanding typology is significant because without it we cannot understand the New Testament's interpretation of the Old. If we do not understand the New Testament's interpretation of

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the Old, we could be led to false conclusions about the legitimacy of the hermeneutical moves made by the authors of the New Testament.

Leonhard Goppelt referred to typology as "the principal form of the NT's interpretation of Scripture."[7] Similarly, Earle Ellis writes that "The NT's understanding and exposition of the OT lies at the heart of its theology, and it is primarily expressed within the framework of a typological interpretation."[8] And David Instone-Brewer states, "Typology dominates the New Testament and, if messianic movements are an indication of popular thought, it also dominated pre-70 CE Palestinian Judaism …"[9] Goppelt, Ellis, Instone-Brewer, and others,[10] thus indicate that typological interpretation is central to understanding the New Testament's appeal to the Old Testament. By contrast, there is almost no treatment of typological interpretation in Richard Longenecker's *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*.[11]

Typology is significant because it is used so often in the New Testament, and this means that understanding this interpretive practice can deliver us from wrong conclusions regarding what the New Testament claims about the Old Testament. As Earle Ellis has written, "Paul's usage [of the OT] … is not arbitrary or against the literal sense if the typological usage be granted."[12] I have argued elsewhere that a typological reading of the "fulfillment" passages in the first two chapters of Matthew alleviates the dissonance created when we try to read the passages Matthew quotes as predictive prophecies.[13] Such a reading has implications not only for our understanding of the New Testament, but also for how we understand the Old. It seems significant that one of the major proponents of the view that apostolic interpretive methods are not to be practiced today, Richard Longenecker, does not recognize typology *as an interpretive method*. Longenecker does discuss typology as a factor in "the concept of fulfillment in the New Testament," which, he writes, "has more to do with ideas of 'corporate solidarity' and 'typological correspondences in history' than with direct prediction."[14] But when he comes to "Exegetical Procedures of Early Christians," he limits these to "literalist, midrashic, pesher, and allegorical."[15] This is a category mistake: since Longenecker does not recognize typology as a kind of biblical theological interpretive procedure, he wrongly labels typological interpretations as pesher interpretations (more on this shortly).[16] His rejection of the abiding validity of the hermeneutical procedures employed by the authors of the New Testament is thus called into question.

If the task of typology is similar to the task of biblical theology—reflecting on the results of exegesis, and thus exegeting the canon as opposed to exegeting a particular passage—then it appears that when the biblical authors engage in typological interpretation they are in fact engaging in biblical theological reflection. What Frei says regarding the "controversy between certain Deists and their orthodox opponents about the veracity of the assertions made in the New Testament … that certain Old Testament prophecies had been fulfilled in the New Testament story" remains true today:

> At stake [is] the correctness or incorrectness of a later interpretation of the words of earlier texts. Did the earlier texts actually mean what at a later stage they had been said to mean? … Were the New Testament writers correct or not when they used the Old Testament texts as evidence for the New Testament's own historical truth claims?

Definition

Historical Correspondence and Escalation

Earle Ellis helpfully explains that "typology views the relationship of OT events to those in the new dispensation … in terms of two principles, historical correspondence and escalation." Michael Fishbane writes that "inner-biblical typologies constitute a literary-historical phenomenon which isolates perceived correlations between specific events, persons, or places early in time with their later correspondents." This basic definition of typology is generally agreed upon, with some exceptions, but there are differences over whether

types are predictive and whether typology is an interpretive method. Our main interest will be with the latter question, but we can briefly represent the concerns of the former.

Retrospective or Prospective?

There is a dispute among those who read the Bible typologically over whether types are *only* retrospective or whether they also function *pro*spectively, that is, predictively. On one side, R. T. France writes: "There is no indication in a type, as such, of any forward reference; it is complete and intelligible in itself." On the other side, G. K. Beale states that "the πληρόω [fulfillment] formulas prefixed to citations from formally non-prophetic OT passages in the gospels decisively argue against this." In between these two options, Grant Osborne writes, "It is likely that the solution lies in the middle. The OT authors and participants did not necessarily recognize any typological force in the original, but in the divine plan the early event did anticipate the later reality." The fulfillment formulas do indicate that the NT authors understand the Old Testament types to be pointing forward, but Osborne is correct to point out that more needs to be said about *how* and *when* these types would have been understood as pointing forward. Engaging this debate further is beyond the scope of this essay. What does concern us at present is whether typology should be understood as an exegetical method or only as, in Longenecker's terms, an "exegetical presupposition."

Method or Presupposition?

Reventlow states that "Typology is not the task of exegesis proper, but of biblical theology; the former examines the literary testimony to an event; the latter connects it with other events which are reported in the Bible." This is similar to a recent observation of Stephen Dempster's that biblical theology is something along the lines of reflection upon exegesis. I grant the point that we first interpret the near context—words, phrases, complete thoughts, etc.—in our exegesis. This close exegesis of particular passages then provides fodder for reflection on and correlation with other passages when we engage in biblical theology or typological thinking. What must be recognized, however, is that this correlation and reflection is still *interpretation*. We are still doing exegesis. The difference is that rather than exegeting a particular passage, we are exegeting the canon. Biblical theology and typological interpretation, then, can be thought of as a form of exegesis that gives itself to the broader context, the canonical context, of the passage at hand.

One sometimes hears the suggestion that "biblical theology is 'an old man's game.'" The idea seems to be that one will spend the greater part of one's life exegeting individual passages in isolation, and only when all that long work is done is one in a position to make accurate correlations. But if this is true, why not suggest that one should spend the greater part of one's life studying historical backgrounds, or textual criticism, or language, or lexicography, or syntax, or exegetical method, and only once these approaches have been mastered, begin the work of exegesis as an old man?

It seems better to grant that biblical theology and typological interpretation have a rightful place in the hermeneutical spiral. This hermeneutical spiral has so many tortuous turns that all interpreters—old or young—must hold their conclusions with due humility. We not only can, we must engage in biblical theology and typological thinking as we do exegesis. Naturally we will, Lord willing, become better interpreters as we grow in wisdom and experience, but that does not mean that we should bracket off part of the process until we reach a certain age or level of experience. Each spin through the whole of the hermeneutical spiral brings us closer, it is hoped, to understanding what is happening in a text. We cannot afford to defer the typological turn. We must attempt to navigate these curves. Just as skill is cultivated from practicing the other bends in the spiral, so continued reflection on typology and biblical theology—continually refined by prayerful reading and re-reading of the Bible—will by God's grace produce scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven,

able to bring out treasures old and new.

If we ask how the conclusions of such exegetical reflection might differ from the *sensus plenior,* we find help from Reventlow, who says regarding the *sensus plenior*: "The difference from the typical sense is seen to lie in the fact that it relates to the wording of the Old Testament texts themselves …" Thus, whereas typology focuses on patterns of events, *sensus plenior* refers to deeper or fuller meanings of words or statements.

As noted above, Longenecker treats some instances of typological interpretation under the rubric of "pesher" interpretation. This unhelpfully confuses two very different methods of interpretation. Pesher and Typology differ in both form and content. The "pesherite form" of interpretation practiced at Qumran often involved the citation of "large blocks" of the Old Testament, followed by the Aramaic term פֵּשֶׁר, "solution/interpretation," followed by "the elucidation of the consecutive lemmata from the text at hand…with references to the present and future life of the community."[36] Thus, on the formal level, pesher interpretations are usually marked by the use of the word "pesher."

By contrast, Michael Fishbane lists several phrases that are characteristically used to signal typological interpretations in the Old Testament. He writes:

- "the clause כאשר…כן 'just as…so' and its variants are particularly frequent"
- "Now and then כאשר is replaced by כ־ and variants"
- "juxtaposition of such terms as ראשנות and קדמניות, which indicate 'first' or 'former' things, over against חדשות or אחרנות [*sic* this term takes a masc. pl. ending not a feminine, cf. Isa 41:4], which indicate 'new' or 'latter' things, recurs exclusively in [Isaiah]"
- "In a similar way, the prophet Jeremiah juxtaposes old and new events with a fixed rhetorical style, as can be seen by a comparison of his statement in 31:30-2 that the new covenant will 'not be like' (… כ לא) the older one 'but rather' (כי זאת [v.33]) of a different type"
- "Apart from these instances, there is another broad category wherein the typologies are indicated by non-technical idiosyncratic usages, employed by the speaker for the situation at hand. A good example of this technique may be found in Isa. 11:11, where YHWH states that 'he will continue יוסף' to redeem Israel in the future, a 'second time שנית', just like the first. The language used here marks the typological correlation very well, and explicitly indicates its two vital features, the new moment *and* its reiteration."
- "In addition, there are many other cases of inner-biblical typology which are not signaled by technical terms at all. To recognize the typologies at hand, the latter-day investigator must be alert to lexical co-ordinates that appear to correlate apparently disparate texts … or to various forms of paratactic juxtaposition. Sometimes, moreover, motifs are juxtaposed, sometimes pericopae, and sometimes recurrent scenarios."[37]

None of the occurrences of פשר, "interpretation," in the Old Testament introduce a typological interpretation (cf. Eccl 8:1; Dan 4:3; 5:15, 26). Thus, on the formal level, there appears to be no warrant for grouping typological interpretation under the umbrella of "pesher interpretation."

As for differences in content, Craig Evans helpfully contrasts typology with other forms of first century interpretation:

> *Allegorization* discovers morals and theological symbols and truths from various details of Scripture; *pesher* seeks to unlock the prophetic mysteries hidden in Scripture and *midrash* seeks to update Torah and clarify obscurities and problems in Scripture. But *typology* represents the effort to coordinate the past and present (and future) according to the major events, persons and institutions of Scripture.[38]

Typology should be recognized as an interpretive method. Granted, it reads divinely intended patterns of events seen in multiple passages as opposed to reading single passages in isolation. But typology should not be classed under "pesher," for as George J. Brooke has written,

> it is important that modern commentators do not use the term *pesher* loosely, as if it could ever cover all that there is to understand and catalog in Qumran biblical interpretation. Pesher describes one distinctive kind of interpretation among others.... The warning about the careful use of the term *pesher* applies especially in relation to the various kinds of biblical interpretation found in the NT.[39]

Brooke then states that the term pesher "can be applied only in cases where the NT author engages in the interpretation of unfulfilled or partially fulfilled blessings, curses, and other prophecies."[40] Pesher is not typology, and neither interpretive method is clarified by subsuming it under the other.[41]

If typology is not classified as *pesher*, which Craig Evans calls "the most distinctive genre among the Dead Sea Scrolls,"[42] it immediately loses some of the stigma attached to certain discredited methods of interpretation practiced in the ancient world. This opens the door for a reconsideration of "the normativeness or exemplary status"[43] of the method of typology.

THE LIMITS OF TYPOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION?

There is no small dispute over whether we are limited to the typological interpretations found in the New Testament. Can we apply the method to Old Testament passages that the New Testament does not directly address? Graeme Goldsworthy states the question plainly when he writes, "There are obvious typological interpretations in the New Testament, but are we confined to the texts that are specifically raised in the New Testament?"[44] This question arises because, as Reventlow notes, "The demand is ... often made that typology should be limited to the examples explicitly mentioned in the New Testament."[45]

Stan Gundry describes "The rule of thumb that a type is a type only when the New Testament specifically designates it to be such" as being a reaction against those whose typology had become so extravagant that it was practically allegorical.[46] Gundry explains:

> whenever typology is used to show the Christocentric unity of the Bible, it is all too easy to impose an artificial unity (even assuming that there is a valid use of the basic method). Types come to be created rather than discovered, and the drift into allegorism comes all too easily.... Properly speaking, typology is a mode of historical understanding. The historical value and understanding of the text to be interpreted forms the essential presupposition for the use of it. But in the search for types it was all too easy to look for secondary hidden meanings underlying the primary and obvious meaning. When that happened, typology began to shade into allegory.[47]

It is important to stress that it is precisely the *historical* nature of a type that is essential to it being interpreted typologically. This is a universally acknowledged methodological control articulated by those who differentiate between typology and allegory. Thus, if the type becomes merely a cipher for its antitype, the interpreter has begun to lean in the direction of allegory. As Fishbane writes, "the concrete historicity of the correlated data means that no new event is ever merely a 'type' of another, but always retains its historically unique character."[48] But it is not only *history* that matters, there must also be a genuine *correspondence*. As R. T. France says, "the lack of a real historical correspondence reduces typology to allegory...."[49]

As to whether we can employ this method today, Beale observes that all interpretive meth-

ods are abused and that the abuse of typology does not invalidate it as a method. Rather, the abuse of typology in the past urges that we use it with "great caution." Moreover, Beale contends, we need not be inspired by the Holy Spirit to read the Old Testament typologically. The fact that we are not inspired, as the biblical authors were, simply means that we will lack the epistemological certainty enjoyed by the apostles. As Beale says, all interpretive conclusions "are a matter of degrees of possibility and probability," and this will be true of the typological interpretations put forward as we use the method today.[50]

In spite of the danger of allegory, it is simply not possible to limit our typological interpretation of the Old Testament to those examples explicitly cited in the New Testament. The most obvious reason for this is that the New Testament does not cite *all* of the instances of the Old Testament's typological interpretation of itself.[51] This means that we must read the Old Testament typologically—and find types not explicitly identified in the New Testament—if we are to understand the Old Testament's interpretation of itself. Typology appears to be vital to a robust understanding of the unity of the Bible.[52] Moreover, several passages in the New Testament invite readers to conclude that the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus and the church in more ways than are explicitly quoted in the New Testament (cf. Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39-46; Acts 3:24; 17:2-3; Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11; 2 Cor 1:20; Heb 8:5; 10:1; 1 Pet 1:10-12).[53] The text that is particularly relevant for the examination of Samuel below is Acts 3:24, "And all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those who came after him, also proclaimed these days."[54] Could the proclamation in view be typological?

As we turn to explore a typological reading of David's rise to power in Samuel, Frei's words will hopefully ring true: "the 'method' of figural procedure [is] better exhibited in application than stated in the abstract."[55] As we proceed, we do so in agreement with Richard B. Hays, who has written of Luke 24:27,

> Luke's formulation suggests that testimony to Jesus is to be found 'in all the scriptures' (ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς, *en pasais tais graphais*), not just in a few isolated proof texts. The whole story of Israel builds to its narrative climax in Jesus, the Messiah who had to suffer before entering into his glory. That is what Jesus tries to teach them on the road.[56]

MESSIANIC PATTERNS IN SAMUEL

Before we look at possible historical correspondences between and escalations of divinely intended patterns of events in Samuel, we should briefly define how the term "messianic" is being understood here. The term "messianic" is used here

> to refer to expectations focused on a future royal figure sent by God who will bring salvation to God's people and the world and establish a kingdom characterized by features such as peace and justice. The phrase 'the Messiah' is used to refer to the figure at the heart of these expectations.[57]

With this definition in mind, we turn from the significance and definition of typology to test the theory that we can engage in "the method of exegesis that is the characteristic use of Scripture in the NT."[58] As we examine the narrative of Samuel, it is important to stress that nothing is being taken away from the historicity of these narratives, nor is the human author's intention in recording them being violated in any way. These narratives can only be understood typologically if they are taken precisely as narratives that have historical meaning.[59] In what follows, I seek to draw attention to the ways in which David's experience was matched and exceeded in the experience of Jesus.

Most of what follows will focus on broad correspondences between sequences of events in the narratives that concern David in Samuel and Jesus in the gospels. I am suggesting that the authors of the gospels have seen the correspondence between the narratives about David and the events that they know from the life of Jesus. Under the influ-

ence of the narratives about David, the authors of the gospels have shaped their narratives about Jesus such that they correspond to the narratives about David, so as to highlight the ways that Jesus has typologically fulfilled the patterns seen in the life of David, even as he is the fulfillment of the promise to David in 2 Samuel 7.[60]

THE ANOINTED, SAVING RESTRAINER

Saul serves as a foil for David in the narrative of Samuel, and his experience as king of Israel prepares the ground for the foundation of Davidic kingship to be laid. When Yahweh instructs Samuel regarding the anointing of Saul, significant statements are made about the king's role in Israel:

> Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me." When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man of whom I spoke to you! He it is who shall restrain my people (1 Sam 9:16-17, ESV).

We begin with three observations on what this text says about kingship in Israel: first, the king is to be *anointed* (9:16). The Pentateuch calls for the anointing of priests, but Deuteronomy 17 does not mention that Israel's king should be anointed. Later, Jotham's parable against Abimelech associates anointing with kingship (Judg 9:8, 15). But as we consider the anointing of a king in biblical theology, we cannot overstate the significance of the prophet Samuel receiving direct revelation (1 Sam 9:15) that Israel's king is to be anointed. Second, Yahweh tells Samuel that the anointed king will *save* his people from the Philistines (9:16). This announcement establishes Israel's king as Yahweh's agent of deliverance. As the narrative progresses, Saul is anointed (10:1), saves Israel from the Ammonites (11:1-15, Jonathan defeats the Philistines; 14:1-31); and when the people eat meat with the blood, Saul restrains them by having them slaughter the meat as the law requires (14:33-34).

This pattern is matched and exceeded by David, who is anointed not once but three times: by Samuel in private (16:16), as king over Judah (2 Sam 2:2), and as king over Israel (5:3).[61] Similarly, whereas Saul fought the Philistines all his days, never altogether defeating them (cf. 1 Sam 14:47, 52), David struck down the Philistine champion (17:49-51), took two hundred Philistine foreskins (18:27), and Yahweh gave the Philistines into David's hand (2 Sam 5:17-21, 22-25). In short, David subdued them (8:1). David was not only anointed and not only saved the people from the hand of the Philistines, he also restrained the evil of God's people. The people who gathered around David while he was in the wilderness were those who were in distress, those who were in debt, and those who were bitter in soul (1 Sam 22:2). This band of malcontents became the nucleus of David's kingdom. Twice David's men urged him to strike Saul (24:4; 26:8), and twice David restrained himself and his men. In addition to his respect for Saul as the Lord's anointed, striking Saul would set a grisly precedent for dealing with an unwanted king. David might not want such a precedent once he became king. Similarly, whereas Saul had around him the kind of person who would strike down priests (22:9-19), David did not tolerate those who came to him thinking that they would benefit from the death of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:1-16). Nor did David congratulate Joab for his murder of Abner, but made him mourn Abner's death (3:26-31). And David punished the murderers of Ish-bosheth (4:5-12). David restrained evil by doing justice and refusing to endorse and cultivate murderous methods in Israel.

As this pattern of Saul being anointed, saving God's people, and restraining their evil is matched and exceeded by David, so it is fulfilled in Jesus. Just as David was anointed with oil three times, Jesus was anointed *by the Spirit* at his baptism

(Luke 3:21-22).[62] Just as David delivered God's people from the Philistines, Jesus saved his people from their sins (Matt 1:21) by casting out the ruler of this world (John 12:31), and the New Testament promises that he will come again and defeat the enemies of his people (e.g., 2 Thess 1:8; Rev 19:11-21). Just as David restrained his men and cultivated virtue in Israel (it seems that some of those in distress and bitter of soul became the mighty men), so also Jesus restrained the wielder of the sword on the night he was betrayed (Matt 26:51-52), prayed for Peter before he was to be sifted (Luke 22:32), and announced that all who love him will obey his commands (John 14:15).

THE UNEXPECTED KING

Evidently no one, not even Jesse, expected that David might be the one whom Samuel was sent to anoint. The Lord sent Samuel to anoint one of Jesse's sons as king (1 Sam 16:2), Jesse passed his sons before Samuel (16:10), and Samuel had to ask if all of Jesse's sons were present. The youngest, David, was not even summoned in from the flocks on this occasion (16:11). Considered in worldly terms, there are certain expected routes to the throne. Being the youngest son, and later, serving as a court minstrel—playing the harp for the sitting king, are not conventional features of a king's resume.[63] Samuel seems to have been impressed with the stature and appearance of David's older brother Eliab (16:6-7), and Saul expected his son to succeed him (e.g., 1 Sam 20:31). Nor is it expected that the one who would be king would be chased through the hills of Israel with a band of unimpressive losers, as Nabal's reaction to David shows (1 Sam 25:10).

In the same way, the establishment is hardly impressed by the circumstances of Jesus' birth and the route he takes to the throne. John 7:27 indicates that Jesus was not perceived as matching what was expected about where the Messiah would be born and raised (cf. 7:41-42). The suggestion that Jesus was a Samaritan (John 8:48) may reflect speculation on the circumstances resulting in the birth of Jesus. Just as Jesse did not expect his youngest to be anointed by Samuel, so Jesus' family apparently did not expect him to be the Messiah—they thought he was out of his mind (Mark 3:21), taunted him about going to Jerusalem, and did not believe in him (John 7:1-9). Just as the boy playing the harp was not expected to be king, so the carpenter the people of Nazareth knew was not expected to be king (Mark 6:1-4). And just as David had his "bitter in soul" debtors, so Jesus had his "unlearned men" who did not keep the traditions of the elders (Acts 4:13; Mark 7:5).

ESTABLISHMENT OPPOSITION

David was anointed as Israel's king by the prophet Samuel according to the word of the Lord (1 Sam 16:13). He played the harp for Saul when the evil spirit from God troubled him (16:23). He struck Goliath down and brought great victory to Israel (17:45-54). Then Saul started throwing spears at him (18:11; 19:10). Saul used his own daughters as traps against David (18:17, 21, 25). David was eventually forced to flee (19:11-12), and throughout his flight he avoided open conflict with Saul, trusting that God would deal with Saul at the appropriate time (26:10). While David fled, Jonathan, who as heir to the throne has to be regarded as an establishment insider, interceded with Saul on behalf of David (20:28-29, 32). Saul was so enraged by this that he threw his spear at his own son Jonathan! (20:33).

Like David, Jesus was anointed as Israel's king in the presence of the prophet John according to the word of the Lord (John 1:30-34). Just as David ministered to Saul when he was troubled by the evil spirit,[64] Jesus ministered to those troubled by evil spirits by casting them out (e.g., Mark 1:21-27).[65] Just as Saul had more regard for setting a trap for David than for the good of his daughter, so the Pharisees had more regard for setting a trap for Jesus than for the welfare of the man with the withered hand (Mark 3:1-2). Just as David had success in the moments of crisis with Goliath and when he took the two hundred Philistine foreskins as the bride-

price for Saul's daughter, so Jesus had success in the five controversies recounted in Mark 2:1-3:6. Just as David's mounting triumphs resulted in Saul fearing and opposing him, so also Jesus' triumphs resulted in the Pharisees and Herodians, the establishment, plotting his destruction (Mark 3:6).[66] Just as David fled to the wilderness, so Mark's five controversies are preceded by the note that "Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter" (Mark 1:45). Then after the five controversies culminate in the plot to kill Jesus (Mark 2:1-3:6), we read that "Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea" (3:7).

WANDERING ABOUT IN DESERTS AND MOUNTAINS, AND IN DENS AND CAVES OF THE EARTH

Just as David was driven from Israel's court and gathered a following in the wilderness (1 Sam 22:2), so the Synoptic Gospels present Jesus only entering Jerusalem when he went there to die. Even in the Gospel of John, which indicates that Jesus made several trips to Jerusalem, he eluded the clutches of his enemies just as David had eluded Saul (John 7:30, 44; 8:59; 10:39). "Saul sought [David] every day, but God did not give him into his hand" (1 Sam 23:14), and in the same way, in the Gospels, Jesus eluded his enemies until the hour had come (John 12:23).

Once driven out of his home, David went to Ahimelech, the priest at Nob, and ate the holy bread (1 Sam 21:1-10). David then went to the Philistines, who feared him, and he escaped to the cave of Adullam (21:10-15, 22:1). Saul reacted to Ahimelech assisting David by ordering the death of the priests (22:9-19). Abiathar escaped to David, and David took responsibility for the death of the priests ("I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father's house," 22:22), even though he had avoided disclosing the circumstances of his flight to Ahimelech (21:1-9). David had probably avoided telling Ahimelech why he needed food and weapons to preserve Ahimelech's innocence before Saul (see Ahimelech's reply to Saul when called before him, 22:14-15).

Just as David fled from cave to cave ahead of Saul, so Jesus stated that he had no place to lay his head (Matt 8:20). Just as David went to the Philistines, so Jesus crossed into Gentile territory (Mark 5:1). Just as the Philistines rejected David, so the Gerasenes "began to beg Jesus to depart from their region" (5:17). Jesus complied and returned to Jewish territory (5:21-22).

As for David and the holy bread, Jesus appealed to this incident in his defense of his disciples when the Pharisees complained that they were doing what was not lawful on the Sabbath (Mark 2:24). Jesus reminded the Pharisees that David ate bread that "is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him" (Mark 2:26). R. T. France helpfully discusses this passage in terms that appear to legitimate the typological perspective on the relationships between David and Jesus being set forth here. France writes:

> Jesus' defence of his disciples' alleged violation of the Sabbath by citing the story of David and the showbread is not simply an appeal to precedent…. It is a question of authority. Mark 2:28 claims that Jesus has the right to regulate Sabbath observance. The appeal to the example of David therefore has the force: "If David had the right to set aside a legal requirement, I have much more." The unexpressed premise is "a greater than David is here": indeed the parallel argument in Matthew 12:5-6 introduces an equivalent formula.
>
> This argument from the authority of David to the greater authority of Jesus is best explained by an underlying typology. If David, the type, had the authority to reinterpret the law, Jesus, the greater antitype, must have that authority in a higher degree.[67]

France's reference to "an underlying typology" suggests that there are more points of historical correspondence and escalation than the ones

explicitly mentioned in Mark 2:23-28, and this seems to warrant the kinds of suggestions being put forward here. Goppelt's comments on this passage are similar: "Christ-David typology is the background of the saying and the general presupposition that supports it."[68] When we consider the first five chapters of Mark's gospel,[69] we find the following historical correspondences between David and Jesus, in whom these significant messianic patterns find their fulfillment (see fig. 1).

Considering the way that Jesus appeals to the Davidic type in Mark 2:23-28, Goppelt draws attention to the way that Jesus not only makes a connection between himself and David in Mark 2:25, he also links his disciples to "those who were with [David]."[70] This would seem to invite Mark's audience to make other connections between those involved in these two events. Much discussion has been generated by the fact that Mark 2:26 portrays Jesus referring to "the time of Abiathar the high priest," when it appears that at the time, Ahimelech would have been the high priest. Goppelt simply asserts: "Mark says Abiathar, but that is an error."[71] But perhaps there are typological forces at work here, too. David did interact with Ahimelech in 1 Samuel 21:1-9, but Abiathar is the priest who escapes from Doeg's slaughter (22:20). Could the reference to Abiathar be intentional? Could Mark be presenting Jesus as intentionally alluding to Abiathar's escape from the slaughter of the priests ordered by Saul and carried out by Doeg the Edomite? Could this be a subtle way for Jesus to remind the Pharisees ("Have you never read," Mark 2:25) that the opposition to David was wicked and murderous? If this is so, the typological connection suggested by the reference to Abiathar in Mark might be that just as Saul and Doeg opposed David and Abiathar's household, so also the Pharisees are opposing Jesus and his followers.[72]

HE SHALL BEAR THEIR INIQUITIES

I noted above that David is presented as preserving Ahimelech's innocence by not divulging the true circumstances of his need for food and a weapon when, having fled from Saul, he arrives at Nob (1 Sam 21:1-9). This makes Saul's ven-

Fig. 1. Typological Points of Contact between Samuel and Mark

Ref. in 1 Samuel	Point of Contact	Ref. in Mark
16:23	Power over unclean spirits	1:23-27, 34, etc.
18:7-30	Triumphs result in opposition	2:1-3:6
22:3	Disreputable associates	2:16
21:1-6	Above the law status	2:23-28
18:17, 21, 25	People who should be protected used as traps	3:1-2
19:1, etc.	Enemies counsel to kill	3:6, etc.
19:18; 20:1	Withdrawal and avoidance of open conflict	1:45; 3:7
16:6-11	No regard from family members	3:21, 31-32
21:10-15	Trip into Gentile territory	5:1-20

geance upon Ahimelech and his house all the more vicious, but more importantly for our purposes here, it has implications for David's response to Abiathar. As noted above, when Abiathar comes to David, David says to him, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father's house" (22:22). What Saul and Doeg did was wicked, and yet David takes responsibility for the death of Abiathar's kinsmen. David is not guilty, and yet he takes the sins of others upon himself.[73]

This pattern is matched and exceeded by Jesus, who though he was innocent, nevertheless identified with the sins of the people when he "fulfilled all righteousness" by undergoing John's baptism for repentance (Matt 3:13-17). Jesus, whom no one can convict of sin (John 8:46), was nevertheless "numbered with the transgressors" (Luke 22:37). Just as David was innocent regarding the slaughter of the priests, but nevertheless took responsibility for their deaths, so also Jesus was innocent of sin, but nevertheless came as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Just as David was innocent of wrongdoing but took responsibility, so also "He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth," and yet "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Pet 2:22, 24). And the words of David to Abiathar, "Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life. With me you shall be in safekeeping" (1 Sam 22:23), typify the one who said to those who came for him, "if you seek me, let these men go" (John 18:8).

BETRAYED BY THOSE HE SERVED

David delivered the city of Keilah from the Philistines, and yet the people of Keilah were ready to hand David over to Saul (1 Sam 23:1-12). Similarly, though David had delivered Israel from Goliath, and though he had more success against the Philistines than all the servants of Saul "so that his name was highly esteemed" (18:30), the people of Ziph readily report his presence to Saul (23:15-24). Later, the Philistines refused to allow David to go into battle with them (29:1-11), and when David and his men returned to Ziklag they found it burned and all the women and children taken captive (30:1-5). Remarkably, David's own men, "bitter in soul" at this calamity, were ready to stone him (30:6).

Along these lines Jesus cast demons out of many, healed many, and even raised people from the dead (e.g., Matt 4:23-25; Mark 5; Luke 7:11-15; John 11). John indicates that Jesus also did signs in Jerusalem (John 2:23; 5:1-9; 9:1-12). Even if most of his mighty works were not done in Jerusalem, it is likely that many in the crowd shouting "Crucify!" had come to Jerusalem for the Passover from areas where Jesus had done mighty works. Just as the city that David delivered, Keilah, was ready to hand David over to Saul, so the crowds whom Jesus delivered from demons, disease, and death, were ready to hand him over to Rome. Just as David's men were ready to stone him, Judas was ready to betray Jesus (e.g., Matt 26:14-16), and the rest of the disciples abandoned him in his hour of need (26:56).

ENTRUSTING HIMSELF TO GOD

Saul's pursuit of David was unjust, and when he consulted the witch of Endor (1 Sam 28:3-11), it moved in the direction of being demonic. In spite of the atrocity Saul ordered in the slaughter of the priests (22:6-19), in spite of the various opportunities David had when his men told him that the Lord had delivered Saul into his hand (24:4; 26:8), David refused to lift his hand against the Lord's anointed, Saul. Instead, David trusted that "as the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish" (26:10). As David fled from one place to the next, it appears that he was intent upon avoiding open conflict with Saul. David seems to have been resolute that he would not occasion civil war in Israel, trusting that if the Lord had anointed

him as king, the Lord would bring it to pass in his good time.

Similarly, Jesus did nothing to raise his hand against his opponents or exploit his appeal with the multitudes. When they wanted to make him king by force (John 6:15), he withdrew to a mountain by himself. He constantly urged people to tell no one of the mighty things he did (e.g., Mark 1:44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 9:9, etc.). Jesus even urged people to do as the Pharisees say, "but not what they do" (Matt 23:3). When Jesus was arrested, he did not resist. "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly" (1 Pet 2:23). Jesus was confident that God's plan was being worked out, and he declared to Pilate that Pilate had no more power over him than what was given him from above (John 19:11).

SEED OF THE WOMAN, SEED OF THE SERPENT

A significant concept that has been only briefly mentioned to this point in this study is the idea of "corporate personality." Beale lists this idea as one of "five hermeneutical and theological presuppositions" employed by the authors of the New Testament.[74] Earle Ellis explains, "Israel the patriarch, Israel the nation, the king of Israel, and Messiah stand in such relationship to each other that one may be viewed as the 'embodiment' of the other."[75] This notion is perhaps introduced in Genesis 3:15, where in the judgment on the serpent the Lord promises to put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.[76] The term "seed" is a collective singular, and it refers to both singular individuals who are "seed of the woman" as well as groups of people who are "seed of the woman."[77] There will be enmity between those who belong to God and those who follow the serpent, and this enmity will also exist between particular individuals who can be identified as the seed of the woman or the seed of the serpent.

This enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman is expressed in several different ways in Samuel. The sons of Eli are referred to as "sons of Belial" (1 Sam 2:12), and in later texts Belial is clearly understood to be an evil spirit.[78] Identifying Eli's sons as "sons of Belial" seems tantamount to declaring them "seed of the serpent," and they stand in contrast to the seed of the woman born to Hannah when the Lord "remembered her," Samuel (1:19).

On a broader scale, opponents of the people of God seem to be regarded as seed of the serpent, and no opponent of Israel is more prominent in Samuel than the Philistines. The particular Philistine seed of the serpent who receives the most attention in Samuel is the giant Goliath. Goliath presents himself as the representative Philistine. He stands for his tribe. And he calls for Israel to send out a representative Israelite to settle the dispute between Philistia and Israel (1 Sam 17:4-11).

Israel does just that, but the representative Israelite they send out is a shepherd boy unarmed but for a sling and five stones. This particular shepherd boy comes from a particular line. This line has been carefully traced back to Judah's son via the genealogy in Ruth 4:18-22. Judah descends from Abraham, whose line was carefully traced back to Noah's son in Genesis 11:10-27. Noah descends from a line that is carefully traced back to the son of Adam in Genesis 5:6-29. This means that the representative Israelite who goes out to meet the representative Philistine is the seed of Judah, seed of Abraham, seed of Noah, seed of the woman.

In the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the seed of the woman crushes the head of the seed of the serpent, smiting Goliath with a stone from the sling (1 Sam 17:49).[79] Sending out a virtually unarmed shepherd boy to fight the mighty Philistine looks like certain defeat. But the shepherd boy knows and proclaims that "the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's" (17:47). The victory that comes through the seed of the woman is a victory snatched from the jaws of defeat.

In the same way, a seed of David, seed of Judah,

seed of Abraham, seed of Noah, seed of the woman arose who cast out the ruler of this world (John 12:31). On the way to the great conflict, the seed of the woman was opposed by the seed of the serpent. Jesus tells those seeking to kill him that they are of their father, the devil (John 8:44).[80] That is, they are seed of the serpent. The seed of the serpent also sought to kill the seed of the woman when the child was born, and his parents had to take him and flee to Egypt (Matt 2:13-16). Jesus, the seed of the woman, then conquered the serpent by crushing his head. Through what looked like a satanic triumph—the crucifixion—Jesus snatched victory from the jaws of death.[81]

ON THE THIRD DAY

The narrator of Samuel is clear about the sequence of events surrounding Saul's death. While David was living in Ziklag under the authority of Achish the Philistine king of Gath (1 Sam 27:6), the Philistines mustered their forces for battle against Israel (28:1). Saul panicked (28:5) and sought out a medium (28:7). When he went to the witch of Endor, he had an encounter with Samuel, whom the witch brought up for him (28:11-14). Among other things, Samuel told Saul, "Tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me" (28:19), that is, dead.

The next day, on which Saul would join Samuel, appears to be the day that David was sent home by the Philistine lords who feared that he would turn on them in battle (29:1-11). Curiously, the narrator of Samuel then relates that David and his men found their home city of Ziklag raided when they arrived "on the third day" (1 Sam 30:1). This seems to be the third day after the Philistines mustered for battle against Israel (cf. 30:13). In this way, the narrator shows that David was not with the Philistines in battle when Saul met his end. The narrator then relates what happened on the day the Philistines dismissed David: they defeated Saul's army and Saul took his own life (31:1-7). This means that a death brought the reign of the king who opposed the Lord's anointed to an end. Three days later, David overcame the thought his men had of stoning him, "strengthened himself in the Lord his God" (30:6), and, rising from the near stoning, pursued his enemies, and recaptured his people—all of them. But this is not the only significant third day in this account. 2 Samuel 1 opens by relating that after David had struck the Amelakites who had raided Ziklag, he remained in Ziklag for two days, and then "on the third day" the messenger came with the news that Saul was dead (2 Sam 1:1-2). This means that "on the third day" David conquered his enemies, took captivity captive, and gave gifts to men when he sent spoil to the elders of Judah (1 Sam 30:26-31). And then "on the third day" he received news that the death of Saul meant that as the Lord's anointed he, David, was now to be king.

