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*of Theology and Politics*

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# The Evangelical Review of Theology and Politics

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# The Evangelical Review of Theology and Politics

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Edited by  
Calvin L. Smith  
Stephen M. Vantassel

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The *Evangelical Review of Theology and Politics* subscribes to the historic decisions of the early church councils. We hold dearly to the deity of Christ, the virgin conception, salvation through Jesus Christ, and the Trinity. We also believe in the unity of Scripture and consider the Bible as the final authority on all issues of faith and practice. This high view of Scripture requires submissions to be underpinned by a thoughtful biblical and theological analysis. The Editors also welcome non-Evangelical contributors to submit critiques of Evangelical political and social thought, providing they are suitably respectful of our values and beliefs, and that submissions are of interest and relevance to the aims and readership of the journal. Articles appearing in the journal do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors.

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## Introduction

Calvin L. Smith

### *About*

The Evangelical Review of Theology and Politics is an online journal. All articles and reviews are published online as PDF files, and are downloadable by subscribers.

All articles and reviews are published in real time. Once peer reviewed and typeset they are immediately published online and the subscribers notified by email. This takes the place of a printed journal. Subscribers can print-off articles and bind them in a folder for future reference. This means there is no delay between acceptance and publication of an article: the material becomes available immediately to the academic and Church communities.

What you have here are the articles, review articles, and reviews from 2014 collected together in a single edition for subscribers to print-off, or consult in electronic mode on Kindle or an e-Book reader.

In addition all past volumes of The Evangelical Review of Society and Politics are available for subscribers from the website: [www.theevangelicalreview.com](http://www.theevangelicalreview.com)

The Evangelical Review of Theology and Politics is a peer-reviewed, online, subscription journal exploring God’s revelation to humanity in the form of Jesus Christ. Scholarly submissions that are suitably respectful of the Evangelical Christian tradition are welcomed and invited from across the disciplinary spectrum: Evangelical theology, biblical studies, biblical theology, politics, society, economics, missiology, homiletics, discipleship, preaching, conversion, salvation, atonement, redemption, the Church et al.

### *About...*

*The Evangelical Review of Society and Politics* and *The Evangelical Review of Theology and Politics*, are international peer-reviewed journals exploring Evangelical issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. The purpose of the journal is to bring an international and scholarly Evangelical analysis to bear upon various social and political issues of national and international interest. The Editors are committed to presenting the full spectrum of Evangelical thought to provide readers (whether Evangelical or those analysing Evangelical phenomena) with thoughtful, scholarly debate and original research that is biblically based and theologically sound.

### *Core Values*

*The Evangelical Review of Theology and Politics* subscribes to the historic decisions of the early church councils. We hold dearly to the deity of Christ, the virgin conception, salvation through Jesus Christ, and the Trinity. We also believe in the unity of Scripture and consider the Bible as the final authority on all issues of faith and practice. This high view of Scripture requires submissions to be underpinned by a thoughtful biblical and theological analysis. The Editors also welcome non-Evangelical contributors to submit critiques of Evangelical political and social thought, providing they are suitably respectful of our values

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### *Submissions*

Scholarly submissions that are suitably respectful of the Evangelical tradition are invited from across the disciplinary spectrum. Given the broad and interdisciplinary nature of the subject matter covered by the journal, contributors should refer to our core values and submission instructions, which provide further details of material suitable for inclusion.

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Evangelical Review of Theology and Politics  
**Articles**







# The Principle of Civil Strife and the Exclusion of Religious Reasoning from the Public Square

**Shannon Holzer**

**KEYWORDS:**

Philosophy	Philosophy of Religion	Philosophy of Law
Religion and Politics	Religious Epistemology	Legal Philosophy
Religious Persecution	Ethics	

**ABSTRACT:**

It has been argued that citizens should use restraint in using certain types of reasoning while operating in the public square. Specifically, religious reasoning has been singled out as one that should not be used for the creation of legislation. Though there are a multitude of reasons for this, one rationale that is often cited is the claim that religion is divisive and dangerous. This assumption has become engrained in the legal community, and it has for the most part gone unchallenged. This article argues that religious reasoning is not always divisive and dangerous. It often promotes peace and unity. Moreover, secular reasoning does not always lead to peace, and it has in fact lead to some of the most heinous violations of human rights in history. Furthermore, to use the avoidance of potential division and civil strife to exclude certain types of public reason as a guiding principle is too broad. The principle, if applied universally, would exclude not only religious

reasons, but it would also exclude historical, scientific, and legal reasoning. Thus, it would be wise to allow religious reasoning just as the other sources of justification are allowed until certain claims show themselves to be false or in violation of others' rights. This is asking for no more than what other sources of justification are afforded.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Pierre Manent, much of the history of liberalism has been the attempt to escape “decisively the power of the singular religious institution of the Church...”<sup>1</sup> Much like a beat reporter who knows that controversy arouses the passions and is much more likely to hit the front page than the fact that society as a whole is intact, those who tell the story of church and state often tell the sordid tale of crusades, inquisitions, and witch trials.<sup>2</sup> One result of this has been a push towards strict separation of religion and state. Whereas depicting the interaction of church and state as a problem directs the focus towards division, power plays, and irrational beliefs, it equally directs it away from religion's ability to unify, encourage charity, demand justice, and provide hope. It is very rare indeed that one hears the positive accounts of religion's interaction with the state. The purpose of this article is to point out that much of the legal landscape perceives religious reasoning as divisive and dangerous. Further, I propose to show that this need not be the case. Religious reasoning can be understood to unify and promote peace. Finally, this article will show that abandoning religious reasoning for secular reasoning does not necessarily result in unity and peace. The same conflicts of which religious reasoning is

1 Pierre Manent, *An Intellectual History of Liberalism*, Translated by Rebecca Balinski (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995), 114.

2 Leo Strauss framed the discussion of church and state as a problem. The majority of literature on the subject works from this perception. This perception of the interaction of church and state as problematic focuses on certain correlatives such as civil strife, irrationality, close-mindedness, and oppression.

accused are present and often worse with secular reasoning.

## THE COURTS' PERCEPTION OF RELIGION

Several court decisions and dissents reveal how engrained the perception of religion as a divisive force has become entrenched in the minds of many in the legal community. This understanding is not new. In 1943 Justice Frankfurter's dissented in *West Virginia State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette* by writing:

The great leaders of the American Revolution were determined to remove political support from every religious establishment. They put on an equality the different religious sects — Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Huguenots — which, as dissenters, had been under the heel of the various orthodoxies that prevailed in different colonies. So far as the state was concerned, there was to be neither orthodoxy nor heterodoxy. And so Jefferson and those who followed him wrote guaranties of religious freedom into our constitutions. Religious minorities, as well as religious majorities, were to be equal in the eyes of the political state. But Jefferson and the others also knew that minorities may disrupt society. It never would have occurred to them to write into the Constitution the subordination of the general civil authority of the state to sectarian scruples.<sup>3</sup>

For Frankfurter where there is disagreement between religion and state laws the state wins; lest there be civil unrest.

One year later, in the case *Prince v. Massachusetts*, Justice Murphy expressed his perception of religion in his dissent by writing:

No chapter in human history has been so largely written in terms of persecution and intolerance as the one dealing with religious freedom. From ancient times to the present day, the ingenuity

3 *West Virginia State Bd. of Educ. v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943), 653.

of man has known no limits in its ability to forge weapons of oppression for use against those who dare to express or practice unorthodox religious beliefs.<sup>4</sup>

According to James Hitchcock, starting with *Everson v. Board of Education* the courts “adopted a consistent view that religious strife was a danger to the nation and needed to be controlled.”<sup>5</sup> In delivering the Court’s opinion over state funded transportation of children to Catholic schools Justice Black wrote:

A large proportion of the early settlers of this country came here from Europe to escape the bondage of laws which compelled them to support and attend government favored churches. The centuries immediately before and contemporaneous with the colonization of America had been filled with turmoil, civil strife, and persecutions, generated in large part by established sects determined to maintain their absolute political and religious supremacy. With the power of government supporting them, at various times and places, Catholics had persecuted Protestants, Protestants had persecuted Catholics, Protestant sects had persecuted other Protestant sects, Catholics of one shade of belief had persecuted Catholics of another shade of belief, and all of these had from time to time persecuted Jews. In efforts to force loyalty to whatever religious group happened to be on top and in league with the government of a particular time and place, men and women had been fined, cast in jail, cruelly tortured, and killed. Among the offenses for which these punishments had been inflicted were such things as speaking disrespectfully of the views of ministers of government-established churches, nonattendance at those churches, expressions of non-belief in their doctrines, and failure to pay taxes and tithes to support them.<sup>6</sup>

Justice Black’s Old World history is nightmarish to say the least. If one perceives the history of church and state in this fashion, one would

4 *Prince v. Massachusetts*, 321 U.S. 158 (1944), 175-176.

5 James Hitchcock, *The Supreme Court and Religion in American Life, Volume II: From “Higher Law” to “Sectarian Scruples”* (Princeton, Princeton University Press 2004), 49.

6 *Everson v. Board of Education of Ewing TP.*, 330 U.S. 1 (1947), 5-6.

conclude that the solution or prevention of such atrocities would be strict separation. Black goes on to suggest that the very same horrific events caused by religion came to America with the colonists. Black writes:

These practices of the old world were transplanted to and began to thrive in the soil of the new America. The very charters granted by the English Crown to the individuals and companies designated to make the laws which would control the destinies of the colonials authorized these individuals and companies to erect religious establishments which all, whether believers or non-believers, would be required to support and attend. An exercise of this authority was accompanied by a repetition of many of the old world practices and persecutions. Catholics found themselves hounded and proscribed because of their faith; Quakers who followed their conscience went to jail; Baptists were peculiarly obnoxious to certain dominant Protestant sects; men and women of varied faiths who happened to be in a minority in a particular locality were persecuted because they steadfastly persisted in worshipping God only as their own consciences dictated. And all of these dissenters were compelled to pay tithes and taxes to support government-sponsored churches whose ministers preached inflammatory sermons designed to strengthen and consolidate the established faith by generating a burning hatred against dissenters. These practices became so commonplace as to shock the freedom-loving colonials into a feeling of abhorrence. The imposition of taxes to pay ministers' salaries and to build and maintain churches and church property aroused their indignation. It was these feelings which found expression in the First Amendment. No one locality and no one group throughout the Colonies can rightly be given entire credit for having aroused the sentiment that culminated in adoption of the Bill of Rights' provisions embracing religious liberty.<sup>7</sup>

This strong language continued to influence cases that specifically reached for strict separation.

The Supreme Court utilized the ideas of separation from *Everson v. the Board of Education* in *McCullum v. Maryland*. The Court's majority

7 Ibid., 6.

believed that the “commingling of sectarian with secular instruction in the public schools”<sup>8</sup> violates the Establishment Clause. Justice Frankfurter delivered and partially justified the opinion on the grounds of religious divisiveness.

The preservation of the community from divisive conflicts, of Government from irreconcilable pressures by religious groups, of religion from censorship and coercion however subtly exercised, requires strict confinement of the State to instruction other than religious, leaving to the individual’s church and home, indoctrination in the faith of his choice.<sup>9</sup>

Given this perception of religion as dangerous, it is no wonder the courts have steered towards separation.

This perceptual starting point has driven much of the debate over the use of religious reasoning in the public square. Is it possible that religious reasoning may have an acceptable place in a liberal democracy? The goal of the following section is to show that the current legal culture does not have to perceive religious reason as divisive and potentially dangerous. Thus, if one wants to relegate it to the private sphere, she must justify doing so for different reasons.

## RELIGIOUS REASON AS UNIFYING

I pointed out that many scholars and federal court judges enter into the discussion of church state relations from the schema of the theologico-political problem. One problem that federal courts assume is that religion is divisive. Divisiveness is not unique to religious reason; thus, unless restraint is placed on all divisive sources of justification, to do so only in

8 *McCullum v. Board of Education*, 333 U.S. 203 (1948).

9 *Ibid*

religious cases may be unreasonable. This is not intended to deny that divisions do arise with religious reasoning. However, this is intended to show that historically religion has shown the ability to unify people; and when this is taken into account, it has a mitigating affect. I am making the modest claim that religious reason does not *necessarily* entail division or danger. To show this modest claim requires only one counter example; however, I shall endeavor to provide more than that.

History *lessons* are replete with examples of religious wars, inquisitions, and witch hunts.<sup>10</sup> However, *history* is replete with examples of brotherhood and charity that have been the result of religious reasoning and practice. By focusing on one aspect that is correlated with religious thought, the courts ignore the greater picture of theologico-political relations.

On the evening of December 24th, 1914 British troops heard singing from the trenches on the opposing side of the battlefield of the western front. Though the lyrics were in German, the British soldiers recognized the song as *Silent Night*. British soldiers joined in with their enemies from across the battlefield; thus, the *Christmas Truce* had begun. One of the British troops described the onset of the peace thusly:

They finished their carol and we thought that we ought to retaliate in some way, so we sang 'The first Noël', and when we finished that they all began clapping; and then they struck up another favorite of theirs, 'O *Tannenbaum*'. And so it went on. First the Germans would sing one of their carols and then we would sing one of ours, until when we started up 'O Come All Ye Faithful' the Germans immediately joined in singing the same hymn to the

10 See Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2003), and *God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades* (New York, Harper One, 2009). Stark uses these two works to challenge the portrayal of Religious history (particularly Christian history) in a negative light. Stark writes the following about the crusades:

"The thrust of the preceding chapters can be summarized very briefly. The Crusades were not unprovoked. They were not the first round of European colonialism. They were not conducted for land, loot, or converts. The crusaders were not barbarians who victimized the cultivated Muslims. They sincerely believed that they served in God's battalions." 248.

Latin words ‘*Adeste Fideles*’. And I thought, well, this was really a most extraordinary thing - two nations both singing the same carol in the middle of a war.<sup>11</sup>

The following morning a German soldier delivered a Christmas tree to the center of the battlefield known as “No Man’s Land.” Before long an impromptu armistice broke out in celebration of the holiday. This peace came in the face of charges of treason of those who participated in it. One German soldier who participated in this treasonous act of peace said, “It was a day of peace in war...It is only a pity that it was not a decisive peace.”<sup>12</sup>

During the short time of peace, the two sides took the time to bury the dead that littered No Man’s Land. Single graves were shared by British and German soldiers while chaplains from both sides shared in the duty of providing religious rights for the dead.<sup>13</sup> The enemy combatants celebrated a religious holiday together, sang songs of praise together, and mourned and prayed together. The celebrations also included playing soccer, exchanging gifts, and the sharing of meals. On the British line’s eastern flank Muslim allies fired at a Germans while they celebrated. Once they learned about that which was happening in their enemies trenches, they showed due respect to those celebrating. In this case, the religious holiday resulted in a short lived peace even between those of differing faiths.

On September 11th, 2001, four airliners were hijacked and used to attack American civilian and military targets. These terrorists were motivated by their religious beliefs. The hijackers’ actions strengthened many people’s perception of religion as a divisive and dangerous practice. This is what the prevailing schema allowed into their perceptual framework. What religious critics did not perceive for the most part has gone unspoken.

11 Jay Winter and Blaine Baggett, *The Great War: And the Shaping of the 20th Century* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996) 97.

12 Malcolm Brown, Shirley Seaton, *Christmas Truce: The Western Front 1914* (Pan Grand Strategy Series, 1999) I.

13 See Vikram Jayanti, *The Christmas Truce* (The History Channel, 2002).

Later that evening, both houses of Congress bowed their heads for a moment of silence. One of the members, who stood in the front row, could be seen making the sign of the cross. This moment of silence by one of the three branches of government was never denounced as a misuse of governmental authority that might have a coercive effect on those who watched it. Nor did anyone cry out that the practice of religion was what caused the act of terrorism, thus, Congress should restrain themselves lest they resort to the same terroristic type actions. Instead, it was described as “an act of unity.”<sup>14</sup> Immediately following this moment of silence, the two bipartisan houses began to sing *God Bless America*. Whether Congress planned to do this or whether it was reaction to the trauma that arguably the most diverse city on the planet had just experienced, Americans as well as other nations were unified in calling out for God’s blessing. Both houses were univocal in believing that something terribly evil had just been committed, and even the atheists among them respected their public display of religiosity.

The Christmas truce and the national appeal to God on 9/11 are not the only examples of unity that religion may bring. Religion unifies cultures to cultures and individuals to individuals. When American law permitted practice of slavery in the southern states, many Catholic churches made no distinction between slave and master. Though in civil society the black man was perceived as inferior to the white man, while at mass, there was no segregation between the two races. According to the church, all were perceived as equal in the sight of God.<sup>15</sup> Many Catholic churches were unified with other denominations of Christianity in the abolitionist movement. Their reasoning was unequivocally religious.

There was disagreement between the many congregations and the pro-slavery southerners who often used religious arguments to justify the slave trade. In the south, many slave owning Catholics resisted the

14 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Izb459vJ-8Q>.

15 See John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2003).

church's official teachings<sup>16</sup> concerning the practice.<sup>17</sup> However, as time passed, the churches became more and more decidedly abolitionist.<sup>18</sup> As a result of their reasoning, the religionists became more unified in their belief about the nature of humanity and the moral nature of the practice of slavery. Catholics in both the North and South were unified in their denial of the scientific theory of polygenesis. This was the belief that the black man was not merely another race, but instead a completely other species. John McGreevy wrote:

One Mississippi bishop specifically urged local Jesuits to criticize the “abominable idea of the plurality of races,” and Savannah’s Bishop Augustin Verot, a staunch defender of slavery, later urged the world’s bishops to denounce theories positing a spurious “white humanity” and “Negro humanity.”<sup>19</sup>

It goes without saying that a large portion of the discussions over slavery included religious reasoning.

16 Pope Eugene IV, *Sicut Dudum: Against the Enslaving of Black Natives from the Canary Islands*, (1435). <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Eugene04/eugene04sicut.htm>. At the end of this papal bull, the Pope commands the following:

“And no less do We order and command all and each of the faithful of each sex, within the space of fifteen days of the publication of these letters in the place where they live, that they restore to their earlier liberty all and each person of either sex who were once residents of said Canary Islands, and made captives since the time of their capture, and who have been made subject to slavery. These people are to be totally and perpetually free, and are to be let go without the exaction or reception of money. If this is not done when the fifteen days have passed, they incur the sentence of excommunication by the act itself, from which they cannot be absolved, except at the point of death, even by the Holy See, or by any Spanish bishop, or by the aforementioned Ferdinand, unless they have first given freedom to these captive persons and restored their goods. We will that like sentence of excommunication be incurred by one and all who attempt to capture, sell, or subject to slavery, baptized residents of the Canary Islands, or those who are freely seeking Baptism, from which excommunication cannot be absolved except as was stated above.”

17 See Fr. Joel S. Panzer, “The Popes and Slavery: Setting the Record Straight,” <http://www.cfpeople.org/apologetics/page51a003.html>. Fr. Panzer writes:

“From 1435 to 1890, we have numerous bulls and encyclicals from several popes written to many bishops and the whole Christian faithful condemning both slavery and the slave trade. The very existence of these many papal teachings during this particular period of history is a strong indication that from the viewpoint of the Magisterium, there must have developed a moral problem of a different sort than any previously encountered.”

18 McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 55.

19 *Ibid.*

The debate over God's will and slavery was not the only consideration that colored the argument. The Southern economy was bound up by the practice of slavery. Moreover, the immediate emancipation of millions of slaves would flood the south with unemployed and uneducated citizens. Religious reasoning was arguing against the strong secular force of economic necessity. George Marsden writes:

Therefore, by the end of the eighteenth century, with changing views of the rights of individuals reinforced by revolutionary ideology, many Americans began to question the anomaly of slavery. After the Revolution, some churches in both the North and the South took stands condemning slavery and slave owning. However, such stands prevailed only in areas where the economic and social reasons for perpetuating slavery were not strong. Hence, slavery was gradually eliminated in the North after the Revolution. In the upper South, however, where antislavery sentiment was strong for a time, both churches and politicians soon found they would lose their constituencies if they took a strong stance. In the Deep South, more economically dependent on the slavery system, abolitionism never had a chance.<sup>20</sup>

When the economic variable was taken out of the picture, the prophetic voice of religious reasoning was less likely to be ignored or relegated to the private sphere.<sup>21</sup> The North and South's perceptual experience of religious reasoning concerning the practice of slavery became clearer and more univocal as the economic lens was lifted. While racism still exists in the United States, the predominant religious and political voices are

20 George M. Marsden, *Religion and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (USA, Wadsworth, 2001) 77.

21 In 1854, Senator Mason argued for the silencing of the religious abolitionist movement. He argued:

"...I understand this petition to come from a class who have put aside their character of citizens. It comes from a class who style themselves in the petition, ministers of the Gospel, and not citizens. ...Sir, ministers of the Gospel are unknown to this Government, and God forbid the day should ever come when they shall be known to it. The great effort of the American people has been, by every form of defensive measures, to keep that class away from the Government; to deny to them any access to it as a class, or any interference in its proceedings."

See Senator Mason, "Statement in the Senate, March 14, 1854," *Right of Petition: New England Clergymen* (Washington, D.C." Buell and Blanchard, 1854), 5.

in unison on the subject of slavery, that it was immoral and a stain on American history.

## MORALITY AND JUSTICE

As mentioned earlier, scholars and federal court judges describe the history of church and state in ways that imply that the inclusion of religious reasoning with state policy leads to injustice and atrocities. Though Robert Audi is congenial to religious reason, he believes that due to religious wars it is best that religionists apply restraint when it comes to voting on coercive policy. I mention Robert Audi specifically because he is a Christian, and that he perceives issues of church and state largely through the same schema as many secularists. I intend to suggest that a schema that broadly paints religious reasoning as a risk factor for war is quite possibly a misrepresentation of reality.

First, correlation does not entail causation.<sup>22</sup> Religious critics Kramnick and Moore reference the “millions” of people killed in all the religious wars of Europe.<sup>23</sup> It is true, there were wars in Europe. However, to refer to the wars that took place throughout the middle ages as “religious wars” is perhaps a misnomer. Because of the high level of integration of religion and society prior to the reformation, it would have been hard to make a distinction between church and state. The church was the center of societal life. It provided not only a place of worship; the church was also the hub of the social intercourse.<sup>24</sup> It does not necessarily follow that because state endorsed religion correlated with state military

22 For an excellent discussion of this see Meic Pearse, *The Gods of War: Is Religion the Primary Cause of Violent Conflict?* (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity Press), 2007. Pearse argues that the major causes of war are cultural and the desire for more land and natural resources. Given that culture is correlated with religion, these clashes are often mistaken for religious wars.

23 IsaaK Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 76.

24 See R.W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages*, *The Penguin History of the Church*, Vol. 2 (London, Penguin Books, 1990).

action the former caused the latter. Each military action would have to be addressed independently to determine what role religious reasoning played in choosing to engage an enemy nation. This is especially true of one of the paradigm cases of religious wars, the Crusades.

With the above said, it should be noted that the history of European conflict is one of nations fighting nations and empires fighting empires. The Crusades do not comprise a single war but are a constellation of conflicts over several decades are not one war. Each Crusade has to be judged on its own merit. Paul F. Crawford lists four myths about the Crusades; one of which, was “The Crusades represented an unprovoked attack by Western Christians on the Muslim world.”<sup>25</sup> In A.D. 638 Jerusalem had been taken over, and the Byzantine Empire was in constant defense of its territories. By A.D. 732 Christian territories were under threat of invasion by Muslim expansion. The original motivation for the Western Christian Empire’s engagement with the Muslim Empire was not religious; it was instead defensive in nature. This defensive war would have been fought by any secular government without any religious motivation. However, given that there was such a close link to the religions of Islam and Christianity to their respective homelands, it was hard to make a distinction between the bureaucratic acts of government and the theocratic identities of the people. To this day, many Muslims associate western countries with Christianity despite attempts to separate religion from politics.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding wars stemming from the Protestant Reformation, the religious motivations may have been overstated. William T. Cavanaugh writes:

For the main instigators of the carnage, doctrinal loyalties were at best secondary to their stake in the rise or defeat of the centralized

25 Paul F. Crawford, “Four Myths about the Crusades,” *The Intercollegiate Review: A Journal of Scholarship and Opinion*, Spring (2011), 13-22.

26 “Justice and Peace: Because Broken Promises Fueled Islamic Militancy, the Road to Stability must be Paved with Good Faith; A Conversation with J. Dudley Woodberry,” *Christian History*, issue 74, XXI, 2, (2002), 43.

State. Both Huguenot and Catholic noble factions plotted for control of the monarchy. The Queen Mother Catherine de Medici, for her part, attempted to bring both factions under the sway of the crown. At the Colloquy of Poissy in 1561, Catherine proposed bringing Calvinist and Catholic together under a State-controlled Church modeled on Elizabeth's Church of England. Catherine had no particular theological scruples and was therefore stunned to find that both Catholic and Calvinist ecclesiologies prevented such an arrangement. Eventually Catherine decided that statecraft was more satisfying than theology, and, convinced that the Huguenot nobility were gaining too much influence over the king, she unleashed the infamous 1572 St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of thousands of Protestants. After years of playing Protestant and Catholic factions off one another, Catherine finally threw in her lot with the Catholic Guises. She would attempt to wipe out the Huguenot leadership and thereby quash the Huguenot nobility's influence over king and country.

The St. Bartholomew's Day massacre was the last time it was easy to sort out the Catholics from the Protestants in the French civil wars.<sup>27</sup>

At least in this case, it seems that secular interests played a role in causing strife.

## SECULAR REASONING AND WAR

Has secular reasoning minimized the problems of strife and injustice that comes with religious reasoning? The answer is no it has not. There have been several wars that have been waged on exclusively secular grounds. The short essay, *The Communist Manifesto*, encouraged revolutions that resulted in the loss of millions of lives. Georg von Rauch wrote the following regarding the great communist purge of Russia:

The upheavals were set off by the murder of a prominent Party

27 William T. Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State," *Modern Theology* 11:4 October 1995.

member, the Leningrad Party Secretary, Sergei Mironovich Kirov. The murder, which occurred on December 1, 1934, started a chain reaction of arrests, interrogations and executions which found its climax in the great purge, the *Chistka* of 1937-1938. According to conservative estimates about 7 to 8 million people—according to others, 23 million—became victims of this purge.<sup>28</sup>

While much of the purge had to do with political enemies, the Soviets targeted the church as well. The communist government killed 28 archbishops and bishops and 6775 priests. They also confiscated church land, treasures, and sacred objects. The Soviets arrested the Patriarch and almost all of the surviving ecclesiastical dignitaries.<sup>29</sup>

Sixty-seven million Germans embraced Hitler's vision to rebuild Germany on the back of a master race. Hitler's propaganda tactic was not religious or intellectual, it was emotional. Hitler did not want to deliver complex speeches that could only be understood by the educated. He believed that by offering both sides of an argument would result in the ambivalence of the crowd. According to Randall Bytwerk:

He [Hitler] thought that the average person is uninterested in complex arguments, being ruled more by emotion than intellect. Nazi rhetoric therefore avoided presenting detailed solution to complex problems. The effective leader, Hitler thought, made things seem simple, and could "make even adversaries far removed from one another seem to belong to a single category." A speaker who attempts to persuade an audience by a complicated, developed argument, or by attacking multiple enemies, is doomed to fail.

A speaker should aim at the lowest common denominator,

28 Georg Von Rauch, *A History of Soviet Russian*, Trans. Peter and Annette Jacobsohn, revised ed. (New York, Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1957), 238.

29 *Ibid.*, 141-143. Rauch included the following description of the treatment of religious believers in Soviet Russia:

"The complete separation of State and Church marked the beginning of a number of other measures which thoroughly isolated the life of the Church and excluded it from public affairs. The clergy were deprived of its civil rights. Religious instruction of the young was prohibited in 1921; the Criminal Code of 1926 decreed forced labor as the punishment for any violation of this prohibition. The state's hostile attitude toward religion was clearly expressed in the new school text books. All religious literature was banned and parochial schools, seminaries and monasteries were closed."

speaking so that everyone in the audience could understand. “Among a thousand speakers there is perhaps only a single one who can manage to speak to locksmiths and university professors at the same time, in a form which not only is suitable to the receptivity of both parties, but also influences both parties with equal effect of actually lashes them into a wild storm of applause.”<sup>30</sup>

Yet, while Hitler’s propaganda tactic was emotional, he used a form of reason that was common to the general public. Hitler’s public reasoning was in line with social Darwinism. In his book *From Darwin to Hitler*, Richard Weikart pointed out that while “Darwin was a typical English liberal, supporting laissez-faire economics and opposing slavery,”<sup>31</sup> the political demagogue Hitler made use of Darwinism to convince his citizens that killing millions of people was justified.<sup>32</sup>

Beyond justifying acts against public enemies with Darwinian ideas, Hitler:

...removed some of his [religious] opposition by falsely accusing churchmen of treason, theft, or sexual malpractices. Goebbels, the propaganda minister, insisted that those trials be published in detail in newspapers, thus parading lurid details about known ministers, priests, and nuns. Priests who warned parents against letting their children become a part of the Hitler Youth were subject to blackmail. Thus Catholic priests, nuns, and church leaders were arrested on trumped-up charges, and religious publications were suppressed.<sup>33</sup>

30 Randall, L. Bytwerk, “The Magic of the Spoken Word: The National Socialist Approach to Rhetoric,” *Landmark Speeches of National Socialism*, ed. Randall L. Bytwerk (College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2008), 2.

31 Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany* (New York, Palegrave Macmillan, 2004) 3.

32 This is not to say that Darwinism is sufficient for Nazism; however, it may be argued that it is a necessary condition to justify the types of acts committed by the Nazis against their enemies. By this I mean to say that the Nazis justified their treatment of Jews, Gypsies, and the handicapped on grounds that these groups were less than humans or at least malformed and detrimental to the advancement of the species.