Nor are these the only two significant "third days" in the Old Testament: Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac "on the third day" (Gen 22:4). Yahweh came down on Mount Sinai to meet Israel "on the third day" (Exod 19:11, 16). The Lord raised up Hezekiah "on the third day" (2 Kgs 20:5). The second temple was completed "on the third day" (Ezra 6:15). Esther interceded on behalf of the Jewish people "on the third day" (Esth 5:1). And perhaps most significantly, Jonah was in the belly of the whale "three days and three nights" (Jon 2:1 [ET 1:17]), while Hosea prophesied that the people, having been torn by Yahweh as by a lion (Hos 5:14-6:1), would be raised up "on the third day" (6:2).[82]

These significant events in the Old Testament took place "on the third day," and this pattern found its fulfillment when Jesus "was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:4). Perhaps the references in the Old Testament to the remarkable things that took place "on the third day" were themselves read typologically by Hosea, leading him to the conclusion that the restoration of the people after Yahweh's judgment of the nation would take place "on the third day" (Hos 6:2, cf. 5:14-6:1). Perhaps the same typological reading of these

instances led Jesus to the conclusion that he would be the suffering servant who would be torn by Yahweh's judgment and then raised up "on the third day" (cf. Matt 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22).[83]

Just as David defeated the Amelakites on the third day (1 Sam 30:1), Jesus defeated death on the third day.[84] As David took captivity captive and gave gifts to men, Jesus did the same (cf. Eph 4:8-11). Just as David received word that Saul was no more on the third day (2 Sam 2:1), Acts 13:33 links the announcement of enthronement from Psalm 2:7, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you" to the resurrection: "this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'" (Acts 13:33). The death of the reigning king brought the end of hostility, and the news of that death announced the beginning of the reign of the Lord's anointed.

N. T. Wright's comments on 1 Corinthians 15:3, "that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures," are instructive:

> Paul is not proof-texting; he does not envisage one or two, or even half a dozen, isolated passages about a death for sinners. He is referring to the entire biblical narrative as the story which has reached its climax in the Messiah, and has now given rise to the new phase of the same story….[85]

In fact, when Wright comments on the phrase in 1 Corinthians 15:4, "that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures," he says, "Like the scriptural narrative invoked as the world of meaning for 'the Messiah died for our sins', the qualifying phrase here looks back to the scriptural narrative as a whole, not simply to a handful of proof-texts."[86] D. A. Carson's conclusion regarding Jesus being raised from the dead on the third day "according to the Scriptures" is similar: "It is difficult to make sense of such claims unless some form of typology is recognized…. The cross and the resurrection of the Messiah were, in Paul's view, anticipated by the patterns of Old Testament revelation."[87]

TEMPLE BUILDING

David was the anointed seed of the woman who crushed the serpent's head. He was rejected and opposed by the reigning establishment, with whom he avoided open conflict, while gathering a new Israel to himself in the wilderness. David conquered his enemies on the third day, and on the third day the news of the death of the reigning king opened the way for him to be enthroned. Once established as king, the Lord gave David "rest from all his surrounding enemies" (2 Sam 7:1). This rest resonates with the rest Yahweh himself enjoyed when he finished his work of creation (Gen 2:4). Immediately after Yahweh's rest is mentioned, Genesis 2 describes the garden of Eden in terms of a cosmic temple. It seems that Adam's responsibility to subdue the earth (Gen 1:28) entailed expanding the borders of Eden, God's habitable dwelling, such that the glory of the Lord might cover the dry land as the waters cover the sea.[88] Once David experienced rest from all his enemies, his temple building impulse seems to have arisen from an understanding of his responsibility to expand the borders of the new Eden, the land of Israel, such that the dominion of Yahweh might expand so that the glory of Yahweh might cover the dry land as the waters cover the sea. The temple David desired to build (2 Sam 7:1-5) was to be the focal point from which the glory of God would spread. This began to happen in the conquests that expanded the boundaries of the land in 2 Samuel 8-10, before there was something like another "fall" in 2 Samuel 11.

Similarly, Jesus is the anointed seed of the woman who crushed the serpent's head. Rejected and opposed by the establishment, he avoided open conflict while gathering to himself a new Israel. Jesus conquered death on the third day, and once enthroned as king, he took up the task of temple building. But the temple that Jesus builds is not a building but a people.[89] Jesus charges this

people to go make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). Beginning from Jerusalem, the making of disciples spread through all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). As those in whom the Spirit dwells, God's temple (1 Cor 3:16), the followers of Jesus are to make disciples, and this will spread the temple, spreading the knowledge of the glory of God until it covers the dry land as the waters cover the sea. Once enthroned, Jesus made good on his promise to build his church (Matt 16:18), and from the foundation of the apostles and prophets the knowledge of the glory of God began to spread, as seen in the advance of the gospel recounted in Acts-Revelation. Unlike David, his greater Son will never experience a "fall."

CONCLUSION

This survey of David's rise to power does not exhaust the possible typological points of contact between David and Jesus.[90] The plausibility of the typological reading of these narratives will be disputed by some, accepted by some, and altogether ignored by others. For my part, I am most sure of the typological significance of the incident when David visited the priests at Nob and ate the show bread. I am most sure of this incident because it seems to me that the New Testament presents this as an instance of typological interpretation. I think this example warrants a typological reading of other aspects of the narratives that recount what David experienced, but of these others I am less sure because unlike the authors of the New Testament, I am not an infallible interpreter of the Old Testament.

Throughout this study the main hermeneutical controls employed in the examination of possible types of Jesus in the narratives of David's rise to power have been *historical correspondence* and *escalation*. Grant Osborne has also cautioned against basing doctrinal conclusions on typological interpretations.[91] No specific doctrines are at stake in anything that I have proposed here. What is mainly at issue has to do with understanding how the New Testament authors understand the Old Testament. It seems to me that typological interpretation is a tool whose explanatory power can and should be put to use.[92]

From what we see in these narratives of David's rise to power, it would be possible to suggest that in David we see a certain pattern. This pattern is of king who would be anointed, who would save God's people, and who would restrain their evil. This king would be something of a surprise—he would come in an unexpected way, and he would be opposed by the establishment. He would follow in the footsteps of those "of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb 11:38). This coming king might be expected to take responsibility for wrongs done by others, be betrayed by those whom he had blessed, and refuse to lift his hand to defend himself but rather entrust himself to God, who judges justly. This king would almost certainly be expected to crush the head of the serpent, and in so doing he would have his heel struck. And something remarkable might be expected to happen "on the third day," after which, like not only David but all the righteous kings of Israel, he would seek to build the temple.

Perhaps early audiences of Samuel might have reflected upon these features of the narratives recounting David's rise to power. And perhaps it was reflection upon these messianic patterns in David's life, as well as similar patterns of rejection, suffering, and then saving intervention for God's people in the lives of Joseph, Moses, and others that prompted Isaiah, informed by the promise to David in 2 Samuel 7, to expect a shoot of Jesse who would arise to rule in Spirit-filled edenic splendor (Isaiah 11), a young plant who would have no form or majesty (Isa 53:2), who would be despised and rejected (53:3), who would bear the griefs of his people (53:4), be cut off from the land of the living (53:8), and thereby make many to be accounted righteous (53:11).[93]

Perhaps. But we must also bear in mind that Paul describes what God accomplished in Messiah Jesus as "a secret and hidden wisdom of God"

(1 Cor 2:7).[94] He writes that this mystery "was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed" (Eph 3:3-5; cf. Rom 16:25-27), and yet Paul also maintains that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3-4).

In light of Paul's comments about the way the mystery was hidden, and in light of the fact that the disciples needed Jesus to open their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45), it seems that those of us who read the whole Bible today are in a better position to understand the canonical and messianic implications of Old Testament narratives than even those prophets who "searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories" (1 Pet 1:10-11). Indeed, "It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but [us], in the things that have now been announced to [us] through" the authors of the New Testament (1:12).[95]

This essay began with the question of "how we may read the Old Testament Christianly." It seems to me that typological interpretation is central to answering that question: precisely by assuring us of the unity of Scripture and the faithfulness of God—that as God has acted in the past, so he acts in the present, and so we can expect him to act in the future—we find the words of Paul true in our own lives:

> For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 15:4-6).[96]

ENDNOTES

[1]This essay was delivered originally as part of the Julius Brown Gay Lectures series at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on March 13, 2008.

[2]Daniel J. Treier, "Biblical Theology and/or Theological Interpretation of Scripture?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61 (2008), 29 (16-31). Similarly Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 234.

[3]Henning Graf Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century* (trans. John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).

[4]For "an investigation of the breakdown of realistic and figural interpretation of the biblical stories," see Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 9. For extensive bibliography on the subject of typology, see Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology*, 14-18, 20-23, and Paul Hoskins has updated the discussion of typology in the published version of his dissertation, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006), 18-36.

[5]Francis Watson, *Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 205.

[6]For examination of the use of typology in the Old Testament, see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 350-79, and Francis Foulkes, *The Acts of God: A Study of the Basis of Typology in the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1955; reprinted in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts*, 342-71). For typology in extra-biblical Jewish literature, see Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (trans. Donald H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982; repr. Wipf and Stock, 2002), 23-58. For typology in the New Testament, see Goppelt, *Typos*, 61-237; E. Earle Ellis, "Biblical Interpretation in the New Testament Church," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 2.1;

Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988; repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 713-16; R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (Vancouver: Regent College, 1998 [1971]), 38-80; and Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple*.

[7]Goppelt, *Typos*, xxiii, cf. also 198: "typology is the method of interpreting Scripture that is predominant in the NT and characteristic of it." This is of course disputed. Reventlow (*Problems of Biblical Theology*, 20) writes: "typology is just one, rather rare, way in which the Old Testament is used in the New."

[8]E. Earle Ellis, "Foreword," in Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (trans. Donald H. Madvig; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982; reprint Wipf and Stock, 2002), xx.

[9]David Instone-Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE* (Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 221.

[10]Mark A. Seifrid ("The Gospel as the Revelation of the Mystery: The Witness of the Scriptures to Christ in Romans," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 11, no. 3 [2007]: 92-103) writes, "Paul's understanding of Scripture is fundamentally 'typological'" (99). Cf. also Richard B. Hays, "Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," in *The Art of Reading Scripture* (ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 216-38: "the Jesus who taught the disciples on the Emmaus road that *all* the scriptures bore witness to him continues to teach us to discover figural senses of Scripture that are not developed in the New Testament" (234).

[11]Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). Longenecker classifies first century Jewish exegesis "under four headings: literalist, midrashic, pesher, and allegorical" (xxv, 6-35). Longenecker does discuss "Correspondences in History" and "Eschatological Fulfillment" as two of what he refers to as four major "Exegetical Presuppositions" (76-79), but he does not view "typology" as a distinct interpretive practice, and he classifies instances of typological interpretation as instances of pesher interpretation (58). He writes, "what appears to be most characteristic in the preaching of the earliest Jewish believers in Jesus were their pesher interpretations of Scripture" (82). While Goppelt's book on typology (with reference to the English translation) is on Longenecker's bibliography, Goppelt's name does not appear in Longenecker's author index.

[12]E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981 [1957]), 75. Citing J. Bonsirven, *Exégèse Rabbinique et Exégèse Paulinienne* (Paris, 1939), 337f.

[13]See my essay, "'The Virgin Will Conceive': Typological Fulfillment in Matthew 1:18-23," in *Built upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* (ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 228-47.

[14]Richard N. Longenecker, "Who is the Prophet Talking About? Some Reflections on the New Testament Use of the Old," *Themelios* 13 (1987): 4-8; reprinted in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts* (ed. G. K. Beale; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 377 (375-86).

[15]Longenecker, "Who is the Prophet Talking About?" 379-80.

[16]See Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 58, 82.

[17]Frei refers to biblical theology as the successor of typology, which was destroyed by the rise of higher criticism (*Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, 8).

[18]So also G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? An Examination of the Presuppositions of Jesus' and the Apostles' Exegetical Method," *Themelios* 14 (1989): 89-96; reprinted in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts*, 387-404. Beale writes: "typology can be called contextual exegesis within the framework of the canon, since it primarily involves the interpretation and elucidation of the meaning of earlier parts of Scripture by latter parts" (401).

[19]Frei, *Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, 41.

[20]Ellis, "Foreword," x.

[21]Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 351. See also John H. Stek, "Biblical Typology Yesterday and Today," *Calvin Theological Journal* 5 (1970): 135: "A type [as

opposed to an allegory] is not a narrative but some historical fact or circumstance which the Old Testament narratives report. Furthermore, the type embodies the same 'truth principle' which is embodied in the antitype." Stek is summarizing Patrick Fairbairn's view.

[22]For instance, David Baker does not think that "escalation" is essential to typology ("Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29 [1976]: 137-57; reprinted in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts* [ed. G. K. Beale; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994], 313-30—see p. 326).

[23]France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 42.

[24]Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text?" 396-97, n. 27. Beale cites Fairbairn, S. L. Johnson, Goppelt, Davidson, Moo, and Foulkes as being in general agreement with this conclusion. See also Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple*, 186-87. Frei (*Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, 36) indicates that Calvin saw "figures" (types) as prospective.

[25]G. R. Osborne, "Type; Typology," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* 4:931 (930-32).

[26]It seems to me that it would be helpful to explore *when* in salvation history the type would have been seen to be prospective, and also to ask whether seeing the prospective aspects of a type would have been possible only once a later Old Testament account could be seen to stand in typological relationship with an earlier narrative.

[27]Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 76-79.

[28]Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology*, 31.

[29]Personal communication, January 2008.

[30]So also Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text?" 401.

[31]Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), xv.

[32]When I was taught OT exegesis at an evangelical institution, one of my teachers regularly told us that once we had first done our OT exegesis without reference to the NT, we could then consider the relationships between the Testaments. I cannot remember a time when we actually finished our OT exegesis and moved to the consideration of the relationship between the OT and the NT.

[33]Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology*, 42. See also Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 352.

[34]So also Douglas J. Moo, "The Problem of *Sensus Plenior*," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 179-211, esp. 202.

[35]Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 58. It seems that in "systematizing" the NT's interpretation of the Old according to his four categories of Jewish exegesis, he has forced material that does not fit into his established categories, such as these typological interpretations. This appears to make his categories more prescriptive than descriptive. See also the discussion of "the great gulf which separates Paul's use of the OT from that of the rabbis" in Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 73-76, here 74; similarly Moo, "The Problem of *Sensus Plenior*," 193.

[36]Michael Fishbane, "Use, Authority and Interpretation of Mikra at Qumran," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 2.1; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988; reprint Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 351. Cf. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, 24-30.

[37]Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 352-53. Fishbane adds that these techniques do not provide the basis for "flexible and comprehensive categories" that the analysis of the "contents of the typologies" does.

[38]C. A. Evans, "Typology," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 862 (862-66).

[39]G. J. Brooke, "Pesharim," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 781 (778-82).

[40]Brooke, "Pesharim," 782.

[41]See the older (1957) but still very helpful discussions in Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*. Ellis dis-

cusses both typology (126-35) and "midrash pesher" (139-47). Largely informed by Stendahl's work on Matthew, Ellis defines "midrash pesher" as "an interpretative moulding of the text within an apocalyptic framework, *ad hoc* or with reference to appropriate textual or targumic traditions" (147), and he treats this "moulding" as a scholarly "interpretative selection from the various known texts" (139). For a more recent discussion, see E. Earle Ellis, *History and Interpretation in New Testament Perspective* (Biblical Interpretation Series 54; Atlanta: SBL, 2001), for "pesher midrash" see 109-11, for typology see 115-18.

[42]Craig A. Evans, *Ancient Texts for New Testament Studies: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 146.

[43]Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, xxxvi.

[44]Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 247.

[45]Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology*, 19.

[46]Stanley N. Gundry, "Typology as a Means of Interpretation: Past and Present," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 12 (1969): 236.

[47]Gundry, "Typology as a Means of Interpretation," 235.

[48]Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 351.

[49]France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 41.

[50]Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text?" 399-400.

[51]See the many examples cited in Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, 350-79.

[52]Stek quotes Patrick Fairbairn on the point that "The arbitrary restriction of typology [to those instances cited in the NT] 'destroys to a large extent the bond of connection between the Old and the New Testament Scriptures'" (Stek, "Biblical Typology Yesterday and Today," 135, n. 5). For my own attempt to explore the Bible's unity, see *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010).

[53]See further Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005). Hays states that one of his purposes in the book is to show that "we can learn from Paul's example how to read Scripture faithfully" (viii), and he suggests that in 1 Cor 10:1-22 Paul is seeking to teach the Corinthians "that all the scriptural narratives and promises must be understood to point forward to the crucial eschatological moment in which he and his churches now find themselves…. they are to see in their own experience the typological fulfillment of the biblical narrative" (11).

[54]Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the Bible in this essay are from the ESV. In what follows I will cite several passages from the Synoptic Gospels and John, but I will usually not cite parallel passages. In citing the Synoptic Gospels, I do so representatively from each Gospel, not privileging one over another.

[55]Frei, *Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, 30. So also Douglas Moo, "Paul's Universalizing Hermeneutic in Romans," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 11, no. 3 (2007): 62-90: "To be sure, typology is easier to talk about than to describe" (81).

[56]Richard B. Hays, "Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," in *The Art of Reading Scripture* (ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hays; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 229 (216-38).

[57]W. H. Rose, "Messiah," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 566. For discussion of this and other definitions, see Andrew Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation: Jewish Messianic and Visionary Traditions and New Testament Christology* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 207; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 193-205.

[58]Goppelt, *Typos*, 200.

[59]Note Frei's account of the way that the loss of confidence in the historicity of the narratives destroyed the possibility of reading the narratives typologically (*Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, 1-85). And for one example, see Anthony T. Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), who states that "so much of it depends for its validity on assuming that to be history which we must view as legend or myth" (229), and, "The view of inspiration held by the writers of the New Testament is one which we cannot accept today" (234).

[60]I have added this paragraph as I revised this essay from the 2008 original for its publication in 2012. This results from some sharpening in my own think-

ing about these issues as I wrote "Was Joseph a Type of Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification between Joseph, David, and Jesus," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 12, no. 4 (2008): 52-77. In particular, my thinking developed on the issue of how we discern the intention of the human author: I would now say that later biblical authors noticed patterns in earlier biblical literature, then highlighted correspondences between earlier events and the events they narrated in their own work. The biblical authors drew attention to these typological parallels by means of linguistic points of contact (i.e., reusing words or phrases from the earlier narrative or directly quoting it), parallels in sequences of events, and matching thematic material.

[61]We can also observe that after Solomon, the only king anointed in Israel is Jehu (2 Kgs 9:3, 6, 12).

[62]Peter J. Leithart (*A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel* [Moscow, ID: Canon, 2003], 167) suggests that David's three experiences of being anointed are matched by Jesus' three experiences of the Spirit: at his baptism (Luke 3:21-22), when he was declared the Son of God in power by the Spirit at his resurrection (Acts 13:32-33; Rom 1:4), and when he received the promised Spirit from the Father when exalted to the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33). We might have warrant for seeing a parallel between the three times David was anointed and Jesus being anointed by the Spirit, raised by the Spirit, and receiving the Spirit to pour out at his ascension from the fact that Luke quotes Psalm 2:7 with reference to the resurrection in Acts 13:33 and at least alludes to Psalm 2:7 in his account of Jesus' baptism. On Luke 3:22, I. Howard Marshall ("Acts," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* [ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 585) calls attention to "the variant reading in Codex Bezae and the Old Latin witnesses, which replicate Ps. 2:7 LXX exactly." Marshall also notes that Jesus received the Spirit at both his baptism and his ascension and that these receptions of the Spirit at the baptism and the ascension are different events (542).

[63]Cf. Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 139.

[64]David's ability to minister to Saul when he was afflicted with the evil spirit from God could have influenced *The Testament of Solomon*, the Greek title of which reads as follows: "Testament of Solomon, Son of David, who reigned in Jerusalem, and subdued all the spirits of the air, of the earth, and under the earth . . ." Cf. *OTP* 1:960.

[65]James D. G. Dunn (*Jesus Remembered* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003], 667) writes regarding the Jewish expectation, "both David and Solomon had reputations as exorcists."

[66]Just as Saul's son Jonathan, an establishment insider, had interceded on David's behalf—asking what David had done that he should be put to death (1 Sam 20:32), so also Nicodemus, an establishment insider "who was one of them" (John 7:50), asked, "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" (7:51). Just as Jonathan's intercession had drawn Saul's wrath, so Nicodemus met with the curt reply, "Are you from Galilee too?" (7:52).

[67]France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*, 46-47. Cf. Goppelt, *Typos*, 87 n. 116, quoting Zahn.

[68]Goppelt, *Typos*, 86.

[69]We are concerned here with the narratives of David's rise to power in Samuel, but if we were to consider broader typologies in Mark we would note the way that John's baptism in the Jordan seems to correspond to and fulfill the way the nation first entered the land to conquer it, and the way that John's dress corresponds to and fulfills the promise of the return of Elijah.

[70]Goppelt, *Typos*, 84-86.

[71]Ibid., 85, n. 106.

[72]Having come to this position, I was pleased to find a similar suggestion in Rikk E. Watts, "Mark," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 141: "If the point is to establish an authoritative precedent, then the actions of Abiathar, as Ahimelech's son, in taking the ephod to David to become his chief priest and subsequent blessing underscore God's affirmation of Ahimelech's deci-

sion, his presence with David, and his abandonment of David's opponent Saul. Not only are Jesus' disciples justified, but also to oppose them (and, of course, Jesus) is to oppose both 'David' and ultimately God, who vindicated him and will also vindicate Jesus."

[73]In a similar way, later in the narrative, Abigail takes responsibility for the sin of Nabal when she says to David: "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt" (25:24). The narrative had earlier cleared Abigail of any culpability in this matter by showing that Abigail did not learn of the visit from David's men until after Nabal had answered them roughly (25:14-17). These two episodes connect David and Abigail as righteous Israelites, who though they are innocent, nevertheless take responsibility for sins committed by others.

[74]Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?" 392. The other four are that Christ represents the true Israel in both OT and NT, that history is unified by a wise, sovereign plan, that the age of eschatological fulfillment has dawned in Christ, and that later writings in the canon interpret earlier writings.

[75]Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, 136.

[76]For the influence of Genesis 3:15 on the rest of the Old Testament, see my essay, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10, no. 2 (2006): 30-54. For the relationship between the curses of Genesis 3:14-19 and the blessings of Genesis 12:1-3, see my essay, "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," *Tyndale Bulletin* 58, no. 2 (2007): 253-73.

[77]Cf. Jack Collins, "A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman's Seed Singular or Plural?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 48 (1997): 139-48; T. Desmond Alexander, "Further Observations on the Term 'Seed' in Genesis," *Tyndale Bulletin* 48 (1997): 363-67.

[78]Pseudepigraphic texts (e.g., *Mart. Isa.* 1:8, 2:4; 4:2; *Jub.* 1:20; 15:33; 20:1) and texts from Qumran (CD 16:5; 1QM 13:11) understand Belial to be "the angel of wickedness." Many more texts from Qumran and the Pseudepigrapha could be cited, see T. J. Lewis, "Belial," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 1:655-56.

[79]Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 139-40.

[80]Cf. Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 458.

[81]See also the conflict between the serpent and the individual and collective seed of the woman in Rev 12:1-17.

[82]Cf. also Lev 7:17, 18; 19:6, 7; Num 19:12, 19. And N. T. Wright notes that "The phrase 'after three days', looking back mainly to Hosea 6.2, is frequently referred to in rabbinic mentions of the resurrection" (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* [Christian Origins and the Question of God 3; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], 322, and cf. 322, n. 25).

[83]The remarkable events that took place "on the third day" in the OT, Paul's deliberate reference to it in 1 Cor 15:4, and Jesus' apparent conclusion that "the third day" was significant for his own death and resurrection, seem to demand a typological understanding of the "third day" as significant. This is so even if "the phrase 'according to the Scriptures' modifies 'was raised' rather than the temporal reference" on the basis of "similar syntax in 1 Macc. 7:16" (Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, "1 Corinthians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* [ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 744).

[84]My attention was first drawn to the significant events that take place "on the third day" in the OT by Peter Leithart, *A Son to Me*, 149-51. Leithart also reads the phrase typologically, but I find some of his conclusions less than convincing.

[85]Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 320.

[86]Ibid., 321.

[87]D. A. Carson, "Mystery and Fulfillment: Toward a More Comprehensive Paradigm of Paul's Understanding of the Old and the New," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: A Fresh Appraisal of Paul and Second Temple Judaism*, vol. 2: *The Paradoxes of Paul* (ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament; Tübingen/Grand Rapids: Mohr [Siebeck]/ Baker, 2004), 409.

[88]Cf. G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mis-*

sion: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 81-87. And cf. Hamilton, "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," 267-68.

[89]See James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Indwelling Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments*, NACSBT (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006).

[90]There might be typological significance in the following: Saul's son Jonathan recognizes that David will be King and acknowledges him as such (1 Sam 20:3-4). Similarly, Jesus asks his opponents by what power their sons cast out demons (Matt 12:27). This might be taken to indicate that the children of the opponents of Jesus have followed Jesus, just as Jonathan sided with David. Just as Saul wants to kill Jonathan for siding with David (1 Sam 20:33), so the chief priests want to kill Lazarus "because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus" (John 12:11). Just as David provided for his parents by entrusting them to the king of Moab (22:3-4), so also Jesus, on the cross, provided for Mary by entrusting her to the beloved disciple (John 19:26-27). There might also be significance to the pattern seen in Joseph, Moses, and David: all three experience rejection from their kinsmen, go away, and take gentile wives. Similarly, Jesus was on the whole rejected by Israel and has gone away and taken a predominantly gentile bride in the church.

[91]G. R. Osborne, "Type; Typology," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* 4:931 (930-32).

[92]Foulkes (*The Acts of God*, 370) writes, "This, in fact, is the way in which we as Christians must read the Old Testament, following the precedent of the New Testament interpretation of the Old, and supremely the use that our Lord himself made of the Old Testament."

[93]Cf. Antti Laato's (*The Servant of YHWH and Cyrus: A Reinterpretation of the Exilic Messianic Programme in Isaiah 40-55* [Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 35; Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1992]) suggestion that "the death of Josiah forms an important part of the tradition-historical background for Isa 53" (231). Laato establishes the link between Josiah and Isa 53 partly through the similarities he documents between Isa 52:13-53:12 and Zech 12:9-13:1 (153-54, cf. 235-37). In his book *Josiah and David Redivivus* (Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 33; Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1992) Laato argues "that expectations for a David Redivivus were intimately connected with a favorable picture of the historical Josiah … Josiah was regarded as a typos for the coming Messiah of the post-Josianic times" (356). Those of us who hold that the whole book of Isaiah comes from the hand of Isaiah ben Amoz can easily adapt Laato's stimulating suggestions to our understanding of how this plays out: perhaps Isaiah's typological understanding of David and others led to the prophecy found in Isa 53, then Zechariah, reflecting on what took place with Josiah in combination with Isa 53 (and other factors) was led to prophesy what he records in Zech 12:9-13:1 (for Laato's suggestion that this passage understands Josiah's death typologically, see *Josiah*, 362). Andrew Chester's fascinating summary of Laato's views drew my attention to his work (cf. Chester, *Messiah and Exaltation*, 211-13).

[94]Cf. Ellis, *History and Interpretation in New Testament Perspective*, 15: "From the perspective of the biblical writers, and of Jesus as he is represented by them, the essential meaning of the Scriptures is revelation, also in their historical and literary dimension. As such, the meaning is understood to be either hidden or revealed to the reader at God's discretion and is never viewed as truth available, like pebbles on a beach."

[95]Richard B. Hays ("Reading Scripture in Light of the Resurrection," 224) suggests that the description of how the disciples came to fuller understanding of what Jesus had done and "believed the Scripture" in John 2:13-22 provides "the key that unlocks the interpretation of Scripture. Retrospective reading of the Old Testament after the resurrection enables Jesus' disciples to 'believe' in a new way both the Scripture and Jesus' teaching and to see how each illuminates the other. Such retrospective reading neither denies nor invalidates the meaning that the Old Testament text might have had in its original historical setting."

[96]I wish to express my gratitude to Professors Thomas R. Schreiner, Jay E. Smith and Jason G. Duesing, as well as to my brother, David Hamilton, who read this essay and offered helpful feedback.

What Would Augustine Say to Evangelicals Who Reject the Eternal Generation of the Son?

Keith E. Johnson

The early church confessed that Jesus Christ is both consubstantial with and distinct from the Father.[1] The doctrine of the "eternal generation" played an important role in affirming both elements. This doctrine teaches that the Father eternally, necessarily, and incomprehensibly communicates[2] the divine essence to the Son without division or change so that the Son shares an equality of nature with the Father yet is also distinct from the Father.[3] Biblical evidence for eternal generation can be seen in the unique way Scripture presents the Father/Son relationship (especially in the Gospel of John).

Although the eternal generation of the Son is affirmed by all pro-Nicene theologians and included in early ecumenical creeds (as well as many post-Reformation confessions), this doctrine has been rejected as speculative, unbiblical, and philosophically problematic by several prominent evangelical theologians.[4] As one theologian explains, "It appears to me that the concept of eternal generation does not have biblical warrant and does not make sense philosophically. As such, we should eliminate it from theological discussions of the Trinity."[5]

The purpose of this essay is to make a constructive case for the eternal generation of the Son by considering how Augustine of Hippo might respond to contemporary critics of this doctrine. In conversation with Augustine, I will argue that "eternal generation"—properly construed—provides a helpful way of explicating biblical teaching regarding the relationship of the Son to the Father and should be seen as an integral element of an evangelical doctrine of the Trinity.

Why Augustine? Not only is Augustine's teaching on the Trinity by far the most influential in the history of the West,[6] but despite popular portrayals to the contrary, his Trinitarian doctrine also shares much in common with the Greek-speaking theologians of the East (e.g., the Cappadocians).[7] In turning to Augustine, one draws upon what is arguably

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the most representative version of Trinitarian doctrine in the history of the church among Protestants and Catholics. Although Augustine's explanation of eternal generation may lack the theological and philosophical precision found in later formulations of this doctrine (e.g., medieval theologians like Thomas Aquinas or post-Reformation scholastics like Francis Turretin and John Owen), his writings offer a helpful window in the biblical and theological foundations for eternal generation.[8]

In the first section, I will summarize recent criticisms of eternal generation. Next, I will explore Augustine's explanation of and biblical arguments for the eternal generation of the Son. I will show that this doctrine emerges from substantive engagement with Scripture and is essential to a biblical understanding of the work of divine persons in creation, providence, and redemption. Finally, I will consider how Augustine might respond to contemporary critics.

EVANGELICAL CRITICISMS OF ETERNAL GENERATION

Evangelicals who reject eternal generation typically cite four reasons. First, they insist that eternal generation is a speculative doctrine that lacks biblical support.[9] Texts allegedly supporting this doctrine (e.g., Prov 8:22-25; Ps 2:7; Heb 1:5; John 5:26; and Col 1:15) have simply been misread by proponents of eternal generation.[10] In addition, this doctrine is dependent upon the mistranslation of the Greek term *monogenes* as "only begotten."[11] Furthermore, passages that speak of "begetting" (e.g., Ps 2:7) refer to the incarnation and not the eternal relation of the Son to the Father. As Millard Erickson explains, "I would propose that there are no references to the Father begetting the Son or the Father (and the Son) sending the Spirit that cannot be understood in terms of the temporal role assumed by the second and third persons of the Trinity respectively. They do not indicate any intrinsic relationships among the three."[12] The title "firstborn" in Colossians 1:15 does not provide evidence for eternal generation but simply indicates Christ's "preeminence" as Lord of creation.[13] Similarly, the biblical title "Son" does not imply a divine begetting but merely signifies "likeness" or "equality."[14] In sum, "Scripture provides little to no clear warrant for the speculation that the Nicene fathers made the bedrock for distinguishing properties of the Father and the Son."[15]

Second, these critics assert that eternal generation makes no sense: "It must be acknowledged," explains Millard Erickson, "that for many persons today, the doctrine does not seem to make much sense."[16] Similarly, J. Oliver Buswell asserts that "begotten not made" is meaningless.[17]

Third, evangelical critics insist that the doctrine of eternal generation opens to door to ontological subordinationism. William Lane Craig expresses this objection forcefully: "For although creedally affirmed, the doctrine of the generation of the Son (and the procession of the Spirit) is a relic of Logos Christology which finds virtually no warrant in the biblical text and introduces a subordinationism into the Godhead which anyone who affirms the full deity of Christ ought to find very troubling."[18] Although it was not the intent of those who affirmed eternal generation to subordinate the Son to the Father, Craig insists that the Son's status is ineluctably diminished when he "becomes an effect contingent upon the Father."[19] Similar criticisms are leveled by Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears,[20] Millard Erickson,[21] Paul Helm,[22] Lorianne Boettner,[23] and Robert Reymond.[24] The assumption behind this criticism is that positing any kind of "derivation" in the Father/Son relationship *necessarily* introduces ontological subordination into the divine life.

Finally, evangelicals who reject eternal generation maintain that this doctrine is not necessary in order to distinguish the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Fundamental to orthodox Trinitarian theology is the notion that the Father is not the Son and Son is not the Father. Pro-Nicene theologians argued that what makes the Son distinct from the Father is the fact that the Son is eternally begotten by the Father and what

makes the Father distinct from the Son is the fact that the Father eternally begot the Son.[25] If one drops eternal generation, how does one distinguish the persons? Craig explains that one should not attempt to ground the distinction of divine persons in intra-Trinitarian relations. Instead, one must recognize that the economic Trinity (God's self-revelation in the economy of salvation) should be clearly distinguished from the immanent Trinity (God apart from creation and redemption). The divine persons are distinct simply as knowing and loving agents. According to Craig, the specific roles they each play in the economy of salvation "may well be arbitrary."[26] The "Father" is simply the one who sends. The "Son" is whichever one is sent. The "Spirit" is the one who continues the ministry of the Son. There is nothing intrinsic to intra-Trinitarian relations necessitating that the one the Bible designates as "Son" would in fact be the one who is sent.[27] John Feinberg also affirms that the divine persons may be distinguished merely on the basis of their economic roles.[28] Wayne Grudem suggests that distinctions among the divine persons are grounded in differing "roles."[29] Like Feinberg and Craig, Grudem appeals to differing economic "roles" to distinguish the persons. However, unlike Craig, Grudem does not believe that the relational patterns manifested in the economy of salvation are arbitrary. To the contrary, he insists that the economic "roles" of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit directly reflect their eternal "roles." For example, the Father/Son relation is constituted by "roles" of authority and submission in such a way that the Father eternally has authority over the Son while the Son eternally submits to the Father.[30] Having considered objections to eternal generation, we will now examine Augustine's explanation.

ETERNAL GENERATION IN AUGUSTINE'S TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

Augustine was not the first to articulate a doctrine of eternal generation as a way of explicating the relation of the Son to the Father.[31] To the contrary, eternal generation is a central feature of pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology (Latin and Greek).[32] The inclusion of this doctrine in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed reflects this reality.[33] There are three questions we will consider below. What is eternal generation? What biblical and theological evidence does Augustine marshal for this doctrine? What role does eternal generation play in Augustine's theology?

UNDERSTANDING ETERNAL GENERATION

Augustine's exposition of John 5:26 in his *Tractates on the Gospel of John* offers a helpful window into his understanding of eternal generation.[34] "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself" (John 5:26, ESV). What does it mean, asks Augustine, that the Father has "life in himself" (John 5:26a)? It means that the Father's "life" is completely unlike human "life."[35] Whereas the life of the soul is "mutable" and dependent, the life of God is "immutable" and dependent on nothing outside God (*Tract.* 19.8, 149).[36] In this text, we are told that the Son possesses a form of "life" identical to that of the Father—"life in himself" (John 5:26b).[37] The Father and Son, however, possess "life in himself" in distinct ways. The Son possesses "life in himself" that has been "given" to him while the Father possesses "life in himself" that was given by no one.