33 Erwin W. Lutzer, *Hitler’s Cross: The Revealing Story of How the Cross of Christ was used as a Symbol of the Nazi Agenda* (Chicago, Moody Publishers, (1995) 114.

Hitler believed that one was a German first and a Christian second.<sup>34</sup>

I used the examples from communism and German fascism for three reasons. First, both of the above wars were undergirded by philosophical assumptions that would pass as secular reasoning in the eyes of the United States federal courts.<sup>35</sup> Second, these two examples both shared a commitment to the silencing of the Religious voice in matters that conflicted with state policy. Third, by widening one's perceptual scheme one can see that theistic reason does not necessitate war and that it may even be necessary for justice.

It goes without saying that divisiveness and civil strife should be avoided whenever possible. However, the principle that requires sources of belief that cause or result in civil strife should be separated from statecraft proves too much. To suggest that if the source of one's political beliefs may be divisive or dangerous, one should refrain from using it would cut disciplines such as history, law, and science out of public discourse. The truth is that there is not one source of belief about the most important issues in life and government that is not potentially divisive and dangerous. Thus, the principle of civil strife is too broad. The answer then may not be in the exclusion of religious reasoning from the public square; but instead, it may in the use of all sources of justification to promote unity, peace, and well-being. Inasmuch as religious beliefs can be useful to these ends, there seems to be no reason to exclude them from the discussion.<sup>36</sup>

34 See John S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches 1933-45* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1968) 15. Conway wrote that Hitler's intentions were to rid Germany of Christianity. Hitler stated that "making peace with the church won't stop me from stamping out Christianity in Germany, root and branch. One is either a Christian or a German. You can't be both."

35 This is not to say that public reason leads to communism or fascism. I am only showing that what counts as public reason in American federal courts was used in these two instances of mass violence.

36 See Shannon Holzer and Jonathon Fuqua, "Courting Epistemology: Legal Scholarship, the Courts, and the Rationality of Religious Belief," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol. 3, No 2 (2014). In this article my co-author and I defend the rationality of religious reasoning in the public square and its role in public reason. Whereas, this current article shows that religious reasoning should not *a priori* be left out of the discussion based on the assumption that its inclusion will necessarily lead to civil strife.





# The Case for Post-Tribulationism

Daniel Kayley

KEYWORDS:

| Day of the Lord | Imminency | Rapture |  
| Second Coming | Olivet Discourse | Great Tribulation |

ABSTRACT:

This article surveys the merits for post-tribulationism in contrast to pre-tribulationism or the pre-wrath view, advocating post-tribulationism as the most compelling. It explores several of the principal questions around which the debate has centred, many of which revolve around the exegetical viability of separating the rapture from the Parousia by a period of divine wrath. Post-tribulationist advocates are not convinced that there exists a gap of time between these two events, characterized by divine wrath. There are theological tensions in both camps, however it is the position of this article that as the various biblical passages that relate to the rapture are viewed through the lens of post-tribulationism that these theological tensions are reasonably resolved.

## INTRODUCTION

The ἄρπάζω transliterated *harpazō* (Koine Greek) or *rapio* (Latin) translates into the English word rapture, which denotes a forcible *catching up* of the church to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess 4:17), and is one of the most seemingly unbelievable concepts in the entire Bible. When

first encountering such a concept it seems to belong more to the genre of science fiction or fantasy. Yet not only is this idea awe inspiring, it is also fully rooted in Scripture. The concept of the rapture is unquestionably biblical and scholars on all sides of the debate particularly pre-millennial scholars certainly believe in its future occurrence, in the same way they believe in the Second Coming itself.<sup>1</sup>

Those advocating amillennialism or post-millennialism generally understand the rapture to be synonymous with the Second Coming, and therefore the emphasis is not so much concerned with the rapture of the church but with the resurrection and uniting of God's people to Christ.<sup>2</sup> One of the main questions dividing pre-millennial scholars is concerning the timing of the rapture, i.e. whether the rapture occurs prior to the great tribulation, prior to the wrath of God being outpoured, or after the great tribulation but immediately prior to the Second Coming. This premillennial eschatology is built on a futurist reading of Daniel the Olivet Discourse and Revelation, which it is maintained all describe the final seven years of this age as being dominated by Antichrist i.e. the seventieth week of Daniel.<sup>3</sup> 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is the only NT passage where the teaching

1 Premillennialists hold that Jesus will establish a temporary earthly kingdom i.e. the millennium upon his return at the Second Coming, this accords with a plain interpretation of Revelation 20:1-6.

2 Amillennialists do not generally believe that Christ will set up his rule on the earth, but rather that Christ simply comes, judges, and establishes the new heaven and earth. Post-millennialists believe that the world will become godlier more peaceful and prosperous through the preaching and teaching of the church, and that the age to come will be like the present with the church ruling for a period of time. At the end Christ returns and judges the world and like the amillennialists the rapture is therefore synonymous with the Second Coming.

3 A distinction is made by pre-wrath advocates between the general eschatological conditions which characterise the church age (Matt 24:4-14), and the divine wrath of God poured out in the eschatological Day of the Lord, signalled by the Danielic abomination of desolation. Pre-wrath advocates believe that prior to and during the first half of Daniel's seventieth week, these general eschatological conditions will worsen. Such worsening conditions are exemplified by wars, rumours of wars, and gentile kings and governments increasingly persecuting Christians. However, pre-wrath proponents distinguish between these general eschatological conditions, and the divine outpouring of wrath as depicted by the Day of the Lord language. Futurist advocates believe everything from Revelation ch.6 onwards is future in contrast to being directed to the audience of John's day, which would be a preterist interpretation. A historicist approach interprets everything chronologically from John's day to the Parousia, in contrast to the idealist

of the rapture is explicitly taught, however the rapture is implicit in both 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 and John 14:2. The doctrine of the rapture rests on these three NT passages, and through which the rapture is seen to be intricately connected to the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the Second Coming. However a number of other relevant NT passages which although ultimately are less conclusive, nevertheless contribute to and enrich the discussion notably Matthew 24:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 14:14-16.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, there are OT allusions to the rapture e.g. Dan 12:2 and also *types* of rapture e.g. Enoch in Genesis 5:24.

This article will firstly overview the seventieth week of Daniel, the reason being because whether surveying post-tribulationism pre-tribulationism or the pre-wrath view, much if not all of the argumentation revolves around the seventieth week of Daniel.<sup>5</sup> For the pre-tribulationist advocate the entire seventieth week is synonymous with the Day of the Lord. The pre-wrath view argues for a rapture during the second half of Daniel's seventieth week, and post-tribulationism argues for a rapture at the climax of Daniel's seventieth week simultaneous with the Parousia. Understanding Daniel's seventieth week from a futurist interpretative approach is therefore essential, in order to fully appreciate the three theological positions of post-tribulationism, pre-tribulationism and pre-wrath. Moreover, many conservative scholars such as Craig Blaising regard the prophecy of the seventy weeks of Daniel as quite compelling, advocating that the first sixty-nine weeks are already

approach which avoids assigning specific referents to John's visionary symbols.

4 Gundry, Stanley N. Hultberg, Alan. 2010. *Three View on the Rapture Pretribulation, Prewrath, or Posttribulation*. Introduction. Alan Hultberg. pp .11-13. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Zondervan.

5 The seventieth week of Daniel is a prophecy given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel as seen in Daniel 9:24-27. The scope of the prophecy spans the time from the decree given by Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) issued to Nehemiah in 444BC in the month of Nisan, to the abomination that makes desolate (Matt 24:15) and according to conservative scholars the Second Advent of Christ. The seventieth week of Daniel is the final 7 years of the total 490 years which make up Daniel's seventy weeks, i.e. each week is a 7 year period of time. A futurist interpretation of this seventieth week postulates a gap of time between the end of the 69th week which culminated with Christ's first advent, and the beginning of the 70th week leading to Christ's Second Advent.

accurately fulfilled, John Walvoord also shared this conviction.<sup>6</sup> If this is the case a futurist reading of Daniel 9:24-27 lends much credence to pre-millennialism, as amillennialists and post-millennialists generally treat OT prophecies less literally than pre-millennialists.<sup>7</sup> Secondly this article explains the recent rise of pre-tribulationism. Thirdly the NT passages which explicitly or implicitly underpin the doctrine of the rapture are surveyed. The following passages will also be surveyed through the lens of post-tribulationism: Matthew 24:3, 15, 31, 34, 40-41, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; John 14:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; and Revelation 1:19, 3:10, 7:14, 11:11-12, 20:4-5.

## DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS – DANIEL 9:24-27

The seventy weeks of Daniel prophesied in Daniel 9:24-27 is the *sine qua non* to understanding the broad theological framework, or context, which pre-tribulationists formulate their interpretations against. Since many post-tribulationists hold to the same interpretation of Daniels seventy weeks as pre-tribulationists and pre-wrath proponents, only an overview will be given here.

The two main divisions of interpreting Daniel 9:24-27 are Christological and non-Christological. The Christological approach generally interprets either the scope of the Danielic prophecy i.e. Daniel 9:24-27 as culminating in Christ, or only the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel 9:24-26 as culminating in Christ. Most conservatives within the evangelical camp hold to the Messianic view, though today some evangelicals are also

6 Walvoord, John F. (1944) *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Volume: BSAC 101:401. Is the Seventieth Week of Daniel Future? pp. 30-31. Blaising, Craig A. (2012) *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Volume: BSAC 169:674. The Day Of The Lord And The Seventieth Week Of Daniel. pp .135-142.

7 Walvoord, P.30-31.

rejecting the Messianic interpretation.<sup>8</sup> Within the non-Christological view there is the traditional Orthodox Jewish interpretation and the liberal critical view, both of which are non-Messianic.<sup>9</sup> A non-Christological interpretation finds fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy in events either before or after Christ. For example, parts or all of the prophecy finding fulfilment in the events leading up to the persecution carried out by Antiochus Epiphanes (164-168 B.C.), resulting in the Maccabean revolt.<sup>10</sup> Or as many orthodox Jews maintain, the prophecy finding its climax in the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD70.<sup>11</sup> Non-Christological adherents can therefore generally be divided along the line of those which represent a liberal critical view, Orthodox Jewish or those with a conservative amillennial view. The former two either posit that Daniel was not a product of the 6th century B.C., but rather the 2nd century B.C., or assign figures within their chronology of Daniel's seventy weeks which are unacceptable to modern historians.<sup>12</sup> The latter do not interpret the units of time in Daniel 9:24-27 literally, but rather figuratively.<sup>13</sup> Two major weaknesses exist within the non-Christological perspective, based upon the presumption that the beginning of the seventy weeks begun with the Jeremianic prophecy, and not the command to restore Jerusalem. Therefore, insofar as Daniel's seventy weeks culminating in Antiochus Epiphanes (164-168 B.C.), this necessitates that Jeremiah was incorrect

8 For example, John Goldingay rejects the messianic interpretation in the Word Biblical Commentary, and Thomas McComiskey in a prominent Christian journal. Tanner, Paul J. (2009) *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Volume: BSAC 166:663. Is Daniel's Seventy-Weeks Prophecy Messianic? Part 2. p. 320.

9 Despite this, there are ancient Jewish sources written before the earliest Christian sources which posit a messianic interpretation, as seen through chronologies referring to some prophetic passages, including Daniel's seventy weeks. Tanner, Paul J. (2009) *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Volume: BSAC 166:662. Is Daniel's Seventy-Weeks Prophecy Messianic? Part 1. pp. 82-183.

10 Walvoord, pp. 32-33.

11 Walvoord, p. 36.

12 Tanner, (Part 1). pp. 184-185.

13 SPELIOPOULOS ELKE B. 2009. THE 70 WEEKS OF DANIEL: A SURVEY OF THE INTERPRETIVE VIEWS. On-line available from, [http://www.academia.edu/506098/The\\_70\\_Weeks\\_of\\_Daniel\\_-\\_Survey\\_of\\_the\\_Interpretive\\_Views](http://www.academia.edu/506098/The_70_Weeks_of_Daniel_-_Survey_of_the_Interpretive_Views), Accessed on 12/04/15. Tanner, (Part 1). P.182-185. Tanner, (Part 2). P.334.

(Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10), and secondly therefore that Daniel was in error, (Daniel 9:24-25). This would render the Christological view not worthy of consideration, even though there are credible reasons given for a literal interpretation of segments if not all of this prophecy.<sup>14</sup> It is therefore the intention of this article to explore and defend further only the Messianic interpretation of Daniel.

### MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION OF DANIEL'S SEVENTY WEEKS

Within premillennial theology the first sixty-nine weeks culminated in Christ, and the great tribulation in the eschatological future takes place during the seventieth week of Daniel. Daniel's seventieth week according to a futurist reading of Daniel 9:27 is the final seven year period of this current age, culminating with the Second Coming.<sup>15</sup> This interpretation begs the question "Why is there a gap between the 69th and 70th week?" Or put another way between the first coming of Christ, and the future tribulation and the Second Coming of Christ at least two-thousand years later?

Scholars have understood the gap period as allowing for the two different aspects of Christ's coming, as prophesied in the OT. By the close of the 69th week the Messiah had presented himself to his covenant people for the first time, however unbeknown to the Jewish people there would be two comings not one.<sup>16</sup> On this first occasion Christ would

14 There was unanimous agreement between virtually all the early church fathers, as well as Jewish scholars that each of Daniels weeks was equal to a period of seven years. Additionally, nearly all these scholars interpreted the first sixty-nine weeks, if not the entirety of Daniel's seventy week prophecy as culminating in Christ's first advent. This Messianic view is also predominant throughout church history, though the chronological details and calculations of these scholars did vary widely. Walvoord, P.33-34.

15 Walvoord, P.31-36.

16 Story, Cullen I. K. (1948) *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Volume: BSAC 105:418. What Kind of Messiah Did the Jews Expect? pp. 238-239.

come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey fulfilling his role as the priestly Suffering Servant, though at the time of his Second Coming he will fulfil his prophesied role of conquering King.<sup>17</sup> Additional examples to support the gap will follow below.

There are other passages in Scripture which clearly intend a significant gap of time which the original reader may not have realised, but which contemporary readers now know. This view is therefore completely tenable with Scripture hermeneutically. A passage of scripture which evidently implies a gap of time between two prophesied events within the same verse, or passage, is known as prophetic compression.<sup>18</sup> The following passages exemplifying prophetic compression do not all evidence the same event or duration of time, or gap, but they suffice to illustrate that a gap is intended. For example an interval of time is also seen in Zechariah 9:9-10, in v9 the Messiah is prophesied to enter Jerusalem on a donkey and in v10 can be seen to be ruling over the nations. Again in Isaiah 9:6-7 the same principle is seen, in 9.6 Messiah is born a child and in 9.7 can be seen to be ruling on David's throne over the earth. Another verse illustrating this hermeneutical feature is Isaiah 61:1-2. Jesus himself quotes from Isaiah 61:1-2a as seen in Luke 4:18-19, but stops at the comma and does not actually quote Isaiah 61:2b. In Isaiah 61:1-2a Christ spoke of the signs accompanying his Messianic ministry, but he does not quote Isaiah 61:2b which prophesies the day of vengeance of our God.

17 The Jewish rabbis in their confusion over the two contrary descriptions of the Messiah presented in the OT even speculated the possibility of two Messiahs, one being named Messiah ben Joseph who would be a Messiah of grace and mercy and the other a Messiah of righteous rule of law named Messiah ben David. This idea is found in Gemara, Sukkah 52a-b. Mitchell, David C. RABBI DOSA AND THE RABBIS DIFFER: MESSIAH BEN JOSEPH IN THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD. On-line available from, <http://home.scarlet.be/~tsf07148/theo/Mes.b.Joseph%20in%20Talmud.pdf>, Accessed on 01/03/15. However, not all scholars agree that Jewish rabbis speculated as to the possibility of two Messiahs, but rather that it is a creation of modern scholars. Hurst, L. D. (1999) *Bulletin for Biblical Research*. Volume: BBR 09:1. Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs? pp. 157-180. On another point, during this intervening time between the two separate comings of the Messiah the message of the Gospel would go out to the nations.

18 Jewish Roots. 2003-2015. Old Testament Prophecy: A Gap of Time In-Between Week 69 and Week 70. On-line available from, <http://jewishroots.net/library/prophecy/daniel/daniel-9-24-27/gap-in-between-69-and-70.html>, Accessed on 01/01/15.

Those signs accompanying Christ's Messianic ministry included: good news being preached to the poor; his binding up of the broken hearted; his proclaiming liberty to captives; and of his proclaiming the favourable year of the Lord. These signs are all described in Isaiah 61:1-2a, this is the point at which Christ halted in his speech mid-sentence. The reason that Christ stopped at the comma is because the day of vengeance describes the activity of his Second Coming, while the part of the passage he read from in Isaiah described his first advent, the activities of which were presently being fulfilled.<sup>19</sup> Prophetic compression is therefore clearly evident in Daniel 9:26-27. So when we read in Daniel 9:26 that Messiah is cut off it seems reasonable to conclude that the natural sequence in the weeks has been interrupted, and the prophetic clock has stopped, leaving one seven-year period to be completed in the eschatological future, as prophesied in Daniel 9:27.<sup>20</sup>

This leads us to a discussion of the nature of Daniel's final "week", or seven-year period. Pre-tribulationists believe this whole seven year period to be synonymous with the great tribulation, whereas pre-wrath advocates believe the great tribulation to take place during the final 3 ½ years of this seventieth week or seven year period. Pre-wrath advocates do not believe the rapture occurs in the middle of the tribulation, but rather that it occurs specifically before the wrath of God is outpoured on the earth. Pre-wrath advocates distinguish a difference between the general eschatological conditions characteristic of the church age (Matt 24:4-14), and the eschatological Day of the Lord signalled by the Danielic abomination of desolation.<sup>21</sup> The pre-wrath view proponents believe these general eschatological conditions will worsen prior to and during the first part of Daniel's seventieth week. Examples of such worsening conditions include wars, rumours of wars, and persecution of Christians by gentile kings and governments. However, they maintain

19 Walvoord, P.47-49.

20 Jewish Roots.

21 Gundry, P.78-84.

a distinction between these general eschatological conditions, and the divine outpouring of wrath as depicted by the Day of the Lord language. Conversely some post-tribulationists believe the final seventieth week of Daniel as mentioned in Daniel 9:27, is actually the entire inter-advent age, i.e. the time between Christ's first and Second Coming.<sup>22</sup> My view is that the seventieth week of Daniel is yet future, and equates to a seven calendar year period of time prior to the Parousia. According to standard premillennial eschatological thinking this final seven year period is when the Antichrist will dominate the earth, and this period will begin when he makes a covenant with Israel (Dan 9:27). This current age or dispensation, sometimes referred to as the church age, is not mentioned in Daniel 9:24-27, notwithstanding such a long period of time that has elapsed between the historical events described in Daniel 9:26 prior to the events of v27 in the eschatological future. So far the time that has elapsed between Daniel 9:26 and v27 is over two-thousand years, and still growing. This gap in excess of two-thousand years is therefore implied between v26 and v27 of Daniel 9, between the cutting off of the Messiah (v.25-26), and the future appearance of Antichrist in the eschatological future (v.27). Therefore a Messianic interpretation of the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel 9:24-26, concluding with Christ's appearance as the *Messiah the Prince* in v26, and the subsequent diaspora, makes it consistent and fitting that the final seventieth week will have a similar futurist fulfilment.<sup>23</sup> This futurist approach to understanding Daniel's seventy weeks is shared by pre-tribulationist and pre-wrath proponents, and also by many post-tribulationists though not all.

It is not the purpose of this article to examine in depth the various interpretations of Daniel 9:24-27, or the accuracy of the prophecy concerning the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel 9:24-26. A multitude of ancient and modern scholars have attempted to solve the stimulating challenge of Daniels seventy weeks. For example, the fathers from the

22 Gundry, P.11-24.

23 Walvoord, P.30-49.

second to the fourth century such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerome and Augustine, advance many theories supporting a Christological and futurist reading of Daniel, whereby the sixty-ninth week culminates with Christ's public ministry and death.<sup>24</sup> This view regarding the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel as culminating in Christ is also shared by many more recent scholars, such as Sir Robert Anderson, John F Walvoord, Alan Hultberg and Robert Gundry. Despite these scholars agreeing that all Christological interpretations tend to culminate in Christ's first advent at the climax of the sixth-ninth week, their methods vary widely, particularly concerning the interpretation of the seventieth week. Therefore, it will suffice here to summarize the general scholarly consensus, regarding the first sixty-nine weeks of Daniel.

Firstly, the interpretative approach of many conservative scholars regarding Daniel 9:24-27 is Christological. Secondly, these scholars generally concede that the number of days in the sixty-nine weeks amounts to 173,880 days, based upon a prophetic 30 day month and 360 day year. This is confirmed by Revelation 11:2-3. In Revelation 11:2-3 the author uses *one thousand two hundred and sixty days* interchangeably with both *forty two months* and *time, times and half a time*. This kind of prophetic calendar is also implicit when comparing Genesis 7:11, with Genesis 8:3-4. Genesis 7:11 states the flood as beginning on the seventeenth day of the second month, and Genesis 8:3-4 states the flood as having receded by the seventeenth day of the seventh month. The intervening period totals 150 days, prior to Noah's ark resting on the mountains of Ararat, therefore five 30 day months can be implied through this description of 150 days. The Bible's use of a standard prophetic type calendar is therefore implicit throughout the OT, and explicit in Revelation 11:2-3. Calendrical adjustments to compensate for the different calendars used across cultures and epochs would be unnecessary with this kind of prophetic calendar, in

24 Knowles, Louis E. (1945) *Westminster Theological Journal*. Volume: WTJ 07:2. 'The Interpretation Of The Seventy Weeks Of Daniel In The Early Fathers,' pp. 136-160.

order to calculate the number of days present within Daniel's seventy weeks.<sup>25</sup>

Conservative expositors also now generally accept that the starting point of the prophecy i.e. the decree to rebuild the Temple, is the decree which Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) issued to Nehemiah in 444BC in the month of Nisan. Nehemiah however does not specify which day of the month in Nisan.<sup>26</sup> Assuming this basic premise or framework, many writers' proposals to solve the puzzle of the first sixty-nine weeks have varied slightly in their detail. For example the start date within the month of Nisan and varying suggestions for a terminus date, including among others the triumphal entry, the crucifixion and the ascension.<sup>27</sup> Beginning then with the twentieth year of Artaxerxes reign necessitates calibrating this date to the Julian calendar, for consistency, as the terminus date of the prophecy occurs at a time historically when the Julian calendar was

25 Hughes, Christopher A. (2013) *Journal of Dispensational Theology* Volume: JODT 17:51. The "'Terminus Ad Quem" Of Daniel's 69 Week: A Novel Solution,' pp. 124-125.

26 Sir Robert Anderson (1841–1918) a theologian and prolific writer and also a practicing barrister, is well known for proposing this above process of determining the start and terminus dates and number of days within the sixty-nine weeks. His interpretation advocates that the seventy weeks of Daniel represent 490 years divided into three parts: forty-nine years; four hundred and thirty-four years (following the first forty-nine years), and the last week of seven years. The first forty-nine years or seven weeks commences with the decree to rebuild Jerusalem, which he believed was given to Nehemiah in 445 B.C., specifically the first of Nisan or March 14 in that year. According to Anderson the 434 years or sixty-two weeks immediately follow the first forty-nine years, and assuming a prophetic year of 360 days would total 173,880 days, culminating on April 6, A.D. 32 which he believes is the most likely date that Christ entered Jerusalem on a donkey in fulfilment of Zechariah 9:9. While his general method for obtaining the answer is still appropriate today there is now credible evidence that he was incorrect in some of the details, however some scholars e.g. John F. Walvoord state that "no one today is able dogmatically to declare that Sir Robert Anderson's computations are impossible."

27 Many other scholars e.g. Clarence Larkin, John MacArthur, G. W. West, Dr. Harold Hoehner, and Dr. Thomas Ice while broadly keeping Anderson's proposed process for determining the start and finish times of Daniel 9:24-26, have tried to repair or salvage Anderson's solution by giving defensible dates for the events he places at the beginning and termination of the sixty-nine weeks. Sir Robert Anderson's contemporaries and close friends included well known biblical teachers such as John Nelson Darby, Cyrus Scofield, James Martin Gray, A. C. Dixon, Horatius Bonar and E. W. Bullinger. His book *Human Destiny* has been acclaimed by C. H. Spurgeon to be the most valuable contribution on the subject, which he had seen. Anderson also occupied the role of second Assistant Crime Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police in London from 1888 to 1901.

employed.<sup>28</sup> The terminus date of the sixty-nine weeks is the time of Jesus ministry death resurrection and ascension. The Julian calendar is a tropical solar calendar measuring 365 days annually and occasionally adding a day to form a leap year, though for the purpose of calculating the number of days in the Danielic prophecy i.e. 173,880 days, this makes no difference.<sup>29</sup> Assuming this interpretative approach Christopher A. Hughes offers a more recent and credible interpretation of Daniel 9:24-26, by placing the terminus date of the prophecy at the day of Jesus ascension. Through use of astronomical calculations the evidence for the date of the crucifixion of Christ points to Friday, 3 April of AD 33, as the most likely date.<sup>30</sup> If using the resurrection of Christ as the first day of his forty days post-resurrection his ascension can be placed on Thursday, 14 May AD 33, (Julian Day #1733245). Thus working backwards by subtracting 173,880 days from this date would yield Thursday, 23 April of 444 BC (Julian Day #1559365), which equates to 22 Nisan. 22 Nisan would therefore be the day that Artaxerxes gave the decree to Nehemiah to return and rebuild Jerusalem (Neh.2:1, 5), and this interpretation would also satisfy the criteria specified in Nehemiah 2, i.e. that the decree was given during the month of Nisan in Artaxerxes' 20th year.<sup>31</sup>

While the purpose of this paper is not an apologetic for the inerrancy and accuracy of Scripture, nonetheless such a division of the 69 weeks is interesting. However, those who eschew the concept of foretelling the future, will reject such views as mere attempts to support fundamentalism.<sup>32</sup>

28 Additionally, the present astronomical standards by which calculations are made is through use of the Julian dates, with their corresponding day numbers.

29 Hughes, pp. 124-125, 127-128.

30 Humphreys, Colin J. (1992) *Tyndale Bulletin*. Volume: TYNBUL 43:2. The Jewish Calendar, A Lunar Eclipse And The Date Of Christ's Crucifixion. pp. 331-350.

31 Hughes, P.133-141.

32 Today the label fundamentalist is applied to a wide range of religious adherents from some conservative Protestants to conservative Muslims, Jews, and Catholics. Protestants themselves even debate over who is a fundamentalist and who is not, e.g. those with strict moral codes and commitments to ecclesiastical separation may be considered to be fundamentalists. Certain methodological problems are inherent with this kind of labelling, and for this reason Protestants disdain the term fundamentalist because of its negative connotations. Instead Protestants prefer other terms such as conservative, neo-

Some credible explanations have now been explored placing the terminus of the sixty-ninth week of Daniels seventy weeks at Christ's first coming, namely his ascension. This article will now proceed to explain how pre-tribulationists, pre-wrath proponents, and post-tribulationists interpret the rapture passages in Scripture, against the backdrop of the seventieth week of Daniel which is assumed to take place in the eschatological future.

### THE RISE OF PRE-TRIBULATIONISM

Premillennialist post-tribulationism was the only assumed eschatological perspective for the first three centuries of the early church. The ante-Nicene fathers consistently maintained that the church would witness the abomination of desolation in the middle of the seventieth week of Daniel, and experience persecution under him.<sup>33</sup> As time went by pre-millennial post-tribulational eschatology began to fall out of favour with most theologians, and from the Middle Ages to the commencement of the 19th century many theologians believed in amillennialism or historicism.<sup>34</sup> There are however some pre-tribulationists such as Charles Ryrie, who suggest that there has been an embryonic version of the doctrine of pre-tribulationism from as early as the first century church.<sup>35</sup> The beginning

evangelical, evangelical, or simply Christian. In this sense, the term fundamentalism has been abused, in some parts of the world more than others, e.g. the UK. Fea, John. (1994) *Trinity Journal*. Volume: TRINJ 15:2. 'Understanding the Changing Facade of Twentieth-Century American Protestant fundamentalism: Toward a Historical Definition,' pp. 181, 183.

33 Gundry, pp. 14-15.

34 Historicism is the teaching that apocalyptic genres of Scripture are generally prophecies about the history of the church, which also deny a future Antichrist and tribulation.

35 Of course whether this is true or not is a different question, as it is acknowledged by pre-tribulationists that a detailed theology of pre-tribulationism is not found in the early church Fathers. Nevertheless, Ryrie asserts that the absence of historical evidence corroborating pre-tribulationism, doesn't therefore confirm that pre-tribulational exegesis

of the nineteenth century brought with it a resurgence of premillennial thinking, and futurist readings of Daniel and Revelation. Brethren leader John Darby was instrumental in the rise of pre-tribulationist thinking in the 1830s, and this secret rapture theology became the dominant theological position by the 1920s.<sup>36</sup> A number of theories about the true origin of Darby's pre-tribulationism have been proposed over the years,<sup>37</sup> nevertheless, most current advocates of pre-tribulationism believe that Darby was the originator of his pre-tribulationist views as a result of personal Bible study, most likely during the time he was recovering from a horse riding accident.<sup>38</sup> By 1980 post-tribulationism had made a considerable comeback, and pre-tribulationism was by no means any longer the dominant position. This was in part due to the 1956 publication of *The Blessed Hope* by George Eldon Ladd, and Robert H. Gundry's *The Church and the Tribulation* in 1973. Both of these publications articulated a defence of post-tribulationism, with Gundry's publication being particularly exegetical in nature.<sup>39</sup> Mid-tribulationism from which the pre-wrath view also developed is relatively new, and its chief proponent was Norman B. Harrison who developed it after The Second World War.

is faulty. Ryrie, Charles C. (1974) *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Volume: BSAC 131:522. "The Church and the Tribulation": A Review. p. 174.