How, Augustine asks, did the Son receive "life in himself"? His answer is both simple and profound: the Father "begat" the Son.[38] "For it is not that he was without life and received life; but he is life by a 'being born.' The Father is life, not by a 'being born'; the Son is life by a 'being born.' The Father [is] from no Father; the Son, from God the Father" (*Tract.* 19.13, 152). Augustine explains that the phrase "has been given" (John 5:26b) is roughly equivalent in meaning to "has been begotten" (*Tract.* 19.13, 152).[39] Here we see Augustine appealing to eternal generation in

order to explicate the theological judgment this text renders regarding the relation of the Son to the Father.[40] On the one hand, the "life" which the Son "receives" is identical to the "life" the Father possesses. On the other hand, the Father and Son possess this "life" in differing ways: "Therefore, the Father remains life, the Son also remains life; the Father, life in himself, not from the Son, the Son, life in himself, but from the Father. [The Son was] begotten by the Father to be life in himself, but the Father [is] life in himself, unbegotten" (*Tract.* 19.13, 153). In a beautiful turn of phrase, Augustine exhorts his readers to "[h]ear the Father through the Son. Rise, receive life that in him who has life in himself you may receive life which you do not have in yourself" (*Tract.* 19.13, 153).

Augustine's account of eternal generation includes several important elements. First, the generation of the Son is incorporeal and should not be understood in the manner of human generation. Unfortunately, some people make the mistake of "transfer[ing] what they have observed about bodily things to incorporeal and spiritual things …" (*De trin.* I.1, 65). Second, the generation of the Son is timeless.[41] Through generation, "the Father bestows being on the Son *without any beginning in time*" (*De trin.* XV.47, 432, italics added). Thus, the Son is coeternal with the Father.[42] Third, the Son is begotten by the Father in an equality of nature. The Father did not beget a "lesser Son" who would eventually become his equal. Commenting on John 5:26, Augustine explains that the Father "begot [the Son] timelessly in such a way that the *life* which the Father gave the Son by begetting him is co-eternal with the *life* of the Father who gave it …" (*De trin.* XV.47, 432, italics added). Through generation the Son receives the "life"—that is, the nature or substance—of the Father.[43] Fourth, the Son is begotten not by the *will* of the Father but rather of the *substance* of the Father (*De trin.* XV.38, 425).[44] Fifth, a likeness to the generation of the Son can be found in the nature of "light."[45] We should not think of the generation of the Son like "water flowing out from a hole in the ground or in the rock, but like light flowing from light" (*De trin.* IV.27, 172).[46] The Son's "light" is equal in its radiance to "light" of the Father.[47] Finally, the generation of the Son is incomprehensible.[48]

AUGUSTINE'S ARGUMENT FOR ETERNAL GENERATION

One might assume that Augustine's commitment to eternal generation is merely rooted in a handful of isolated "proof texts." Nothing could be further from the truth. This doctrine is rooted in a comprehensive Trinitarian hermeneutic. In *De trinitate*, Augustine outlines several "canonical rules" to help believers rightly read Scripture in its witness to Christ. His first "rule" concerns a distinction between two ways that Scripture speaks about Christ. When reading Scripture, we must distinguish between the Son in the "form of God" and the Son in the "form of a servant."[49] In the form of God, Christ created all things (John 1:3) while in the form of a servant he was born of a woman (Gal 4:4). In the form of God, he is equal to the Father (John 10:30) while in the form of a servant he obeys the Father (John 6:38). In the form of God, he is "true God" (1 John 5:20) while in the form of a servant he is obedient to the point of death (Phil 2:8). These two "forms" exist in one person (*De trin.* I.28, 86).

Augustine explains that the distinction between the Son in the "form of a servant" and the Son in the "form of God" is inadequate to explain a number of passages which speak of the Son neither as "less" than the Father nor "equal" to the Father, but rather indicate that the Son is "from" the Father. A second "rule" must be applied to these texts: "This then is the rule which governs many scriptural texts, intended to show not that one person is less than the other, but only that one is from the other" (*De trin.*, II.3, 99). We might refer to this as Augustine's "from another" rule. He explicitly cites John 5:19 and John 5:26 as exemplars of this rule. "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For what-

ever the Father does, that the Son does likewise" (John 5:19, ESV). "For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself" (John 5:26, ESV). Commenting on these verses, Augustine explains, "So the reason for these statements can only be that the life of the Son is unchanging like the Father's, and yet is from the Father [5:26]; and that the work of Father and Son is indivisible, and yet the Son's working is from the Father just as he himself is from the Father [5:19]; and the way in which the Son sees the Father is simply by being the Son" (*De trin.*, II.3, 99).[50] Combining Augustine's rules, New Testament references to Christ can be grouped into three categories: (1) texts which refer to Son in the "form of God" in which he is equal to the Father (e.g., Phil 2:6; John 10:30); (2) texts which refer to the Son in the "form of a servant" in which he is "less" than the Father (e.g., John 14:28); and (3) texts which suggest that the Son is "from" the Father (e.g., John 5:19; 5:26).[51]

It is helpful to observe what is going on. Augustine (rightly) assumes that significant continuity exists between God's inner life and God's actions in creation and redemption.[52] As a result, relational patterns in the economy of salvation reflect relational patterns in God's inner life. Notice how this assumption is reflected in Augustine's reading of John 5. The reason the Son can do nothing of himself (John 5:19) is because the Son is not (so to speak) "from himself" (John 5:26). This is why the Son's "working" (which is indivisible with the Father) comes *from* the Father.

There is much to commend Augustine's reading of John 5:26. D. A. Carson makes a compelling case in support of Augustine's reading of this text. It will be helpful to quote him at length:

> A full discussion of John 5:26 could demonstrate that it most plausibly reads as an *eternal grant* from the Father to the Son, a grant that inherently transcends time and stretches Jesus' Sonship into eternity past. When Jesus says that the Father has "life in himself," the most natural meaning is that this refers to God's self-existence. He is not dependent on anyone or anything. Then Jesus states that God, who has "life in himself," "has granted the Son to have life in himself." This is conceptually far more difficult. If Jesus had said that the Father, who has "life in himself," had granted to the Son to have life, there would be no conceptual difficulty, but of course the Son would then be an entirely secondary and derivative being. What was later called the doctrine of the Trinity would be ruled out. Alternatively, if Jesus had said that the Father has "life in himself" and the Son has "life in himself," there would be no conceptual difficulty, but it would be much more difficult to rule out ditheism. In fact what Jesus says is that the Father has "life in himself" and He has *granted* to the Son to have "life in himself." The expression "life in himself" must mean the same thing in both parts of the verse. But how can such "life in himself," the life of self-existence, be granted by another? The ancient explanation is still the best one: This is an eternal grant. There was therefore never a time when the Son did not have "life in himself." This eternal grant establishes the nature of the eternal relationship between the Father and the Son. But if this is correct, since Father and Son have always been in this relationship, the Sonship of Jesus is not restricted to the days of His flesh.[53]

Evangelicals who reject eternal generation typically counter that John 5:26b refers exclusively to the economic working on the incarnate Son.[54] In response, it should be noted that many of the same theologians who deny that the language of "grant" (John 5:26) makes a metaphysical claim about the eternal relation of the Son to the Father frequently read verse 26 as making a metaphysical claim about the "self-existence" of the Father *and* the Son. John Feinberg represents a case in point. On the one hand, he claims that John 5:26 makes a metaphysical claim not only about the self-existence of the Father but also the Son.[55] That is to say, he reads both instances of "life in himself"

metaphysically. On the other hand, in rejecting eternal generation,[56] he implicitly denies that the language of "grant" has any metaphysical implications. There is an inconsistency here. "Life in himself" is read metaphysically (both in relation to the Father and the Son) while "grant" is read only economically. This inconsistency begs for an explanation. The question is not whether verse 26, in the broader context of John 5, describes the economic working of the Father and Son. Surely it does. Rather we must ask whether this adequately captures *all* John 5:26 affirms about the life-giving power of the Son. As Marianne Meye Thompson explains, "The life-giving prerogative [v. 26] does not remain external to the Son. He does not receive it merely as a mission to be undertaken. It is not simply some power he has been given. Rather, the Son partakes of the very life of the Father …"[57] The affirmation that Jesus has "life in himself" is made in the context of the conviction that there is but one God. Thus, Jesus does not represent a "second source of life, standing alongside the Father."[58] To the contrary, he possesses "life in himself" precisely because the Father "granted" it.[59] This is why the incarnate Son is able to raise the dead (John 5:25).[60] As Augustine explains, "For the Father has life everlasting in himself, and unless he begot such a Son as had life in himself, then the Son would not also give life to whom he would wish, as the Father raises the dead and gives them life" (*Tract*. 19.13, 153).

Although he offers traditional readings of many texts typically cited in support of eternal generation (e.g., Prov 8:22-25; Ps 2:7, etc),[61] it is Augustine's "from-another" rule that constitutes the hermeneutical linchpin to his argument.[62] One might wonder what biblical evidence supports this "rule." Earlier I noted that significant continuity exists for Augustine between God's inner life and God's self-revelation in creation and redemption. This leads Augustine to draw inferences about God's inner life on the basis of relational patterns expressed in the economy of salvation. We will briefly examine five lines of biblical evidence.

The first group of passages includes the numerous "sending" texts scattered throughout the New Testament (e.g., Matt 10:40; Luke 4:43; 10:16; Gal 4:4-6). A high concentration of these passages can be found in the Gospel of John (e.g., John 4:34; 5:23-24, 30-47; 6:38-44, 57; 7:16, 28-29, 33; 8:16-18, 26-29, 42; 9:4; 12:44-50; 13:16; 14:24; 15:21; 16:5, 28; 17:3, 18; 20:21). In these texts, Jesus designates the Father as "the one who sent me":

- "Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him" (John 5:23).
- "For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me" (John 5:36).
- "For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38).
- "I know him, for I come from him, and he sent me" (John 7:29).
- "I will be with you a little longer, and then I am going to him who sent me" (John 7:33).
- "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me" (John 8:42).
- "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me" (John 13:20).
- "And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3).
- "For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me" (John 17:8).

Augustine discusses the sending of the Son at length in Books II-IV of *De trinitate* and argues that the temporal sending of the Son reflects the Son's relation of being eternally "from" the Father: "So the Word of God is sent by him whose Word

he is; sent by him he is born of. The begetter sends, and what is begotten is sent" (*De trin*., IV.28, 173). One might wonder how "sending" texts can count as evidence for the eternal generation of the Son. After all, John the Baptist was "sent" by God (John 1:6) yet we do not infer the divinity of John the Baptist from the fact he was "sent." This criticism misunderstands the theological significance of the "sending" passages. The passages cited above do not constitute evidence for the "divinity" of Christ (an "essential" predication). Rather, they shed light on the unique nature of the Son's relationship to the Father ("personal" predication). Returning to John 1, although John the Baptist and Jesus are both presented as "agents" of God, it is clear they are not agents in the same way. To the contrary, the agencies of John and Jesus are explicitly contrasted on the basis "of the status or rank of the two."[63] John the Baptist (who is "not the light") functions merely as a human agent (cf. John 1:4-5, 8, 15, 30) whereas Jesus is a divine (and human) agent whose working is identified with that of the Father (John 1:1-3, 14).[64] Once we recognize that Jesus is a divine agent who is equal to the Father, then we must ask what his unique sending reveals about his relationship to the Father. It is precisely in this context that the sending passages cited above offer a window into the nature of the Son's eternal relation to the Father.

A second line of evidence includes passages that speak of the Father "giving" and the Son "receiving" (e.g., John 5:19, 22, 26, 27, 36; 10:18; 17:2, 8, 11, 22; 18:11). Although a number of these giving/receiving texts can be explained on the basis of the "form-of-a-servant" rule (e.g., John 5:22, 27; Phil 2:9), Augustine insists that *some* necessarily refer to the eternal relation of the Son to the Father (*De trin*. I.29, 87). For example, when John 5:26 affirms that the Father has granted the Son to have "life in himself," this must be understood in terms of the "from another" rule. John 5:19 should also be interpreted on the basis of the "from another" rule.[65] John 7:16 ("My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me") represents a borderline case.[66] It could be understood either according to the "form-of-a-servant" rule or the "from-another" rule (*De trin*. II.4, 99). If understood in terms of the "from-another" rule, "*My teaching is not mine but his who sent me* (John 7:16) may be reduced to 'I am not from myself but from him who sent me'" (*De trin* II.4, 100).

A third group would include passages that reflect an ordered equality that constitutes the working of the Father and Son (John 1:1-3, 10; 5:19, 21; 14:6; Rom 5:1, 11; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph 1:3-14; 2:18; 4:6; Col 1:16; 3:17; Heb 1:1-2; Jude 25). One place this ordered equality can be clearly seen is creation. For example, reading 1 Cor 8:6 alongside John 1:3, Augustine explains that the Father created all things *through* the Son (*De trin*. I.12, 72). This reflects a broader scriptural pattern—namely, that the Father works all things through the Son (and in the Spirit).[67] This pattern is reflected in the prepositions associated with the work of the Father and Son. For example, 1 Corinthians 8:6 presents the Father as the one "from whom" all things exist while the Son is named as the one "through whom" all things exist.[68] Augustine offers a Trinitarian reading of Romans 11:36a ("For from him and through him and to him are all things") associating the individual propositions with each of the divine persons. Even if one questions the exegetical appropriateness of a Trinitarian reading of Romans 11:36 (a possibility Augustine acknowledges), one cannot deny the broader pattern. An ordered equality can also be seen in the way the blessings of salvation reach us: from the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.[69] This pattern can be seen in Ephesians 1:3-14. The Father, as *principium*, is the ultimate source of the blessings of salvation. These blessings are purchased *through* the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and flow to believers through union with him (hence, Paul's emphasis upon the blessings being "in Christ"). The Holy Spirit, in turn, brings believers into possession of the blessings that Christ has purchased.

Although Augustine does not develop this as a separate argument for eternal generation, a

fourth group of passages includes those that use the names "Father" and "Son" (e.g., Matt 11:27; 24:36-39; 28:18; Gal 4:4-6). Like the "sending" texts cited above, a high concentration of these passages can be found in the Gospel of John (e.g., John 1:14; 3:35; 5:17-47; 6:40; 14:13; 17:1). Critics of eternal generation assert that the title "Son" only implies the "equality" of the Son to the Father in the New Testament and does not indicate anything regarding the mode by which he eternally exists.[70] This argument, however, commits the fallacy of the excluded middle: "Son" must refer either to "equality" or "origin" but not both. For Augustine, "Son" implies both equality *and* origin. In the process of responding to his "Arian" opponents,[71] Augustine argues that "begotten" simply means the same thing as "son": "Being son is a consequence of being begotten, and being begotten is implied by being son" (*De trin*. V.8, 193).[72] If "Son" only means "equality," then we find ourselves in the odd place where the biblical name "Son" appears to tell us nothing about the eternal distinction between the Son and the Father.

A final group of texts supporting the eternal generation of the Son comes from an unlikely source—passages about the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Son (and Father). It might be argued that much of the biblical material cited above (e.g., the "sending" passages) could be explained simply by appealing to *incarnation* of the Son. This argument, however, cannot be made in the case of the Holy Spirit. In other words, one cannot say that Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit being "sent" because the Holy Spirit became incarnate. Similarly, one cannot say that the Holy Spirit "receives" from the Father and Son because he took on flesh.[73] After reminding his readers that the Holy Spirit did not take on the "form of a servant" like the Son, Augustine cites John 16:13-14. "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:13–14, ESV). Reading this text alongside John 15:26,[74] Augustine explains that the reason the Holy Spirit does not "speak on his own" is because, like the Son, he is not "from himself." Rather, the Holy Spirit speaks as one "proceeding from the Father" (*De trin*. II.5, 100). Similarly, the reason the Holy Spirit "glorifies" the Son (John 16:14) is because he "receives" from the Son—just as the Son glorifies the Father because he "receives" from the Father (*De trin*. II.6, 100). My point is not to attempt to prove the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and Son. Rather, I simply want to point out (1) that these Holy Spirit passages constitute additional evidence for Augustine's "from another" hermeneutical rule and (2) that one cannot dismiss all the biblical evidence cited earlier merely by appealing to the incarnation.

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ETERNAL GENERATION

The generation of the Son (along with the procession of the Holy Spirit) plays a central role in Augustine's Trinitarian theology. First, eternal generation provides the basis both for the equality of the Son to the Father as well as the distinction between the Father and the Son. One of Augustine's central concerns in *De trinitate* is affirming the unity and equality of the Father and the Son. On the one hand, because "the Father has begotten the Son as his equal," the Father and Son share the same nature (*De trin*. I.29, 88). On the other hand, eternal generation constitutes the basis for the distinction between the Father and the Son. At the beginning of Book I, Augustine offers a helpful summary of Latin (pro-Nicene) teaching on the Trinity. After affirming that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not three gods but one God because they exist "in the inseparable equality of one substance," Augustine turns to the distinction of persons: "although indeed the Father has begotten the Son, and *therefore* he who is the Father is not the Son; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and *therefore* he who is the Son is not the Father

…" (*De trin*. I.7, 69, italics added). Notice how "begetting" constitutes the basis for affirming the distinction between the Father and the Son.

Closely related to the previous point, the perichoretic communion that exists among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is rooted in the Father's generative act. Lewis Ayres explains that in the decade between 410 and 420, Augustine moves "towards a sophisticated account of the divine communion" in which "the Trinitarian life is founded in the Father's activity as the one from whom the Son is eternally born and the Spirit proceeds."[75] Thus, in his mature theology, Augustine presents Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as "an ordered communion of equals established by the Father."[76] On the one hand, each of the divine persons is "irreducible" and possesses the "fullness of God."[77] On the other hand, "[Augustine] consistently founds the unity of God in the Father's eternal act of giving rise to a communion in which the mutual love of the three constitutes their unity of substance."[78] In this context, we might say that eternal generation names the mode of communion that exists between the Father and Son.[79]

Third, the eternal generation of the Son constitutes the ontological basis for his temporal mission. Augustine's opponents argued that the sending of the Son reveals his "inferiority" to the Father on the grounds that the one who sends must, of necessity, be "greater" than one who is sent (*De trin*. II.7, 101). Augustine labors to show that "being sent" does not imply any inferiority on the part of the Son. It simply reveals that the Son is *from* the Father.[80] One might say that the sending of the Son represents a temporal echo of his generation by the Father in eternity.[81]

Finally, the generation of the Son grounds the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in creation, providence, and redemption.[82] Augustine's mature account of Trinitarian operation involves two elements.[83] On the one hand, the working of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is "inseparably" the work of the three *ad extra* (God's work outside himself).[84] On the other hand, in this single act, the divine persons work according to their relative properties *ad intra* (God's work internal to himself).[85] The Father acts with the other divine persons according to his mode of being "from no one" (unbegotten). The Son acts with the other divine persons according to his mode of being "from the Father" (generation). The Spirit acts with the other divine persons according to his mode of being "from the Father and the Son" (procession). Combining these two elements we might say that the divine persons act inseparably through the intra-Trinitarian *taxis*: from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. We can see this dynamic clearly in Augustine's discussion of the work of the divine persons in creation. Genesis 1 teaches that God created light. What light did the Son create? It certainly cannot be a different light. Rather, it must be the same light: "Therefore, we understand that the light was made by God the Father, but through the Son" (*Tract*. 20.7, 170). Similarly, the Father created the earth. The Son did not create another world by "watching" the Father. On the contrary, the world was created by the Father *through* the Son. Summarizing his discussion of the creative work of the triune God, Augustine explains, "The Father [made] the world, the Son [made] the world, the Holy Spirit [made] the world. If [there are] three gods, [there are] three worlds; if [there is] one God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, one world was made by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit." (*Tract*. 20.9, 172).

WHAT WOULD AUGUSTINE SAY TO EVANGELICALS WHO REJECT ETERNAL GENERATION?

Having examined Augustine's teaching, we are now in a position to consider how the Latin doctor might respond to evangelicals who reject eternal generation. First, although Augustine would agree that the ultimate issue is whether or not Scripture affirms eternal generation,[86] he would express surprise and dismay that some evangelicals would ignore the clear conciliar teaching of the church

(e.g., Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed). Before dismissing this as misguided Catholic rhetoric, we need to remember that the Reformers did not abandon "tradition." Nowhere can this be seen more clearly than in the case of the doctrine of the Trinity. As Richard Muller explains, "The ancient creeds, namely, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creed, plus the decision of the Council of Ephesus and the formula of Chalcedon, are consistent guides for the Reformed orthodox in their identification of fundamental teachings of the faith, in the establishment for a foundation for catechesis (here the Apostles' Creed is of course most prominent), and in their formulation of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Person of Christ."[87] What the Reformers opposed was tradition as a separate source of revealed truth standing alongside Scripture.[88] As Kevin Vanhoozer reminds us, *sola scriptura* must not be confused with "solo" *scriptura*.[89] The early creeds are not a hindrance to understanding Scripture but help us rightly read Scripture in its witness to the triune God.

Second, Augustine would point out that evangelical rejection of eternal generation is rooted in a narrow reading of Scripture and deficient Trinitarian hermeneutic.[90] The biblical evidence for eternal generation is far broader than a handful of isolated texts. It includes numerous passages that offer a window into the Father/Son relationship including "sending" texts, "giving/receiving" texts, texts reflecting an ordered equality between the Father and Son, the names "Father" and "Son," and even texts regarding the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Son. Moreover, the truth of this doctrine does not depend on the translation of *monogenes* as "only begotten" (as some critics wrongly assume).

Third, although Augustine would resonate with concern about introducing ontological subordination into the immanent life of the triune God, he would insist that eternal generation actually supports the ontological equality of the Son to the Father. For Augustine, the equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is reflected in "the inseparable equality of the one substance" (*De trin*. I.7, 69).[91] The equality of the divine persons is also reflected in the fact that they work "inseparably."[92] Although some forms of "generation" may be subordinationist, Augustine's account is not.[93] On the contrary, eternal generation constitutes a key element of his argument for the ontological *equality* of the Son to the Father on the assumption that like "begets" like. It is crucial to recognize that the "creator/creature" distinction provides theological context for Augustine's affirmation of eternal generation. Those who subordinate the Son to the Father do so not merely by affirming that the Son is "from" by the Father but by construing the generation of the Son in terms of creation and locating the Son on the "creature" side of creator/creature distinction.[94]

Fourth, Augustine would insist that some evangelical arguments against eternal generation undermine the reliability of divine revelation.[95] This problem can be seen most acutely in the case of William Lane Craig who claims that we must sharply distinguish the economic revelation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (economic Trinity) from the inner life of the divine persons (immanent Trinity) with the result that the roles assumed by the divine persons in the economy of salvation are arbitrary and reveal nothing regarding their personal properties. In making this argument, Craig effectively severs the economic Trinity from the immanent Trinity.[96] In contrast to Craig, Augustine (rightly) affirms that patterns of divine relation in the economy of salvation echo and exhibit eternal relations among the divine persons. The economy of salvation (constituted by the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit) is not *merely* a record of the actions undertaken by God to save us. It is also designed to teach us about God. As Fred Sanders explains, "God has given form and order to the history of salvation because he intends not only to save us through it but also to reveal himself through it. The economy is shaped by God's intention to communicate his identity and character."[97] Thus, when the Son and Holy Spirit appear, they behave as they truly are: "their eternal personalities, we might say, are exhibited

here in time."[98] This can be clearly seen in the case of the economic working of the Son.[99] The temporal "sending" of the Son reveals his filial mode of being "from" the Father for all eternity. On Craig's account, however, the temporal missions are simply willed acts that in no direct way reflect God's inner life (i.e., the "personal properties" of the divine persons).[100]

Fifth, Augustine would legitimately press evangelicals who reject eternal generation with the following question: "How do you distinguish the Son from the Father without lapsing into modalism or tritheism?"[101] Simply asserting that Father and Son are "persons" is not adequate.[102] One of the fundamental elements of orthodox teaching on the Trinity throughout the history of the church is that the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father. For Augustine (and all other pro-Nicenes) the reason that the Son is distinct from the Father is because the Son is "begotten" by the Father.[103] Some evangelicals suggest that the distinction of persons can be grounded exclusively in the economic activity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because the divine persons act conjointly in creation, providence, and redemption, there are significant theological problems with grounding the distinction of persons *exclusively* in the economy of salvation.[104]

Finally, Augustine would invite evangelicals who insist that eternal generation "makes no sense" to reflect more carefully on the nature of theological language and the profound theological "sense" of this doctrine. At the beginning of Book V, Augustine explains that "when we think about God the trinity we are aware that our thoughts are quite inadequate to their object, and incapable of grasping him as he is …" (*De trin*. V.1, 189). Although we should always be praising God, "yet no words of ours are capable of expressing him…" (*De trin.* V.1, 189). Whatever we say about God's unchanging nature "cannot be measured by the standard of things visible, changeable, mortal, and deficient" (*De trin.* V.1, 189). In light of this, Augustine would insist that "incomprehensibility" should not be limited to the manner of the Son's generation but should qualify all our thinking about God.[105]

ENDNOTES

[1]Apart from a few minor changes, this essay was published previously in *Trinity Journal* 32 (2011): 141-163. Reprinted with permission.

[2]The term "communicates" is crucial. Fundamental to the definition offered above is the Trinitarian distinction between "person" and "essence." As Zacharias Ursinus explains, "The sum of this distinction between the terms Essence and Person, as applied to God is this: Essence is absolute and communicable—Person is relative and incommunicable." Zacharias Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism* (4th ed.; trans G. W. Willard; Cincinnati: Elm Street, 1888), 130. The essence of the Son is not "generated." It is communicated. What is "generated" is the personal subsistence of the Son.

[3]"[G]eneration is a communication of the divine essence, whereby only the second person of the Deity derives and takes from the first person alone, as a son from a father, the same essence whole and entire, which the father has and retains." Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, 136. Generation must be distinguished from creation, "which implies the production of something out of nothing by the command and will of God" (136). Berkhof offers a similar definition of eternal generation: "It is that eternal and necessary act of the first person in the Trinity, whereby He, within the divine Being, is the ground of a second personal subsistence like His own, and puts this second person in possession of the whole divine essence, without any division, alienation, or change." Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 94.

[4]Pro-Nicene theology is not merely a reassertion of the teaching of Nicaea. It represents an interpretation of Nicaea that emerged in the second half of the fourth century that centered on common nature, common power, and common operations. In context of a clear distinction between "person" and

"nature," pro-Nicenes affirmed that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share the same power, perform the same works, and possess the same nature. See Michel R. Barnes, "One Nature, One power: Consensus Doctrine in Pro-Nicene Polemic," in *Studia Patristica,* vol. 29, *Historica, Theologica et Philosophica, Critica et Philologica* (ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone; Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 205-23; and Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Oxford, 2004), 236-40.

[5]Millard Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity? An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009), 251.

[6]Not everyone views Augustine's influence as positive. According to critics like Colin Gunton, Cornelius Plantinga, and Catherina LaCugna, Augustine's theology "begins" with a unity of divine substance (which he allegedly "prioritizes" over the persons), his Trinitarian reflection is over-determined by neo-Platonic philosophy, his psychological "analogy" tends toward modalism, and he severs the life of the triune God from the economy of salvation by focusing on the immanent Trinity. Lewis Ayres and Michel Barnes, however, have convincingly demonstrated that these criticisms are based on fundamental misreadings of Augustine's theology. See Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); idem, "The Fundamental Grammar of Augustine's Trinitarian Theology," in *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner* (ed. Dodaro and George Lawless; New York: Routledge, 2000) 51-76; Michel R. Barnes, "Rereading Augustine's theology of the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, Gerald O'Collins; New York: Oxford, 1999), 145-76.

[7]Many contemporary histories of the development of Trinitarian doctrine proceed from the unwarranted assumption that significant differences exist between early "Western" approaches (which emphasize divine unity) and early "Eastern" approaches (which emphasize a trinity of divine persons). This problematic assumption can be traced to the work of a nineteenth-century Jesuit, Théodore de Régnon. Trenchant criticisms of this polarizing paradigm can be found in Michel R. Barnes, "De Régnon Reconsidered," *Augustinian Studies* 26 (1995): 51-79; idem, "Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 56 (1995): 237-50.

[8]Because of his role as "Doctor of the Church" (*doctor ecclesiae*), medieval theologians treated Augustine as a reliable authority whose teaching on the Trinity may be employed as foundational elements in theological argumentation because they are seen as faithful expressions of Scripture and conciliar teaching. This is not to suggest that Augustine's doctrinal statements possessed the same kind of authority as Scripture. Rather they possessed a "probable" authority—something less than the ultimate authority of Holy Scripture but certainly much more than untested theological opinions. This medieval practice offers an apt analogy for my engagement with Augustine's Trinitarian theology in this essay.

[9]"The whole attempt to define the eternal relations in the immanent or ontological Trinity seems misguided. First, God has given us no revelation of the nature of their eternal relations. We should follow the command of the Bible: 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God' and refuse to speculate." Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 27-28.

[10]See John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 490; Lorraine Boettner, *Studies in Theology* (9th ed.; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970), 121.

[11]Commenting on the lack of evidence that *monogenes* means "only begotten," Feinberg explains, "In light of this evidence, it is clear that a major biblical support for the eternal generation doctrine evaporates." Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 491; Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 1233-34; J. Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 111.

[12]Millard J. Erickson, *God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 309. See also Feinberg, *No One Like*

Him, 490.

[13]Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 491; Boettner, *Studies in Theology*, 113.

[14]Ibid., 112-14. "What underlies the conception of sonship in Scriptural speech is just 'likeness'; whatever the father is that the son is also." Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity," in *Biblical and Theological Studies* (ed., Samuel G. Craig; Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1952), 52.

[15]Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (2nd ed.; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 325-26. Similarly, "[W]e can say with confidence that the Bible has nothing whatsoever to say about 'begetting' as an eternal relationship between the Father and the Son." Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, 111.

[16]Erickson, *Tampering with the Trinity*, 182.

[17]Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, 112; Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 488; Erickson, *Tampering with the Trinity*, 251; and Driscoll and Breshears, *Doctrine*, 28.

[18]William Lane Craig, "A Formulation and Defense of the Doctrine of the Trinity," 15. Unabridged version of chapter 29 from *Philosophical Foundations of a Christian Worldview* (ed. J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003).

[19]Craig, "Doctrine of the Trinity," 16.

[20]Driscoll and Breshears, *Doctrine*, 28.

[21]Erickson, *Tampering with the Trinity*, 251; idem, *God in Three Persons*, 309-10.

[22]Paul Helm, "Of God and of the Holy Trinity: A Response to Dr. Beckwith," *Churchman* 115 (2001): 350.

[23]Boettner, *Studies in Theology*, 122.

[24]Reymond, *New Systematic Theology*, 326.

[25]Other elements of pro-Nicene theology include an assumption that there are no degrees of divinity, that the divine persons are distinct yet possess the same nature apart from any ontological hierarchy, and that the generation of the Son by the Father takes place within the being of God and involves no division of being. See Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 236, 434. Representatives of pro-Nicene theology include Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, Hilary of Poitiers, Marius Victorinus, and Ambrose of Milan.

[26]Craig, "Doctrine of the Trinity," 17

[27]Ibid., 18. Without asserting that the roles of the divine persons are arbitrary, Millard Erickson also sharply distinguishes the economic Trinity from the immanent Trinity. Apart from their roles in the economy of salvation, Erickson never really explains how the persons are distinct. He simply claims that "an eternal symmetry" exists among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Erickson, *God in Three Persons*, 310.

[28]"Here we must focus on predicates that are true of each alone in their economic roles. For example, the Son alone became incarnate, and he alone was baptized. The Father alone spoke words praising Jesus at Christ's baptism, and the Holy Spirit alone descended as a dove at that event.... Even if we deny predicates usually applied to members of the Trinity according to their internal relations, we can still distinguish each from the others." Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 498.

[29]Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 251.

[30]"So we may say that the role of the Father in creation and redemption has been to plan and direct and send the Son and Holy Spirit. This is not surprising, for it shows that the Father and the Son relate to one another as a father and son relate to one another in a human family: the father directs and has authority over the son, and the son obeys and is responsive to the directions of the father. The Holy Spirit is obedient to the directives of both the Father and the Son.... The Son and Holy Spirit are equal in deity to God the Father, but they are subordinate in their roles. Moreover, these differences in role are not temporary but will last forever ..." Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 245.

[31]The Alexandrian theologian Origen (c. 185-c. 254) is frequently identified as the first to affirm that the generation of the Son by the Father is *eternal.*

[32]Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 236 and 434.

[33]The relevant phrases from the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381) include the following: "And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father."

[34]English citations from Augustine's *In Johannis evangelium tractatus* will be taken from Saint Augustine,

Fathers of the Church, vol. 79, *Tractates on the Gospel of John, 11-27* (trans. John W. Rettig; Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988). English citations of *De trinitate* will be taken from Edmund Hill's translation: Saint Augustine, *The Trinity* (trans. Edmund Hill; Brooklyn: New City, 1991).

[35]It is important to recognize that the creator/creature distinction provides the context for Augustine's analysis of John 5:26. "Life in himself" can only be understood on the "creator" side of this distinction.

[36]Many theologians (rightly) cite John 5:26 as a proof text for self-existence of God. See Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 242.

[37]Augustine points out that the phrase "in himself" is crucial. The text does not merely say that the Father and Son possess "life" but rather "life in himself." See Augustine, *Tract*. 22.9, 205. The fact that the Son possesses "life in himself" rules out the possibility that the Son possesses a mutable form of life (i.e., human "life"): "What does it mean, he might be life in himself? He would not need life from another source, but he would be the fullness of life by which others, believing, might live while they live." Augustine, *Tract*. 22.9, 207.

[38]Here we see how human birth bears a limited likeness to eternal generation. As Augustine explains elsewhere, "Thus it is clear that the Son has another from whom he is and whose Son he is, while the Father does not have a Son from whom he is, but only whose Father he is. Every son gets being what he is from his father, and is his father's son; while no father gets being what he is from his son, though he is his son's father." Augustine, *De trin*. II.2, 98.

[39]Augustine's interpretation of the phrase "has been given" as "has been begotten" in John 5:26 may strike some readers as a huge leap. It is important to remember that Christian theologians frequently employ terms not found in the biblical text (e.g., *Trinity*, *person*, *essence*, *nature*, etc.) in order to explain what the text affirms. For example, most theologians (including those who reject eternal generation) interpret "life" in v. 26 as referring to God's essence even though the term *essence* is not found in John 5:26.

[40]It is crucial to distinguish the "judgment" this text renders regarding the relationship of the Son to the Father from differing "conceptualities" used to express this judgment (i.e., the language of "grant" in the text vs. the language of "generation," in the case of Augustine). For more on this important distinction, see David S. Yeago, "The New Testament and the Nicene Dogma: A Contribution to the Recovery of Theological Exegesis," *Pro Ecclesia* 3 (1994): 152-64.

[41]Some ante-Nicene theologians like Tertullian understood the generation of the Son to be temporal (immediately prior to creation) rather than eternal. This is sometimes described as a "two-stage" logos model.

[42]"Before all times he was coeternal with the Father. For the Father never was without the Son; but the Father is eternal, therefore the Son [is] likewise coeternal." Augustine, *Tract*. 19.13, 153.

[43]It should be noted that the essence of the Son is not generated but *communicated* to him by the Father. See Footnote 2.

[44]To say that the Son is generated by the "will" of the Father is to assert that the Son is a "creature."

[45]Augustine also likens the generation of the Son to the generation of a word by the human mind. See Augustine, *Tract*. 20.9, 173.

[46]Patristic writers frequently employ "light radiating from light" as an analogy for the generation of the Son by the Father. The ubiquity of this metaphor is attested by its inclusion in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381).