36 Gundry, pp. 16-17.

37 Four main theories attempt to explain the origin of Darby's pre-tribulationism. Firstly it is proposed that Darby got his ideas from Edward Irving (1792–1834) and the Irvingite movement, who purportedly first developed pre-tribulationism, or secondly from a prophetic utterance from a woman in Irving's church in London. Thirdly, it is claimed that Darby's pre-tribulationism was taken from the pseudonymous writings of a Jesuit Priest named Manuel de Lacunza (1731–1801), who wrote under the pseudonym of Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra a converted Jew. The fourth theory is that Darby's pre-tribulationism was the product of a prophecy, from a fifteen-year old Scottish girl named Margaret Macdonald in April 1830.

38 Ice, Thomas. 2014. THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL BARNDOLLAR LECTURE SERIES. "The History of the Doctrine of the Rapture" Part IV: "A Refutation of False Origin of the Rapture Theories". P.1-3. On-line available from, [http://www.bbc.edu/barndollar/barndollar\\_refutation\\_rapture.pdf](http://www.bbc.edu/barndollar/barndollar_refutation_rapture.pdf), Accessed on 29/12/14.

39 Gundry, pp. 16-17.

## THEOLOGICAL TENSIONS

One of the biggest theological tensions between pre-tribulationism and post-tribulationism is that pre-tribulationism interprets the church as being exempt from God's divine wrath, whereas post-tribulationists question the extent of the church's exemption from God's wrath. Post-tribulationists concur with pre-tribulationists, that certain Scriptural passages e.g. Revelation 3:10 certainly indicate at the very least a certain kind of protection to Christians from the period of divine wrath, throughout the tribulation.<sup>40</sup> Pre-tribulationists interpret this protection as complete removal from the tribulation period, for those Christians. However, post-tribulationists see no such promise in Scripture that Christians will be protected from divine wrath, due to their being raptured prior to its commencement.<sup>41</sup> However, being a post-tribulationist does not have to mean only this stark choice. For example if the tribulation is aimed exclusively and therefore geographically at Israel, (i.e. the time of Jacob's sorrow) then even if the Church is physically present on earth throughout the tribulation, being multi-national it is not necessarily the direct recipient of the tribulation woes. Various scholars hold this theological position, by implication of their eschatological perspective on the Bibles many Antichristic and apocalyptic passages. These scholars believe that the Antichrists reign will be local not universal, and that the final empire described in Daniel 9-11 although being dictatorial and therefore demanding complete allegiance will not be all encompassing.<sup>42</sup> In other words, they believe the final apocalyptic world scene as depicted in the Bible will be primarily played out in the Middle East, the place of

40 This protection need not be exclusively physical and many scholars believe the protection promised in Revelation 3:10 is to be interpreted as spiritual protection, i.e. to enable those Christians in the church of Philadelphia in Revelation 3:10 to persevere under trial without losing their faith.

41 Gundry, pp. 225-226.

42 Tanner, J. Paul. (1992) *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*: Volume: JETS 35:3. Daniel's "King Of The North": Do We Owe Russia An Apology? pp. 315-328.

its origin narration and final climax.<sup>43</sup>

Other key and significant eschatological questions include: the timing of divine wrath in relation to Daniel's seventieth week; the exegetical basis for separating the rapture of the church from the Second Coming, by a period of divine wrath; and the nature and relation of the Olivet discourse to the Parousia passages in the NT epistles. The hermeneutical approach employed by pre-wrath proponents and pre-tribulationists to support their respective theological positions, in regard to the timing of the divine wrath, is clearly crucial to support their particular belief systems concerning the timing of this event. Therefore, the hermeneutical approach they employ in their interpretation of the scriptural passages detailing the rapture and Parousia, particularly revolves around the timing of God's wrath outpoured. The validity and reasonableness of any such hermeneutical and or exegetical approach is therefore essential, to corroborate their respective theological positions.

For example, pre-tribulationists equate the Day of the Lord to the entire tribulation period, which they also equate to the entire seventieth week of Daniel. So the three terms Day of the Lord, great tribulation and Daniels seventieth week become synonymous under the pre-tribulation schema. This therefore necessitates that pre-tribulationists adequately show from Scripture that the rapture occurs before the commencement of the Day of the Lord, as it is essential for them to demonstrate that Christians will not enter into the Day of the Lord.

For pre-wrath proponents conversely the Day of the Lord is not synonymous with Daniel's seventieth week, as they identify the great tribulation and the specific Day of the Lord as separate events occurring during Daniel's seventieth week. Therefore, pre-wrath proponents concur with post-tribulationists that the church will enter into Daniels seventieth week, experiencing the tribulation associated with that time period. However pre-wrath advocates diverge from post-tribulationists in

43 Tanner, p. 328; Richardson, Joel. 2012. *Mideast Beast*. Ch.3. P.35-36. Washington, D.C. WND Books.

that they believe the church to be promised exemption from the Day of the Lord. In this sense pre-wrath advocates agree with pre-tribulationists that Christians will not enter into the Day of the Lord, yet each group has a different definition of the Day of the Lord i.e. the duration and timing of that Day. Pre-wrath advocates must therefore demonstrate from Scripture that the rapture will take place during the second half of Daniel's seventieth week, prior to the Day of the Lord which they believe occurs just before the Second Coming.

Pre-tribulationists draw their conclusions in regard to the rapture partly upon a dispensational approach to Scripture, indeed pre-tribulationism is a major tenet of Dispensationalism. Classic dispensationalists draw a sharp distinction between the Church and the nation of Israel, and this is reflected in their exegesis of many eschatological passages in Scripture. Understandably then post-tribulationists seek to blunt such a sharp distinction between the Church and Israel, while not necessarily denying a future place and purpose for Israel within God's plan. They do however highlight the exegetical fallacies of falsely dichotomizing between the Church and Israel, as such sharp distinctions may mistakenly support the case for pre-tribulationism. Sharp distinctions between the church and Israel mistakenly support the case for pre-tribulationism, because this hermeneutic assumes that the church is not the recipient of eschatological passages such as Matthew 24, and is therefore not in view, or entirely absent at the time of the great tribulation.

Pre-wrath advocates and post-tribulationists need not rely on or be governed by this kind of dispensational approach, to support or validate their respective theological positions. Because each group whether pre-tribulationist pre-wrath or post-tribulationist identifies the church as being absent or present in various different ways during Daniel's seventieth week, each group therefore interprets passages, such as the Olivet discourse, in dissimilar ways. However some overlap exists between pre-wrath and post-tribulationism in their interpretation of the Olivet discourse, e.g. both groups see Matthew 24:31 as descriptive of the rapture.

These theological tensions will now be explored firstly with the explicit and implicit rapture texts, followed by the less conclusive passages which nevertheless contribute to and enrich the discussion.

## 1 THESSALONIANS 4:17 & 5:1-11

1 Thessalonians 4:17 is the only passage in the NT which explicitly uses the term [SPI]ῶρπᾶζω transliterated *harpazō* (Koine Greek) or *rapio* (Latin), translating into the English caught up, other passages although describing the rapture are less explicit and do not use this term. In 1 Thessalonians 4:17 believers were concerned that their dead would not be taken to be with Jesus at the Parousia, Paul assures them that those asleep in the Lord would be resurrected first and only after would those who are alive and remain be raptured and meet the Lord together with them in the air. Both pre-tribulationists and pre-wrath advocates locate the rapture before the *Day of the Lord* (1 Thess 5:2) because they believe that the church is promised protection from God's wrath, and this protection is in the form of removal. Therefore both groups understand the rapture primarily as an act of rescue from imminent danger, in contrast to a meeting with the Lord i.e. a delegation meeting. On the contrary, post-tribulationists understand the rapture not as a rescue mission, but as a delegation meeting which takes place at the time of the Second Coming.

Pre-tribulationists agree that the passage makes no mention of the timing of this event, they assert that the timing element is to be determined precisely from reading 1 Thessalonians 4:17 together with 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. Pre-tribulationists also identify textual differences between Matthew 24:31 and 1 Thessalonians 4-5, precluding a parallel account and infer the passages to be describing two separate events.

Pre-wrath advocates on the other hand recognise a parallelism between the Olivet discourse and first and second Thessalonians, and generally place the rapture at v31 of Matthew 24, but agree with pre-tribulationists

that the passage is not explicit regarding timing. Therefore, pre-wrath advocates identify the timing aspect mainly through drawing a distinction between the tribulation period which they believe the church will pass through, and the divine wrath of God which occurs in the *Day of the Lord* which they believe the church is exempt from. Pre-wrath proponents believe therefore that the *Day of the Lord* occurs sometime in the second half of Daniel's seventieth week i.e. the second half of the seven year period, after the abomination of desolation but before the end of this period and certainly before the Parousia. As pre-tribulationists equate the whole of Daniel's seventieth week as being synonymous with the *Day of the Lord*, they therefore interpret only the second part of the Olivet discourse (Matt 24:36-25:46) as being parallel to that of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 which they understand as describing the entire *Day of the Lord* spread over this seven year period.<sup>44</sup> And because pre-tribulationists believe that 1 Thessalonians 5:9 promises the church exemption from the *Day of the Lord* which they interpret as the entire seventieth week of Daniel, the rapture must therefore be pre-tribulationist.<sup>45</sup>

The strength of pre-tribulationism regarding their interpretation of 1 Thessalonians 4:17, 5:2, 9, necessitates establishing the entire seventieth week of Daniel to be synonymous with the *Day of the Lord*. Failing to do this renders pre-tribulationist exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 & 5:9 unsatisfactory to uphold pre-tribulationism. As would be expected the pre-wrath view shares many of the same lines of argumentation as that of post-tribulationism, as to why the church will enter the tribulation period otherwise known as the seventieth week of Daniel. These are persuasive lines of argumentation that both pre-wrath and post-tribulationist proponents share, which undermine the notion that the entire seventieth week of Daniel is synonymous with the *Day of the Lord*. Firstly, in 2 Thessalonians 1-12 Paul is relying on established apocalyptic traditions, (e.g. Dan 9-11; Matt 24-25) this dependence upon the Matthean and

44 Gundry, pp. 32-33, 52-53.

45 Gundry, p. 58.

Danielic accounts is clearly seen in the parallelism between the accounts. As stated earlier pre-tribulationists do not consider Matthew 24:30-31 as descriptive of the rapture, but rather of the Second Coming. Pre-tribulationists interpret only the latter part of the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:36-25:46) as paralleling that of 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, despite the noteworthy parallel between Matthew 24:30-31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 which is the explicit NT rapture verse. Both passages depict the Parousia by reference to clouds at which time the saints are gathered to meet the Lord, both are accompanied by a trumpet blast and also angels. These features also are found in other Thessalonian passages, e.g. 2 Thessalonians 1.7; 2:1, 13; and especially 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10. Throughout these Thessalonian passages can be seen the parallelism to Matthew 24:30-31 which Paul is not only drawing upon but expanding upon due to a “word from the Lord”, (1 Thess 4:15). Paul’s reliance on Matthew 24:30-31 a passage which clearly describes the Parousia, undermines any notion that the two passages are not connected in anyway, or are describing two separate events.

Secondly Paul assures the Thessalonian believers that the *Day of the Lord* will not precede the appearance of the *Abomination of Desolation*, again Paul here is relying on the Matthean account (Matt 24:15). Pre-tribulationists interpret Matthew 24:15 from a dispensational perspective i.e. that this passage only concerns Israel, or that it addresses those tribulation Christians which become Christians during the tribulation. However, as Paul in first and second Thessalonians is relying on the Matthean account which in turn is describing the Danielic Antichrist, it is more likely that the signs related to the appearance of the Antichrist, i.e. the *Abomination of Desolation*, are intended to reassure the Thessalonian Christians that the *Day of the Lord* had not yet arrived. In other words, the *Abomination of Desolation* as a sign to the Thessalonian Christians precedes the Day of the Lord, but is not part of it as is required for pre-tribulationism. If Paul was a pre-tribulationist why did he not merely defuse the fear of the Thessalonian Christians (2 Thess 2:3) that the *Day*

*of the Lord* had come, by pointing to the fact that all the Christians hadn't been raptured? On the contrary Paul talks more like a post-tribulationist by stating to them that the Day of the Lord had not arrived, because that day will not precede the great apostasy and the appearance of Antichrist.

Thirdly, Paul's command to the Thessalonian Christians to watch for the *Day of the Lord* is not a command to watch in order that they may escape it, but rather obedience and faithfulness to Christ as expected of those who belong to the light and to the day. This is seen by the verbs used in Paul's command in 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8, which do not connote looking for something, but are an exhortation to faithful obedience. This command to watchfulness is the same in principle to that taught in Matthew 25:1-13 where all ten maidens are asleep when the Lord returns, in this passage the exhortation to watch is not gazing up for an any moment return of the Lord, rather it is concerned with having moral vigilance that keeps one ready at all times. The wise maidens which demonstrated this moral vigilance had full lanterns and therefore were considered to have been watchful, as their watchfulness was connected to their faithfulness. Additionally, if the *Day of the Lord* would not overtake the Thessalonian Christians, then Paul would not have used the phrase *like a thief* as a comparative for both unbelievers and believers (1 Thess 5:4). The point Paul is trying to make here is that the day will come upon both unbelievers and believers simultaneously, though to unbelievers it will be unexpected like a thief in the night, for they will not be anticipating that day. However, for believers the day will not be unexpected and therefore will not surprise them like a thief in the night, as for them it is a day much hoped and anticipated for by the believers. The difference is not whether the Thessalonian Christians experience the *Day of the Lord*, but how they experience it.

Fourthly, believers in every age have undergone tribulation and going through times of tribulation even when the tribulation is appointed by God is not contrary to biblical teaching, e.g. 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thess 1:3-10; and Heb 12:3-11. This is not to say that the Lord cannot or will not

supernaturally protect believers through times of tribulation, as suggested in Revelation 9:4. In fact in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-7 rest for believers from such tribulation is said to happen at the same time that retribution for the unbelievers happens, namely the Second Coming. On this day vengeance on unbelievers and rest for those persecuted believers comes simultaneously in the same event, Paul therefore obviously links the *rest* and the *destruction* to the Revelation of the Lord Jesus.

Fifthly, both pre-tribulationists and pre-wrath advocates interpret the *wrath* to come in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 as the temporal wrath which God will pour out on the *Day of the Lord*, however this is unlikely as Paul juxtaposes the wrath in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 with eternal life. Therefore, Paul is actually saying that God has not appointed the Thessalonian Christians to eternal judgement or final condemnation as is true for those who are in darkness (v4) or of the night (v5), but to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. This juxtaposing of final condemnation with eternal life is seen throughout 1 Thessalonians 5 by Paul's contrasting of those who are of the night with those of the day, those in darkness who are asleep to those awake and in the day, and those who are sober with those who are drunk. Furthermore, believers here does not only refer to those alive at the time of the rapture but those who are asleep as contextually Paul has both those alive and asleep in mind, and those asleep would not need deliverance from a temporal wrath of God poured out on the earth. Additionally, this passage does not so much depict the rapture as a means of rescue for the believers from the wrath of God, as both pre-tribulationist and pre-wrath advocates believe, but rather depicts an enjoining to the Lord to be with the Lord forever. The word for meeting the Lord in the air in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 is ἀπάντησις transliterated as *apantesin*, and is used in Matthew 25:6 and Acts 28:15. In both places it refers to a meeting in which people go out to meet a dignitary, and then accompany him in to the place from which they came out.<sup>46</sup> Matthew 25:6 illustrates this to be the case in parabolic

46 Gundry, p. 200.

form, and therefore serves to parallel the same sense of meaning in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 i.e. that we rise to meet the Lord in the air and then welcome him to earth as king.<sup>47</sup>

As a sixth point the meeting the Lord language in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 seems to be the same day as the *Day of the Lord* with which the Thessalonians are confused, by a straightforward reading of the verse.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 15:51-52 & JOHN 14:2

In 1 Corinthians 15:52 Paul states that the *trump* of God that accompanies the rapture will take place at the sound of the last *trump*, which clearly indicates this will be at the end at the time of the Parousia i.e. post-tribulational. Some pre-tribulationist commentators argue that this last trumpet is the last in a particular series, but much more likely this trumpet is the trumpet which ushers in the last day. This trumpet is probably also the same one as that mentioned in Matthew 24:31, as Jesus only references a trumpet once in association with the gathering of the elect into the kingdom, and here we have Paul stating the transformation of the saints for the kingdom will be associated with the last trumpet a parallel that cannot be ignored.<sup>48</sup> And assuming the parallel to be correct the trumpet sound in Matthew 24:31 is clearly post-tribulational, thus the transformation of the saints in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 takes place when national Israel receive its eschatological salvation (Isa 27:12-13) after the final tribulation (Matt 24:31).<sup>49</sup> This also fits in with Paul's purpose in 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 which is to demonstrate how living saints can enter

47 Gundry, Robert H. (1996) *Bulletin for Biblical Research: Volume: BBR 06:1. A* Brief Note on "Hellenistic Formal Receptions and Paul's Use of ΑΠΑΝΘΗΣΙΣ in 1 Thessalonians 4:17." pp. 39-41. Ice, Thomas. (2003) *Conservative Theological Journal: Volume: CTJ 07:21. The Meeting in the Sky.* p. 197.

48 Gundry, p. 198.

49 Gundry, P.198.

the kingdom at the last day, as he had just declared that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God in the previous verse, (1 Cor 15:50).<sup>50</sup>

Pre-tribulational advocates interpret John 14:2-3 to be teaching about a pre-tribulational rapture of the saints to be with the Lord, for reasons of comforting the disciples as their Lord was about to depart. However, this inference is not necessary as the text does not mention about timing, neither does a period of distress in the final tribulation nullify the promise of comfort of being with the Lord at the rapture. And John 14:2-3 does not stipulate that the believers would go directly to heaven, but that they would be with the Lord where he is forever.<sup>51</sup> The pre-tribulational viewpoint would necessitate that the disciples occupy heavenly rooms for a period of seven years, only to vacate them after these seven years to enter the millennium for one-thousand years.<sup>52</sup>

#### MATTHEW 24:3, 15, 31, 34, 40-41

The Olivet discourse is not a passage which establishes the doctrine of the rapture though it does contribute to and enrich the discussion. Most scholars on both sides of the fence generally now recognise that the twelve apostles as recipients are also representative of the church, making this a message applicable not only for national Israel but for the church also. There is a general consensus that the two parts of the Olivet discourse are related to the disciple's questions, (Matt 24:2). Nevertheless there is no consensus as to whether the discourse neatly divides into two sections as it relates to the disciples questions, e.g. Matthew 24:4-35 followed by Matthew 24:36-25:46. Those which do identify such a division and transitional change

50 Johnson, Andy. (2003) *Bulletin for Biblical Research*: Volume: BBR 13:2. On Removing a Trump Card: Flesh and Blood and the Reign of God. p. 190.

51 Gundry, pp. 196-197.

52 Gundry, p. 197.

at 24:36 do not agree as to the order in which Jesus answers the disciples questions, or which answers go to which part or parts. It is reasonable that Jesus disciples must have had in their mind the destruction of the temple in AD70, and also that of the Second Coming. It is reasonable to believe that this passage therefore is historical and eschatological. With this in mind the proposal given here is that Matthew 24:4-14 detail normal catastrophes of the church age, and Matthew 24:15-31 beginning with the sign of the *Abomination of Desolation* midway through Daniel's seventieth week is therefore thoroughly eschatological, concluding with the *Day of the Lord* complex at Matthew 24:29-31. Matthew 24:36-25:46 is in regard to watching for and living in light of the coming Parousia of Matthew 24:30-31. Some pre-tribulationists propose that because Matthew 24:4-31 and Matthew 24:36-25:46 contain the same imagery as the *Day of the Lord* passages, that both are the entire *Day of the Lord* complex. In other words, the first part detailing the signs and the second part explaining the "when" aspect. However, although Matthew 24:4-31 contains the same imagery typically characterising the *Day of the Lord*, this still doesn't necessitate the church's exemption from this whole *Day of the Lord complex event*. For this to be true it relates back to the definition of *wrath* in 1 Thessalonians 5:9, along with the nature of such an exemption which doesn't necessarily mean removal but may also be protection (e.g. Joh 17:15; Rev 3:10).

The comparison and noteworthy parallels between Matthew 24:30-31 with 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 have already been detailed above, and both pre-wrath and post-tribulationists identify the connection between the two verses. Matthew 24:34 falls within the sub-division which in my view is thoroughly eschatological, "this generation" must therefore at the very least include the future generation alive at that time and witnessing "these" things. This interpretation is advanced by a number of evangelical scholars.<sup>53</sup> It is also generally recognized now that Matthew 24:40-41 does not refer to the rapture as some have taught, but to those taken in

53 Nelson Jr, Neil D. (2007) *Journal of Dispensational Theology*: Volume: JODT 11:33. Three Critical Exegetical Issues In Matthew 24: A Dispensational Interpretation. pp. 61-64.

judgement thus the reference to Noah's flood in Matthew 24:38 with use of the verb *took* them away in v39. Again this is also well recognized by the majority of pre-tribulationists.<sup>54</sup>

REVELATION 1:19, 3:10,  
7:14, 11:11-12, 20:4-5

Revelation 1:19 is often used to support a tripartite division in the book of Revelation as John is instructed to write the things he has seen; the things which are; and the things which will be after the things which are. It is argued that because the word church or ἐκκλησία transliterated as *ekklēsia* is not again seen after Revelation 3, that Revelation 4 onward should be interpreted as the final dispensation which follows the age or dispensation of the church which culminates with Revelation 3 i.e. Laodicea. In other words *the things which are to come* are concerned with the events of Daniel's seventieth week, i.e. the next dispensation in God's schema.

However, for several reasons this interpretation of Revelation 1:19 is weak, and at best inconclusive to support pre-tribulationism. Firstly the word church is rarely used in the New Testament to indicate such a universal group, and John himself rarely uses ἐκκλησία other than to denote a local body of believers. Secondly, in Revelation 4:4 the twenty-four elders most naturally suggest the whole people of God, Israel and the church. Thirdly in Revelation 5:10 the elders refer to the church in the third person. For these reasons and others Revelation 1:19 is inconclusive to support a pre-tribulational position, based on a dispensational interpretation of this verse.

54 Entekin, Rusty. 2003. Things to come. Did Jesus Wrongly Predict a First Century Return in Matthew 24:34? Partial Futurists: The Olivet Discourse contains fulfilled and unfulfilled elements. Conclusion. On-line available from, <http://www.thingstocome.org/whatgen.htm>, Accessed on 06/03/15.

## REVELATION 3:10 &amp; 7:14

It is also argued that Revelation 3:10 is a universal promise to remove the church prior to the *hour of trial* that is to come upon the whole earth, i.e. a pre-tribulational perspective. However, although there is a consensus that this verse does indeed promise protection to the believers at Philadelphia, this protection need not be in the form of removal. The phraseology of Revelation 3:10 closely parallels that of John 17:15, where Jesus prayer is not for the removal of the disciples from the world, but for their protection from the evil one.<sup>55</sup> In Revelation 7:14 we see a great multitude of people coming out of tribulation, pre-tribulationist and pre-wrath advocates interpret this great multitude as those who were raptured prior to the tribulation. However, considering the nature of the protection Christ promises his disciples throughout tribulation in John 17:15, Revelation 7:14 is most likely referring to those saints that have gone through great tribulation. Additionally, as these saints have come out of the great tribulation, this denotes that they have gone through it.

## REVELATION 11:11-12

In Revelation 11:11-12 the two witnesses are overcome by the beast and killed. Their bodies lie in the street giving rise to celebration by all the people around, who forbid their bodies to be buried. After three and a half days their bodies come to life, and they are taken into heaven to the astonishment of the onlookers. This is not viewed as a rapture passage by

55 Older pre-tribulation advocates also included Rev 4:1-2 as support for their view. The images in Revelation 4:1-2 e.g. a trumpet sound, the voice of God, heaven, and the Spirit, are similar to the imagery described in other rapture passages, however interpreting Revelation 4:1-2 in this way is highly problematic. Rather the language used in Revelation 4:1-2 functions only to describe John's experience as he received his prophetic vision, rather than foretelling a future event. Dispensational writers such as Robert Thomas admit this difficulty, and understand this verse mainly as an invitation to John to see from a new vantage point, for the purpose of the revelation he was going to receive. Svigel, Michael J. (2001) *Trinity Journal*: Volume: TRINJ 22:1. The Apocalypse Of John And The Rapture Of The Church: A Re-evaluation. pp. 29-30.

pre-tribulationists, and though it is viewed as a rapture passage by pre-wrath advocates, it is the timing aspect of this event which once again is thrown into question. The timing of the rapture as detailed in Revelation 11:11-12, revolves around the interpretative approach of the structure of the book of Revelation. For post-tribulationists the book is not chronologically ordered, though for pre-wrath advocates it is chronological. For example, pre-wrath advocates believe that the earthquake of Revelation 6:12 and 16:18 are two separate earthquakes, whereas post-tribulationists believe these two earthquakes to be the same. If the earthquakes of Revelation 6:12 and 16:18 are not the same, then pre-wrath advocates have a strong argument to support a pre-wrath rapture. This interpretation would also undermine identifying the earthquake of Revelation 11:13 as that of Revelation 6:12, and 16:18. However, as post-tribulationists point out there is too much repetition as the visions unfold between Revelation 6-16, to think that the language is chronological. The language in the book of Revelation in many instances seems to be describing Parousia events typical of the *Day of the Lord*, and this is also an indication of the non-chronological structure of the book of Revelation. If the earthquake of Revelation 6:12 is the same as that described in Revelation 16:18 and also the same as that of Revelation 11:13, then the resurrection of the witnesses can be seen to be post-tribulational. Additionally the witnesses are said to ascend in a cloud and in v15 a trumpet is mentioned, and clouds and trumpets are both consistently mentioned in rapture passages (e.g. Matt 24:30; Acts 1:9; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 14:14). Further support for a post-tribulational rapture of the witnesses is seen in that they prophesy for forty-two months (Rev 11:2), and then lie in death for three and a half days (Rev 11:9). If the former references the first half of Daniel's seventieth week, then the latter could indicate the second half of the seventieth week of Daniel. The book of Revelation consistently makes reference to a three and a half year period in various ways, for example 3 ½ days in Revelation 12:14, 1260 days in Revelation 11:3, and 12:6, and 42 Months in Revelation 11:2, and 13:5. These lines of argumentation are

by no means conclusive, and as previously stated only serve to enrich the discussion over the timing of the rapture.

### REVELATION 20:4-5

Revelation 20:4-5 is clearly a resurrection passage and is described as the first resurrection, and as such must include the entire body of the redeemed. To restrict this resurrection to anything less than this faces two problems. Firstly those resurrected are identified as those who reign with Christ for a thousand years. Limiting those resurrected in Revelation 20:4-5 to the tribulation martyrs as pre-tribulational and pre-wrath advocates do, also limits those who reign with Christ in the millennium exclusively to the tribulational martyrs. Secondly, the contrasting of this first resurrection against the second resurrection, which includes only the unrighteous, implies that the first resurrection includes all of the righteous. One of the only objections to this is the sequence of events in Revelation 20 which seem to place the rapture as post Parousia, in other words a non-rapture. However there is nothing in the text to suggest to the reader that these events transpire in a chronological sequence, and it is far likelier that John is reporting various aspects of Christ's return. Revelation 20:4-5 which seemingly places the rapture as post Parousia should be viewed diachronically, within and against the broader context of each of the rapture passages.

### CONCLUSION

The timing of the rapture is not explicitly mentioned throughout the Bible, however it can be inferred from a number of texts. A straightforward reading of the text consistently points toward a post-tribulational rapture. In order to hold to a pre-tribulational or pre-wrath rapture the reader has to seemingly attribute meaning to certain passages which from a straightforward reading cannot easily be seen or understood. While the

Bible is not always straightforward or easy to interpret e.g. the progressive unfolding of salvation history as prophesied in the OT, particularly the OT mysteries not realised until the NT era, nevertheless interpreting the rapture passages utilizing a complicated hermeneutical system seems to miss the straightforward meaning of the various passages. This is true with the explicit passages in the NT (e.g. 1 Thess 4:17) where the stress should be placed upon union with Christ rather than escaping temporary wrath, and also true with the implicit passages (e.g. 1 Cor 15:51-52) which clearly describes the rapture to take place at the last trumpet. The straightforward reading of the passage is post-tribulational i.e. the last trumpet, not the last in a series of trumpets (Rev 11:15) which then requires one more last trumpet to be sounded at Christ's Second Coming. Post-tribulationists therefore identify the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52 as that of Revelation 11:15, and also recognize a strong correlation between the events of Matthew 24:29-31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16. This straightforward reading does not therefore require two last trumpets, two great earthquakes, and two separate comings of Christ. A straightforward reading of 2 Thessalonians 1:10 also infers a post-tribulational rapture, and does not necessitate interpreting the Day of the Lord as the entire seventieth week of Daniel. Here God's wrath is juxtaposed against eternal life, the straightforward interpretation of wrath is equal to condemnation generally not temporal wrath at the Second Coming, and yet both pre-tribulationism and the pre-wrath view require the wrath of 2 Thessalonians 1:10 to be primarily temporal not finally condemnatory.