[47]The Son's light is also equal in its "duration" to the Father's: "How does an eternal, someone says, beget an eternal? As temporal flame generates temporal light. For the generating flame is of the same duration as the light which it generates, nor does the generating flame precede in time the generated light; but the light begins the instant the flame begins." Augustine, *Tract*. 20.8, 171.

[48]Commenting on the generation of the Son with the context of divine simplicity, Ayres explains, "Augustine does not imagine that we can grasp the dynamics of such a divine generation at other than a very formal level—we have no created parallel that offers anything other than a distant likeness." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 226.

[49]"Provided then that we know this rule [*regula*] for understanding the scriptures about God's Son and can thus distinguish the two resonances in them, one tuned to the form of God in which he is, and is equal to the Father, the other tuned to the form of a servant which he took and is less than the Father, we will not be upset by statements in the holy books that appear to be in flat contradiction with each other." Augustine, *De trin.* I.22, 82.

[50]John 5:26 includes both personal and essential predications. The essential predication is "life in himself" while the personal predications include the names "Father" and "Son" as well as the mode by which Father and Son possess "life in himself."

[51]Augustine has an additional hermeneutical rule that in every action the divine persons work conjointly. This rule will be discussed below.

[52]In contemporary theology this distinction is expressed in terms of the immanent Trinity (God's inner life) and the economic Trinity (God's actions in creation and redemption). For discussion of the relationship between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity in Augustine's theology, see Keith E. Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity and Religious Pluralism: An Augustinian Assessment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 65-92.

[53]D. A. Carson, "God is Love," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 156 (1999): 139. See also Marianne Meye Thompson, *The God of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 77-80.

[54]Reymond, *New Systematic Theology*, 325; Boettner, *Studies in Theology*, 121. Although he affirms eternal generation, Calvin insists that John 5:26 refers not to the eternal relation of the Father and Son but exclusively to the Son's role as mediator: "For there he is properly speaking not of those gifts which he had in the Father's presence from the beginning, but of those with which he was adorned in that very flesh wherein he appeared." John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford L. Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), IV.17.9, 1369.

[55]See Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 212, 242, 258, 462. "Evidence of Christ's deity stems from the fact that NT writers predicated attributes of Christ that belong only to God" (ibid., 462). In this context, Feinberg claims that John 5:26 explicitly predicates self-existence to Christ: "and possessing life in and of himself, i.e., having the attribute of aseity (John 5:26)" (ibid., 462).

[56]Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 488-492.

[57]Marianne Meye Thompson, "The Living Father," *Semeia* 85 (1999): 24.

[58]Ibid., 25.

[59]"Precisely in holding together the affirmations that the Son has 'life in himself' with the affirmation that he has 'been given' such life by the Father, we find the uniquely Johannine characterization of the relationship of the Father and the Son. The Father does not give the Son some thing, power, or gift; the Father gives the Son life." Thompson, "The Living Father," 25. A similar theme can be seen in John 6:57. "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me."

[60]A causal link between verse 25 and verse 26 is established by the Greek preposition *gar* ("for") in v. 26.

[61]Discussion of these texts is scattered through Books I to IV of *De trinitate*.

[62]Although this exegetical principle does not originate with Augustine, his formal explication of it constitutes one of his distinctive contributions to the development of Latin pro-Nicene Trinitarian theology.

[63]Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 116.

[64]"The contrast between John the Baptist and the Word is not that one is an agent of God whereas the other is not. Both are agents of God.... The contrast between John the Baptist and the Word concerns, then, their *status* as agents. One is earthly, merely human. The other is divine (and *also* human: see 1:14)." Köstenberger and Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit*, 116.

[65]"If we take the reason for his saying this to be that in the creaturely form he took the Son is less than the Father, it will follow that the Father must first have walked upon the water, and with spittle and mud opened the eyes of another man born blind, and done all the other things done by the Son when he appeared to men in the flesh, to enable the Son to do

them too, who as he said could do nothing of himself except what he saw the Father doing. Surely nobody, even out of his wits, could have such an idea." Augustine, *De trin*. II.3, 99.

[66]Sometimes it is not clear which rule applies: "So then, as I started to say, there are some things so put in the sacred books that it is uncertain which rule they are to be referred to; should it be to the Son's being less than the father because of the creature he took or to his being shown to be from the Father in his very equality with him?" Augustine, *De trin*. II.4, 99.

[67]One may wonder where the "equality" is to be found in the ordering described above. Equality is found in the fact that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit act inseparably. This reality will be discussed below.

[68]The word "frequently" is crucial. These general patterns are not absolute. Fourth century anti-Nicene theologians attempted to appeal Scriptural differences among prepositions in order to argue that the Son is ontologically inferior to the Father. Basil of Caesarea responded to this argument by pointing out that flexibility exists in the use of biblical prepositions. See St. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Anderson (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980).

[69]The numerous "sending" passages examined above reflect this ordered equality.

[70]Although the terms "Father" and "Son" may for us include ideas of "source of being," "subordination," or "dependence," in their Semitic Scriptural context they only communicate "*sameness of nature*." Boettner, *Studies in Theology*, 112 (italics original).

[71]Augustine's opponents, whom he calls "Arians," were probably Latin Homoian theologians. See Michel R. Barnes, "Exegesis and Polemic in Augustine's *De trinitate* I," *Augustinian Studies* 30 (1999): 43-52; and idem, "The Arians of Book V, and the Genre of '*de Trinitate*,'" *Journal of Theological Studies* 44 (1993): 185-95. Latin Homoian theologians (e.g., Palladius and Bishop Maximinus) emphasized the Father as "true God" over and against the Son (particularly because of the Father's unique status as *ingenerate*).

[72]In the context of the Aristotelian distinction between "substance" and "accident," Augustine's opponents argued that terms like "unbegotten" and "begotten" name the substance of God. Since "unbegotten" and "begotten" clearly differ, the substance of the Son must differ from the substance of the Father. Augustine responded by pointing out that while no "accidents" can be predicated of God, not all predications must refer to God's "substance." Some predications (i.e., "begotten" and "unbegotten") are "relational." It is in this context he argues that "begotten" means the same thing as "Son" (i.e., relationship).

[73]In other words, at the level of Trinitarian hermeneutic, Augustine's "form-of-a-servant" rule cannot be applied to the Holy Spirit.

[74]"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me" (John 15:26, ESV).

[75]Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 3.

[76]Ibid., 197.

[77]Ibid., 230.

[78]Ibid., 319.

[79]Although Augustine is speaking about the knowledge of the Father and Son, the following statement offers a small window into this reality: "Therefore the Father and the Son know each other, the one by begetting, the other by being born." Augustine, *De trinitate*, XV.23, 415.

[80]Notice the central role that eternal generation plays in Augustine's explanation: "If however the reason why the Son is said to have been sent by the Father is simply that the one is the Father and the other the Son, then there is nothing at all to stop us believing that the Son is equal to the Father and consubstantial and coeternal, and yet that the Son is sent by the Father. Not because one is greater and the other less, but because one is the Father and the other the Son; one is the begetter, the other begotten; the first is the one from whom the sent one is; the other is the one who is from the sender" Augustine, *De trin*. IV.27, 172.

[81]Augustine's distinction between "mission" and "generation/procession" roughly corresponds to the contemporary distinction between the economic Trinity (mission) and the immanent Trinity (generation/procession). See Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity and*

Religious Pluralism, 73-79.

[82]As Ayres explains, "the Father's eternal establishing of the divine communion is the foundation of all the inseparable actions of the three, even those which happen externally in time." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 244.

[83]For a discussion of the agency (working) of the divine persons in Augustine's theology, see Keith E. Johnson, "Trinitarian Agency and the Eternal Subordination of the Son: An Augustinian Perspective," *Themelios* 36 (2011): 7-25.

[84]What does it mean to affirm that the divine persons act "inseparably"? First, it means that all three persons are involved in every act of creation, providence, and redemption. For example, while it was only the Son who became incarnate, the incarnation of the Son was the work of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Second, it means that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit possess one will and execute one power. Inseparable operation is a direct implication and economic expression of intra-Trinitarian unity (i.e., monotheism). Moreover, inseparable operation is a fundamental axiom of pro-Nicene theology: "Although this doctrine is fundamental to late fourth-century, orthodox, Latin theology, it is important that we do not think of 'inseparable operation' as a peculiarly Latin phenomena. The inseparable operation of the three irreducible persons is a fundamental axiom of those theologies which provide the context for the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 and for the reinterpretation of Nicaea, which came to be the foundation of orthodox or catholic theology at the end of the fourth century. It is a principle found in all the major orthodox Greek theologians of the later fourth and fifth centuries, and enters later Orthodox tradition through such figures as John of Damascus in the eighth century." Ayres, "The Fundamental Grammar of Augustine's Trinitarian Theology,"56.

[85]See Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 254.

[86]Although Augustine is sometimes presented as a "philosopher" whose "Neoplatonic" convictions function like a cookie-cutter on the dough of Scripture, he is clear that Holy Scripture constitutes the authoritative basis for human knowledge of the triune God. Whatever else may have been involved, one thing is clear: the fifth-century debate over the doctrine of God was a battle about how rightly to read and interpret Scripture. In the latter context, Augustine contends "for the rightness of saying, believing, understanding that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one and the same substance or essence." Augustine, *De trin*. I.4, 67. Hence, his first priority is to "establish by the authority of the holy scriptures whether the faith is in fact like that." Augustine, *De trin*. I.4, 67. In an effort to demonstrate the unity and equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Augustine discusses numerous biblical texts. The scriptural index to *De trinitate* in volume 50a of *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* contains over 6800 biblical citations and allusions. See *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*, vol. 50A (Turnholt: Brepols, 1968), 601-721. In addition to twenty-seven canonical Old Testament books, citations can be found from every New Testament book except Philemon.

[87]Richard A. Muller, *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 51. See also Scott R. Swain, "The Trinity in the Reformers" in *Oxford Handbook on the Trinity* (ed. Matthew Levering and Gilles Emery; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 227-39.

[88]Heiko Oberman distinguishes two understandings of the relationship of Scripture and tradition that provide a backdrop for later Reformation debates. According to "Tradition I," Scripture and tradition coincide in such a way that tradition simply represents Scripture properly interpreted. According to "Tradition II," Scripture and tradition represent parallel sources of revelation. The "II" in Tradition II stands for two sources whereas "Tradition I" represents a single-source view. The Council of Trent represents Tradition II while the Reformers reflect Tradition I. Thus, during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, "We are here not confronted with the alternatives of Scripture and tradition but with the clash of two radically different concepts of tradition: Tradition I and Tradition II." Heiko A. Oberman, *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late*

Medieval and Early Reformation (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 283. See also Heiko A. Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought* (Cambridge: James Clark, 2002), 51-66.

[89]"It is important not to confuse this view—call it 'solo' *scriptura*—with the Reformation practice of *sola scriptura*. The main problem with 'solo' *scriptura* is that each biblical interpreter sees what is right in his or her own eyes." Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 154.

[90]Critics of eternal generation sometimes present this doctrine as if it is merely dependent on a handful of dubious proof texts. At stake in this debate, however, are broader patterns of scriptural judgment regarding the nature of the eternal relationship of the Son to the Father.

[91]For Augustine there is an important sense in which the equality of the three divine persons can ultimately be traced to the Father. As Ayres explains, the Father is the "cause and source of the Trinitarian communion." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 264.

[92]Inseparable operation played a key role in Patristic arguments for the ontological equality of the divine persons.

[93]"It is important to note, again, that while the Son is constituted by the relationships in which the Father generates him eternally, he can only be so *because* he is also life in itself, the fullness of the Godhead and, hence, necessarily simple." Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 245 (italics original).

[94]Thus, evangelicals who claim that all forms of eternal generation are necessarily subordinationist wrongly assume that every form of "derivation" must be equated with "creation."

[95]For Augustine, Scripture is a revelation—albeit in an accommodated form—of God's immanent life (e.g., John 1:1; 5:26, 10:30; Phil 2:6).

[96]Augustine, of course, does not use the terms "economic" Trinity and "immanent" Trinity. His terms are "mission" (economic Trinity) and "generation/procession" (immanent Trinity). See Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity and Religious Pluralism*, 73-79.

[97]Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 133.

[98]Ibid., 151.

[99]This does not mean that *everything* the Son does (eating, sleeping, fatigue, etc.) reveals his eternal relation to the Father. We must bear in mind the threefold manner in which the Scriptures speak about the Son: (1) in the "form of the servant," (2) in the "form of God," (3) in the mode of being "from the Father." Scriptural statements about the Son "in the form of a servant" should not be read back into God's inner life.

[100]Josh Malone suggested this helpful point.

[101]Some evangelicals attempt to ground distinctions among the divine persons in eternal "roles of authority and submission." This is not Augustine's position.

[102]Much evangelical Trinitarianism can be reduced to three points: (1) there is one God; (2) God exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and (3) each of the divine persons is God. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 231. Many evangelicals assert these points without explaining how Scripture holds together these three realities (i.e., eternal relations).

[103]Medieval theologians like Thomas Aquinas will later explain that the personal property of the Father is "paternity" while the personal property of the Son is "filiation."

[104]The key word is "exclusively." There are several problems with grounding the distinction of persons exclusively in the economy of salvation. First, external acts of the Trinity are the work of all three persons. For example, one cannot say that what makes the Father distinct from the Son is that the Father was creator. Creation was inseparably the work of the three. Second, if one grounds the distinction of persons exclusively in the economy of salvation, how does one rule out modalism (or, for that matter, tritheism)? In other words, how does one know that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not merely "faces" of an undifferentiated God? Finally, it is only by affirming a distinction of persons in the inner life of the Trinity that we are rightly able to distinguish the divine persons in the economy of salvation.

[105]The second commandment to make no graven images (Exod 20:4) aims at protecting the incomprehensibility of God.

Christological Reflections in Light of Scripture's Covenants

Stephen J. Wellum

In a newly published work, *Kingdom through Covenant,* Peter Gentry and I sought to demonstrate how central the concept of "covenant" is the narrative plot structure of the Bible.[1] To be sure, this is not a new insight. Almost every variety of Christian theology admits that the biblical covenants establish a central framework that holds the story of the Bible together. In fact, from the coming of Christ and the beginning of the early church, Christians have wrestled with the relationships between the covenants, particularly the old and new covenants. It is almost impossible to discern many of the early church's struggles apart from covenantal wrestling and debates. For example, think of how important the Jew-Gentile relationship is in the NT (Matt 22:1-14, par.; Acts 10-11; Rom 9-11; Eph 2:11-22; 3:1-13), the claim of the Judaizers which centers on covenantal debates (Gal 2-3), the reason for the calling of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), the wrestling with the strong and weak within the church (Rom 14-15), and the implications for the church on how to live in relation to the old covenant now that Christ has come (Matt 5-7; 15:1-20, par.; Acts 7; Rom 4; Heb 7-10). In reality, all of these issues are simply the church wrestling with covenantal shifts—from old covenant to new—and the nature of fulfillment that has occurred in the coming of Christ.

However, our work sought to provide a *via media* between the current biblical-theological way of "putting together" the biblical covenants, i.e., between the theological systems of dispensational and covenant theology. In addition, we also intended to demonstrate how our understanding of the relationship between the covenants could help illuminate various theological issues and debates. In this article, I want to summarize some of our findings, particularly related to the overall theme of this edition of *SBJT,* namely Christology. Obviously given the constraints of this format, I cannot even begin to lay out the entire argument here; one will have to read the book in order to see

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how we have developed our case! Instead, I simply want to describe two ways a proper understanding of the unfolding and progressive nature of the biblical covenants helps illuminate and ground the biblical presentation of first, the glorious person of Christ, and secondly, our Lord's work.

THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS AND THE IDENTITY OF JESUS

In what ways does a proper understanding of biblical covenants affect our understanding of the *person* of Christ? Before we begin it is important to state what I mean by the word "person." In this context I am using the term to address the question: "Who is the Jesus of the Bible as an entire individual?" or, in today's terminology, "What is the *identity* of Jesus the Christ?" I am not primarily using it as it is used in classical theology and particularly the Chalcedonian Definition. At Chalcedon it specifically refers to the "subject" or the "who" of the incarnation in relation to the persons of the Godhead and thus the intra-Trinitarian personal relations. I am no doubt assuming this entire theology, but my main aim here is to speak to the issue of how Scripture and the biblical covenants unpack for us the *identity* of Jesus—who Jesus is as an individual and his significance for us.[2]

If we ask the all-important question—Who is the Jesus of the Bible?—Scripture presents a straightforward answer which the church has confessed throughout the ages: Jesus is *God the Son incarnate*. As God the Son he has existed from all-eternity, co-equal with the Father and Spirit and thus fully God. Yet, at a specific point in time he took to himself our human nature and became incarnate in order to save us from our sin by his glorious life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Or, as summarized by the later Chalcedonian Creed: Jesus is fully God and fully man, one person existing in two natures now and forevermore.

How does Scripture teach these incredible truths about Jesus? How did the church draw this theological conclusion from the diverse biblical data? For the most part, the church appealed to individual texts which not only establish Jesus' unique relation to the Father, but also demonstrate his unique divine status and prerogatives, his divine work and acts, and his divine name and titles.[3] However, and this is the point I want to strongly emphasize, an often neglected way of establishing Jesus' identity is by tracing out the storyline of Scripture. As God's redemptive plan is progressively disclosed *through* the biblical covenants (viewed diachronically) the identity of the coming Son (Messiah) becomes more defined.[4] By the time the curtain of the NT opens, OT expectation of a Messiah to come who will inaugurate God's saving reign and usher in the new covenant age, is viewed as the obedient son, the antitype of all the previous covenant mediators, yet one who is also uniquely *the* Son who is identified with the Lord, hence God the Son incarnate. Four steps will sketch out how Scripture identifies the Jesus of the Bible by unpacking the biblical covenants which all terminate in Christ.

First, Scripture begins with the declaration that God, as Creator and Triune Lord is the sovereign ruler and King of the universe. From the opening verses of Genesis, God is introduced and identified as the all-powerful Lord who created the universe by his work, while he himself is uncreated, self-sufficient, and in need of nothing outside himself (Pss 50:12-14; 93:2; Acts 17:24-25). As the Lord, he chooses to enter into covenant relations with his creatures through the first man, Adam. But sadly, Adam willfully and foolishly rebels against God's sovereign rule and by his act of disobedience, sin and all of its disastrous effects are brought into this world. Instead of leaving us to ourselves and swiftly bringing full judgment upon us, God acts in grace, choosing to save a people for himself and to reverse the manifold effects of sin.[5] This choice to save is evident in the *protoeuangelion* (Gen 3:15), given immediately after the fall to reverse the disastrous effects of sin upon the world through a coming deliverer. This promise, in embryonic form, anticipates the coming of a Redeemer, the "seed of the woman," who though

wounded himself in conflict, will destroy the works of Satan and restore goodness to this world. This promise creates the expectation that when it is finally realized, all sin and death will be defeated and the fullness of God's saving reign will come to this world as God's rightful rule is acknowledged and embraced.

Second, God's promise receives greater definition and clarity *through* the biblical covenants. As God's plan unfolds in redemptive history and as God enters into covenant relations with Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David, step by step, God, by his mighty acts and words, prepares his people to anticipate the coming of the "seed of the women," the deliverer, the Messiah. A Messiah who, when he comes, will *fulfill* all of God's promises by ushering in God's saving rule to this world.[6] This point is important for establishing the identity of the Messiah, especially the truth that he is God the Son incarnate. On the one hand, Scripture teaches that the fulfillment of God's promises will be accomplished *through a man* as developed by various typological persons such as Adam, Noah, Moses, Israel, and David, all seen in terms of the covenants. On the other hand, Scripture also teaches that this Messiah is more than a mere man since he is *identified with God*. How so? Because in fulfilling God's promises he literally inaugurates *God's* saving rule (kingdom) and shares the very throne of God—something no mere human can do—which entails that his identity is intimately tied to the one true and living God.[7] This observation is further underscored by the next point which brings together the establishment of God's kingdom through the inauguration of the new covenant.

Third, how does God's kingdom come in its *saving/redemptive/new creation* sense? As the OT unfolds, God's saving kingdom is revealed and comes to this world, at least in anticipatory form, through the biblical covenants and covenant mediators—Adam, Noah, Abraham, and his seed centered in the nation of Israel, and most significantly through David and his sons. Yet, in the OT, it is clear that all of the covenant mediators (sons) fail and do not fulfill God's promises. This is specifically evident in the Davidic kings who are "sons" to Yhwh, the representatives of Israel, and thus "little Adams," but they fail in their task. It is only when a true obedient son comes, a son which God himself provides that God's rule finally and completely is established and his promises are realized. This is why, in OT expectation, ultimately the arrival of God's kingdom is organically linked to the dawning of the new covenant. This is also why when one begins to read the Gospels, one is struck by the fact that the kingdom of God is so central to Jesus' life and teaching; he cannot be understood apart from it.[8] But note: in biblical thought one cannot think of the inauguration of the kingdom apart from the arrival of the new covenant.

In this regard, Jeremiah 31 is probably the most famous new covenant text in the OT, even though teaching on the new covenant is not limited to it. New covenant teaching is also found in the language of "everlasting covenant" and the prophetic anticipation of the coming of the new creation, the Spirit, and God's saving work among the nations. In fact, among the post-exilic prophets there is an expectation that the new covenant will have a purpose similar to the Mosaic covenant, i.e., to bring the blessing of the Abrahamic covenant back into the present experience of Israel and the nations,[9] yet there is also an expectation of some massive differences from the old, all of which are outlined in Jeremiah 31. Probably what is most *new* about the new covenant is the promise of complete forgiveness of sin (Jer 31:34). In the OT, forgiveness of sin is normally granted through the sacrificial system. However, the OT believer, if spiritually perceptive, knew that this was never enough, as evidenced by the repetitive nature of the system. But now in verse 34, Jeremiah announces that sin will be "remembered no more," which certainly entails that sin finally will be dealt with in full.[10] Ultimately, especially when other texts are considered, the OT anticipates a perfect, unfettered fellowship of God's people with the Lord, a harmony restored between creation and God—a new creation and a

new Jerusalem—where the dwelling of God is with men (see Ezek 37:1-23; cf. Dan 12:2; Isa 25:6-9; Rev 21:3-4). That is why it is with the arrival of the new covenant age that we also have God's saving kingdom brought to this world, which is precisely the fulfillment of the *protoeuangelion*.

Fourth, let us now take this basic storyline of Scripture and explain how it answers the crucial question: Who is Jesus? If we step back for a moment and ask—*Who* is able, or what kind of person is able to fulfill all of God's promises, inaugurate his saving rule in this world, and to establish all that is associated with the new covenant including the full forgiveness of sin?—in biblical thought the answer is clear: it is *God alone* who can do it and no one else.[11] Is this not the message of the OT? Is this not the message of the covenants? As the centuries trace the history of Israel, it becomes evident that the Lord alone must act to accomplish his promises; he must initiate in order to save; he must *unilaterally* act if there is going to be redemption at all. After all, who ultimately can achieve the forgiveness of sin other than God alone? Who can usher in the new creation, final judgment, and salvation? Certainly none of these great realities will ever come through the previous covenant mediators for they have all, in different ways, failed. Nor will it come through Israel as a nation for her sin has brought about her exile and judgment. If there is to be salvation at all, God *himself* must come and usher in salvation and execute judgment; the arm of the Lord must be revealed (Isa 51:9; 52:10; 53:1; 59:16-17; cf. Ezek 34). Just as he once led Israel through the desert, so he must come again, bringing about a new exodus in order to bring salvation to his people (Isa 40:3-5).[12]

However, as the biblical covenants establish, alongside the emphasis that God *himself* must come and accomplish these great realities, the OT also stresses that the Lord will do so *through* another David, a human figure, but a human figure who is also closely identified with the Lord himself. Isaiah pictures this well. This king to come will sit on David's throne (Isa 9:7), but he will also bear the very titles and names of God (Isa 9:6). This King, though another David (Isa 11:1), is also David's Lord who shares in the divine rule (Ps 110:1; cf. Matt 22:41-46). He will be the mediator of a new covenant; he will perfectly obey and act like the Lord (Isa 11:1-5); yet he will suffer for our sin in order to justify many (Isa 53:11). It is through him that forgiveness will come for he is, "The Lord our righteousness" (Jer 23:5-6). In this way, OT hope and expectation, which is all grounded in the coming of the Lord to save, is joined together with the coming of the Messiah, one who is fully human yet also one who bears the divine name (Isa 9:6-7; Ezek 34).

It is this basic storyline of Scripture which serves as the framework and background to the NT's presentation of Jesus. Who is Jesus? He is the one who inaugurates *God's* kingdom and new covenant age. In him, the full forgiveness of sin is achieved; in him, the eschatological Spirit is poured out, the new creation dawns, and all of God's promises are fulfilled. But, in light of the OT teaching, who can do such a thing? Only one who is both the Lord *and* the obedient Son, which is precisely how the NT presents Jesus. The NT unambiguously teaches that this *human* Jesus is also the Lord since he alone ushers in *God's* kingdom. He is the eternal Son in relation to his Father (see Matt 11:1-15; 12:41-42; 13:16-17; Luke 7:18-22; 10:23-24; cf. John 1:1-3; 17:3), and also the one who has taken on our flesh and lived and died among us in order to win for us our salvation (John 1:14-18). In him, as fully human, the glory and radiance of God is completely expressed since he is the exact image and representation of the Father (Heb 1-3; cf. Col. 1:15-17; 2:9). In him, all the biblical covenants have reached their *telos* and by his cross work, he has inaugurated the new covenant and all of its entailments. But it is crucial to point out: to say that he has done all of this is to identify him *as God the Son incarnate*, fully God and fully man.[13]

It is for this reason that the NT presents Jesus in an entirely different category from any created

thing. In fact, Scripture so identifies him with the Lord in all of his actions, character, and work that he is viewed, as David Wells reminds us, as "the agent, the instrument, and the personifier of God's sovereign, eternal, saving rule."[14] In Jesus Christ, we see all of God's plans and purposes fulfilled; we see the resolution of God to take upon himself our guilt and sin in order to reverse the horrible effects of the fall and to satisfy his own righteous requirements, to make this world right, and to inaugurate a new covenant in his blood. In Jesus Christ, we see the perfectly obedient Son who is also the Lord, taking the initiative to keep his covenant-promises by taking upon our human flesh, veiling his glory, and winning for us our redemption. In him we see two major OT eschatological expectations unite: he is the sovereign Lord who comes to rescue and save his people, who is, simultaneously, David's greater Son. In this way, our Lord Jesus Christ fulfills all the types and shadows of the OT who is also the eternal Son, identified with the covenant Lord and thus God-equal to the Father in every way. The biblical covenants, then, nicely teach us who Jesus is and, in fact, he cannot be understood apart from them.

THE BIBLICAL COVENANTS AND THE ACTIVE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST

Let us now turn to an examination of how the unfolding nature of the biblical covenants help illuminate the important biblical truth of Christ's active obedience. Historically and in contemporary theological discussions, people have disputed the biblical and theological basis for the active obedience of Christ.[15] In Reformed theology (but not limited to it), the discussion of Christ's active obedience is part of the larger discussion of the nature of Christ's cross work and how his work is applied to us in salvation. Often the distinction is made between Christ's *active* and *passive* obedience.

On the one hand, active obedience, as Wayne Grudem explains, is conceived of in terms of the way "Christ had to live a life of perfect obedience to God in order to earn righteousness for us. He had to obey the law for his whole life on our behalf so that the positive merits of his perfect obedience would be counted for us."[16] As that active obedience is applied to us, it is viewed in terms of the *imputation* of Christ's righteousness to us, tied to the larger discussion of justification by grace through faith. In other words, our Lord, in his life and death, acts as the obedient Son in our place so that his righteousness is legally reckoned to us by faith union in him.

On the other hand, passive obedience refers to Christ, as our substitute, bearing our sin in our place and paying the penalty we rightly deserve. Together they emphasize that for our Lord Jesus to act as our Savior, his whole life and death is one act of obedience to the Father on our behalf. Salvation requires that our Lord not only had to pay for our sin as our substitute (passive obedience); he also had to live a life of perfect, devoted obedience before God, as our representative (active obedience). In so doing, as the obedient Son, he fulfilled God's righteous demands for us both in regard to penal sanctions and positive demands.

Why have some disputed the biblical basis for the active obedience of Christ? A number of reasons could be given all the way from a misunderstanding of the terms, to thinking that it can only be maintained as it is linked to a specific understanding of the "covenant of works," and to a rejection that God demands perfect obedience for salvation.[17] Yet, such a dismissal or even worse, rejection, greatly affects how we think of Christ's cross and its application to us. As Greg Van Court reminds us, the active/passive distinction is not just an attempt to describe the judicial character of justification:

> It is also a means of articulating the holiness and infinite worth of God's character and the positive and negative aspect that is inherently and inseparably bound up in all true obedience to his perfect will. For example, it is not enough to have no other gods before him; if one is to be acceptable before holy God, he must love him

with all his heart, mind, and soul. It is not enough to refrain from committing adultery; if a husband is to be obedient to God, he must love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave his life for her. It is not enough to put off filthiness; one must also put on righteousness. Righteousness is not merely the negative lack of what is bad but also the positive fulfillment of what is good. It is this positive aspect of Christ's obedience to the will of the Father even unto and especially unto death that Reformed theologians have termed *active*.[18]

Or, as John Murray nicely states,

> We must not view this obedience in any artificial or mechanical sense. When we speak of Christ's obedience we must not think of it as consisting simply in formal fulfillment of the commandments of God. What the obedience of Christ involved for him is perhaps nowhere more strikingly expressed than in Hebrews 2:10-18; 5:8-10 where we are told that Jesus "learned obedience from the things which he suffered," that he was made perfect through sufferings, and that "being made perfect he became to all who obey him the author of eternal salvation."... It was requisite that he should have been made perfect through sufferings and become the author of salvation through this perfecting. It was not, of course, a perfecting that required the sanctification from sin to holiness. He was always holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. But there was the perfecting of development and growth in the course and path of his obedience—he *learned* obedience. The heart and mind and will of our Lord had been moulded—shall we not say forged?—in the furnace of temptation and suffering. And it was in virtue of what he had learned in that experience of temptation and suffering that he was able, at the climactic point fixed by the arrangements of infallible wisdom and everlasting love, to be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.[19]

Given the importance of the active obedience of Christ for understanding Christ's work and its application to us, how is it best demonstrated? As in the discussion of the identity of Christ, one must establish its biblical basis text by text. But it is also important to remember that texts are embedded in an overall storyline which provides the categories, structures, and framework to make sense of individual texts. In the case of the active obedience of Christ, one's grasp of the biblical covenants is crucial in establishing its grounding. Let us develop this point in three steps.

First, the active obedience of Christ is intimately related to the larger question of the unconditional-conditional nature of the biblical covenants. What exactly do I mean by this distinction? In *Kingdom through Covenant*, we spend a lot of time addressing it. There we discuss that a common way to distinguish the biblical covenants is to employ the unconditional-unilateral (royal grant) versus conditional-bilateral (suzerain-vassal) distinction.[20] It is on this basis that the Abrahamic, Davidic, and new covenant are often characterized as a royal-grant covenant (unconditional) covenant, while the covenant with creation and the covenant with Israel is described as a suzerain-vassal covenant (conditional). From here a variety of theological conclusions are drawn depending upon the issue. Yet, as we discuss in the book, for a variety of reasons, we dissent from this common way of distinguishing the biblical covenants. Instead, we argue that the OT covenants consist of unconditional (unilateral) and conditional (bilateral) elements blended together. In fact, it is precisely due to this blend that there is a deliberate *tension* within the covenants—a tension which is heightened as the storyline of Scripture and the biblical covenants progress toward their fulfillment in Christ *and* a tension which is important in grounding Christ's active obedience.

On the one hand, what the covenants and storyline of Scripture reveal is the sovereign promise-making and covenant-keeping God who never fails. He is the covenant Lord who supremely

reveals himself as the God of *hesed* and *'emet* or, in NT terms, "grace and truth." As Creator and Lord, he chooses to enter into relationships with his creatures, and in that relationship he always shows himself to be the faithful partner. He always remains true to himself, his own character, and his promises, and it is on this basis alone that we can hope, trust, and find all our confidence in him. Does not the author of Hebrews capture this point well when he reflects on the certainty of God's covenant promises, especially as those promises are brought to fulfillment in Christ? The author states: "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us" (Heb 6:17, 18). The covenants, then, reveal first and foremost the incredible sovereign-personal Triune God of Scripture who is our covenant Lord, who makes and keeps his promises and as such they can never be thwarted. It is for this reason that all of the biblical covenants are unconditional or unilaterally guaranteed by the power and grace of God. Whether it is with Adam in the garden, God's commitment to his image-bearers and creation, tied to his promise in Genesis 3:15, will never fail. That same promise runs across the entire canon and it is developed through the biblical covenants until it comes to its most profound fulfillment in the coming of God's own dear Son. It continues in the Noahic; it is given more definition and expansion in the Abrahamic; it undergirds the old covenant and the Davidic, and, as noted, it reaches its crescendo in Christ.

On the other hand, all the biblical covenants also demand an obedient partner (son). This is evident with Adam as commands and responsibilities are given to him and the expectation is that he will do so perfectly. Furthermore, as the covenants unfold the same emphasis is in all of them. Complete obedience and devotion are demanded from the covenant mediators and the people; God demands and deserves nothing less. In this sense, there is a conditional/bilateral element to all the covenants. It is this latter emphasis on God's demand of complete obedience from his creatures which is crucial in establishing the grounding to the active obedience of Christ. This is consistent with who he is as the standard of righteousness and justice. To demand anything less than full devotion from his creatures would be a denial of himself. In addition, in creating us, our Triune God made us for himself, to know him, to worship him as servant-kings, to obey him, as we fulfill our task to extend his rule to the entire creation.

Second, in the covenant of creation, it is best to think of God's initial arrangement with Adam as holding forth a conditional promise of everlasting life. Even though this point is often disputed, there are good reasons to maintain it.[21] In this regard, God's specific command and warning to Adam in Genesis 2:16-17 and the emphasis on the tree of life (Gen 2:9) is important. Admittedly, in the text, no reward is explicitly given, yet in light of the entire canon, this conclusion is warranted. First, think of the command *not* to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is best to view this command as a test of Adam's obedience to the Lord. He was created to love God and his neighbor with a heart of love and devotion. The specific prohibition was a test to discern whether Adam would be what he was created to be: an obedient son. Sadly, Adam failed and the consequence of his action was no private affair. As the first man and representative head of the human race, his choice brought death into this world—spiritually and physically—for the entire human race.

In addition, think of the tree of life. It is best to see it as an implied promise of life especially in light of Genesis 3:22 where God expels man from Eden so that he will not take of the tree and live forever.[22] The expulsion from Eden not only speaks of God's judgment upon Adam (and the entire human race) but it also gives a glimmer of hope that eternal life is still possible, especially set in

the context of the Genesis 3:15 promise of a coming deliverer. Together the two trees present two choices in Eden: life or death. As Micah McCormick rightly notes, "If the tree of the knowledge of good and evil loomed over Eden with the threat of death, so too did the tree of life course with the expectation of everlasting life."[23] Canonically, it is significant that the tree of life appears again in the new creation.[24] Not only are believers told that they will eat of the tree of life if they preserve until the end (Rev 2:7), but in the new creation all who dwell there are sons of God who enjoy the tree of life (Rev 22:1-5). G. K. Beale captures the significance of this when he writes: "To 'eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God' is a picture of forgiveness and consequent experience of God's intimate presence (22:2-4).... The 'tree' refers to the redemptive effects of the cross, which bring about the restoration of God's presence."[25] In this light, it is legitimate to conclude that the tree of life symbolizes eternal life—held out to Adam in the beginning and won by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Putting together these pieces, especially in light of the larger Adam-Christ typological relationship (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:22, 45-49; cf. Heb 2:5-18), where Adam failed, Christ succeeded in gaining eternal life for his people. Death (physical and spiritual) was the result of Adam's disobedience; eternal life (spiritual and physical) was the result of Christ's act of obedience—an obedience which characterized his entire life including the supreme act of obedience in his death (Phil 2:8). Adam acted as our covenantal head yet failed the test. God demanded from him covenant loyalty, devotion, and obedience, but he did not fulfill the purpose of his creation. As Michael Horton rightly notes, "Adam is created in a state of integrity with the ability to render God complete obedience, thus qualifying as a suitable human partner,"[26] yet he failed. Our Lord, as the second Adam, lived a life of complete love, devotion, and obedience to his heavenly Father for us—showing us what an obedient son looks like—and in the greatest act of obedience possible, went to the cross for us to pay for our sin and satisfy God's own righteous requirements which we violated in our sin, rebellion, and disobedience.