Post-tribulationism is the conclusion reached from a straightforward reading of Matthew 24. This interpretation does not necessitate Jesus to answer his disciples questions back to front, and does not demand a strict dividing of Matthew 24-25 at Matthew 24:36, dichotomising the passage between two separate comings of Christ as pre-tribulationism does. When turning to Revelation we also see that there are many passages which suggest a post-tribulational rapture, (e.g. Rev 11:11-12; 20:4-5), and the main reasons to suggest otherwise are less than compelling. Post-

tribulationism does not undermine the biblical notion of imminency when the rapture is not understood exclusively as any moment, and accords more with the Bible's general exhortation toward faithfulness to Christ rather than continually looking for the sign of his coming.

One must remember when debating the issue of pre-tribulationism, pre-wrath or post-tribulationism, that the position adopted is not a test of orthodoxy. The scriptures are not entirely clear on this issue and there is room to arrive at different conclusions, the essential thing is to discuss this issue in the spirit of Christian love, with thoughtfulness and respect.





# Interpreting the New Testament in the East African Context

Joseph Koech

KEYWORDS:

| Biblical Interpretation | Grammatico-Historical | Inculturation |  
| Hermeneutics | African Context | Exegesis | Worldview | Culture |

ABSTRACT:

Historically biblical interpretation in East Africa is the brainchild of the Western world. Missionaries brought the gospel to this region but influenced by their western cultural perspectives. The first African biblical scholars in East Africa attended seminaries in the West where they received training in the western approaches to biblical understanding and interpretation. Such methodologies could not fit the needs of African situation. Africans seek Bible reading informed by their cultural perspectives, worldview and life experience. Presently there exist diverse approaches to biblical interpretation propounded by African scholars. Their concern has been how to make the message not only understood by Africans but also relevant to them. This paper attempts to show the significance and challenges of grammatico-historical method of interpretation for African contexts. It also examines the existence of diverse biblical interpretations within the African context. The African context has its peculiar issues such as culture, worldview, political, social and economic concerns among others. This impact on the responses to the interpretation of the scripture that should ensure relevance to the particular context. Such an approach should seek to empower the African readers and hearers for a critical study of the Bible in relation to their life-situations, and for personal and societal transformation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Africa is composed of different regions which have undergone different unique experiences. However, scholars treat African context as one due to same worldview and cultural components. African scholars talk of African Religion instead of African religions (Mbiti, 1969; Magesa, 1997). In this paper East African context is used when the information is specific to East Africa, while African context when it can relate to Africa in general. The minority immigrant communities such as the Asians are not focused upon in this discussion.

The greatest Christian influence in East Africa resulted from European missionary activity in the region in the nineteenth century. However, the challenge which has persisted is how to make the biblical message relevant and meaningful within the African situation (Mugambi, 1989, p. 36). The main reason is that the missionaries brought the gospel to Africa but were influenced by their western cultural perspectives (LeMarquand, G., 2000). They attempted unsuccessfully to domesticate the message in Africa through indigenization sometimes seeking help from the Africans (Gehman, 1987, p. 12-22). However, their interpretation of the Bible was mainly influenced by their own cultural background. The Africans could not identify with such a message. Africans responded to Christianity in several ways:

1. Some communities became very hostile to the missionaries and their converts. In certain instances African converts to Christianity were ostracized from their homes.
2. For those who converted to Christianity and became members of the missionary churches, most of them still resorted to traditional means to sort out their problems. This happened in situations where the church failed to address such needs. Religion to Africans must be practical especially in addressing felt needs (Barrett, 1968).
3. Some retained their membership in the missionary churches

while attending African Instituted Churches (AICs). These were churches established by Africans most of which focused on the supernatural dimension of Christian ministry (Barrett, 1968).

4. Majority broke away to start their own churches as a result of their needs and which were based on African reading of the Bible (Koech, 2008, p. 63). The work of Christ in the New Testament (NT) of exorcism, healing and addressing social needs of the people became attractive to the Africans.

Three categories of Christian readers of the Bible can be noted in the African context. The first comprise the ordinary Christian who takes the scripture literally. These ordinary Africans readers of the Bible are generally influenced by their worldview and life experiences which then color the way they understand the biblical message. The second category are the preachers who have no theological training and thus unfamiliar with interpretive methods. Such preachers are guided, as Magesa notes, by pastoral rather than by academic concerns in interpretation (1997, p. 25).

Tite Tienou (1998) notes that one of the major problems facing the church in Africa is the proclamation of the message without serious reflection of both the scripture and the context of the audience (p.4). Many of the African preachers who enter into the church to minister do not necessarily go through training first. Training is not even a priority. The third group comprises the minority ministers who received training in seminaries which have theological curriculum developed in the West. Some of the seminaries in Africa are beginning to make attempts to incorporate African culture and worldview in the curriculum. In some situations theological training may even be seen as an impediment to ministry basically due to the irrelevance of the curriculum.

Due to the frustration in attempting to domesticate the biblical message in the African situation African scholars have proposed diverse interpretive ways to the biblical text. These are explored below. There

has not been any agreement on the exact method of interpreting the biblical text in the African context. Several questions which touch on interpretation in relation to the African context include:

1. What is the meaning and significance of Jesus for the African situation?
2. How can the gospel message become alive not only in the individual lives but also in their communities at large?
3. What is the relevance and application of the good news in their life situations?
4. How can they experience the gospel message today?
5. How can the message be truly African and yet remain Christian?

The mainline churches seem to have fallen short in providing adequate and relevant answers to the above questions. To most of these mainline churches, the Jesus of the gospels is no longer active today in the same way he was in the gospels. He belongs to history. When Africans read the gospels they are attracted by the activities of Jesus such as healings, exorcisms, and other supernatural acts. They see in Him and His work solutions to their predicaments including freedom from oppression. E. Obeng (1997, p. 17) notes that "...many in Africa are searching for a spiritual haven for physical problems like economic hardships, political turmoil, social unrest and supernatural problems."

Biblical scholars state that the interpretation of the biblical text is important for several reasons. First, the Bible is an ancient text using first century Palestinian expressions for the case of the NT. Differences between the biblical world and our contemporary world as a whole and East Africa in particular is in culture, history, language, literary styles, and worldview among others. A correct interpretation would most likely lead to Africans acceptance the message (Sam Oleka, 1998, p. 104). Many

within the African context read the Bible not only as though it was written within their present context but are also influenced by their traditional worldview. In some cases there seem to be parallels or similarities between the Jewish and African perceptions. The present reader is separated by several gaps which must be bridged in order to understand the biblical message. Second, proper application of the text requires proper interpretation. The NT for instance was produced within the first century Palestinian context with many factors influencing its production. The three main cultures which predominated the situation were Greek, Roman and Jewish. Third, the reader is always an interpreter who has pre-understanding informing, mostly unconsciously, the interpretation. Subjectivity is difficult to surmount unless proper interpretive approach is adhered to.

## METHODOLOGY

This paper first attempts to show both the importance as well as the challenges of determining the author's intention and doing biblical interpretation for African contexts. Second, the current situation of biblical interpretation in Africa is examined the focus being on the diversity of approaches and thus the need for a unified and relevant approach. The assumption here is that the African context has its peculiarities such as culture, worldview, political, social and economic concerns among others. These have an impact on the approach to the interpretation of the scripture that should ensure relevance to the particular context and remain faithful to the authority of the biblical text. Currently, biblical interpreters state that the African context provides critical resources for biblical interpretation. The concern of this paper is not just to show the existing challenges of biblical interpretation in Africa but also makes a proposal for the components of the relevant approach.

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## BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS AND THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

Despite the challenges resulting from western approaches to interpretation, Western scholars have made immense contributions to biblical scholarship particularly the interpretation of the Gospels using myriads of approaches (Kinoti & Waliggo, 1997, pp. 8-24). Generally these approaches have their merits and demerits particularly for non-western contexts and especially for the African contexts. Historical-critical method was popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Tate, 2000). Merits and demerits of this methodology have received scholarly scrutiny (Stock, 1983; Lategan, 1984). It focused on the world behind the text but was rejected by evangelicals because of among other things its liberal tendencies as well as scientific and rationalistic perceptions. They instead preferred grammatico-historical approach (Carson, 1980). The significance of this method rests in the usefulness in the understanding of the text in its original context. The intentionality of the original author is crucial in the unearthing of the original meaning of a text.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF GRAMMATICO-HISTORICAL METHOD

A significant starting point of grammatico-historical method is first determining the original rendering of a text by use of textual criticism. Scholars of this school of thought assert that God used the original author's words to give His message. However, due to the process of transmission of the text, changes occurred resulting in variant copies of manuscripts of the same document. The linguistic analysis of the text in question is done in order to determine the accurate meanings of words and idioms used. The awareness of language, style of writing and types of literature is done in order to get as accurate as possible what the author said. To Kaiser

getting author's intention requires a study of verbal meanings of the texts because God inspired the authors (Kaiser, 1978, p 138).

In the second place it also seeks to answer questions of circumstances that prompted the author to write, identity of recipients, date of writing, occasion and sources. Another focus is to understand the world behind the text, the intention of the author and what the original readers understood. Before one can discover what the text means for today, it is important to establish what it meant then at the time of writing (Gordon Fee, 1993, p. 19). True meaning can only be attained in the writer's intention in his context (Yilpet, Yoilah K., 2000). Before bringing the message home in the African context it is important to understand it in its original context. Grammatico-historical method is therefore significant for interpreting the Bible in the African context because this approach forms the foundation stage in the interpretive process.

Explaining the author-centered approaches W. Randolph Tate (2000, p. xvi) notes that meaning lies in the author's intention formulated within its social, political, cultural, and ideological matrix. Gordon Fee (1983, p. 28) clarifies that in interpreting NT documents examining the historical context in general is the starting point. The exegete must address several questions touching the identities of the authors, the recipients, their relationships, present circumstances, the historical situation which occasioned the writing, the author's purpose, the overall theme or concern of the document, and also if there exists a recognizable outline in the argument or narrative. This forms the first point of departure in interpretation in the African context. The starting point of the interpretation of the NT and other biblical texts within the Africa context is the paying of attention to both the historical context of the document as well as the present context of the reader.

Single-meaning authorial intent is based on the work of E. D. Hirsch (1967). Unless a biblical author indicates otherwise, it must always be assumed that there is a single meaning in a text (Kaiser, 1984). This approach seeks to avoid four errors (Millard J. Erickson, 1993, p. 12).

First is the guarding against subjectivism in interpreting scripture. It seeks to distance the interpreter's influence on the meaning of a text. Second is the refuting of the idea of *sensus plenior* (fuller meaning of Scripture) advanced by some Christian scholars. Third is the rejection of allegorical method of interpreting scripture. The fourth error to be avoided is given in Erickson's words, "... [a] form of eschatological hermeneutic that finds dual or multiple meanings within prophetic passages. According to this view, the "real" meaning of the passage may be something quite different from the apparent or surface meaning" (Erickson, 1993, p. 12).

### CHALLENGES OF THE GRAMMATICO-HISTORICAL METHOD

Apart from the challenges posed by historical distance between the 21<sup>st</sup> readers from the biblical writers as well as those brought about by textual variants, the knowledge that the Bible has dual authorships escalates the challenge. Several other challenges can be noted from the view touching on the author's intention and the idea of a single meaning of a text.

In the first place, it has been argued that a single-meaning in authorial intent contradicts the practice in the NT of imputing different meanings to OT quotations (Payne, 1977). Such interpretations would not have existed if the NT was missing. For instance situations where OT prophesies find fulfilment in the NT. Such texts have their own historical contexts but now are reinterpreted in the NT without necessarily paying attention to those contexts. It appears then that their reinterpretation in the NT gives them fuller meaning especially in the life, work and crucifixion of Jesus. The implication is that the OT writers of those passages were not conscious of meanings beyond their intention. For instance Donald Hagner (1976, p.92) cites the case of Matthew's use of OT that seem to give the relevant texts fuller sense than intended by their original OT authors.

Another challenge to single-meaning approach is existence of texts

in the Bible where the authors seem to suggest that they did not fully understand what they were saying or writing about. In 1 Peter 1:10—12, Peter speaks of how the prophets tried to determine in vain what the Spirit was speaking concerning issues related to the incarnation and suffering of Christ. A similar case is that found in John 11:49—52, where Caiaphas, the high priest, gave prophesy about Jesus unknowingly (Erickson, 1993, p. 15).

Some scholars state that due to the dual authorship of the Bible it is difficult to maintain the single authorial intent. The human author may have had a single intention but the divine author may have had a different intention. *Sensus Plenior* is one such proposal which is rejected by some evangelical theologians (Erickson, 1993). However, others like G.K. Beale support the possibility of fuller meaning of scripture (Beale, 1989, p. 92; Phillips et al, 2012, p.7).

The definition of the term “intention” is noted by Philip B. Payne (1977) to be problematic. Several reasons have been identified for this. Payne (pp. 244-5) notes:

The Bible authors’ intentions are an elusive matter for many reasons. We will consider only four reasons here: (1) “Intention” can be understood at many levels; (2) an author may have more than one reason for making a statement—his intention, in other words, may be complex; (3) intention is a complex category involving mental states that are in a constant flux; intention may suggest subconscious as well as conscious factors; and (4) it is difficult to demonstrate what the intentions of the Biblical authors were, since we are separated from them by many centuries and their thoughts are known to us only through their writings.

“Intention” may have several layers touching intention in writing a book, a chapter, a paragraph, a sentence, a phrase, or even a particular word. Another challenge is going beyond the meaning to arrive at the significance of the text in today’s contexts. Significance of the text relates to applying the meaning to different situations today resulting from diverse cultural

contexts. Normativeness of scripture in relation to cultural context is debated by scholars (McQuilkin, 1984).

Another problem is the dilemma faced by those who (especially pastor) want to apply the method in practical ministry. This is coupled with the fact that in the African context the field of hermeneutics is still in its early stages of development (Justin Upkong, 1999).

The trained African minister may have knowledge of exegetical process, but how to apply it to the African context is a problem. The message of the Bible can easily remain locked up in the original first century times. The Student of the NT instead of bringing the message to the present gets lost in the NT (B. C. Lategan, 1984, pp. 14-15).

The foregone discussion has highlighted the challenges at the initial stage of doing exegesis even before moving to applying it to the African context. Kaiser has attempted to respond to each of the issues raised (Kaiser, 1984).

The task of the interpreter is to bridge the existing gap between the Jewish world of the 1<sup>st</sup> century (in case of NT texts) and the present African contexts. It has been acknowledged that the world of the Bible is closer to that of Africans than to that of the Westerners. The search for a contemporary African meaning of the text should be the concern of hermeneutics. Scholars are not to be satisfied with a mere unearthing of the past nor an overemphasis on the original historical context (Michael Prior, 1995, p. 182) at the expense of the present relevance particularly the African context.

## DEVELOPMENT OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

Another challenge of biblical interpretation in the African context is seen in stages of its development. At each stage new methods are proposed which have little or no connection with the previous one(s). Not only

is multiplicity of approaches noted in the African context but also the shifting of approaches over time. The developmental stages can be seen below.