Third, building on the previous point, it is important to observe how *tension* grows as we progress *through* the biblical covenants in regard to God's demand for obedient covenant partners. To be sure, the Lord himself always remains the faithful covenant partner as the promise-maker and promise-keeper. By contrast, all the human covenant mediators—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Israel, David and his sons—show themselves to be unfaithful, disobedient covenant-breakers—some to a greater extent than others. As a result, there is no faithful, obedient son who fully obeys the demands of the covenant. Obedience *must* be rendered but there is no obedient son to do so. How, then, can God remain the holy and just God that he is and continue to be present with us in covenant relation? How can he remain in relation with us unless our disobedience is removed and our sin is paid for in full? The only answer is this: God himself, as the covenant-maker and keeper, must unilaterally act to keep his own promise *through the provision of a faithful, obedient Son*. It is only through his obedience—in life and in death—that our redemption is secured, our sin is paid for, and the inauguration of an unshakeable new covenant is established.

In this regard, it is important to note how much the NT stresses the obedience of Christ.[27] John Calvin is correct when he states, "Now someone asks, how has Christ abolished sin, banished the separation between us and God, and acquired righteousness to render God favorably and kindly toward us. To this we can in general reply that he has achieved this for us by the whole course of his obedience."[28] A whole course of obedience which not only refers to Christ's obedient death on our behalf, but also his entire obedient life, lived out for us as our representative head. In the context of the covenant of creation, God's demands must be perfectly satisfied, either personally or representatively. "To reflect God as his image-bearer is there-

fore to be righteous, holy, obedient—a covenant servant, defined as such by the covenant charter (Hos 6:7, with Isa 24:5; Jer. 31:35-37; 33:20-22, 25-26)."[29] Christ fulfills Adam's role; he recapitulates Adam's testing in the garden, yet he does not fail. In his obedient life he fulfills the covenant of creation representatively, and by his obedient death, he acts as our substitute paying the debt we could never repay. And all of his work as the head of the new covenant becomes ours, not by physical birth or anything in us, but solely by God's sovereign grace as the Father chooses us in him, the Spirit unites us to him by new birth, and his righteous standing becomes ours as a result.

It is in this covenantal context that we must think of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer and how it is that his active obedience becomes ours. It is by Christ acting as our covenant head and we, by God's grace and through repentance and faith, come under his covenant headship. As John Murray rightly states, "Christ's obedience was vicarious in the bearing of the full judgment of God upon sin, and it was vicarious in the full discharge of the demands of righteousness. His obedience becomes the ground of the remission of sin and of actual justification."[30] God reckons or counts our entire sin to be Christ's and Christ's entire righteousness to be ours. This great exchange provides the basis for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. In this way, Scripture speaks of three great imputations. "The first great imputation is Adam's entire guilt from the Fall to all people (Rom 5:12, 18a, 19a; Ps 51:5). The second is the elect's entire sin to Christ (Isa 53:4-6; Rom 8:3-4; 1 Cor 5:21a; Gal 3:13). The third is Christ's entire righteousness to his elect (Rom 3:21-22; 5:18a, 19b; 1 Cor 5:21b; Phil 3:9)."[31]

Viewing Christ's active obedience, imputation, and justification within context of the biblical covenants is nothing new. Yet, in light of today's debates, it helps illuminate and underscore the great gospel truth of salvation by grace alone, by faith alone, and by Christ alone. In a recent article wrestling with the "new perspective on Paul," Kevin Vanhoozer rightly suggests that viewing Christ's work and how it becomes ours in the context of Christ's covenant representation of his people and our faith union with our covenant head, is a more biblical way of thinking. When we do so, it now makes sense to say that God reckons Christ's,

> right covenantal relatedness ours ... [since] Christ does everything that Israel (and Adam) was supposed to do. He suffers the covenant sanction and fulfills the covenant law, including its summary command, "to love God and your neighbor as oneself." In counting us righteous, then, God both pardons us ("there is therefore now no condemnation" [Rom 8:1]) and gives us the positive *status* of rectitude, a down payment, as it were, sealed with the Spirit, on our eventually achieving an actual righteous *state* (i.e., sanctification).... Christians become members of God's covenant family by receiving the Son's status: *righteous sonship*. Jesus Christ was the righteous Son the Father always wanted Israel, and Adam, to be.... Sons and daughters in Christ, we have Christ's righteousness standing before God *and* unity with one another as members of Christ's one body.[32]

CONCLUDING REFLECTION

Here, then, are two examples of how understanding the progressive, unfolding nature of the biblical covenants helps illuminate the glories of our great Redeemer, first in terms of his identity, and secondly in terms of his new covenant work as our Lord and Savior. In some small way, may these short reflections on the biblical storyline and biblical covenants lead us to greater love, adoration, and obedience to the Lord of Glory.

ENDNOTES

[1] Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012).

[2] On this point see for example, Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel:* God Crucified *and Other*

Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

[3] See e.g., Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, eds. *The Deity of Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011); Robert M. Bowman, Jr. and J. Ed. Komoszewski, *Putting Jesus in His Place: The Case for the Deity of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007); Simon J. Gathercole, *The Pre-existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006); Robert L. Reymond, *Jesus, Divine Messiah: The New and Old Testament Witness* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2003); Murray J. Harris, *3 Crucial Questions about Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994); idem, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of* Theos *in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992).

[4] In this article we will not address the historical-critical issue of whether messianism is prevalent or even exists in the OT; I simply assume that it is for the sake of this article and presentation. On this issue, see Stanley Porter, ed., *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007); J. H. Charlesworth et al., eds., *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); Walter Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995); Robert Reymond, *Jesus: Divine Messiah*.

[5] In truth, God's plan is an eternal plan and not one that originates in time. Stating it as we have done only seeks to reflect the drama of the story; it is not meant to deny that God's plan is from before the foundations of the world (see e.g., Ps 139:16; Isa 14:24-27; 22:11; 37:26; 46:10-11; Prov 16:4; 19:21; Acts 2:23; cf. 4:27-28; 17:26; Rom 8:28-29; 9-11; Gal 4:4-5; Eph 1:4, 11-12; 2:10).

[6] For a development of these points see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*. Also see the work of Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), and Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003).

[7] For a development of these points, see David F. Wells, *The Person of Christ: A Biblical and Historical Analysis of the Incarnation* (Westchester: Crossway, 1984), 21-81 and Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*. Some specific texts we have in mind are Pss 2, 45, 110; Isa 7:14; 9:6-7; Ezekiel 34, and Daniel 7.

[8] In the Gospels, the kingdom is mentioned directly thirteen times in Mark, nine times in sayings common to Matthew and Luke, twenty-seven additional instances in Matthew, twelve additional instances in Luke, and twice in John (Mark 1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14, 15, 23, 24, 25; 12:34; 14:25; Matt 5:3 [Luke 6:20]; 6:10 [Luke 11:2]; 6:33 [Luke 12:31]; 8:11 [Luke 13:29]; 10:7 [Luke 10:9]; 11:11 [Luke 7:28]; 11:12 [Luke 16:16]; 12:28 [Luke 11:20]; 13:33 [Luke 13:20]; 5:10, 19, 20; 7:21; 8:12; 13:19, 24, 38, 43, 44, 45, 47, 52; 16:19; 18:1, 3, 4, 23; 19:12; 20:1; 21:31, 43; 22:2; 23:13; 24:14; 25:1; Luke 4:43; 9:60, 62, 10:11; 12:32; 13:28; 17:20, 21; 18:29; 21:31; 22:16, 18; John 3:3). Even though John's Gospel does not use kingdom terminology as often, John refers to these same realities in the language of "eternal life." On this point, see I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 498; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Pillar New Testament Commentary: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 187-90. For John, eternal life belongs to the "age to come," which is, importantly, identified with Jesus (John 1:4; 5:26; 1 John 5:11-12) since Jesus himself is the "life" (John 11:25: 14:6). In this way, John ties eternal life to Jesus, just as the Synoptics link the kingdom with Jesus in his coming and cross work. We are not to view the Synoptic Gospels' emphasis on the fulfillment of God's promises by speaking of God's kingdom and John's focus on the fulfillment of God's promises by speaking of eternal life as if they are opposed to each other. See Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 123, who argues this point.

[9] The "new covenant" will bring about the Abrahamic blessing in that it will benefit both Israel and the nations. Within the OT, the new covenant is viewed

as both national (Jer 31:36-40; 33:6-16; Ezk 36:24-38; 37:11-28) and international (Jer 33:9; Ezek 36:36; 37:28). In fact, its scope is viewed as universal, especially in Isaiah (42:6; 49:6; 55:3-5; 56:4-8; 66:18-24). These Isaiah texts project the ultimate fulfillment of the divine promises in the new covenant onto an "ideal Israel," i.e., a community tied to the Servant of the Lord located in a rejuvenated new creation (Is 65:17; 66:22). This "ideal Israel" picks up the promises to Abraham and is presented as the climactic and ultimate fulfillment of the covenants that God established with the patriarchs, the nation of Israel and David's son (Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Jer 23:5-6; 33:14-26; Ezek 34:23-24; 37:24-28). As the new covenant texts are picked up in the NT, they are viewed as fulfilled in Christ and then by extension to the church.

[10]The concept of "remembering" in the OT is not simple recall (cf. Gen 8:1; 1 Sam 1:19). That is why in the context of Jeremiah 31:34 for God "not to remember" means that no action will need to be taken in the new age against sin. In the end, to be under the terms of *this* covenant entails that one experiences a full and complete forgiveness of sin. See William Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (2nd ed.; Milton Keyes: Paternoster, 2002), 181-85, for a development of this point.

[11]See Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 184, who argues this point. Bauckham labels this teaching of the OT "eschatological monotheism." By this expression he stresses not only God's unique Lordship but also as sole Creator and Lord there is the expectation that, "in the future when YHWH fulfills his promises to his people Israel, YHWH will also demonstrate his deity to the nations, establishing his universal kingdom, making his name known universally, becoming known to all as the God Israel has known." On this same point see N. T. Wright, "Jesus" in *New Dictionary of Theology* (eds. Sinclair B. Ferguson, et al.; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 349, who describes three features of first-century Judaism as, "a. belief in the one creator God who had entered into covenant with Israel; b. hope that this God would step into history to establish his covenant by vindicating Israel against her enemies … ; c. the determination to hasten this day by remaining loyal to the covenantal obligations enshrined in the law (Torah)."

[12]See R. E. Watts, "Exodus," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (eds. T. Desmond Alexander, et al.; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000): 478-87.

[13]David Wells, *Person of Christ*, 38, captures this point well when he unpacks the significance of Jesus inaugurating the kingdom and the new covenant age which, in biblical thought, *only God can do*. He writes: "This 'age,' we have seen was supernatural, could only be established by God himself, would bring blessings and benefits which only God could give, would achieve the overthrow of sin, death, and the devil (which only God could accomplish), and was identified so closely with God himself that no human effort could bring it about and no human resistance turn it back. If Jesus saw himself as the one in whom this kind of Kingdom was being inaugurated, then such a perception is a Christological claim which would be fraudulent and deceptive if Jesus was ignorant of his Godness." For a similar view, see Reymond, *Jesus, Divine Messiah*, 239-41, and G. E. Ladd, "Kingdom of Christ, God, Heaven," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. W. A. Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 609.

[14]Wells, *Person of Christ*, 172. Gerald Bray, "Christology" 137, makes the same point when he writes: "The NT claims that Jesus, the son of David and inheritor of the kingly tradition of Israel, became the high priest and victim of the atoning sacrifice, made once for all upon the cross in order to save men from their sins. Only God had the authority to overturn the established order of Israelite society in this way, and establish a 'new way.' That this took place is consistent with the first Christians' claim that Jesus was God in human flesh, and this is in fact implicit in the frequent discussions of his authority which occur in the gospels."

[15]For example, see Robert Gundry, "Why I Didn't Endorse 'The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration'… even though I wasn't asked to," *Books & Culture* 7, no. 1 (2001): 6-9; cf. the various essays both pro and con in Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, eds., *Justification: What's at Stake in the Current Debates?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity,

2005); J. R. Daniel Kirk, "The Sufficiency of the Cross (I): The Crucifixion as Jesus' Act of Obedience," *The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 24, no. 1 (2006): 36-64; idem, "The Sufficiency of the Cross (II): The Law, the Cross, and Justification," *The Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 24, no. 2 (2006): 133-54.

[16]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 270. Also see, Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (ed. James T. Dennison, Jr.; trans. George Musgrave Giger; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994), 2:445-55; Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (ed. John Bolt; trans. John Vriend; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 3:394-95.

[17]For a extensive and excellent discussion of reasons why the active obedience of Christ is disputed or rejected, see Micah J. McCormick, *The Active Obedience of Jesus Christ* (Ph.D. diss.; The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 1-93. Also see Brian Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006).

[18]Gregory A. Van Court, *The Obedience of Christ* (Frederick, MD: New Covenant Media, 2005), 6.

[19]John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 22-23.

[20]See, for example, Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 128-211; Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose* (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2007), 17-43; Michael Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 23-110.

[21]For a detailed defense of this view, see McCormick, *The Active Obedience of Jesus Christ*, 108-18.

[22]See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Word Biblical Commentary: Waco: Word, 1987), 1:62, who argues that "Trees as a symbol of life are well-known in the Bible.... In Scripture, trees, because they remain green throughout summer drought, are seen as symbolic of the life of God (e.g., Ps 1:3; Jer 17:8).... Furthermore, it seems likely that the golden candlestick kept in the tabernacle was a stylized tree of life; the falling of its light on the twelve loaves of the presence symbolized God's life sustaining the twelve tribes of Israel (Exod 25:31-35; Lev 24:1-9).

[23]McCormick, *The Active Obedience of Jesus Christ*, 112.

[24]There are also many intertextual links in the canon to the tree of life as well. See Prov 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4; Ezek 47:12, and so on.

[25]G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (New International Greek Testament Commentary: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 234-35.

[26]Horton, *God of Promise*, 89.

[27]The NT explicitly speaks of the obedience of Christ in three texts (Rom 5:19; Phil 2:8; Heb 5:8-9; cf. 2:5-18). In addition, the concept or theme of obedience is found in numerous places. For example, the servant theme underscores Christ's obedience (Mark 10:45; Phil 2:7; cf. Isa 42:1; 52:13-53:12); the purpose of Jesus' coming is to do his Father's will as the Son (John 5:19-30; 8:28-29; 10:18; 12:49; 14:31; Heb 10:5-10); his submission to the law (Matt 3:15; Gal 4:1-4); and his being perfected through suffering (Heb 2:10-18; 5:8-10; 7:28).

[28]John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (ed. John T. McNeil; trans. Ford Lewis Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), II:16.5.

[29]Horton, *God of Promise*, 93.

[30]Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 22.

[31]Van Court, *The Obedience of Christ*, 15.

[32]Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Wrighting the Wrongs of the Reformation? The State of the Union with Christ in St. Paul and Protestant Soteriology," in *Jesus, Paul and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N. T. Wright* (eds. Nicholas Perrin and Richard B. Hays; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 251, 256.

Jesus Christ's Temptation

John E. McKinley

"And he was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan" (Mark 1:13).

Like many topics in theology, the temptation of Jesus Christ requires that we think about several doctrines simultaneously In this case, our thinking about Jesus' temptation involves us in the doctrines of *God* (can God be tempted or commit sin?), *humanity* (what is temptation to sin for humans? how much was Jesus like us in his human life?), *sanctification* (how is Jesus a model for withstanding temptation to sin and obeying God as a man?), and, of course, the complicated reality of *the Incarnation*. This inter-doctrinal situation makes matters messy when we seek for easy answers. Unfortunately, the theological tradition is little help to resolve the issues on this question, having supplied us with many different explanations and not provided us with the broad consensus we might wish for.[1]

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Jesus was tempted, Scripture says, "in all ways as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). This declaration marks the closeness of Jesus' experiences to ours. The reminder is given to encourage us that he truly understands our situation from the inside. Having endured temptations firsthand, as a true man, Jesus knows temptations that we suffer. That he is God the Son did not protect him from feeling the strain of the pull to commit sin, or from any of the suffering he endured. Instead, these sufferings were his training to learn obedience through suffering (Heb 5:8-9) and to become perfected to function as a sympathetic priest who reconciles us to God (Heb 2:17-18).

Jesus was tempted for our sakes. This means both that he withstood the pressure by his triumph over sin for us (where we have all failed), and that he was credibly tempted so that we would believe he is truly a fellow sufferer with us in temptation. We are told that he is compassionate and ready to lend us the help we need when we are caught in temptation's thrall. Hebrews 4:16 urges us to approach Jesus for the help that he is

uniquely qualified to offer as the only one who has been tempted as we are, has succeeded against it, and possesses the ability to assist us in our battle. This is good for us, since the temptation to sin is the battle of the human condition. God the Son made this human fight his own when he invaded his hostile creation to rescue it from sin. Accordingly, I will address the topic of Jesus' temptations by laying out two questions of practical relevance: What was temptation for Jesus (as compared with us); and, how did he succeed against temptation (as compared with how we can succeed against it, with him as our example)? I will argue that Jesus was tempted for us in a variety of ways that equipped him to be our reasonable human model in resisting temptation, and our sympathetic ally in the fight.

WHAT WAS TEMPTATION FOR JESUS (AS COMPARED WITH US)?

Jesus was tempted as a *man*, in his human nature. The humanness of his temptation experiences warrants the truth of Hebrews 4:15 and the similarity to our temptations. This is in contrast to the false notion that he was tempted as *God*, according to his deity, since, as James 1:13 affirms, God cannot be tempted by evil. This divine immunity to temptation follows from God's transcendence, omnipotence, and omniscience (among other attributes) by which God cannot be threatened with harm (he cannot be harmed), lured to obtain something that he lacks (he owns everything), or deceived by evil as a means to accomplishing some good (he knows the truth). For Jesus, then, temptation must come through his humanity. The Chalcedonian definition helps here to remind us that the divine and human natures are not mixed with each other ("inconfusedly, unchangeably"), and the properties of each nature are preserved in their union to the person, God the Word.[2] This distinction and conservation of each nature means that his human nature is not divinized in any sense. As a man, the Son became fully vulnerable to the pains and strains of human life, including temptation to sin. Thus, Jesus was tempted as a man, that is, he could not be tempted apart from the Incarnation, and he was tempted for us as an example and true model of the ideal human life. The many exhortations that Jesus is the pattern for us to imitate only make sense if his experience corresponds closely to ours.[3]

One difference of Jesus' temptation experiences is that he is God Incarnate, which means that, since God cannot sin, he cannot sin.[4] The early church condemned one prominent theologian, Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350-428), for claiming that Jesus was not impeccable until *after* the resurrection.[5] More recently, some scholars have argued that Jesus could sin (peccability), whether because of his true humanity, or because the reality of a true temptation requires that he was able to commit evil (but he never did so).[6] This *peccability* proposal assumes definitions of humanity and temptation that are unwarranted; we would do better to start with Jesus' experience and define from there the meaning of temptation (see below). By contrast with peccability, most teachers throughout the tradition have held tightly to the unity of the Incarnation and denied that Jesus could have sinned because of his deity (impeccability). The hypostatic union of the Son of God to his deity and humanity requires that being eternal God, Jesus could not sin even as a man. According to Chalcedonian Christology, the natures cannot be separated in a way to allow such contradiction of his deity at the level of his moral action.[7] Thus, everything that Jesus does as a man must be consistent with his impeccability as God. Were this not so, if *Jesus* ever sinned, this would mean that *God* had sinned, a self-violation and failure of his omnipotence, goodness, and immutability (among other attributes).

Another way of understanding Jesus' impeccability (because he is fully God) and temptation as a man is by considering the virtual impeccability that many people experience with reference to a particular action. The ability to do something, abstractly considered, is not possible in some cases

because of the agent who possesses the capacity for action. For example, to illustrate the difference between potential capacities and actual powers, consider how I possess the physical capacities to strangle my dog, Lilly, a five-pound Chihuahua. Being who I am, with strong commitments to the well being of my dog, and my relationships with my wife, my children, and God, I will never use my capacities to strangle the dog. Indeed, I cannot do so because of who I am.[8] Thus, I am functionally impeccable with regard to this evil act. Even so, I can be tempted to strangle the dog in a weak moment, though I remain never fully able to carry through with it. Similarly, Jesus is impeccable with regard to every act because, while he possesses the created capacities to commit evil as a man, so long as these capacities belong to *him*, the eternal Son, *he* will never use his human abilities to commit sin.[9] Being who he is, with the strong commitments he maintains to his Father and the program of salvation, he will never sin (despite our ability to consider his abilities in abstraction from who he is as the agent of the Incarnation). Being God the Son, he is impeccable even in his life as a true man.

That Jesus cannot sin need not dismay us in view of the report that he was truly tempted. We need only to see that the possibility of failure (sin) is not a necessary condition for a true experience of struggle and the praiseworthy accomplishment of sinlessness. Indeed, Jesus clearly struggled in the reported temptations, and his sympathy with us is based on the severity of his combat with temptation to sin. But the apparent problem of his impeccability and temptation remains. It is still legitimate to ask: How can Jesus be tempted without the ability to sin?

I want to address this important question in a bit more depth in four steps. First, I want to consider recent proposals of several theologians who suggest that Jesus could be truly tempted to sin if we link his temptation to his knowledge. Second, I want to discuss how we should best understand how Jesus was tempted in "all ways" like us. Third, I want to consider two features of all temptations which were true of Jesus and ourselves. Fourth, I want to think through five basic kinds of temptations that we all have which will help us explain how Jesus was truly tempted in all ways as we are. Let us now turn to these four areas.

JESUS' TEMPTATIONS AND HIS KNOWLEDGE

When we consider the reality of Jesus' temptations, several proposals have been offered to make sense of this difficulty. Scripture does not explain an answer for us, so we are left to formulate the options and ponder how to understand it all (which may make us feel dizzy). Several theologians have agreed in recent years that Jesus could be truly tempted to sin while remaining impeccable just so long as he was uncertain or unaware of his impeccability.[10] That is, he was uncertain in his human mind, just as he learns things as a developing creature (Luke 2:40, 52), and he claims not to know the time of his return (Mark 13:32). While affirming the absolute impossibility of sin, *uncertainty* at the level of Jesus' beliefs about his capacities as a man would be sufficient for him to suffer the strain of temptation alongside the rest of us.

A thought experiment can help us to see Jesus' situation.[11] Consider that you are told there will be a cash prize for you if you can remain in your house for a full day, a voluntary house arrest. There may be many reasons why you are tempted to leave the house, but you consider the prize to be more worthwhile, so you resolve to stay indoors. At the end of the time you are duly rewarded. Then, to your surprise, you are told that the doors and windows had all been sealed shut—your departure during the test had been impossible! Does this impossibility of leaving the house invalidate your struggle and the accomplishment of choosing to remain inside? No, you should be rewarded, since you truly weighed the options and you freely chose to fulfill the test. Likewise, the temptation remained valid for Jesus to consider that, being God the Son, he was most likely unable to sin

while he felt the strong pull of his temptations. He could not be so certain in his human mind about the inference to his impeccability from knowing his identity as the Son of God that the temptations made no appeal to him.[12] Certainty in human knowledge normally requires a test of the theory (or divine revelation). Without such an experimental test of his ability to sin, Jesus had probabilistic knowledge about himself, but no more. This uncertainty, because untested, provides for the temptation to pull at Jesus as a real option *just as we are tempted*.

He cannot have brushed off the temptations as nonsense for him simply because they were impossible. He was not play-acting (indeed, hypocrisy deeply angered him whenever he saw it in others!). Instead, Jesus truly and painfully felt the pull to flee the cross and he prayed desperately for a way out while praying in Gethsemane (*with loud sobs and tears*, Heb 5:7). When contemplating the imminent betrayal and the pain of hell that would follow, he was intensely distressed to the point of feeling that he was going to die (John 13:21). A short time later, Jesus needed an angel to strengthen him while he prayed to surrender his human will to God's will (Luke 22:41-44).[13] The reality of his true human mind and human will means he did not know all things and wrestled with his conflicting creaturely desire for self-protection (in Gethsemane, he wanted to flee the cross) and the desire for self-surrender to God's purposes (he also wanted to obey his Father). This real experience in struggle was plausibly preserved by his human cognitive uncertainty, and the uncertainty seems to fulfill what we can propose as the necessary and sufficient condition for Jesus to be tempted as a man: he must be uncertain about sin as an impossibility for himself, and by his imagination he must be able to perceive the desirable state of affairs should he follow through and commit the sin (he evades the punishment of hell in the cross).[14] Like the rest of us, Jesus suffered the temptation in the fierce battle of the moment and fought against it as a man with God's help (as provided through the angel's appearance to strengthen him). I think it is implausible to consider that theological reflection about his deity would have shielded him against the devil's allures and the attraction to take the easy way presented in the temptation. He was not experiencing his humanity in the abstract, but in the concrete of feeling pulled by the attraction of sin (the goods offered by sinful means of attainment). He was not sure that he cannot sin, but he focused on the strain and met it within the frame of his human life (as helped by the Holy Spirit, just as he was filled with the Spirit when he entered and returned from the wilderness temptations). Thus, Jesus was truly tempted for us as a man, despite his being unchangeably impeccable as God the Son.

THE MEANING OF JESUS BEING TEMPTED IN "ALL WAYS"

In order to grasp how Jesus could be tempted like us, we must pause for a moment and reflect on what it means for the Scripture to declare that Jesus was tempted *in all ways* as we are (Heb 4:15), leaving us to discover the explanations for how a God-man can be tempted as the reasonable pattern for others who are sinners saved by grace. At first glance, the claim that he was tempted "in all ways as we are" seems impossible because of the historical particularity of Jesus' life. "All ways" need not mean that Jesus was tempted to rob banks, use performance-enhancing drugs as an athlete, or plagiarize a research paper. The main idea is that, somehow, as a true man, God the Son experienced the pull of temptation in ways that compare closely with the ways we feel tempted. His experiences are a real basis for empathy with our experiences. What he lived by to fight against his temptations are the transferable methods that we may live by, following his example and receiving special help from him.

FEATURES COMMON TO ALL TEMPTATION

Let us now consider two features that are com-

mon to all temptation before we turn to think through basic kinds of temptations all human beings, including Jesus, experience thus providing a more grounded explanation on how Jesus was truly tempted in all ways as we are. The first feature that is common to all temptation is the fact that all temptation is subject to *person-variability*, which is just to say that the ways we experience temptation partly depends on us—temptation varies from one person to the next.[15] The person-variability of temptations implies that no one can feel another person's temptation in the sense of an identity of experience ("I feel your pain"). But Jesus, because he experienced hundreds (or hundreds of thousands?) of enticements to sin that come naturally with a human life, can say, "I have felt temptation that is like your temptation." He knows firsthand the temptations that come with poverty, social and political oppression, betrayal, physical suffering, ridicule and public shame, danger, want of food and physical comforts, the sense of abandonment by God and close friends—a whole range of things that come to people in the normal settings of life common to all. Therefore, when Hebrews 4:15 affirms that Jesus was tempted *in all ways as we are*, I take this to mean that he has been tempted in all the ways that are common to humanity. That he was male and unmarried does not count against his abilities to empathize and offer real help to women and men who experience particular varieties of temptations that are based on their person-variability. For example, Jesus did not need to become a heroin user and feel those particular temptations for him to be able to empathize with heroin users. Jesus has his own intense temptations to draw from for relating to other people. Christ's particularity (even his being the God-man and sinless) does not count against his ability to empathize with any other human being suffering temptations. What matters most is that Jesus was thoroughly tempted in the variety of occurrences in the setting of his human life. These are sufficient to constitute him empathetic and a reasonable pattern for all others in their temptations. His empathy is not a function of his omniscience, but is from his human experiences of a variety of temptations throughout his life.

A second feature common to all temptation can be approached by rejecting what some have tried to say marked Jesus' unique temptation. Let me explain. Some have tried to mark Jesus' uniqueness in ways that are not helpful by arguing that normal temptations should be distinguished into internal and external kinds, and Jesus only experienced the external sort.[16] To be sure, if *internal temptation* means sinful desires, then Jesus cannot have experienced internal temptation (usually, *external temptation* means the circumstances, whether by threat of pain or loss, or by the possible gain of some needed thing such as bread).[17] I doubt this distinction is an accurate account of temptation, since it seems that all temptation involves a combination of external circumstances that appeal to one's internal beliefs, desires, and imagination.[18] We can deny that Jesus was plagued by sinful desires (such as lust or greed) while affirming that he *internally* believed he was the Messiah, desired strongly to flee from the pain of the cross, and imagined the possibilities of avoiding pain through disobeying his Father. In this way, we can see that he truly was tempted just as the rest of us are, by struggling with internal desires that relate to external circumstances. Like us, he was not shielded by his deity or sinlessness from suffering the deeply internal pull of temptation as an attack to be resisted from the inside.

BASIC TEMPTATIONS JESUS AND ALL HUMANS FACE

In thinking through how Jesus was truly tempted in all ways as we are, it is important to consider that Jesus' experience in temptation closely corresponds to ours in that he was tempted naturally and normally as a function of his human life. Being a true human being, Jesus was vulnerable to temptation in at least five dimensions or spheres of human life. What are these spheres? They are his relationships to God, the created

world, other people, the self, and suffering. In contrast to God, who cannot be tempted (Jas 1:13), human beings are temptable because of their creaturely weakness, finitude, contingency, and liability to suffering. People want to meet their needs, aggrandize themselves, and avoid pain by sinful avenues of escape. Normally, sin is corruptive in a way that weakens the sinner to be more susceptible to further sins, and sometimes through corrupt desires (not simply innocent desires for things met through sinful means). Jesus' difference in this respect is that, being sinless (he possessed no guilt or corruption from original or personal sin) he was not subject to the original depravity (no corrupt desires) common to the rest of us. The point is that human temptability is not from sinfulness (just as Adam, Eve, and Jesus were each tempted without prior sin), but from the factors explained here in relation to being a human, which Jesus fully shared. This share in human life includes the normal matrix of a person's real and imagined needs and desires that correspond to real and imagined satisfaction in relationships with God, the external world, other people, and the self. These areas of an individual's relationships are spheres of human existence that allow different sorts of temptations to afflict people. Even for the monk in seclusion, temptation is intrinsically relational because the mechanics of temptation are an interaction of relational factors (or, one's relatedness to life). In addition, another avenue of temptation is opened when suffering touches us. Let us look at each of these five areas in turn.

First, with respect to God, every temptation to sin is an enticement to be torn away from God. Moreover, every sin has an ultimate setting within a person's creaturely relationship to God as Creator and Judge. The prospect of turning against God by following a temptation to sin arises from the human condition as finite beings with freedom and imagination (but this is no excuse for sin).[19] We may guess that human beings can be tempted because creaturely finitude and freedom seem to form a tension within the person's heart. Without the combination of freedom and imagination that allows individuals to consider and be tempted by attractive possibilities, people would not see the opportunity to turn away from God. However, being endowed with freedom and imagination to transcend their divinely ordained limitations, people may consider the untested prospect of another way of life apart from God (that is, their independence from the Creator). They are tempted to add to themselves and seek to enlarge themselves beyond the constraints of finitude. Thus, finite human beings can imagine their personal transcendence as the temptation to become great and move beyond their divinely ordered status (which is a departure from God to self-destruction). As contingent creatures with an acute sense of their dependence on God, the temptation to turn away from the Creator by a rebellious grasp at independence appeals to the desire for autonomy.[20] The desire may be inexplicable as the dream for life apart from God, the *source* of all goodness and life. At least we can say the desire for autonomy is irrational, just as all sin is fundamentally irrational and self-destructive. These temptations to independence from God may take both the direct form of forsaking God for independence and autonomy through idolatry, and the indirect form of violating the limits that God has established for his creatures' relationships within the natural order.

The human condition, then, includes a paradox of glory and temptation because of our special, image-bearing relationship to God. If this is right, we should remember that, as a true human being, Jesus shared in this human situation and was tempted as a man in relationship with God. The wilderness temptations seem to have highlighted this relationship and would not have worked otherwise (i.e., he only felt tempted because he had certain obligations to obey God). He had to struggle to surrender to God's will instead of depart from it (Matt 26:39). Thus, if we are right to think that some of our temptations occur with reference to our special relatedness to God, then we can see

that Christ's exemplifying this sort of temptation may be one aspect of the meaning of Hebrews 4:15 (i.e., relationship to God is *one* of the ways in which he was tempted in all ways as we are).

A second sphere of human relatedness is that people are created with needs for material support in the created world. All people are inescapably frail creatures requiring the perpetual, externally supplied life support of food, drink, oxygen, clothing, shelter, sunlight, and more. The temptations that correspond to bodily needs and desires in relationship to the external world afflict humanity constantly, despite the original goodness of both the created world and the human creatures inhabiting it. The severe lack of some needed thing, such as food, brings about suffering and pain for the individual (e.g., weakness, starvation, death). This need for life-support corresponds to the promise of relief, comfort, and well-being that is possible only when eating food, clothing the body, or whatever, satisfies the needs.

The temptations in this relationship to stuff in the world can be divided in two sorts. *Legitimate desires* are an internal touch point for the temptation to satisfy a legitimate desire in the wrong way (e.g., hunger satisfied by stolen bread). These desires are sinless and natural just as part of being a human. They are the desires that God created humans to experience. By contrast, *corrupt desires* are an internal touch point for the temptation to satisfy a corrupt, sinful, and self-destructive desire (e.g., *greed* satisfied by excessive wealth, or *gluttony*, the desire for more food than what one needs). Corrupt desires are the result of sin that disorders the body and heart because the person is alienated from God.[21] Both the corrupt and legitimate desires in temptation seem to occur as internal experiences of a struggle in relation things in the world environment. Notice that these two sorts of desires form the normative temptations for fallen humanity. We can affirm that Jesus was only susceptible to legitimate or innocent desires because he did not possess the corrupt desires of fallen humanity (i.e., he was not fallen or sinful, so he did not possess *lust*).[22]

As noted above, the variety of temptations in this relationship exists because God has set bounds and prescriptions for human conduct in relation to the natural world of stuff (animals, plants, trees, land, etc.). For example, bestiality, gluttony, and greed are prohibited (even the exploitation of the animals is limited in Exod 23:12, as part of Sabbath regulations). While the world is a habitation designed for humans in a way that corresponds perfectly to their embodiment, the divinely ordered relationship for the ways human beings use the world is also the setting for a multitude of temptations to violate that order. Being a real man, Jesus was also tempted as an embodied being in relationship to the created world, just as others are. Satan's urging that Jesus provide food for himself after fasting for forty days depends upon Christ's basic need for nutritional sustenance of his body. The category of temptations in relation to the created world is another way of temptation that Jesus experienced in likeness to us.

In addition to the relationships to God and the created world, a third area of temptation involves the social setting of person-to-person relationships which constitute an array of human temptations. People have the relational needs for the interpersonal realities of love, affection, respect, honor, friendship, companionship, nurture, protection, encouragement, and more. People are tempted to sin in the sphere of their relationships with others both by seeking the *wrong means* of satisfying legitimate, appropriate interpersonal desires (e.g., the desire for respect by lying about one's experiences), and by trying to get satisfaction for their corrupt interpersonal desires (e.g., the desire for revenge satisfied by attacking an enemy through gossip or violence). Much of the social, interpersonal evil to which people are tempted combines both relationships of human-to-things and of humans-to-humans. Examples include coveting, greed, theft, slander, deception, property damage, sexual misconduct, persecution, extortion, and assault. These combinations make for misus-

ing things of the natural world in harmful ways against other people. Thus, the needs that people have for other people draw them into interdependent relationships with others by God's design, but this social setting is also the arena for many temptations to sin against that design in relationship to others. People are inescapably oriented towards one another, and yet it is in these relationships that so many virulent temptations arise because of interpersonal needs.

Jesus experienced many temptations in his relationships with people. For example, he understands the distrust, rejection, slander, betrayal, assault, and malice by others that may have tempted him to revenge. Jesus knows the temptation to do and say the things that could make him well liked by others. He understands the temptation of a growing boy to disobey his parents when they wrongly blamed him for negligence and pulled him away from enjoying the presence of his Father and theological discourse in the Temple courts (Luke 2:41-52). Jesus experienced close relationships with men, women, and children from among the powerful, weak, disgraceful outcasts, and the most highly honored of society. They responded to him with the full range of emotions: adoration, honor, open and concealed disdain, skepticism, insistence, and malicious provocation. Whatever temptations we experience in relation to other people, Hebrews 4:15 seems abundantly truthful that Jesus authentically experienced this third way of temptations just as we do. These societal temptations were as inescapable for him as for us.

Fourth, in one's relationship to oneself, people have the habitual dynamics of character, moods, emotions, self-concept, and self-awareness. There is opportunity for temptations to pride, distorted body image, despair, happiness, safety, power, achievement, comfort, worth, various illusions, and more. Many of these reflexive, self-oriented temptations are simply the appeals to repeat the first human sin of clamoring for one's independence from God (as in Eden). Often these self-referential temptations are based on the problem of seeking to satisfy appropriate desires using the wrong means (e.g., the desire for happiness satisfied through manipulating others to meet one's needs). Other self-referential temptations arise from sinful desires (e.g., the desire to feel superior to others satisfied by manipulating others to make one feel powerful). The issue of temptation in relationship to the self is to see oneself wrongly, according to some false image that is other than God's making, order, and specific call.[23] Human beings face multiform temptations to autonomy for the self, sinful pride, and delusions of power and self-importance by which they violate the proper order of their relationships to God, the world, and other people. While this relationship of the outer self and inner self or self-consciousness always has a setting in another of the three relationships above, the questions of personal identity and significance make for powerful temptations at this relational level because these have to do with a person's self-awareness.

Was Jesus tempted in this way? Satan's suggestions in the wilderness pressed especially at this point of Jesus' desire for confirmation of his special identity. Jesus, just having been publicly declared from heaven as God's Son (at the Jordan baptism), quickly found himself in the peril of starvation. This situation possibly made him susceptible to the wonder if his dawning consciousness of being the Son of God and Messiah was mistaken.[24] Satan suggested that Jesus should force God's hand to confirm his identity as God's Son ("*If* you are the Son of God"). Even if Jesus had no other temptations in relation to himself, these two alone are sufficient to constitute his firsthand empathy for others who face temptations that have to do with one's self-understanding.

Thus, in every sphere of human life, for Jesus as for us, temptation is that pull on people to act against God and his order for human existence. Hebrews 4:15 tells that there is a comprehensive correspondence between the ways that we are tempted and the ways Jesus was tempted. I do not

mean that the writer of Hebrews had these four ways in mind, but that these four categories help us to see comprehensiveness of the temptations that we suffer and that Jesus experienced for us (to empathize with us and give help to us in following his pattern of obedience). George Painter's observation is apt: "The realm of possible temptation, therefore, is almost infinite, and the impulse to anything whatever, outside the sphere of the right, may lead to evil."[25]

Alongside these four aspects of human life is a fifth and more general category of human temptability: the susceptibility to suffer pain that ranges from moderate discomfort and deprivation to intense, excruciating pain. The prospect of suffering in a fallen world creates this avenue of temptation for the promise of relief from pain (or the possible evasion of suffering).[26] Human beings are vulnerable to suffering of many sorts (emotional and physical pain) because of their creaturely contingency and frailty. People are thus open to being tempted to sin by avoiding pain through the wrong means of satisfying their desire for comfort or self-preservation (e.g. stealing bread to escape the pain of hunger; turning away from Christ to escape persecution).[27]

The temptations occasioned by present or imminent suffering are really the pull to sin as a means of relief, which seems truly good to the sufferer (e.g., the legitimate desire to avoid punishment by telling a lie). The one who is tempted only resists sin by renouncing the reasonable, natural desire to escape from suffering. Thus, trials of all kinds strain people specifically because of embodiment and the relational contingency upon life-support and other needs.

As a true human being who suffered emotionally and physically (e.g., Heb 5:7-8), Jesus was also temptable because of his vulnerability to pain. This is most clear when he was tempted to avoid his drinking the cup of God's wrath (Mark 14:36). Christ's achievement against temptation is supreme in this event; he overcame his desire to avoid pain and chose instead the desire to obey God, come what may.

In summary of these five ways or settings for temptation, we have seen that Jesus experienced all the sorts of temptation that we do. I suggest that these are a helpful picture of the meaning in Hebrews 4:15 that Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are. His differences from the rest of humanity (being an eternal person, fully God, and sinless) did not protect him from experiencing the basic modes of temptation. The authentic correspondence of his experience of temptation to ours cannot be denied. His experience is properly the basis of his empathy and his example for us, and the ground of his encouragement to us that he is able and ready to help us when we are tempted (Heb 4:16).

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

Some conclusions follow at this point in answer to our question of what was temptation for Jesus as compared with ours. First, to experience temptation is not itself a sin (since Jesus was tempted sinlessly) and sometimes these afflict us because God is testing us to advance us in salvation (but some temptations are truly our fault, as in a boy who feels tempted to lie because he stole something and wants to avoid getting caught). On the contrary, to feel tempted can be the backside of the positive opportunity to respond to God's work of sanctification through difficulties that provoke the believer to cling all the more closely to God and to repudiate sinful ways of thinking or living.

I propose that *all* temptation (for Jesus and for all others) is intensely internal and external to bring about this basic inward conflict among the opposing desires in the heart, some leading to sin and some leading to righteousness. *Temptation is the internal struggle among a person's beliefs and desires, within a particular setting of attractive external circumstances, and it pulls the person to sin as its target.* The advantage of this comprehensive definition allows us to draw direct lines of correspondence between Jesus' temptations and the temptation experiences of all people, according

to the claim of Hebrews 4:15 that Jesus' empathy is based on the direct similarity of his experience. This advantage also allows us to draw a direct line between Jesus' resistance to temptation and the possibilities for believers to follow Christ's pattern, according to the claims of Hebrews 12:1-3 and 1 Peter 2:21-25 that Jesus is a reasonable model for human sinlessness. Thus, the definition allows a reasonable explanation of the biblical data for Jesus' relevance in terms of the commonality of human temptation.

According to the definition of temptation given above, we can trace one experience of Jesus imaginatively as follows: in Gethsemane, Jesus desires to avoid the punishment for sin (which is a desire that leads to sin) and he desires to obey God (a desire leading to righteousness). Despite his high priority for self-preservation and the belief that evading pain may be possible, he chooses to obey God according to his highest value and desires to please his Father and accomplish redemption. Jesus wants to obey God more than he wants to dodge the pain of being cursed by God in the cross. This internal choice occurred dynamically in relation to specific external factors. Jesus' circumstances—with the imminent prospect of suffering the cup of wrath (hell)—are countered by the imaginable state of affairs in which he does not drink the cup of wrath. The temptation with its sinful prospect of disobeying God out of a justifiable desire to avoid pain is uniquely fitted (his person-variability) to his particular experience and beliefs. No one else could have felt this temptation, or experienced the intensity the way he did because the factors that constituted a temptation for him were both internal and external, and particular to his relationship to God, his special role as the Messiah, and his special awareness of the prospect of his substitutionary suffering of the punishment of hell (cf. Mark 10:45). He suffers the pull of temptation and the fear internally as he pleads again and again for a way out (three times). His struggle to obey truly is a fierce fight that involves his deepest beliefs and desires. When his request for a non-sinful escape is not granted, he chooses the only remaining desire that still leads to righteousness (through suffering). His refusal to choose a sinful path of self-preservation is the difficult model for all of us.[28]

Scripture is clear that Jesus' temptations were real in the full range of experiences that were sufficient for him to empathize with all others who are tempted, and he is the reasonable human template of sinlessness for Christians to resist sin as he did. Jesus experienced legitimate desires and sinless temptations in relation to desires for sinful satisfactions. Jesus had to respond by overcoming his desires without intending or choosing to sin. Jesus' differences of having no corrupt desires or a fallen will do not preclude him from sharing in the common temptation experience of humanity. Temptations related to corrupt desires are person-variable, and do not constitute a distinct set or category of temptations in which Jesus could not share (e.g., the aforementioned internal temptations). Thus, Jesus was tempted for us, in all ways as we are.

HOW DID JESUS SUCCEED AGAINST TEMPTATION?

Now to the second question, how did Jesus resist temptation and achieve a perfect, sinless human life? In answering this question, as with the first, we must keep near to the biblical exhortations that Jesus is an example for us. Whatever answers we consider must be weighed for how they work as transferable from Jesus' experience to ours, that is, the question of his practical relevance as the model for our victory over temptation, since that is the emphasis of the most important temptation passages. The basic idea is that Jesus was tempted for us to *demonstrate* how we can succeed as he did (in addition to living a perfect human life in our place, Romans 10:4).

We have two options for answering the question of how Jesus resisted sin. The first option is that Jesus relied on his divine powers to achieve his sinless, perfect obedience to God. The second option is

that Jesus, a divine person incarnate, did not live his human existence by his deity, but he took up his life as a man fully within the frame of our limitations (Heb 2:14-18), helped only by the same empowering grace that God provides for his people.

The first option has at least two problems. First, to say Jesus resisted sin by his deity cuts off Jesus' relevance for the rest of us who are not God as he is. Second, the appeal to divine powers as the means of his success against sin cuts him off from experiencing any temptation, since God cannot be tempted (Jas 1:13). Once the divine nature was involved as causal in his human experience, temptation cannot pull at him in any sense. Moreover, Scripture never hints that Jesus responded to temptations with divine power. The emphasis is always on his resistance through human means of reliance on God's word, praying for aid, and seeking the support of his friends.

Instead of explaining his sinlessness by an escape through his divine power, the second option seems to fit much better with the relevance of Jesus as tempted for us, and the pervasive role of the Holy Spirit in his life.[29] Scripture emphasizes a strong continuity of the Holy Spirit's active presence in the life and work of Israel's prophets, Jesus, and disciples who followed him. Without detracting from Jesus' eternal deity as the Son of God, we may read Scripture as highlighting his promised human life as the Messiah, the man of the Spirit who lived by and provides the Holy Spirit so that many would be like him in a new relationship to God that manifested in the new operation of righteous human life in the world. The Spirit is not an add-on to God the Son, but a necessary ally to Jesus in his humanity. He never faced temptation alone, and he proved the way of success for us that neither should we face temptation alone. The indwelling presence of God to us by the Spirit is the same help offered as the "grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16) that Jesus relied upon in his battles. Were this not so, then all the relevance of his human life as an example and basis for his empathy with others who are merely human would be void. I will argue that Scripture reveals that Jesus relied upon the very same provisions of empowering grace that are repeatedly commended throughout the Bible for the rest of us.

First, the evidence for the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life and ministry are best explained as fulfilling a real need to him in his weak humanity, and this includes assisting him to repel sin when he was tempted. We are told that Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, was led into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil (Luke 4:1-2), after which test he returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14). This report suggests that the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life is relevant to his success against temptation. Luke's emphasis on the Spirit's closeness to Jesus should not surprise us since the prophecies of the Spirit's involvement in the Messiah's life and ministry predicted a spectacular kingship and prophetic ministry for Israel and the nations. In the tradition of the judges, kings, and prophets of Israel, Old Testament prophecies tell that the Messiah would be closely assisted by the Spirit of God to fulfill his tasks. The primary emphasis is on the job of ruling Israel and the world, as in Isaiah 11:1-10, 42:1-9, 50:4-11, 59:16-21, and 61:1-11. Within these prophecies is the repeated dependence of the Messiah upon the Spirit's support for his ethical development as a wise and righteous king under God. This righteousness resembles David as the man after God's own heart, and sharply contrasts with moral failures of Moses, Saul, David, Solomon, and the many subsequent kings of Israel and Judah. The Messiah to come would be equipped by the Spirit as to his "knowledge and fear of Yahweh" (Isa 11:2) so that his delight would be in the fear of Yahweh (Isa 11:3), resulting in the total righteousness and faithfulness of his reign (Isa 11:5) that extends for establishing shalom for the entire creation (Isa 11:6-10). He would be strengthened by God through the Spirit upon him (Isa 42:1), experienced as Yahweh's promise to hold him by the hand (Isa 42:6). Moreover, the Servant-Messiah

tells that Yahweh opened his ear to instruct him (Isa 50:4-5) and helped him in his mission (Isa 50:7, 9). These details are selected for how they relate to the ethical formation of the Messiah and his active faithfulness as a man, which is necessary to his jobs as the prophet, priest, and king accomplishing divine salvation.

Jesus applied these prophecies to himself by quoting Isaiah 61:1-2 as fulfilled in his life and ministry.[30] He also attributed his exorcisms to the Spirit's empowerment (Matt 12:28, cf. Luke 11:20), which Matthew has preceded with the quotation of Isaiah 42:1-4 to show the messianic fulfillment in Jesus (Matt 12:9-21) as the one empowered to bring release from sin's thrall. Similar is Luke's later summary of Jesus' entire ministry through Peter's statement in Acts 10:38. The entire range of Jesus' works of power to do good and deliver from the devil is under the enablement of the Holy Spirit's anointing, alternately described by Peter that God was with Jesus. This statement is odd if we are thinking merely of the Father and the Spirit being "with" God the Son, but the fit is natural when we consider that the Son is the Messiah according to his human life, for which he needed divine empowerment to support his perfect accomplishments.

We are also told that the Holy Spirit was constantly involved in Jesus' development from his miraculous conception (Luke 1:35), to his boyhood development with increasing wisdom and relationship with God (Luke 2:40, 52), throughout his ministry (Luke 4:1-14), and culminating in the cross (Heb 9:14) and resurrection (Rom 1:4; 8:11).[31] We may conclude from this evidence that the best explanation for the emphasis on the prediction, fulfillment, and continuity of the Spirit's work in Jesus and Christians is that just as he was aided by the Spirit, so would they be. His example as a man of the Spirit to faithfully resist sin and courageously pursue righteousness is reasonable for Christians who follow him. Since he worked within the limitations they (we) have to work with, and he provided the same operative power of the Holy Spirit to them as the Spirit helped him, Jesus is a realistic model to imitate. Obviously, this is not to say that Christians ever succeed in the full way of sinless perfection as Jesus did, but that he is so near to us in having to fight through temptation as we do, that we can be truly inspired by his example, employ the same means that helped him, and be encouraged to persevere even though we still sin daily.

Second, in addition to the basic provision of the Holy Spirit to indwell Christians and aid us in the mission of righteousness by following Jesus, Scripture specifies that Jesus actively relied upon several modes of the empowering grace of God to help him as a man. These reports are Jesus' demonstration of how to fight temptation that we may repeat, and by such means of grace we may find the help that he promises to provide when we are tempted (Heb 4:16). Briefly recounted, these are ways Jesus' received help from God when he was tempted, and we find that the same are commended to us abundantly as the basic support for triumph as a Christian.

Jesus was a man of prayer at all times (e.g., Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; 11:1; 22:32, 41), with a focused appeal for help when he struggled with temptation in Gethsemane. Prayer was for Jesus a real grasp of God to receive strength in his time of need, when he felt weak in the face of a terribly fierce temptation. We can only guess, but it makes good sense to assume that Jesus normally reached for help through prayer when temptations assaulted him. Likewise, Christians are urged to pray constantly about everything (1 Thess 5:17), being assured that God can rescue them especially from temptation (2 Pet 2:9), about which they should pray to God for deliverance (Matt 6:13). Jesus urged his friends to pray for aid in Gethsemane, where resistance to temptation is specifically in view (Luke 22:40, 46). The reminder to pray for help when suffering temptation is also the single exhortation of Hebrews 4:16, with the assurance that Jesus' sympathy from having been tempted himself should encourage us that he will be ready and able

to help us directly in our time of need.

Jesus also rebuffed some of his temptations by reliance upon the word of God. When in the wilderness being tempted by the devil, Jesus routed the lies with truth as his guard from sin. This is what Eve should have done, and constant trust in God's word is the basic method for all believers to parry deception-laden temptations. God's revelation is the antidote that dismantles the lie that otherwise makes sin seem attractive in temptations (cf. Ps 119:9-11).

Finally, Jesus not only fought through his temptations by living close to God through receptiveness to the Spirit, prayer to his Father, and reliance upon his Father's word of truth, but he also called his closest friends alongside to support him when he knew the battle was upon him. Too often, Christians withdraw, but true friendship is a real support that Jesus leaned upon in Gethsemane, even though they failed him. Like Jesus, Christians have divine and human help available to them, even the help of the Spirit present through other believers. Because Jesus was tempted for us, when we rely on all he has provided, he will bring us to triumph with him.[32]

In reflecting on the temptations of Jesus and its relationship to our temptation, we are reminded of our glorious Redeemer and all that he has done for us. In every way he is utterly unique, but in becoming one with us, he has also set the pattern to how we are to deal with temptation in our lives as we seek to trust, follow, and obey our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

ENDNOTES

[1]For the story of the church's reflection on the temptation and impeccability of Jesus, see chapters 4-9 of John E. McKinley, *Tempted for Us: Theological Models and the Practical Relevance of Christ's Impeccability and Temptation* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009). I summarize the evidence in nine models that have been formulated to explain Jesus' temptation.

[2]The patristic theological idea of the hypostatic union explains the union in this way as a personal union of the two natures, not as of union to each other, but as each united to the person. Each nature is fully possessed by the person, God the Son, and so the two natures remain unmixed and distinct from each other while they are inseparable in the incarnational union.

[3]Jesus is presented as the example for people to follow in many ways throughout the Gospels (e.g., we are to take up our cross and follow his cross-bearing steps, Luke 9:23), and his model life is specifically urged upon us in Heb 12:1-3, 1 Pet 2:21-25, Phil 2:5-11, 1 Cor 11:1, and Rom 8:17 and 15:1-7.

[4]Divine impeccability is sometimes disputed by a few philosophers of religion, such as Nelson Pike, Vincent Brümmer, Bruce Reichenbach, and Stephen T. Davis. For a recent defense of the doctrine, see John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001), 288-92.

[5]The Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II, 553). The council anathematizes anyone who defends Theodore's doctrine that Jesus progressed by means of the grace of the Holy Spirit to become impeccable *after* the resurrection, which means Theodore taught that Jesus was peccable before that point.

[6]For example, those who argue for peccability as a conjunct of Jesus' true humanity: Philip Schaff, *The Person of Christ: His Perfect Humanity a Proof of His Divinity* (New York: Doran, 1913), 35-36; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Co., 1873; reprint, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), 2:457. For those who argue for peccability as a necessary condition of true temptation, see T. A. Hart, "Sinlessness and Moral Responsibility: A Problem in Christology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 48 (1995): 38; Robert H. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 110-111; Millard J. Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 562-64.

[7]Here we can distinguish between *paradox* and *contradiction*. Certainly there are paradoxical experiences by which the Son of God *knows all things* as God, and simultaneously he is *limited in his knowledge* as man (or, he is simultaneously immortal and able to die, omnipotent and weak, eternal and temporal, uncreated and created, etc.). These paradoxes are pos-

sible by virtue of his possession of two natures. All the paradoxes are proper as part of being human or the greater purpose of accomplishing redemption; the ability to commit sin is not proper and uniquely would involve the Son rebelling as a man from himself as God. Unlike these paradoxes, sin (moral evil) is a contradiction. The Son of God's moral actions are personal actions whether he commits them as God or as man, so the doer of the action, even in his human nature, would be a sinner. Since Jesus is impeccable as God, he must be impeccable as man. This may be understood also because morality is a dimension of reality that is common to God and humanity, so a simply paradox cannot allow sin; any evil act is a direct self-violation. God the Son cannot act in his humanity that is inconsistent with his moral nature as God.

[8]By comparison, many people own guns and will never be able to use their guns to harm the people they love. Guns, like physical or spiritual capacities, do not kill other people; people do, that is, the agent who wickedly uses a gun to kill another human being. If an agent is not wicked, or if he is sufficiently committed to the well being of other people, then he will never misuse a gun to harm those other people; indeed, he is unable to do so, being who he is with the commitments that he lives by.

[9]It is important to remember that *natures* (whether divine or human) do not do anything, but only persons do. So we would be wrong to say that Jesus' human nature could sin. Instead, we are saying that Jesus will not act according to his human nature in any way that is evil.

[10]Thomas V. Morris seems to be the first to formulate this proposal in *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), chapter 6. Donald Macleod, Gerald O'Collins, Richard Swinburne, and William Lane Craig echo similar ideas. I prefer the formulations by Macleod and O'Collins to specify that Jesus would not have believed a lie that he could sin (as Morris argues), only that Jesus need be unsure whether he was impeccable or not. See *Tempted For Us*, 227-43.

[11]I have adapted the locked room account from Morris, *Logic of God Incarnate*, 146-52.

[12]Some have objected at this point about epistemic uncertainty as a necessary and sufficient condition for temptation. For example, John S. Feinberg, "The Incarnation," in *In Defense of Miracles* (ed. Gary R. Habermas and R. Douglas Geivett; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 241-44. Feinberg argues that Jesus would have known he was impeccable, but this would not have prevented him from experiencing temptation.

[13]Luke's mention of the sweat as like great drops of blood, however interpreted as metaphorical for profuse sweating or actual blood coming from the capillaries and through the pores of his skin, shows extremely intense physical and spiritual exertion of his wrestling with the temptation that is upon him. This cannot be an act

[14]Again, Morris and others formulate this as the belief that there may be a possibility of committing the sin, which I do not think is helpful or necessary for explaining temptation. I think it opens further problems to suggest that Jesus believed lies about himself (that he could sin, when he was impeccable). Were this true, what else was he mistaken about that we should not trust?

[15]This concept of person-variability is my adaptation from George I. Mavrodes, *Belief in God* (New York: Random House, 1970), 40, where he uses the concept of person variability for the subjective value of arguments for the existence of God. He notes (rightly) that certain arguments may function as *proofs* for some people (they are convinced the argument is true) but not for others. An argument is only a proof if it works to convince the person of the truth. Likewise, a circumstance can only be a temptation if a person feels pulled to sin.

[16]E.g., Donald G. Bloesch writes in *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 1:96, that internal temptation presupposes sin, indicating that temptation has roots within the man himself. Bloesch represents a common view that was also voiced by John Calvin based on an interpretation of *without sin* in Heb 4:15 to mean that Jesus' temptations did not originate from internal sin (see *Tempted for Us*, 21, n.23).

[17]While the devil appears in some temptation accounts in the Bible, it would be wrong to say the devil's involvement is a necessary condition for temptation. He is just a factor in some temptations, since surely most temptations occur without the devil or another demon's involvement. That Jesus had to contend with the devil increases the intensity of his struggle, and the consequent worthiness of his example for us as one who knows our suffering.

[18]For example, a state of affairs can only be experienced as a temptation for someone if she *believes* the act may be possible for her, if she can *imagine* how the state of affairs would change if she pursued the temptation (such as to avoid pain), and if she *desires* the imagined state of affairs for herself in the sense that she wants it. By contrast, Jane cannot be tempted if she does not want the outcome proposed to her, or does not believe it is possible for her to attain. In this way, no one is tempted to fly to the moon or spontaneously combust because such states of affairs are not desirable or credible as possible realities to choose.

[19]Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), 1:180-81.

[20]Cf. the emphasis on the desire for autonomy in the description of temptation given by Wayne E. Oates, *Temptation: A Biblical and Psychological Approach* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991), 103: "Temptation is the testing ground between the strivings of the image of God in us and the strivings of our desires to be the masters of our fate, the captains of our souls."

[21]By comparison, we can think of *affection* as a legitimate desire for another's care for or attention to oneself, the corruption of affection is *lust*. Lust is the self-focused desire for gratification of oneself *as an impersonal object* by the use of another person as an impersonal object of illicit desire. Lust rises as a self-destructive desire for the use of other people *as objects*, which degrades both their personhood and the order that sexual affection is ordered within the committed love of marriage.

[22]On the question of whether Jesus took up a sinless or sinful humanity, see my discussion in *Tempted for Us*, 10, 202-205. I think Rom 8:3 is clear that his *likeness* to sinful flesh marks the similarity, not the identity that he was sinful.

[23]Rom 12:3 warns Christians not to think of themselves more highly; some people are excessively self-abasing and face the temptation to think too lowly of themselves, forgetting to count the all-sufficiency of God's power, such as Barak in Judges 4:8.

[24]I do not here claim that Jesus only became aware of his divine identity at the Jordan baptism, but that there was some advance and public acknowledgment by God to be challenged by the devil in the wilderness. Jesus seems to have had knowledge of his divine identity as early as age twelve, when he claimed to have a unique relationship with God as his Father (Luke 2:41-52).

[25]George S. Painter, *The Philosophy of Christ's Temptation* (Boston: Sherman, French, and Co., 1914), 136.

[26]The conjunction of suffering and temptation is also noted by Marguerite Shuster, "The Temptation, Sinlessness, and Sympathy of Jesus: Another Look at the Dilemma of Hebrews 4:15", in *Perspectives on Christology: Essays in Honor of Paul K. Jewett* (ed. Marguerite Shuster and Richard A. Muller; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 205: "Temptation comes when the possibility presents itself of escaping or avoiding suffering (albeit temporarily) *in the wrong way* and with the knowledge that refusing evil will often lead to the increase of earthly suffering."

[27]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall: Temptation* (trans. Kathleen Downham; ed. Eberhard Bethge; New York: Touchstone, 1997), 134. Bonhoeffer, well-acquainted with suffering under the Nazi regime, writes that the temptation that is precipitated by suffering (whether serious sickness, poverty, pain, or various deprivations and tortures) is the temptation by a desire for relief from suffering, albeit relief by sinful means of abandoning God or committing some other crime to alleviate one's troubles.

[28]Bolstered by his example, the apostles Peter, James, and John willingly turned down the same path of suffering and martyrdom, having been preceded by the boldness of Stephen, who even prays for the forgiveness of his assailants as Jesus did from the cross.

[29]The argument in this section is a condensed form of chapters 3 and 12 in *Tempted for Us*. I am indebted to Gerald F. Hawthorne, *The Presence and the Power: The Significance of the Holy Spirit in the Life of Jesus* (Dallas: Word, 1991). The attribution of miraculous power in Jesus' ministry to the Holy Spirit is not detraction from the deity of God the Son (as in Adoptionism). The claim is that while God the Son remained fully God (divine), as a man he could only do divine works by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, in parallel with the prophets and kings before him, and the apostles and other Christians who followed him. With the exception of forgiving sin and making atonement (both of which are works tied to his divine authority and not power per se), all of Jesus' works were repeated by others through the power of the Spirit, including healings, provision of food, raising the dead, knowing others' thoughts, knowing special revelation from God, casting out demons, and walking on water. The difference is that others did these things in Jesus' name, but he did them as the Son of God, from his own authority, though as a man of the Spirit nonetheless. In this way, Jesus truly functions within the limitations of a human life, transcending the bounds only by the Spirit's enablement that are now extended to Christians who follow in Jesus' steps.

[30]Isa 61:1-10 is important for the way the foregoing servant songs and messiah testimonies are brought together to say that the Servant is the Messiah. By defining himself according to this passage, Jesus (and Luke) identifies himself with then entire pneumatological pattern of servant-messiah prophecies in Isaiah.

[31]Luke's presentation of Jesus' conception and development alongside John the Baptizer suggests to several interpreters that we should assume Jesus was filled with the Spirit while in the womb, just as John was (Luke 1:15, 41).

[32]One additional mode of divine aid that is evident in Jesus' temptations is unusual so I have left it out. In Mark's account of the wilderness temptations, angels appeared immediately after the devil departed. Perhaps this means that the visible manifestation of divine help was needed for Jesus, since the mere departure of the devil did not mean the temptations instigated by him had ended. More clearly is Luke's account of Gethsemane, where, in response to Jesus' prayer, an angel appeared to strengthen him (Luke 22:43-44). After the angel comes, Jesus seems to have found his resolve. Some copyists have omitted verses 43-44, but I am persuaded that the account is authentic. This extreme provision for an extreme need compares to the angelic appearances in Daniel and Acts, where men who were imprisoned or being tortured receive angelic visitations as a visible manifestation of divine presence and aid.

Who Is This Jesus? An Examination of the Christology of the Latter-day Saints

Travis Kerns

INTRODUCTION

Although Latter-day Saints[1] are found in all fifty states and in most countries around the world, most people, including Christians, know very little about them.[2] However, given the worldwide influence of the Latter-day Saints and their strong missionary endeavors, a better understanding of Latter-day Saint history and doctrine is becoming increasingly necessary. As Christians we need to know more about the theological convictions of those we are called to minister to, and as such, the purpose of this article is to introduce evangelicals to the basic theology of the Latter-day Saints and especially their Christology.

As noted, even though Latter-day Saints have been a part of the American landscape since the LDS Church was first founded in 1830, the Saints may be some of the most misunderstood persons in contemporary life. Indeed, for some in our society, Mormonism and Christian theology are sometimes identified, but nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the LDS Church often finds herself answering questions about multiple wives, secret rites inside temples, and racism. Indeed, a poll released in January, 2012 by The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life indicates "62% of Mormons say the American people know little or nothing about Mormonism and about two out of three Mormons say the American people as a whole do not see Mormonism as a part of mainstream American society."[3]

Mainstream Americans, though, are not the only persons who misunderstand Latter-day Saints. Some in the academy have misunderstandings as well. Francis Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen concluded in their landmark work, *The New Mormon Challenge*, "The traditional LDS theology described in many books on Mormonism is, on many points, increasingly unrepresentative of what Latter-day Saints actually believe."[4] One scholar at Brigham Young University, Daniel Peterson, agrees. Writing about works concerning other religious groups,

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Peterson argued,

> Now, this leads to another rule. It seems to me that one of the rules of doing comparative religion stuff is that when you restate someone else's beliefs, that restatement ought to be recognizable to the person whose beliefs you are restating. You ought to be able to go to that person and say, "Now is this what you believe?" and the person say, "Yes." The person might say, "That is not exactly how I would phrase it, but yeah, OK, given the change in language, that is what I believe." But if your intended target is always screaming, "But I don't believe that!" then the proper response is *not*, "Oh, yes you do!" This strikes me as a really, really illegitimate tool of comparative religion.[5]

It is clear from both a mainstream and an academic perspective, that misunderstanding is a significant problem in the study of the Latter-day Saints. Richard Mouw, in his recent work, *Talking with Mormons: An Invitation to Evangelicals*, offered a poignant reminder. He observed, "Yes, we must contend for the truth against all those who oppose the gospel. But that means we must be rigorous in making sure that we've discerned the truth about those against whom we contend."[6] Further, and better, understanding is needed.

THE PROBLEM OF SOURCE AUTHORITY

When seeking to understand any subject, primary source material (when available) is the best place to turn. The subject of Latter-day Saint Christology is no different. However, when approaching Latter-day Saint theological issues, a considerable problem comes quickly to the forefront: Can one discern official LDS Church doctrine and build an LDS systematic theology? For example, Brigham Young University professor Robert L. Millet proclaimed, "One meets with great difficult in categorizing or rubricizing Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet, or for that matter Mormonism as a whole."[7] He continued,

> It is not so easy to determine what is "traditional" or "orthodox" Mormonism. Orthodoxy has to do with a straight and proper walk, with appropriate beliefs and practices. In our case, it may or may not be a course charted by Joseph Smith or Brigham Young or some Church leader of the past. Some who claim to be orthodox on the basis of following the teachings of Brother Joseph—for example, members of polygamous cults—are not in harmony with the Church's constituted authorities and are therefore not orthodox. "When the Prophet Joseph Smith was martyred," President Harold B. Lee said in 1964, "there were many saints who died spiritually with Joseph. So it was when Brigham Young died; so it was when John Taylor died. We have some today willing to believe someone who is dead and gone and to accept his words as having more authority than the words of a living authority today."[8]

Millet added further, "The Church is to be governed by current, daily revelation."[9] In attempting to determine how one might utilize the words of a past leader, Millet commented, "To fix ourselves too tightly to the words of a past prophet-leader—even Joseph Smith—is to approximate the mindset of certain fundamentalist Protestant groups who reject modern divine communication in the name of allegiance to the final, infallible, and complete word of God found between the covers of the Bible."[10] Similarly, James Faulconer wrote, "the church neither has an official theology nor encourages theological conjecture."[11] He continued,

> As individuals, we may find a theology helpful to our understanding, but no explanation or system of ideas will be sufficient to tell us what it means to be a Latter-day Saint. For a Latter-day Saint, a theology is always in danger of becoming meaningless because it can always be undone by new revelation. Except for scripture and what the prophet reveals, there is no authoritative *logos* of the *theos* for Latter-day Saints, and given that the prophet can and does continue to reveal things,

> there is no *logos* of what he reveals except the record of those revelations. For LDS, the *logos* is both in principle and in practice always changing, as reflected in the open canon of LDS scripture. In principle continuing revelation precludes an account of revelation as a whole. Thus, finally our only recourse is to the revelations of the prophet since, speaking for God, he can revoke any particular belief or practice at any moment, or he can institute a new one, and he can do those things with no concern for how to make his pronouncement rationally coherent with previous pronouncements or practices.[12]

As Millet and Faulconer have explained, determining a specific set of orthodox LDS beliefs is incredibly difficult. From which sources, then, can LDS beliefs be deduced?

In answering the question, "How do you decide what is your doctrine and what is not?" Millet offered one formulation helpful to answer our original question concerning source authority. Millet wrote, "In determining whether something is a part of the doctrine of the Church, we might ask: Is it found within the four standard works? Within official declarations or proclamations? Is it taught or discussed in general conference or other official gatherings by general Church leaders today? Is it found in the general handbooks or approved curriculum of the Church today? If it meets at least one of these criteria, we can feel secure and appropriate about teaching it."[13]

Gospel Principles, a work published by the LDS Church, parallels Millet's assessment. In the chapter dealing with Scripture, *Gospel Principles* states, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints accepts four books as scripture: the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. These books are called the standard works of the Church. The inspired words of our living prophets are also accepted as scripture."[14] Discussing living prophets further, *Gospel Principles* explains, "In addition to [the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price], the inspired words of our living prophets become scripture to us. Their words come to us through conferences, the *Liahona* and *Ensign* magazine, and instructions to local priesthood leaders."[15] Similarly, Coke Newell wrote, "Revelations 'pertaining to the Kingdom of God' are recorded in the Scriptures—in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, *Doctrine and Covenants*, the *Pearl of Great Price*, in the General Conference talks given by general Authorities every six months; and in various other documents and official records of the church."[16]

Therefore, in assessing official Church doctrine, the works attributed as officially binding and declarative, as the Church, its leaders, and scholars, have defined them, will be used.[17] Also, when various LDS scholars or writers are surveyed, the opinions of those authors will be referenced as the opinions of those authors. For example, the works of Robert Millet will not be referred to as, and should not be thought to be, official statements of LDS Church doctrine. This line of thinking is even shown in the front matter of many books published by Latter-day Saint authors: "This work is not an official publication of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The views expressed herein are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the position of the Church."[18] Let us turn, then, to the question at hand: For a Latter-day Saint, who is this Jesus and is the Mormon Jesus the same as the Jesus of the Bible?

WHY THE FOCUS ON CHRISTOLOGY?

When studying various religions around the world, Christians are always interested to hear what others think about the claims of Jesus. Even more: how one views and thinks about Jesus Christ is a life and death matter and it distinguishes Christianity from all other religious views in the marketplace of ideas. Importantly, Jesus himself was interested in how humans answer this question when he asked the disciples,

as recorded in Matthew 16, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" Furthermore, as noted, due to the exclusive nature of the teachings of Jesus and the focus of the entire Bible on Jesus, one's Christology is vitally important. Passages like Acts 4:12 and John 14:6 make it abundantly clear that one's knowledge and acceptance of Jesus, as presented in the New Testament, are of utmost significance. Kevin Giles noted, "If we do not meet and know God in Christ, then we are without hope."[19] Gregg Allison wrote, "The church has historically believed that 'Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man in one person, and will be so forever.' His deity is demonstrated by his own claims supported by his divine attributes and miraculous activities. His humanity is demonstrated by the virgin birth and his human attributes, activities, relationships, trials, and temptations. One peculiarity of his humanity was sinlessness, but this did not make him something other than human. Along with affirming the two natures of Jesus Christ, the church has also insisted that it was necessary for him to be fully God and fully man if he was to accomplish salvation for all of humanity."[20] John Anthony McGuckin argued, "The essence of the Good News that is the Christian gospel is that freedom brought to the world in the community of Christ, by the Lord's life-giving incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection, and the capacity this saving mystery (for it is a unified whole) confers on the redeemed for the true knowledge of God that illuminates, transfigures and vivifies the believer."[21] Put simply, Christians show ultimate interest in a person's Christology because one's Christology has eternal implications.

LATTER-DAY SAINT CHRISTOLOGY

We must first ask whether Latter-day Saints and traditional Christians agree or disagree over Christological matters. Where, if any, is there agreement? Both sides agree that Jesus Christ was indeed an historical figure who lived two thousand years ago. Both sides agree that Jesus Christ called apostles, performed miracles, and offered specific religious and moral teachings. Both sides agree that Jesus Christ was tried by government officials, sentenced to death, actually died on a cross, and was literally raised from the dead on the third day. Both Latter-day Saints and traditional Christians share significant agreement on the historical nature of Jesus Christ. Is there, then, disagreement? If disagreement is found, over what issue(s) does the disagreement center? The disagreement found between Latter-day Saints and traditional Christians does not reside primarily over the historical person of Jesus—the disagreement resides primarily over the nature of Jesus.

Because the LDS Church is so often misunderstood and misrepresented and because Christology is so vitally important, the remainder of the present study will focus on the Christology of the LDS Church as it is presented by LDS Church leaders, by LDS Church approved curriculum, and by LDS scholars.[22]

LATTER-DAY SAINT CHURCH LEADERS ON CHRISTOLOGY

As noted earlier, a Latter-day Saint systematic theology is nowhere to be found. The nature of the LDS faith resists synthesis. However, numerous statements, proclamations, and talks have been given by LDS Church leaders since the LDS Church was founded in 1830, and a number of those statements, proclamations, and talks deal with the nature of Jesus Christ.

The first major statement by LDS Church leadership dealing with the nature of Jesus Christ was released on June 30, 1916, and is entitled, "The Father and the Son: A Doctrinal Exposition by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles."[23] The editors of *Ensign* magazine noted some issues had erupted during the early twentieth century as to how Latter-day Saints should understand various scriptural passages in which God the Father and Christ the Son are discussed as one and this confusion prompted LDS Church leadership to issue a statement. The editors wrote,

"In the early 1900s, some discussion arose among Church members about the roles of God the Father and Jesus Christ. The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued the following in 1916 to clarify the meaning of certain scriptures where Jesus Christ, or Jehovah, is designated as the Father."[24] The statement lists four different meanings when the term "Father" is applied to God or to Jesus Christ: "Father as a literal parent," "Father as creator," "Jesus Christ the Father of those who abide in his gospel," and "Jesus Christ the Father by divine investiture of authority."[25] As a literal parent, the term "Father" is applied to God the Father in the sense that he "is the literal Parent of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and of the spirits of the human race."[26] As creator, the term "Father" is attributed to both God and Christ in varying ways. The leaders noted,

> God is not the Father of the earth as one of the worlds in space, nor of the heavenly bodies in whole or in part, not of the inanimate objects and the plants and the animals upon the earth, in the literal sense in which He is the Father of the spirits of mankind. Therefore, scriptures that refer to God in any way as the Father of the heavens and the earth are to be understood as signifying that God is the Maker, the Organizer, the Creator of the heavens and the earth.[27]

As creator, the term "Father" is attributed to Jesus in the sense that, in creation, "Jesus Christ, whom we also know as Jehovah, was the executive of the Father, Elohim, in the work of creation."[28] Further, the leaders asserted, "Jesus Christ, being the Creator, is consistently called the Father of heaven and earth in the sense explained above; and since His creations are of eternal quality He is very properly called the Eternal Father of heaven and earth."[29] The third use of the title "Father" is applied to Christ specifically with reference to salvation. The leaders wrote, "If it be proper to speak of those who accept and abide in the gospel as Christ's sons and daughters—and upon this matter the scriptures are explicit and cannot be gainsaid nor denied—it is consistently proper to speak of Jesus Christ as the Father of the righteous, they having become His children and He having been made their Father through the second birth—the baptismal regeneration."[30] The fourth way in which Christ is referred to as Father is by "divine investiture of authority." Here, the members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles noted,

> A fourth reason for applying the title 'Father' to Jesus Christ is found in the fact that in all his dealings with the human family Jesus the Son has represented and yet represents Elohim His Father in power and authority. This is true of Christ in His preexistent, antemortal, or unembodied state, in which He was known as Jehovah; also during His embodiment in the flesh; and during His labors as a disembodied spirit in the realm of the dead; and since that period in His resurrected state.[31]

In an extremely telling concluding paragraph, the leaders wrote,

> Jesus Christ is not the Father of the spirits who have taken or yet shall take bodies upon this earth, for He is one of them. He is The Son, as they are sons or daughters of Elohim. So far as the stages of eternal progression and attainment have been made known through divine revelation, we are to understand that only resurrected and glorified beings can become parents of spirit offspring. Only such exalted souls have reached maturity in the appointed course of eternal life; and the spirits born to them in the eternal worlds will pass in due sequence through the several stages or estates by which the glorified parents have attained exaltation.[32]

What can be gleaned concerning the nature of Christ from this early statement of LDS Church leadership? First, Christ cannot be determined to be a literal parent as the first of the four uses

denotes. When Christ applies the title "Father" to himself, it must mean something different than that of a literal parent because only God (Elohim) carries that designation. Second, when Christ is referred to as Father in the context of creation, he is being referred to as the executive of the creation having been given the power, by God, to perform the act of creating/organizing the world. Third, when "Father" is applied to Christ, it is sometimes applied in terms of his being the saving father of those who follow him. Fourth, and the most telling for the present study, is the investiture of the title "Father" to Jesus Christ. From this fourth way the term "Father" is used, one must conclude that these Latter-day Saint leaders believed Jesus to be a being who was not, in the beginning, equivalent with God the Father. This is plain in the concluding paragraph (quoted above) to the entire exposition. God the Father is, in essence, greater than Jesus Christ because God has already undergone a resurrection and glorification, something Jesus had yet to undergo in his premortal existence.

The second major statement released by Latter-day Saint Church leadership came in the year 2000 and is entitled, "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles."[33] Though shorter and much less nuanced than the 1916 statement, this proclamation has been distributed throughout the LDS Church and is cherished by its members. One of the first phrases in the statement is declarative of who Jesus Christ is and is helpful to the present study. The proclamation states, "He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New. Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth."[34] Though concise and seemingly straightforward, this sentence is telling, especially when combined with the teachings from the 1916 statement. When paired with the statement released nearly a century earlier, the 2000 proclamation declares Jesus and God the Father to be separate beings, united in purpose, but not in essence, which is another point of clear departure from historic Christianity's affirmation of the Trinity.

In summarizing LDS Church leader statements concerning the nature of Jesus Christ, a few comments can be made. First, these two statements make Jesus Christ and God the Father two separate and distinct beings. Second, Jesus Christ and God the Father are not united in essence but only united in purpose. Third, Jesus Christ is subservient to (and less than) God the Father, not in terms of traditional intra-Trinitarian functional subordination, or, better, *taxis* (personal relations and ordering between the persons of the Godhead) but in terms of actual essence or nature. Because God the Father has existed longer than Jesus Christ and because God the Father had undergone resurrection and exaltation when Jesus Christ was born, God the Father is a greater being than Jesus in terms of his very nature.

LATTER-DAY SAINT CHURCH APPROVED CURRICULUM ON CHRISTOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, the LDS Church approved and printed curriculum *Gospel Principles* will be examined.[35] This manual is used for the purposes of adult Sunday school courses and is a standardized text throughout the entire LDS Church. *Gospel Principles* qualifies as an official statement of LDS Church doctrine because it is published by the LDS Church and is used in every local meeting house for teaching and instruction. It is not meant to be a statement of nuanced, systematic theology, but is meant to function as an adult Sunday school manual. Therefore, the statements found in *Gospel Principles* are purposefully succinct.

The discussion of Jesus Christ in *Gospel Principles* is set within the context of the premortal spirit world, a place Latter-day Saints believe all humans, including Jesus Christ, lived prior to being born on the earth.[36] Within this context, the manual reads, "When the plan for our salvation was presented to us in the premortal spirit world, we were so happy that we shouted for joy."[37] This plan of salvation, however, accounted for sin and the need for payment for that sin: "We

needed a Savior to pay for our sins and teach us how to return to our Heavenly Father. Our Father said, 'Whom shall I send?' (Abraham 3:27). Jesus Christ, who was called Jehovah, said, 'Here am I, send me' (Abraham 3:27; see also Moses 4:1-4)."[38] After Jesus Christ proclaimed his willingness to be the Savior, Lucifer stepped forward and made the same proclamation. *Gospel Principles* declares, "Satan, who was called Lucifer, also came, saying, 'Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor' (Moses 4:1)."[39] Continuing the storyline, the manual states, "After hearing both sons speak, Heavenly Father said, 'I will send the first' (Abraham 3:27). Jesus Christ was chosen and foreordained to be our Savior.... Heavenly Father chose Jesus Christ to be our Savior."[40] Similarly, a few chapters later, *Gospel Principles* devotes another section to its teaching on Jesus Christ. The manual notes, "Jesus is the only person on earth to be born of a mortal mother and an immortal Father. That is why He is called the Only Begotten Son. He inherited divine powers from His Father."[41] Further, *Gospel Principles* teaches,

> [O]ur wise Heavenly Father prepared a wonderful, merciful plan to save us from physical and spiritual death. He planned for a Savior to come to earth to ransom (redeem) us from our sins and from death. Because of our sins and the weakness of our mortal bodies, we could not ransom ourselves (see Alma 34:10-12). The one who would be our Savior would need to be sinless and to have power over death. There are several reasons why Jesus Christ was the only person who could be our Savior. One reason is that Heavenly Father chose Him to be the Savior. He was the Only Begotten Son of God and thus had power over death.... Jesus also qualified to be our Savior because He is the only person who has ever lived on the earth who did not sin. This made Him a worthy sacrifice to pay for the sins of others.[42]

From *Gospel Principles*, then, a limited (but important) set of beliefs may be drawn concerning Jesus. First, there was a time in history when Jesus was not the Messiah. Or, said slightly differently, there was a time in history when Jesus was not the Christ. Second, there was a time in history when Jesus and Lucifer competed for the title "Messiah." Latter-day Saints may argue that Lucifer would have never been chosen to be Messiah, so the competition was not completely open, however, the fact remains: Jesus and Lucifer both made requests of God the Father to be the Messiah. Third, God chose Jesus to be the Messiah at a specific point in the past because Jesus agreed to complete the plan for salvation according to God's determined means. Thus, Jesus is not the Savior by essence or nature but by but by God's choosing and, to use a phrase from the 1916 LDS Church leadership statement, by divine investiture.

LATTER-DAY SAINT SCHOLARS ON CHRISTOLOGY

The number of Latter-day Saint scholars has increased exponentially over the recent past, with the vast majority of contemporary professors and scholars receiving degrees from well-known and well-respected major universities. Non-members studying the LDS Church can be overwhelmed by the sheer amount of writing being produced by LDS scholars. Thus, choosing which scholars to survey is difficult. However, two scholars stand out in Latter-day Saint life as both well-known and well-respected: James E. Talmage and Robert L. Millet. Talmage served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles from 1911 until his death in 1933 and is most well-known in Latter-day Saint circles for his works *Jesus the Christ* and *The Articles of Faith*. Robert Millet is a professor at Brigham Young University, currently serving as Abraham Smoot University Professor and has previously served as dean of the School of Religious Education and as Richard L. Evans Chair of Religious Understanding. Millet has written over fifty books and hundreds of articles. Most Latter-

day Saints know of his work and likely have at least one of his works in their personal libraries. Millet's influence on contemporary Latter-day Saints cannot be overstated.

James E. Talmage

In the introduction to his work *Jesus the Christ*, Talmage wrote, "Instead of beginning our study with the earthly birth of the Holy Babe of Bethlehem, we shall consider the part taken by the Firstborn Son of God in the primeval councils of heaven, at the time when He was chosen and ordained to be the Savior of the unborn race of mortals, the Redeemer of a world then in its formative stages of development."[43] This reinforces the ideas presented earlier, namely, that Latter-day Saints believe there was a time in the past when Jesus was not the Christ and that there was a time in the past when he was named the Christ. Concerning the entire event, Talmage argued,

> Satan's plan of compulsion, whereby all would be safely conducted through the career of mortality, bereft of freedom to act and agency to choose, so circumscribed that they would be compelled to do right—that one soul would not be lost—was rejected; and the humble offer of Jesus the Firstborn—to assume mortality and live among men as their Exemplar and Teacher, observing the sanctity of man's agency but teaching men to use aright that divine heritage—was accepted. The decision brought war, which resulted in the vanquishment of Satan and his angels, who were cast out and deprived of the boundless privileges incident to the mortal or second estate. In that august council of the angels and the Gods, the Being who later was born in flesh as Mary's Son, Jesus, took prominent part, and there was He ordained of the Father to be the Savior of mankind.[44]

Here, then, Talmage defines for readers his understanding that, at one point in the past, Jesus was not the Messiah and then at some later point, Jesus was made the Messiah. The natural question here surrounds the Latter-day Saint use of the word "eternal" to describe Jesus as the Christ. Plainly, according to Latter-day Saint thought, Jesus has not always been the Christ, therefore how can he be described as eternal? Talmage answered, "As to time, the term being used in the sense of all duration past, this is our earliest record of the Firstborn among the sons of God; to us who read, it makes the beginning."[45] Similarly, in an interesting comment concerning John 1, Talmage argued,

> The passage is simple, precise and unambiguous. We may reasonably give to the phrase 'In the beginning' the same meaning as attaches thereto in the first line of Genesis; and such signification must indicate a time antecedent to the earliest stages of human existence upon the earth. That the Word is Jesus Christ, who was with the Father in that beginning and who was Himself invested with the powers and rank of Godship, and that He came into the world and dwelt among men, are definitely affirmed.[46]

Thus, it may be concluded that Talmage believed Jesus to be a being who existed "in the beginning with the Father," but understood in such a way that Jesus existed "at the beginning of the plans for the earth with the Father." Similarly, like the previously examined proclamations and *Gospel Principles*, Talmage is in agreement that, at some point in the past, Jesus was not the Messiah and then was made the Messiah because he showed a willingness to follow God the Father's plan.

Robert L. Millet

Millet's writings are well-researched, nuanced, and heavily theological. Much of his writing focuses on explaining Latter-day Saint thought to both members and non-members. Of greatest interest to the present study is his work on the doctrine of the Trinity.

In his article, "God and Man," Millet noted, "[Latter-day Saints] believe the doctrine of the Trinity represents a superimposition of Hellenis-

tic philosophy on the Bible and that the simplest and closest reading of the four Gospels sets forth a Godhead of three distinct beings and three Gods—not three coequal persons in one substance or essence."[47] He added, "If the Nicene theologians meant to convey that the Father and Son are possessed of the 'same substance' or 'same essence' in the sense that they are both possessed of divinity, of an equal divinity, of a divine nature, then Latter-day Saints would agree. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus Christ is God the Son. He was fully human and fully divine."[48] Similarly, he wrote,

> [Latter-day Saints] believe the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in that they constitute one Godhead. We believe they are one in that they possess all of the attributes of godliness in perfection. We believe they have the same mind, the same objective for humanity, the same purpose. We believe they are one in the sense that theirs is a covenantal relationship, a relationship established before the world was. Joseph Smith explained that this "everlasting covenant was made between three personages before the organization of this earth, and relates to their dispensation of things to men on the earth; these personages … are called God the first, the Creator; God the second, the Redeemer; and God the third, the witness or Testator." Finally, they are one in the scriptural sense that the love and unity among the three distinct personages is of such a magnitude that they are occasionally referred to simply as "God."[49]

He concluded, in agreement with James Talmage, "The one-ness of the Godhead, to which the scriptures so abundantly testify, implies no mystical union of substance, nor any unnatural and therefore impossible blending of personality. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are as distinct in their persons and individualities as are any three personages in mortality. Yet their unity of purpose and operation is such as to make their edicts one, and their will the will of God."[50]

A question naturally arises here: is this covenant between the three persons an everlasting, or eternal, covenant? In another work, Millet responded to such questions. He wrote, "My colleague Stephen Robinson has pointed out further that 'in both Hebrew and Greek the words for 'eternity' denote neither an endless linear time nor a state outside of time, but rather 'an age,' an 'epoch,' 'a long time,' 'world,' or some other such term – even a 'lifetime,' or 'a generation'—always a measureable *period* of time rather than *endless* time or timelessness.'"[51]

In summarizing Millet's view, a few points may be made. First, Latter-day Saints do not believe in the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Second, Latter-day Saints believe the three members of the Godhead to be united in various ways, but not in terms of union of being or a sharing of a common, simple, identical nature. Third, Latter-day Saints believe the three members of the Godhead are united through a covenant relationship, making them long-lasting promise keepers with each other, hence of union in purpose and aim but not a union in nature. Fourth, Latter-day Saints believe the Godhead to be eternally covenanted together, but not outside of time. The three members of the Godhead, and their relationship with each other, exist within time and the length of their relationship could, if such an instrument existed, be measured.

CONCLUSION

To say that Latter-day Saint Christology is complex would be an understatement. Latter-day Saints and traditional Christians can agree on the actual existence of an historical figure named Jesus of Nazareth and that this historical person lived, breathed, traveled, taught, was crucified, and was raised to life after death. About these issues there is no question. However, when it comes to the actual identity and nature of Jesus Christ, there is significant disagreement. Traditional Christianity understands Jesus Christ to be eternally one with the Father and the Spirit,

both in purpose and in being. Latter-day Saints understand that oneness to be in purpose. Traditional Christians believe Jesus to have always been the Messiah, in a timeless sense. Latter-day Saints believe Jesus was at one point in time past not the Messiah, and thus, likewise, Latter-day Saints believe Jesus was, at one point in the past, made the Messiah. Traditional Christians believe Jesus to be the second person within a Triune Godhead, a relationship characterized by more than mere covenant between the three persons. Latter-day Saints believe Jesus to be a member of the Godhead, a relationship, started at a point in the past, by covenant.

Thus, though there are points of agreement, there are significant points of disagreement. We disagree over the interpretation of scriptural passages, we disagree over what the early Christians believed, and we disagree over theological points. Of those disagreements, however, the disagreement over the nature of the central figure of the Christian faith is the most significant. Both Latter-day Saints and traditional Christians claim to follow Jesus. Both claim Jesus as their own. One has "Jesus Christ" in its church title. The other calls itself "the Christian church." But, in the end, who is this Jesus? One's answer to this question has eternal ramifications. Jesus is the second person of an ontologically united Trinity. Jesus is fully human and fully divine. Jesus is the lion and the lamb, the Alpha and the Omega. Jesus is, as Peter answered, the Christ, the son of the living God.

ENDNOTES

[1]Variously referred to as, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; the Mormons; and,the Latter-day Saints, in this article the abbreviation "LDS Church" will be used in general reference to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For members of the LDS Church, the terms "Latter-day Saints," "Saints," or "LDS" will be employed. The term "Mormon" will be used only when found in direct quotations from source material.

[2]The branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints being studied in this article is the largest of the Latter-day Saint groups and is headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. Other Latter-day Saint groups include the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (now renamed the Community of Christ) headquartered in Independence, Missouri; the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Strangite headquartered in Burlington, Wisconsin; the Restoration Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints headquartered in Independence, Missouri; and the Church of Christ with Elijah Message headquartered in Blue Springs, Missouri. For a short discussion of some of the various Latter-day Saint groups, see Frank S. Mead, Samuel S. Hill, and Craig D. Atwood, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States* (12th ed.; Nashville: Abingdon, 2005), 346-53. For a more extended discussion see Newell G. Bringhurst and John C. Hamer, eds., *Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism* (Independence, MO: John Whitmer, 2007).

[3]Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Infographic: Mormons in America" [cited 25 June 2012]. Online: http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Mormon/mormons-in-america-infographic.aspx.

[4]Francis Beckwith, Carl Mosser, Paul Owen, eds., *The New Mormon Challenge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 22.

[5]Daniel C. Peterson, "Easier than Research, More Inflammatory than Truth" [cited 7 October 2004]. Online: http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/conf/2000PetD.html.

[6]Richard J. Mouw, *Talking with Mormons: An Invitation to Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 24.

[7]Robert L. Millet, "Joseph Smith and Modern Mormonism," *BYU Studies* 29 (1989): 65.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]James Faulconer, "Why a Mormon Won't Drink Coffee but Might Have a Coke: The Atheological Character of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" (lecture, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 19 March 2003).

[12]Ibid.

[13]Robert L. Millet, *What Happened to the Cross? Distinctive LDS Teachings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 2007), 56. Millet also argued for the same sources of authority in another work co-authored with Gerald R. McDermott. Robert L. Millet and Gerald R. McDermott, *Claiming Christ: A Mormon-Evangelical Debate* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007), 31-32.

[14]The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Principles* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009), 45.

[15]Ibid., 48.

[16]Coke Newell, *Latter Days: An Insider's Guide to Mormonism, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (New York: St. Martins, 2000), 259.

[17]The use of Millet's system for the classification of material as authoritative does not lend authority to Millet. His system is being referenced due to his agreement with *Gospel Principles*, an official publication of the LDS Church. In a private discussion with a former LDS Mission President, two former LDS bishops, and three former LDS Stake Presidents, all six men agreed that the explanation of *Gospel Principles* and Millet concerning LDS source authority was also their personal understanding of the sources from which official beliefs may be gleaned. The names and geographical locations of service of the six men will be kept private per their request. Unless official church material is used for scriptural commentary, any commentaries referenced dealing with the four standard works should be understood to be the opinion of only the author(s) of the commentary and not official LDS Church statements. Although they are not official statements of belief, they nonetheless, at the very least, represent a popular understanding of official beliefs.

[18]Millet, *What Happened to the Cross?*, iv.

[19]Kevin Giles, *The Eternal Generation of the Son* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 15.

[20]Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 365.

[21]John Anthony McGuckin, ed., *We Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), xvii.

[22]The standard works, in a direct fashion, are being purposefully left out of this study. Statements by LDS leaders, LDS Church publications, and LDS scholars are replete with references to the standard works, therefore, the standard works will be consulted indirectly rather than directly.

[23]This statement was originally printed in the *Improvement Era* newspaper in August, 1916, but has been reprinted in a number of different publications. The most recent publication to reprint the doctrinal exposition was the April 2002 edition of *Ensign* magazine. See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "The Father and the Son", *Ensign* (April 2002): 13-18.

[24]Ibid., 13.

[25]Ibid., 14, 17.

[26]Ibid., 14.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., 17.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid., 18.

[33]See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles" [cited 28 June 2012]. Online: http://www.lds.org/study/living-christ.

[34]Ibid.

[35]The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Principles* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009).

[36]Ibid., 9-12.

[37]Ibid., 13.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., 15.

[41]Ibid., 53.

[42]Ibid., 59-61. Another manual used by Latter-day Saints, though in their homes instead of the local meeting house, is entitled *Gospel Fundamentals*. This manual contains the same teachings as *Gospel Principles*. See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Gospel Fundamentals* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002), 5-20.

[43]James Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1915), 3.
[44]Ibid., 8.
[45]Ibid.
[46]Ibid., 9.
[47]Robert L. Millet, "God and Man," in *No Weapon Shall Prosper* (ed. Robert L. Millet; Salt Lake City: Deseret, 2011), 352.
[48]Ibid., 353.
[49]Ibid., 354-55.
[50]Ibid., 356.
[51]Robert L. Millet, *Getting at the Truth* [cited 29 June 2012]. Online: http://gospelink.com/library/document/131982.

The SBJT Forum

Editor's Note: Readers should be aware of the forum's format. Gregg R. Allison, Christopher W. Morgan, Robert Peterson, and Zane Pratt have been asked specific questions to which they have provided written responses. These writers are not responding to one another. Their answers are presented in an order that hopefully makes the forum read as much like a unified presentation as possible.

SBJT: What errors have plagued the church with respect to the person of Christ throughout its history?

Gregg Allison: From its outset, the church has been plagued by heretical notions about its own Savior and Founder, the Son of God incarnate, Jesus Christ. Simply put, these heresies can be categorized according to four denials: (1) denials of the deity of the Son of God; (2) denials of the humanity of the incarnate Son; (3) denials of the two natures—divine and human—in the one person, Jesus Christ; and (4) denials of the distinctions between the Son and the other two persons of the Trinity.

With regard to (1), heresies that denied the deity of the Son of God were of two varieties. *Ebionism* insisted that Jesus was only a human being in whom the presence and power of God worked mightily. At the baptism of the holy and righteous Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, or the presence of God, descended upon this man, conferring upon him unusual powers and rendering him the Messiah. Accordingly, God was influentially active in the man Jesus, but there was no incarnation of the Son.

Arianism emphasized monotheism—the belief in only one God—and denied that this totally unique God could communicate, or share, his divine essence or attributes with anything or anyone else. Obviously, then, to imagine that the Son was God was wrong. Rather, God created a Son, and through this created Son, God created the universe and everything in it. Accordingly, the Son was the first of all created beings, the highest of all created beings, and the one through whom all created beings were created—but he was a created being nonetheless. Two implications arose from this Arian position. First, the Son was not eternal, because there was a time prior to his creation by God when the Son did not exist. Second, the Son has a nature that is different from that of God; that is, the Son is *heteroousios*—of a different

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(*hetero*) substance or essence (*ousios*)—not *homo-ousios*—of the same (*homo*) substance or essence (*ousios*)—as God. The Son is not God.

The early church condemned both Ebionism and Arianism as heresies and proclaimed as orthodox belief *the full deity of the Son of God*.

As for category (2), denials of the humanity of the incarnate Son were of two varieties. *Docetism*—from the Greek word *dokeō*, to *seem* or *appear*—maintained that Jesus only seemed to be a man. He was instead a kind of spirit being, only appearing to be a human being. It was against a prototype of this heresy that the apostle John warned, "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already" (1 John 4:2-3). Docetism flowered in the second century as a major tenet of Gnosticism, a complex of movements that decried physical realities while elevating spiritual realities. Accordingly, Gnosticism could not tolerate the notion of God, who is spiritual and thus good, becoming incarnate, or taking on a human body, which is physical and thus evil. Docetism, then, denied the humanity of the Son because he could not become incarnate.

A less extreme view, though still a heresy, was Apollinarianism, which while not completely denying the humanity of the Son in the incarnation held to a truncated notion of the human nature that the Son assumed. This heresy believed that in becoming incarnate, the Logos or Word of God (John 1:1) united with the human body of Jesus but did not unite with his human soul; rather, the place of his soul was taken by the divine Logos. Accordingly, the humanity assumed by the Word was not true human nature. Indeed, the incarnate God was fully divine but only partially human, possessing the material aspect of human nature but lacking a human immaterial aspect. Apollinarianism was condemned by the early church, which insisted that two distinct natures—one fully divine, one fully human—could unite together in one person. Indeed, the church warned that the Apollinarian God-$^{\text{partial}}$-man failed to accomplish the salvation of real and fully human beings.

The early church condemned both Docetism and Apollinarianism as heresies and proclaimed as orthodox belief *the full humanity of the incarnate Son of God*.

Turning to category (3), denials of the two natures—divine and human—in the one person, Jesus Christ, went in two directions. *Nestorianism* held two beliefs. First, Jesus Christ was composed of two distinct and independent persons—a divine person and a human person—who worked in conjunction with each other. Second, any true union of the divine nature and human nature would have necessarily involved God in change and suffering, which is impossible. Furthermore, such a real union of divine and human would have made it impossible for Jesus as a man to experience true human existence. Accordingly, Nestorianism denied that the divine nature and the human nature united in the one person, Jesus Christ.

Eutychianism (also called *monophysitism*, from *mono*, or one, and *phusis*, or nature; hence, "one nature") believed that the two natures of Jesus Christ, which were distinct natures before the incarnation, combined with each other in the incarnation to form one nature. According to the first version of this heresy, the divine nature so absorbed the human nature that the one resultant nature of Christ was essentially divine; a "**DIVINE**human" nature, so to speak. A second version held that the divine nature and the human nature fused so as to produce a hybrid of the two natures; a "$d^{h}i^{u}v^{m}i^{a}n^{n}e$" nature, so to speak. In either case, the early church insisted that after the incarnation, the God-man Jesus Christ had two complete natures that retained their respective properties while uniting in the one person.

The early church condemned both Nestorianism and Eutychianism as heresies and proclaimed as orthodox belief *the hypostatic union*: the God-man had two complete natures—a divine nature

and a human nature, both of which retained their respective properties—united in the one person, Jesus Christ.

Finally, category (4) was a denial of the distinctions between the Son and the other two persons of the Trinity. *Modalism* held that there is one God who is designated by three different names—"Father," "Son," and "Holy Spirit"—at different times, but these three are not distinct persons. Rather, they are different *modes* (hence, *mod*alism) of the one God. As Creator of the world and Lawgiver, God can be called "Father;" as the incarnate Jesus Christ, God can be called "Son;" as God in the church age, he can be called "Holy Spirit." Thus, God is Father, God is Son, and God is the Holy Spirit: one God with three names or modes, but not one God who eternally exists as three distinct persons. Monarchianism wrongly denied the distinctions between the Son and the other two persons of the Trinity.

The early church condemned modalism as a heresy and proclaimed as orthodox belief *the doctrine of the Trinity*: God eternally exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each of whom is a distinct person and fully God, yet there is only one God.

SBJT: Why is Christ the only way? Or what rationale does the Bible give for teaching that salvation is found in Christ and him alone?

Christopher Morgan: "Co-exist." Twenty-first century philosophical pluralism meets the American bumper sticker. Drivers with this bumper sticker may simply be urging people from all ethnicities, cultures, nations, and religions to relate to one another with civility, kindness, and love. If so, we Christians agree. After all, we follow a Lord who taught and demonstrated love for the outsider, even enemies. But my suspicion is that many affixed the "co-exist" bumper sticker on their cars to preach the gospel of philosophical pluralism (which rejects any notion that a particular ideological or religious claim is intrinsically superior to another).

In such a context, historic Christian convictions regarding "Christ as the only way" are intolerable for many people. But our convictions are not driven by a popularity barometer, but faithfulness to Scripture. So what rationale does the Bible give for teaching that salvation is found in Christ and him alone? Why is Christ the only way? The biblical portrait of this is so massive and detailed that volumes have been written on various aspects of this issue. But for the purposes of this forum piece, I will use a wide-angle lens on the relevant contours of the Christian worldview in hopes that this broad vantage point will help.

First, Christ as the only way is grounded on the biblical teaching that there is only one God, the triune God of the Old and New Testaments, who is creator, Lord, and judge. If there were more than one God, there would likely be more than one way to the gods. But the particularity of God points to the particularity of how God is known, followed, or embraced.

Second, Christ as the only way is grounded on the biblical teaching that the one true and living God has communicated with humanity. He has communicated truly, even if not exhaustively; and humans can understand, even if partially, who he is and how to relate to him. If truth was merely subjective and not rooted in God or eternal realities, then claims to exclusivity would be a stretch. But if the one true God graciously reveals himself to us, then seeking to understand and follow that revelation is not arrogant but marks of humility and faithfulness.

Third, that all of us are sinners, fall short of God's glory, and stand guilty before God also shapes how we view this issue. The biblical teaching on this is unambiguous: we cannot be our own way to salvation by being sincere, good, nice, or pleasant.

Fourth, that Christ is the only way flows from the biblical teaching that God is the covenant

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Lord who determines if and how he will relate to humans. He freely and graciously sets the terms of the covenant; he freely and graciously sets forth if and how he will forgive, justify, adopt, reconcile, redeem, or save sinners. Thus, not only can we humans not be our own way to salvation, we cannot devise our own way.

Fifth and very much related to the last point, Christ as the only way rests on the important truth that Jesus alone is able to serve as the Savior. He is uniquely able to save, as the fully divine and fully human mediator. He is uniquely able to represent us as the sinless and obedient second Adam. He is uniquely able to forgive us, as the obedient Son and the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. He is uniquely able to give us new life, as the resurrected one, the first-born from the dead. Thus, Christ is the only way because of Jesus' uniqueness. Numerous people died on crosses, but none but Jesus could save.

Sixth, Christ is the only way, in the sense of being the unique Savior. And Christ is the only way, in the sense that faith in Christ is the only way to receive the benefits of his saving work. The benefits of Christ's saving work do not flow to us through our good works, religious scrupulousness, or relational sincerity. Salvation comes only through Christ's work, by grace through faith. That Jesus is the object of our faith highlights his uniqueness, especially his deity (ultimate faith in someone other than God is idolatry) and utter worthiness. Indeed, that Christ saves through faith underlines both his sufficiency and our dependency, which both glorifies him as the giver and benefits us as the recipients.

Seventh, that Christ is the only way to salvation also assumes that those who do not have faith in Jesus are on another path, and not the one to salvation. All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. And all are justly condemned and punished by God. Thankfully, many embrace Jesus as Lord and will receive the blessings he has gained for them. Sadly, many do not and will not follow Jesus; and Jesus will consign them to hell, a place of punishment, banishment, and eternal death.

Why is Christ the only way? Maybe framing the question in reverse would be helpful: if other ways of salvation existed apart from Christ, what could they be or where could they come from?

- Could other gods bring such salvation, however it might be defined?
- Could we humans become good, religious, sincere, etc. and thereby become our own way?
- Could we devise our own way?
- Could there be something or someone else besides Jesus who could accomplish this for us?
- Could something other than faith in Jesus be the means to receive the benefits of his saving work?
- Could people who do not follow Jesus somehow receive salvation anyway?
- Or could the question be dismissed out of hand due to a lack of any real, objective truth?

Interestingly, the biblical portrait disrupts each of these possibilities and asserts that Christ is the only way. It does so by pointing to the oneness of God, the reality of objective truth, the universality of human sin, the nature of God's covenant Lordship, the uniqueness of Christ, the necessity of faith in Christ, and the horror of hell.

As the only way to salvation, Jesus is worthy of our love, trust, and worship. He is also worthy of our witness. May our recognition of Jesus' uniqueness burden our hearts for the lost and stir our feet to take the good news about him to our families, friends, neighbors, and the nations.

SBJT: How Does Scripture Relate the Person and Work of Christ?

Robert Peterson: Strengths also sometimes contain weaknesses. So it is with systematic theology. One of its strengths is that it focuses attention on one topic at a time. Our minds have trouble holding together

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the doctrines of the person of Christ—including his preexistence, incarnation, virgin birth, deity, humanity, and unipersonality—and the work of Christ—including his saving events, the biblical pictures that interpret those events, etc. So, for convenience, systematics separates the person and work of the Redeemer and studies them separately. This is more manageable and thus a strength. But it is also a weakness, for Scripture joins Christ's person and work.

The unity of the Redeemer's person and work is evident in Hebrews. I will demonstrate this by examining (1) Christ's threefold office in Hebrews 1; and (2) how his incarnation introduces each picture of his saving work in Hebrews 2.

First, let us examine Christ's threefold office in Hebrews 1, the classic text for illustrating Christ's threefold office of prophet, priest, and king. God ordained these three offices to minister to his Old Testament people Israel. Although he kept the offices distinct in the Old Testament, from the beginning he intended to unite them in the Messiah. The threefold office combines Christ's person and work. It points to his person—*he* is the ultimate prophet, priest, and king. It also points to his work—he *speaks* for God, *offers himself* as sacrifice, and *reigns* as king at God's right hand.

The Son of God is the great and final prophet whose revelation completes that of the Old Testament prophets, through whom God also spoke (Heb1:1–2). Peter speaks for all believers when he tells Jesus, "You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Therefore, we must heed Jesus our Lord and Savior when he teaches us in the gospels and speaks to us through his Spirit-endowed apostles who wrote the New Testament (in fulfillment of his prophetic predictions of John 14:26; 15:26–27; 16:12–15).

Hebrews 1 also presents the Son as the priest who "after making purification for sins . . . sat down at" God's right hand (1:3). His sitting indicates that, unlike Old Testament priests who never sat when making sacrifices, his work is finished. There is no other sacrifice for sin beside Jesus' offering of himself to God on the cross. And because of where he sat—at God's right hand, the place of greatest honor and authority—his work in perfect. It cannot be improved. And because his work is finished and perfect, it is effective to forgive sins. The vilest sinners find forgiveness if they sincerely repent and believe in Jesus as their substitute. Christians too easily forget that Christ's sacrifice is complete, perfect, and effective. When they sin, they sometimes beat themselves up spiritually in a form of "penance," as if that somehow atoned for their sins. It is right to be displeased with ourselves when we sin. But there is no other antidote to the poison of sin than Christ's sacrifice. We dishonor his death if we act otherwise. Let us sincerely confess our sins and take forgiveness and cleansing from God's hand (1 John 1:9) based on the unique work of God's Son, our Savior.

Mostly, however, Hebrews 1 is about Christ's coronation as king. He inherits the name of the divine Son (King) when he sits at God's right hand (1:3-4). In this way he surpasses the angels who, as creatures and servants of God, worship him (1:5-7). His throne lasts forever, his rule is righteous, and God has elevated him above all earthly monarchs (1:8-9). We, his people saved freely by his grace, gladly submit to his righteous rule over us. We love him and keep his commandments because he first loved us (John 14:15, 21, 23; 1 John 4:19). His perfect love for us drives away our fear of God's wrath (1 John 4:18). He, our strong king, keeps us safe in his care (John 10:28)!

Even a brief survey shows how Christ's threefold office links his identity (person) *and* saving accomplishment (work).

Second, let us examine how Christ's incarnation introduces each picture of his saving work in Hebrews 2. Three major pictures or metaphors of Christ's saving work appear in Hebrews 2: Christ as second Adam, victor, and high priest and sacrifice. The writer highlights the inseparability of Christ's person and work by introducing each picture of his saving accomplishment with a reference to his incarnation.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and forfeited much of their creational glory and dominion (2:7-8). But God sent "the last Adam" and "the second man" (1 Cor 15:45, 57) via the incarnation: the Son left heaven's glory and "for a little while was made lower than the angels" (Heb 2:9). He became a man so that by God's grace he could die to ransom "people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev 5:9; Heb 2:9). Consequently, he is now crowned with the "glory and honor" that our first parents lost. And, amazingly, "he is not ashamed to call … brothers" all who believe in him, but will bring them "to glory" (2:10, 11).

Next the writer portrays Jesus as *Christus Victor*, our mighty champion. Again, he begins with the incarnation: the Son shared "in flesh and blood" that he might die for us to "destroy the one who has the power of death … the devil" (2:14). The devil gained some control over death when he seduced our first parents to rebel against their Creator. But thanks be to God that one stronger than the devil loved us and gave himself for us to destroy the Evil One! Christ's death also delivers "all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (2:15). The "fear of death" here is the "fear" that "has to do with punishment" which "perfect love casts out" (1 John 4:18). God wants us to rejoice in our great Redeemer and to live as his loved daughters or sons, unafraid of his coming wrath.

The writer mentions the predominant picture of Christ's work in Hebrews when he speaks of him as high priest and sacrifice (2:16-18). Once more he begins with the incarnation: "Therefore he has to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God" (2:17). Christ's priesthood includes his making "propitiation for the sins of the people" (2:17) and his helping "those who are being tempted" (2:18). Hebrews 2 thus connects Christ's person and work when it introduces each picture of the latter by referring to his incarnation (2:9, 14, 17).

It is difficult for finite minds to consider multiple topics at once. Systematic theology, therefore, helps us by treating doctrinal topics one at a time. But this strength is also a weakness if we are not careful to put back together what God has joined in his word. Hebrews reminds us of the close linkage between Christ's identity and saving accomplishment. Chapter 1 shows that the Old Testament offices of prophet, priest, and king coalesce in the Messiah. And each time the author introduces a picture of Christ's work (in chapter 2), he precedes the picture with a reference to our Lord's incarnation. Systematics has its place, but let us be careful to heed Jesus' words (admittedly spoken in another context): "What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt 19:6).

SBTS: Because Muslims misunderstand the term, should we avoid calling Jesus the Son of God in sharing the gospel with them?

Zane Pratt: Islam explicitly denies that God could ever have a son. The Qur'an categorically states, "He begetteth not nor was begotten" (112:3).[1] A later-written passage in the Qur'an spells this out even more clearly:

> O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which he conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three" – Cease! It is better for you! Allah is only One God. Far is it removed from His transcendent majesty that He should have a son (4:171).

The Christian understanding of Jesus as the Son of God has been a traditional point of attack by Muslims against the

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Christian faith. Historically, when Muslims have heard Christians call Jesus God's Son, they have thought in physical terms, and they have assumed that the Christian Trinity is God the Father, Mary the Mother, and Jesus the Son, with God and Mary having sexual relations in order to produce the Son. The Qur'an itself says:

> And when Allah saith: O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah? He saith: Be glorified! It was not mine to utter that to which I had no right (5:116).

Because of this consistent misunderstanding, many Christian workers in the Muslim world have been hesitant to call God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ or to call Jesus the Son of God. Some have gone so far as to assert that the language of Father and Son is simply an analogy from human experience, and that these terms can be discarded entirely in favor of other divine titles which carry less risk of misunderstanding. Some would even follow this course of action in translating the text of Scripture. Is this appropriate?

In answering this question, several things must be kept in mind. First of all, the filial relationship of Jesus as Son to God the Father is not simply an analogy to human relationships. If anything, it is the other way around. The relationship between God the Father and Jesus as his Son is absolute and primary, and human father-son relationships are derived from this fundamental relationship within the Godhead (Eph 3:15). There are no other words or expressions that can substitute for "Father" and "Son" without a significant loss of essential biblical meaning. There are other truths about Jesus that can be expressed using other language. However, this foundational truth about the relationship between Jesus and His Father can only be expressed using familial language.

Second, it must be remembered that more is at stake than simply a misunderstanding of Christian terminology. While it is true that Muslims are offended by an idea that Christians themselves do not believe (that God's Fatherhood of Jesus is sexual in nature), they also are offended by the very heart of what Christians do believe—that Jesus is God himself in human flesh. The ultimate offense to Muslims is the Incarnation. As indicated by the Qur'anic passages quoted above, Islam stresses the uniqueness and unity of God to the point that both the Trinity and the Incarnation are explicitly ruled out. Islam is the only major world religion to emerge after Christianity, and it contains a built-in apologetic against Christian teaching. The Qur'an presents an exalted picture of Jesus. It acknowledges the virgin birth (3:47). It calls Jesus both the messiah and the word of God (3:45). It describes amazing miracles done by him (3:49). However, based on the passages quoted above, orthodox Islam has always rejected any idea of the Deity of Jesus as the ultimate sin of *shirk*: the sin of associating anyone or anything with God as his equal. It should be added that Islam also rejects the idea that Jesus died on the cross, interpreting a passage in the fourth surah (4:157-158) as meaning that Jesus himself did not die but was taken by God alive into heaven. These are not issues of misunderstanding. These are issues of explicit disagreement over the central beliefs of the Christian gospel. No matter how well things are explained, the gospel taught by the word of God inevitably contradicts Islam. The gospel should always be presented courteously and graciously, with all potential sources of confusion explained carefully, but in the end any presentation of the gospel that is not offensive to Islam is a false gospel.

Scripture calls Jesus by a number of names and titles. He is, for example, called Messiah, Lord, the Word, the Good Shepherd, and the Bread of Life, among other things. Calling him by one of these titles is not wrong. In speaking about Jesus with Muslims, it may be wise on a given occasion to utilize one of these other names or titles when there is no opportunity to clear up what "Son of God" means. However, it is essential to remember that even though Christians and Muslims utilize some

of the same titles for Jesus (Messiah and the Word, for example), they mean very different things by them. In Islam, those titles never imply Deity. In historic Christian teaching and proclamation, the idea of Deity is inseparably entwined in those titles. If, in order to avoid offense, we use a title for Jesus which communicates a sub-biblical understanding of Christology to Muslims, we have miscommunicated, even if the word itself is biblical.

Abuse does not take away use. This is a basic principle of logic. The fact that the term "Son of God" can be misunderstood does not automatically mean that it should never be used, especially when it is used so often on Scripture, when it expresses such a fundamental element in the identity of Jesus, and when there is no substitute that even comes close to communicating the same content. It is absolutely appropriate to correct any misunderstanding of the term. No Christian thinks that there is anything sexual about God's Fatherhood or Jesus' Sonship, and that needs to be stated clearly when talking with Muslims. However, there is a world of difference between explaining a misunderstanding and avoiding a central element in the gospel. In sharing the gospel with Muslims, at some point the relationship between the Father and the Son must be explained, and it must be explained using biblical language. In translating the Bible, it is always appropriate to use a footnote to explain what the terms "Father" and "Son" do and do not mean, but in the main text no one has the right to change the language which the Holy Spirit inspired. The offense of the Deity of Christ must be squarely faced and embraced, or the biblical gospel is lost. Jesus is the Son of God, fully God and fully man. Any other understanding or presentation of Jesus is fatally unbiblical. If the Deity and Divine Sonship of Jesus are denied or concealed, Jesus is dishonored and the gospel is overthrown. Only God the Son can save us from our sin.

ENDNOTES

[1]All Qur'anic quotations are taken from Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran.*

Book Reviews

Christian America?: Perspectives on our Religious Heritage. Ed. by Daryl C. Cornett. Nashville, TN: B&H, 2011, 353 pp., $14.99 paper.

Americans are deeply divided concerning the role that religion currently plays in American public life. Concern about religion in public life is driving renewed interest in the history of our nation's founding, especially Christianity's role in it. Witness a sampling of recent books that address these subjects, including John Fea's *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?* (Westminster John Knox, 2011), Thomas Kidd's *God of Liberty* (Basic, 2010) and *The Founding Fathers and the Debate over Religion in Revolutionary America* (Oxford University Press, 2011), and John Wilsey's *One Nation Under God?* (Pickwick, 2011). Daryl Cornett has added a "counterpoint" book to the growing collection of books on these topics, one which presents a variety of viewpoints and rebuttals under one cover. David Barton, Jonathan Sassi, William Henard, and Daryl Cornett each provide their own perspectives on the role of Christianity in American life in this book, with George Marsden contributing a forward.

The discussion in this engaging book centers on whether or not America is a "Christian nation." Marsden opens the book by highlighting the need to carefully define one's terms when addressing this question. Some might use such a label to mean nothing more than that most of its earliest citizens "were of [a] generically Christian heritage," while others might use it to assert that most of America's citizens or earliest leaders "were practicing Christians of a certain sort." On the other hand, some might call America a Christian nation to assert that "the nation's government [is] officially Christian in some specified ways." Some who assert this might only use the label "Christian America" in a "descriptive sense," thus affirming that "its ethos and laws were predominantly, or at least substantially, shaped by a broadly Christian heritage." Others might go further and press the point that "those laws and practices that were considerably shaped by a Christian heritage were therefore 'Christian' in the normative sense of being examples that

Christians today ought to follow" in national life (xvii). The various ways individuals may use the label "Christian nation" highlights the complexity of engaging the "Christian America" issue.

The essays of the four authors fall on a continuum, with Barton arguing that America is a "distinctly Christian" nation and Sassi arguing that America is a "distinctly secular" nation. Henard and Cornett seek mediating positions, with Henard arguing that America is "essentially Christian" (closer to Barton's position) and Cornett arguing that America is a "partly Christian" nation. The sharply contrasting positions of Sassi and Barton illuminate the two fundamental approaches that can be taken in answering the "Christian America" question.

David Barton asserts in his chapter that America is a Christian nation, which by his definition is "a nation founded on Christian and biblical principles, whose society and institutions have been largely shaped, molded, and influenced by those principles" (4-5). Barton sees Protestantism as the purest expression of biblical Christianity, and he argues that America's republican form of government grew out of the seedbed of Protestantism, with Montesquieu and Edmund Burke in apparent agreement (8-15). Barton credits Protestantism with breaking the medieval societal synthesis, eventually resulting in the separation of church and state in America (15-20). He also credits the principles of Protestantism with producing religious voluntarism, which "secures religious toleration and rights of conscience" (20-24), along with other aspects of America's civic life. Barton reinforces his argument by quoting assertions from a vast number of historical sources that America is a Christian nation in one sense or another. His chapter contains almost four hundred footnotes altogether, and readers will feel that weight of his "Christian America" position when reading his selected quotations. Whether one believes that America is a "Christian nation" or not, all must agree that a large number of America's political leaders and leading intellectuals from the time of its founding have believed that it is.

In contrast to Barton, Jonathan Sassi argues that America was founded as a uniquely "secular" and "religiously eclectic" nation by design (102). Sassi asserts in his chapter that the founding fathers established the newly-formed government in America to be completely disentangled from ecclesiastical life, in contrast with most European countries. The founders did not seek to establish any particular religion in the Constitution, giving the nation a decidedly "secular" nature. According to Sassi, "the Framers of the United States Constitution chose a deliberately secular path in the interest of national unity" (103). Sassi asserts that American notions of religious freedom and toleration, along with the presence of diverse religious beliefs and practices in American life from the beginning, are enough to show the "distinctly secular" nature of America.

Henard and Cornett argue for mediating positions between Barton and Sassi, with Henard's position differing little from Barton's, though more vaguely stated. Cornett stakes out a more clear thesis, namely, that "the primary shaping ideology of the Revolutionary period was that of the European Enlightenment" (263). Christian influences played a role in establishing America, but non-Christian thought had a much bigger role. Cornett argues for his position in part by asserting that the Americans' "rebellion" against Great Britain is a clear indication of "secular Enlightenment theory in regard to politics" (263). Echoing the position of historian Mark Noll and others, Cornett asserts that Americans were swept up into the Revolutionary fervor by Enlightenment thinkers in America and Enlightenment-accommodated clergy like John Witherspoon (281-285). According to Cornett, "Those Christians who supported physical resistance against the tyranny of Britain generally turned to Enlightenment rhetoric for validation, propped up by poor exegesis and application of the Bible" (285). Such an assertion ignores the well-established Puritan rejection "the divine right of kings" and the theological tradi-

tion of righteous resistance to tyranny found in Reformed Protestantism. Cornett also ignores the reality of English legal traditions adopted in America which were profoundly influenced by British Christianity and which provided a large part of America's legal and judicial framework.

Cornett's highlighting of Enlightenment influences in America's founding generation is not without merit, but one must be careful not to emphasize the influence of the Enlightenment in a way that devalues the role that Christianity has played in Western socio-political development, including in the development of America. The best nations on earth "during this present evil age" are a mixture of good and evil. America is no exception, exceptional though it may be, and yet it is all too common to minimize the role that Protestant and evangelical Christianity has played in making America great.

The Christian roots of America beg to be more fully explored, for the factors in a nation's political and societal development are extremely complex. For those wishing to begin such an exploration, a number of books abound, but Cornett's *Christian America?* is a great place to begin. Its "counterpoint" format is especially helpful for accentuating the many different perspectives on the idea of "Christian America" that are common among evangelical scholars today.

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Dictionary of Christian Spirituality. Ed. by Glen G. Scorgie. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011, 864 pp., $39.99 cloth.

Zondervan's *Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, released in 2011, provides an up-to-date and accessible reference for an ever-expanding area of study. The *Dictionary* consists of two parts: a series of thirty-four essays covering particular biblical foundations, theological loci, historical periods, and even social-science interests. Each article, generally six to seven pages in length, surveys key literature and provides bibliographies for further research. The second part of the work contains dictionary entries ranging from several paragraphs to several pages on topics, movement, and individuals related to spirituality.

The articles of part one offer helpful summaries of critical issues in the academic study of spirituality. Glen Scorgie's introductory article overviewing Christian spirituality touches on the significant areas of the discipline: the ubiquitous-yet-slippery concept of spirituality; the narrower Pauline usage of "spiritual"; the integral relationship between theology and piety; the historical continuity of piety throughout the church's history; etc. (27-33). Charles Nienkirchen's essay on prayer includes an impressive collection of historical Christian positions (166-72). Robert Mulholland's treatment of spirituality and transformation is noteworthy for its biblical reflection. Bruce Hindmarsh's tracing of the contours of evangelical spirituality (146-52) accomplishes much in a short space.

The dictionary articles, which comprise the bulk of the volume, are generally accurate, succinct, and helpful. Simon Chan's overview of Quietism traces the significant seventeenth-century authors, theological commitments, and later evangelical appropriations, but also includes a critique of the tradition. Related articles on significant Quietist authors such as Miguel de Molinos, Madam Guyon, and François Fénelon list key writings along with even-handed assessments of their influence. Articles on key spiritual classics are present: Todd Johnson's treatment of *The Cloud of Unknowing* is spot-on and Bruce Demarest's overview of the *Theologia Germanica* is helpful, yet major works such as Augustine's *Confessions* or Thomas á Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* are surprisingly absent.

The *Dictionary* contains articles on the major figures one would expect to find: Augustine,

George Fox, Brother Lawrence, Teresa of Avila, and Thomas Merton. Yet the work also contains several figures one might not expect such as Johann Sebastian Bach, Hannah Hurnard, Brennan Manning, Flannery O'Connor, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Kalistos Ware. Twentieth-century authors, collectors, and analyzers of spirituality like Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, and Urban Holmes are present, as are psychological writers like Norman Vincent Peale and M. Scott Peck.

The *Dictionary* contains an impressive collection of articles on specialized spiritual movements including Celtic spirituality, Quaker spirituality, Methodist spirituality, and Russian spirituality. Naturally there is some unevenness—some of these articles are disappointing. Apart from mentioning Bunyan, who is treated as a contemplative, there is little distinctively "Baptist" in Glenn Hinson's article on Baptist spirituality. By contrast, Paul Peucker's treatment of Moravian spirituality traces its key distinctives with admirable brevity.

Some articles, while certainly well-written and interesting, seem to fall outside the book's scope, including Dudley Woodberry's treatment of Sufism, Bruce Demarest's article on midlife transition, and Mary Wilkinson's survey of children's literature.

Zondervan's *Dictionary* fills a helpful niche in contemporary reference works on spirituality. It is certainly broader in scope than *The New Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (2005) or *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* (1993), though these latter works tend to have more substantive articles (compare Bernard McGinn's treatment of mysticism in the *Westminster* dictionary with Evan Howard's article in the Zondervan work). Overall the Zondervan *Dictionary* is a fine work, and its breadth is its most significant strength.

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LDS in the USA: Mormonism and the Making of American Culture. By Lee Trepanier and Lynita K. Newswander. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012, 166 pp., $24.95 paper.

Trepanier and Newswander's addition to the growing corpus of Mormon studies is an attempt by the authors to show the significant links between the development of culture in the United States and the birth, growth, and development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The authors claim that "Mormons have played a substantial role in the shaping of the social, cultural, political, and religious makeup of the United States, a role that is neither conspiratorial nor marginal and that has not been properly acknowledged in the academy or by the general public. This book is intended to remedy this deficiency" (1).

Chapter one is a brief, albeit helpful, summary of the way Latter-day Saints have been portrayed, and have portrayed themselves, in the American media. Surveying the Osmonds, Disney animator Don Bluth, Glenn Beck, Pixar co-founder Edwin Catmull, Stephanie Meyer, and Stephen R. Covey, Trepanier and Newswander offer a glimpse into the ways in which Latter-day Saints put their theology into practice outside the walls of the local meetinghouse. Chapter two is devoted solely to the historical issue of plural marriage and the ramifications felt by both American culture and the LDS Church. The chapter also offers a concise history of fundamentalist Latter-day Saints who still practice plural marriage. Chapter three discusses the nature of Latter-day Saint political aspirations and offers summaries of the political careers of Joseph Smith, former Michigan governor George Romney, former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, former Utah governor and former United States ambassador to China Jon Huntsman Jr., and United States Senator Harry Reid. Chapter four summarizes some of the differences between traditional, orthodox Christianity and the theological beliefs of Latter-day Saints, and offers a

brief analysis of the political leanings of average Latter-day Saints. Chapter five is meant to argue one simple point: Latter-day Saint religion is the most American religion in the United States.

The main point of the work, that Latter-day Saints have not been given proper attribution for their contributions to American culture and politics, is interesting and altogether worthy discussion. Trepanier and Newswander are particularly helpful in their discussions concerning Latter-day Saint influence in contemporary media and Latter-day Saint political leanings. Mormons have exerted visible influence in many areas of American life in recent decades, but on the whole, this argument is overdone.

There are some faults regarding minor details. For example, the authors incorrectly title the LDS Church "The Church of Latter-day Saints" and incorrectly identify Lilburn Boggs as the governor of Illinois. The proper title of the LDS Church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Lilburn Boggs was governor of Missouri.

The work seems to have an unacknowledged agenda. It repeatedly calls for social and religious tolerance in American culture. The entire work is riddled with authorial calls for tolerance, yet the work is touted as an explanation of the ways in which Latter-day Saints have contributed to American culture. Though discussions concerning tolerance may be needed, those discussions are outside the scope of this work as set by the authors. The authors seem to have a proverbial ax to grind regarding this subject (and regarding numerous others).

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My Name is Patrick: St Patrick's Confessio. Trans. by Pádraig McCarthy. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2011, 42 pp., $6.50 paper.

It was C.S. Lewis who once argued that for every modern book a person reads, he or she should read two from the past. His reason for arguing thus was to avoid chronological snobbery:

Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. And that means the old books. All contemporary writers share to some extent the contemporary outlook … Nothing strikes me more when I read the controversies of past ages than the fact that both sides were usually assuming without question a good deal which we should now absolutely deny. They thought that they were as completely opposed as two sides could be, but in fact they were all the time secretly united—united *with* each other and *against* earlier and later ages—by a great mass of common assumptions.... The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books.

One of the challenges, though, to reading some of the oldest Christian literature, namely, that from the patristic era is finding this material in contemporary, readable translations. For example, Irenaeus' *Against Heresies*, in some ways the most profound theological treatise by a Greek-speaking author in the second century, still lacks a modern translation. On the other hand, the fifth-century *Confession* of Patrick has not, however, lacked for translations. Since the 1990s, there have been five or six good English translations. This new one by Pádraig McCarthy is somewhat different, though. It was done for the Saint Patrick's *Confessio* Hypertext Stack Project, an online resource dedicated to the investigation of the historical and contemporary significance of Patrick of Ireland (see Anthony Harvey and Franz Fischer, eds., *The St Patrick's* Confessio *Hypertext Stack*, www.confessio.ie [Dublin: Royal Irish

Academy, online since September 2011]).

What is particularly exciting about this project is its determination to give people access to the historical Patrick, who needs differentiating from the legendary Patrick to whom medieval authors attributed such things as teaching the Trinity by means of the Irish shamrock and the expulsion of all snakes from Ireland. The site contains John Gwynn's transcription of *Liber Ardmachanus* (*The Book of Armagh* [Dublin/London, 1913), the fundamental study of the only manuscript copy of Patrick's *Confessio* in Ireland (there are seven others extant, in England and France). The main Latin text on the website is Ludwig Bieler's "canonical" critical edition of the *Confessio*, which is translated into a variety of European languages (English, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, and German). Students of Bieler's text can use hyperlinks to access images of the relevant sections of the eight manuscripts of the *Confessio* to evaluate the decisions Bieler made with regard to variants in Patrick's text. The site also contains the most comprehensive bibliography of Patrician studies available (http://www.confessio.ie./more/bibliography_full#).

McCarthy's translation itself is well executed and accurately conveys Patrick's authentic voice, the voice of a man so gripped by the love of Christ that he gave himself body and soul to reach the Irish with the gospel. Moreover, this print translation is an excellent entrée into a fabulous cornucopia of resources that enable the reader to encounter one of the most remarkable early Christians.

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Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine. By Khaled Anatolios. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011, 322 pp., $39.99 cloth.

Contributing to the growing stream of Nicene and Trinitarian scholarship, Khaled Anatolios, professor of historical theology at Boston College, has provided a helpful introduction to the Trinitarian doctrine of several prominent Christian theologians of the fourth and fifth centuries. *Retrieving Nicaea* is a condensed version of the systematic thought of Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine, set in contrast to various anti-Nicene contemporaries. Anatolios recognizes that the critical importance of these theologians for the development and triumph of the pro-Nicene tradition. Their defense of the Nicene formulation, Anatolios argues, did not derive from arcane speculations, but rather involved a coherent interpretation of the entire Christian experience.

The burden of this book is to demonstrate that in order properly to understand Trinitarian doctrine one must observe how it came to be formulated in the councils of Nicea and Constantinople and how such formulations were interpreted in the immediate aftermath of those councils (1). Anatolios insists that it is not enough to simply know *what* Nicene theology is. In addition to knowing what Nicene theology is, one must be aware of *how* Nicene theology was formulated. What were the premises and presuppositions that led the pro-Nicene tradition to their theological conclusions? As the title indicates, Anatolios beckons contemporary theologians to 'retrieve' Nicea by tracing the logic of Trinitarian doctrinal development by re-performing the acts of understanding and interpretation that led to those statements (1).

In a unique proposal, Anatolios distinguishes between two theological commitments of the fourth and fifth centuries, the unity of will (evident in the thought of Arius, Asterius, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Eunomius of Cyzicus) and the unity of being (evident in the thought of

Alexander of Alexandria, Marcellus of Ancyra, and Apollinaris of Laodicea). This suggestion differs somewhat from other recent proposals from Joseph Lienhard, Michel Barnes, and Lewis Ayres. While this proposal affords certain insights, it certainly has its limitations, its simplistic nature being the most apparent. However, it appears that Anatolios is aware of his proposal's limits and is disciplined enough to not push the hermeneutical device too far.

Following his proposal of unity of will and unity of being, Anatolios provides a systematic analysis of three pro-Nicene theologians, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine. Each of these chapters offers a useful investigation into the theological concerns that influenced each of these pro-Nicene theologians. The chapter on Athanasius, a condensed version of a previous work, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought,* provides a well-researched, yet basic, introduction to Athanasius's Trinitarian theology. The history of Christian doctrine in the fourth century cannot be comprehended without reference to Athanasius, since his writings were fundamental to the development of the Christian understanding of the Trinity and the incarnation. Anatolios presents the basic lines of Athanasius's theology with clarity and charity.

Anatolios provides a lucid presentation of the Trinitarian theology of Gregory of Nyssa, though this chapter would have been much stronger if Nyssa's thought had been set in the context of Cappadocian theology as a whole. Without discussing the Cappadocian achievement as a whole Anatolios risks divorcing Gregory from his context.

Finally, Anatolios's chapter on Augustine serves as a particularly helpful guide to Augustine's Trinitarian theology in *De Trinitate*. The three chapters on the systematic thought of Athanasius, Gregory, and Augustine are immensely helpful in tracing the Trinitarian logic of three prominent theologians. These chapters will help the reader understand the underlying the theological commitments that led Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine to champion the pro-Nicene tradition.

A great strength of this book lies in its systematic approach and analysis of three of the most prominent fourth and fifth century Trinitarian theologians. This approach, in contrast to the standard diachronic method, allows Anatolios to explore deeply the theological commitments and the Trinitarian logic of these theologians which led them to pro-Nicene theologies. The systematic methodology employed by Anatolios allows him to discuss theological themes and concepts that would be restricted in a historical sketch of fourth and fifth century historical theology. In addition Anatolios' method further enables him to demonstrate that the Nicene tradition involves far more plurality and complexity than is frequently depicted by traditional historical narratives.

Although this distinctive systematic approach is a great strength, it appears to come at the cost of historical background, something that Anatolios is aware of and mentions in his introduction. Despite the disclaimers, more connections between historical and dogmatic theology are needed. The thesis of the book would have been strengthened if Anatolios had included more historical data. A reader who is looking for a historical sketch of the Trinitarian theology of the third and fourth centuries should look elsewhere.

This is nevertheless a valuable work. This book will prove immensely helpful to those who wish to gain insight into the premises and logic that led to the development of the pro-Nicene tradition. In addition this book demonstrates the significant influence that confessional theology and theological presuppositions have upon the task of exegesis. To understand more fully the life of the mind of the great Trinitarian theologians of the early church, I wholeheartedly commend this book to you.

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Ten Popes Who Shook the World. By Eamon Duffy. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011, 151 pp., $25.00 cloth.

Eamon Duffy, professor of the history of Christianity at Cambridge University, has produced an accessible and highly readable account some of the most important phases in church history by viewing them through the lens of the careers of ten popes who changed the course of world history. Change history they did. The papacy has been one of the most powerful institutions in the world history. The actions undertaken by the popes and the ideas that developed around them shaped world history in profound ways.

Duffy's longer masterpiece, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (Yale, 2006), is among the finest histories of the long expanse of church history available. This shorter work, which originated as ten talks on BBC Radio, draws on the excellence and insights of *Saints and Sinners*, but stands impressively on its own as an excellent introduction to a vastly important part of church history. It is also wonderfully illustrated.

Duffy's ten popes are the Apostle Peter, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, Gregory VII, Innocent III, Paul III, Pius IX, Pius XII, John XXIII, and John Paul II. Duffy acknowledges that Peter was not a pope in the later sense of the word, but explains how the biblical, historical, and legendary material combined to establish an ideal that the bishops of Rome developed into a powerful moral symbol of their office and authority. Duffy recognizes also that there were other popes besides these who similarly shook the world and who arguably could have been included in this work.

The book is weighted disproportionately toward modernity. Four of the nine popes held their office in the nineteenth or twentieth century. In support of Duffy's selection, the world in which the papacy operated changed so dramatically in the last two hundred years that this selection is reasonable enough. And the emphasis on the modern era is quite valuable. Insight into the vast changes brought about by modernity is in some important respects more clearly visible when viewed through the experience of the Vatican. Duffy, a Roman Catholic, is sympathetic but not uncritical. He faults the papacy, for example, for its reactionary response to the emergence political liberalism, especially democracy.

The gathering of ecclesiastical authority into a single bishop in the western church, Duffy explains, was a rather natural response of churches battling heresy, division, and diversity during the first three centuries of the church's existence. Truth claims, legitimacy, and credibility seemed to depend on unity. But Duffy's interest resides less in the origins of papal authority than in the ways in which the popes "shook the world" and reshaped it.

Duffy's arguments in each chapter are clear and insightful. Duffy for example argues that Leo the Great, who was pope from 440 to 461, "invented the papacy as we know it" (47). As the political empire of Rome collapsed in the fifth century, Leo transformed the very notion of Rome and put it to use in the service of the church. Rome would no longer serve as a symbol of a pagan empire—Leo reinvented Rome as a symbol of a religious empire led by the bishop of Rome. As Romulus and Remus had founded a pagan Rome that endured a thousand years, Leo argued, so Peter and Paul refounded Rome as the head of the Christian church, which would endure forever. Duffy argues compellingly also that as the classical world was crumbling around Gregory the Great (pope from 590 to 604), he "unwittingly created Europe" by sending a mission to England, resulting finally in the conversion of northern Europe and the establishment of churches that acknowledged the authority of Rome.

As Protestants, we tend to view the papacy as an institution that was committed to authoritarianism in principle and advancing tyranny in practice. And often it was. Duffy however offers a less obvious but no less insightful interpretation: The papal struggles with secular rulers from the medieval

era to the modern age helped establish freedom from an authoritarian secular state. State authority indeed generally exceeded church authority in most eras, even in church matters. Papal authority fell far short of its vaunted claims. Popes did not even possess broadly control over the appointment of bishops—arguably their most important claim to authority—until the nineteenth century.

So Gregory VII's eleventh-century conflict with emperor Henry IV should be viewed not merely in terms of the assertion of papal authority. Gregory sought to establish the church's right to rule its own affairs—in this case, the right of the pope to appoint bishops in papal lands. To the extent that Gregory succeeded, he struck a blow for an independent church. "Under this overbearing autocratic pope," Duffy concludes, "human freedom took one small, uncertain step forward" (69).

These autocratic popes energetically pressed their theoretical claims and gained considerable ground. But even during periods of the papacy's greatest temporal power in the middle ages, the pope's actual control over the church often met rather severe practical limits. In the modern era, however, the real authority of the papacy diminished dramatically. One of the great ironies of papal history, Duffy explains insightfully, is that as the papacy lost temporal power in the modern era, it finally attained the real power over the church that it long had sought.

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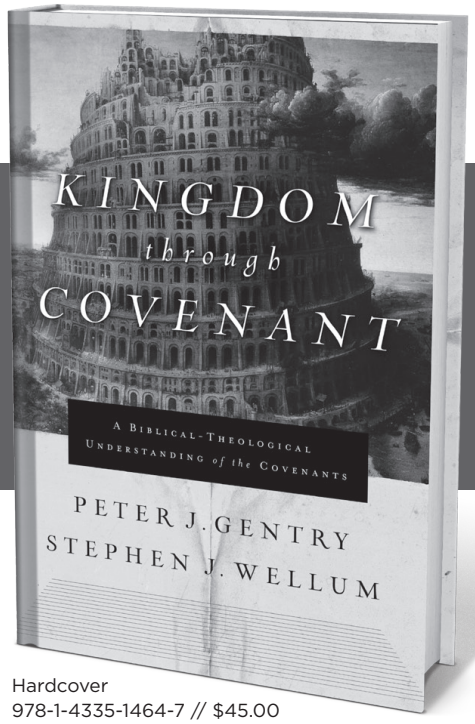

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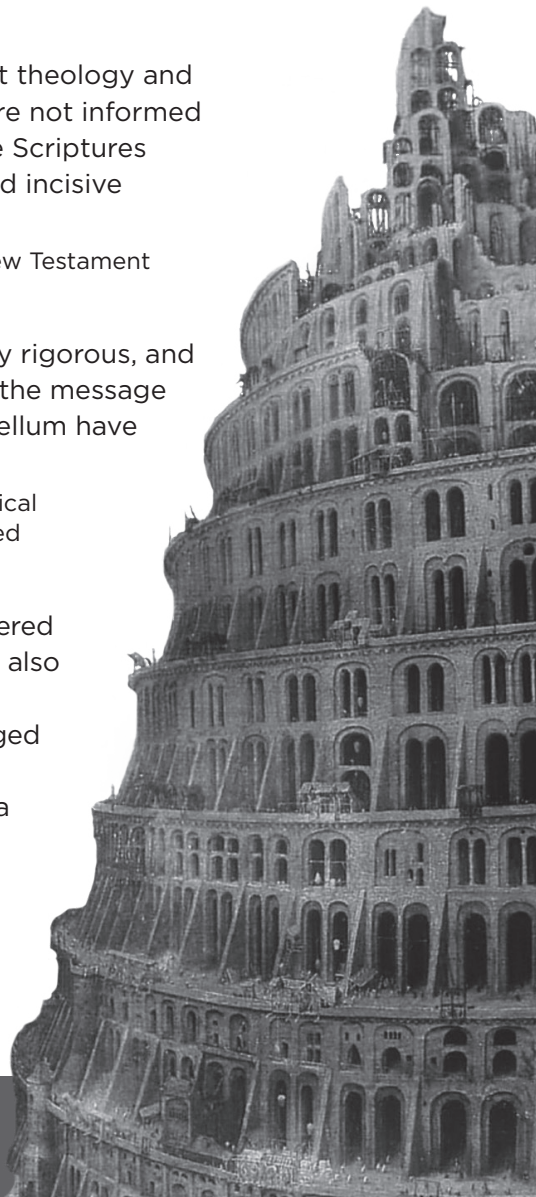

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