The first is the Comparative method (1930s-1970s). This period is also called reactive and apologetic era. The main focus of the methods of this time was to show that African Traditional Religion and Culture is acceptable if not equivalent with that of the Jews as depicted in the scripture. The leading scholars include Kwesi Dickson (1984, pp. 141-184), Daniel Wambutda (1981, pp. 137-153), Joseph John Williams (1930), Justin Upkong (1987), S. Kibicho (1968), John Mbiti (1971), Theodor H. Gaster (1969), just to name a few. Objections have been raised against this method (Erick Isaac, 1964). These approaches mostly served apologetic and polemic purposes. However, though inadequate they are foundational to biblical studies that connect the biblical text to the African context.

The second stage is the Africa in the Bible inculturation-evaluative and liberation hermeneutics of 1970s-1990s, also known as the reactive-proactive approach. These methodologies make use of the African context as a resource for biblical interpretation. Some leading scholars in these approaches are Cheikh A. Diop (1974), Michael Prior (1997), Cain Hope Felder (1991, p. 130), West Claus Westerman (1984, pp. 459ff), and David T. Adamo (1993, pp. 138-143). Other studies focused on identifying the presence of Africa and Africans in the Bible, such as those by Engelbert Mveng (1972, pp. 23-39), Temba Mafico (1989), and Adamo (1987, pp. 1-8; 1992, pp. 51-64).

The inculturation-evaluative method examine also concerned itself with what the Biblical text or theme has to say in critique of a particular issue in society or in Church's life. It draws out lessons from a biblical text or theme to add to a particular African context. It searches for implications of the text to the specific context. Examples include the works of Chris Manus (1982, pp.18-26) and Nlenanya Onwu's (1998, pp. 43-51). The biblical theme or text is also interpreted against the background of African

culture, religion, and life experience as exemplified by Daniel Wambutda (1981, pp. 23-41), and Bayo Abijole (1988, pp. 118-129). It seeks also to establish continuity between the African culture and Christianity like in the works of John Mbiti (1972) and John Pobee (1979). Contextualization is sometimes used to describe this approach (Gehman, 1987; Pobee & Hallencreutzeds, 1986).

1990s up to the present is seen to be the most productive phase in hermeneutical approaches in Africa which is duped the proactive time. The leading interpretive approaches are Liberation and Inculturation. Contextual theology and inculturation hermeneutics are the two main approaches with the aim of producing original contribution to biblical interpretation in Africa. Gerald West and Justin Upkong (1993) are among the leading scholars, previous approaches either sought to defend African religion or justify African culture.

The challenge of finding an interpretive approach that pays attention to traditional African worldview, culture plus the economic, social and political realities faced by Africans is still ongoing. African scholars are not yet in agreement as to the best approach.

## THE CONCERN OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN AFRICA

Another persistent problem in the African situation is the existence of a gap between the academic approach to the scriptures and the understanding of the ordinary reader who is supposed to benefit from the message. The purpose of hermeneutics especially in Africa is to empower the African readers and hearers for a critical study of the Bible in relation to their life-situations, and for individual and societal change (Koech, 2008, p. 35). The concern of hermeneutics should be the making of Jesus real and his message relevant in the present African context. The meaning of Christianity must become clear in the African context

paying attention to culture, worldview, social and other concerns. Also the gospel message comes alive in African societies. Pobe (1986) makes important comments, "... if there is to be an effective and meaningful communication of the Gospel, there is need for a careful engagement between the eternal, non-negotiable Word of God, divested of cultural trappings of one area, with the new society in heart, soul and body (p. 1). Whatever the method proposed it should involve the following processes:

1. Understanding the text in its original context. The intention of the author must be sought because missing the author's original intention means missing out on the message. We must know the sense of the text then before it can be applied to any present context, in this case, the African context.
2. The reader or hearer must see the text as relevant and functional for his/her particular situation. The needs of the hearer should be addressed by the particular interpretation.
3. The context of the receptor clearly plays an important role in the communication and understanding of the biblical message. In the case of Africa, an approach informed by the western grid will not make sense.
4. The message should be intelligible to the hearers. The worldview issue is significant in any communication process. One may hear the words but may not get the message. The traditional African sees reality from a supernatural perspective. However, there are certain aspects in the African worldview that differ from that of the Bible. These are areas of discontinuity discussed below.

In order to make the biblical message relevant for the African context today, it is essential to get the original author's intention. Out of this the relevance for African contexts can be sought, in other words the

significance of the text is sought. Inculturation hermeneutics seems flexible enough to incorporate the above processes.

## INCULTURATION HERMENEUTICS AS A VIABLE OPTION

The proposal made here is that of inculturation hermeneutics which takes into consideration the biblical text in its context and reader in his/her context.

The basic framework of inculturation hermeneutics first finds its basis on the African worldview. This worldview sees reality as unified (Justin Upkong, 1999, pp. 313-339; 1995, pp. 3-14; 1996, pp. 189-210,). There is no separation between matter and spirit, sacred and ordinary, religious and secular. Both the visible and invisible realities are unified. The constitution of the human being has no divisions. Humans are persons with visible and invisible dimensions. Even the dead are considered part of the visible reality since they still influence and participate in what goes on the physical world.

In Traditional African worldview everything in the universe had a divine origin. There exist an ontological connection between God, humans and the created world. The sense of community is an important component in the African worldview. This sense of community is what connects humans with other aspects of creation. Individuals only exist as part of the human community and nature. Humans are also custodians of the earth. This sense of community includes the ancestors, the living and the future generations.

Another dimension of the traditional African worldview is the belief in the supernatural. The entire universe is seen as a plane of interaction between human beings and spiritual beings. The spirit forces are either good or evil and can influence human life (Koech, 2008, p. 50). Spirit beings also participate in every activity of human life, work, worship,

weddings, meal times, harvest, and preparation of food and not just during a religious function. All these must be taken into account in the interpretation process. One such approach which pays attention to these aspects is inculturation hermeneutics but in a modified form especially to exclude the subjective elements.

Inculturation hermeneutics seeks to redress the African situation by first adopting a holistic approach to culture whereby both the secular and the religious aspects of culture are treated as interconnected. It finds its basis from the African worldview where reality is unified. There is no dichotomy between secular and the religious aspects of society. The Bible is also read within the religious as well as economic, social, and political contexts of Africa (Upkong, 1994, pp. 3-15). The proposal here is that interpretation is not to be influenced by contextual concerns but should address those concerns.

Inculturation hermeneutics attempts to establish a dynamic interaction between the text and the reader. The meaning of the text is a function of the interaction between the text in its context and the reader in his or her context. The starting point of interpretation begins with establishing the meaning of the text in its context. At this level the grammatico-historical method is utilized. The exegete seeks not to inform the text, but to be informed by the text. The questions addressed are: What did the text mean when it was written? Also what did the original respondents understand the text to have meant? Michael Kyomya (2010, pp. 13-14) argues against pursuing meaning in the understanding of original audience because in some instances they misunderstood the message.

Second, the approach is concerned with the context of the reader. It pays attention to African religious and cultural issues, such as belief in ancestors, the spirits, spirit possession, and witchcraft to name a few. Here the question addressed is: What is the significance of the text to the African situations? The reader's context is important, as it can influence the understanding of the text and seeks to be addressed by the interpretation. The subjective element here needs to be avoided so that the

reader's context should not inform the text (Erickson, 1993).

Third, the method is holistic in its presentation as it concerns itself with all the aspects of life of the respondent, the worldview being at the core. The Spiritual world impinges on the natural at every point. B.J. Van der Walt's (1991) comment gives further explanation, "The African concept of the world, society and the human being is defined, molded, and conditioned by his faith- the reality of the spirit world and the application of the law of the spirit as a means of explaining social phenomena and all kinds of mysteries." At the core of culture is a worldview which does not change even in the face of the forces of secularization such as education, the church, and media just to name a few. The worldview colors the reading of the Bible and influence the perception of reality. This points to the need for the use of inculturation hermeneutics in interpreting the Bible within the African context.

In spite of the challenges the African context has resources which can enrich the understanding of the biblical text. This point is made clear by Erickson when he states that contact with other cultures such as the African culture:

...enlarges our understanding of the text. It enables us to see facets of the truth to which we are blind because of our cultural limitations. It does not give a different meaning to the text, but a fuller meaning. And it does not say that the text has different meanings for different persons—a sort of epistemological subjectivism. But it reminds us that there are meanings in the text that are meanings for everyone, but that some persons may be more likely to observe certain of these meanings than are others, simply because of their perspective on things (1993, p.96).

The example given by Erickson is that of the experiences of Joseph in the Old Testament (OT). For the North American Christians they see in the story evidence of the providence of God as well as Joseph's faithfulness, but to the African Christians the leading thought in the passage is family ties.

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## AREAS OF DISCONTINUITY

Whereas it is important to pay attention to African worldview and culture in biblical interpretation, it is however necessary to be aware of existing discontinuity between the Bible and African culture. In the first place “the perception of the spirit world is different in detail in the African understanding from that of the biblical view” (Koech, 2008, p.192). The spirit world in African understanding is populated by ancestors, spirits (divinities), and the Supreme Being. These beings influence the physical world. The biblical worldview shows that the spirit world is occupied by angels, the devil, and God (or the Godhead).

Another area of divergence is that the African world is anthropocentric while the biblical worldview is theocentric. The African perspective is that humans must perform prescribed rituals to maintain relationship with the spirit world especially the ancestors and the Supreme Being (Mbiti, 1969, p. 16). The thoughts, speech, actions, and relationships influence how the spirit beings will respond to humans. The biblical perspective especially the NT is that God has taken the initiative to restore relationship with humans who respond to Him by faith.

Whereas there is no superior culture the scripture is to provide a corrective to the African understanding of reality where the African understanding differs from that of the Bible.

## CONCLUSION

The foregone discussion has highlighted the challenge of interpretation of the biblical text in the African context. The missionaries brought the message to Africa but influenced by their own cultural perspectives. It made it unintelligible and irrelevant to the Africans due to their worldview including economic, social, and political contexts. Various methods have been developed in Africa over time leading to diverse and sometimes conflicting approaches. The starting point of biblical interpretation the

text in the original context. The aim of Grammatico-historical approach is to unearth the original intent of the text which is the first stage in the process before making use of contextual methods for the target audience. An interpretive approach that pays attention to the text in its context as well as the context of the reader needs to be developed. The scripture, being eternally contemporary, must have meaning in the present contexts, in this case the East African context. Scholars are unanimous that the NT was produced within the 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestinian context. The setting is important for the understanding of the intended meaning of a text, and thus making it possible to apply the same to the present context. One ought to come to the scripture with an openness of mind and heart. It means becoming critically involved with the text within ones present context. The African respects the scripture and treats it as the word of God, which is meaningful to him or her now. The African freely interacts with the biblical text, and especially those parts that speak to his or her need. African biblical scholars are however not agreed on the best approach of interpreting the Bible in the African context. Each of the proposed approaches have their own merits but also demerits. There is a continuous evolution of new methods of biblical study as noted above. The present paper proposes inculturation hermeneutics in a modified form as a viable contextual method for the contemporary East African context. It pays attention to the text in its context, the relevance of the African social, political, economic and cultural context, and its holistic approach to reality in the East African situation.

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# Jesus' Relationship to Israel as Evidenced in the Matthean Infancy Narratives

Salvador Ung Hayworth

## KEYWORDS:

| Christology | Israel | Matthean Theology |  
| Use of OT in the NT | Prophetic Fulfilment | Supersessionism |

## ABSTRACT:

Various scholars have proposed that Matthean Christology portrays Jesus as the 'true Israel' or 'new Israel'. This designation leaves one to wonder whether this involves an abrogation of Israel in an ethnic sense. In other words, does Matthew present the reader with a supersessionist Christology? Though this paper will not answer this question, it does seek to explore a major aspect of it. This paper seeks to explore Jesus' relationship to Israel in the Matthean infancy narratives. From Matt. 1:18 – 2:23 the narratives serve to illustrate Jesus' fulfillment of five OT citations. Matt. 1:18-25 concerns the fulfillment of Isa. 7:14. Matt. 2:1-12 concerns Mic. 5:2. Matt. 2:13-15 concerns Hos. 11:1 and allusions to Exodus. Matt. 2:16-18 concerns Jer. 31:15 with possible allusions to the Exodus. Matt. 2:19-23 concerns the fulfillment of some unstated OT reference(s). Matthean Christology, at least of the infancy narratives, concerns Jesus' fulfillment of OT scripture. This paper will analyse each narrative individually, examining both the context of the OT citation and that of the Matthean narrative surrounding the citation. This paper will then piece together the findings into a coherent statement regarding Jesus' relationship to Israel.

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## INTRODUCTION

The issue of supersessionism generally tends to focus on ecclesiology; namely the Church's relationship to Israel. Perhaps not as central to the debate are other areas of theology. Tracing the flow of theology from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus through to Karl Barth and Karl Rahner, R Kendall Soulen demonstrates how supersessionism has embedded itself into the very structure of Christian Theology's metanarrative. He proposes the re-evaluation of Christian theology along non-supersessionist lines. One such area is Christology, concerning which he states, "The question, then, is whether Christology involves the abrogation of God's promises to Israel" (Soulen 1996, 9). However, if William Kynes' thesis is correct, that the Church's relationship to Israel is mediated through Jesus (Kynes 1991), then the manner in which Jesus relates to Israel would, therefore, indicate how the Church also relates to Israel.

France lists the Matthean phenomena which suggest that Matthew must have had Jewish members, in his audience, who would have appreciated Matthew's writing which,

[W]ithout explanation includes transliterated Aramaic words (ῥακά, 5:22; μαμωνᾶς, 6:24; κορβανᾶς, 27:6) and references to details of Jewish custom (handwashing at meals, 15:2; phylacteries and tassels, 23:5; burial customs, 23:27; sabbath travel problems, 24:20), which displays an almost obsessive interest in and subtlety in the use of the Old Testament, which includes a genealogy of Jesus beginning with Abraham and focusing around David and the monarchy of Judah, and which introduces 'Son of David' as a title of Jesus on several occasions when the others do not, which restricts the mission of both Jesus and his disciples to 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (10:5-6; 15:24; cf. also 10:23; 19:28), and which unlike Luke mentions Samaritans only to exclude them from the mission, which can apparently countenance the continuing validity of Jewish scribal teaching (23:2-3; 23:23), and finds it necessary to insist on Jesus' respect for the Jewish law (5:17ff), which includes teaching and narrative focusing on such Jewish concerns as fasting,

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sabbath observance, temple offerings, the payment of temple tax, etc" (France 1989, 97).

This seems to suggest that, even though the audience may have been predominantly Greek speaking, (or else why would Matthew have written in Greek?), there would have been a sizeable Jewish presence. France makes a strong case for the notion that Matthew could have deliberately embedded subtle hints, especially for those in his audience who had an advanced understanding of OT scripture and Jewish hermeneutic practices (France 1981). Though Richard Beaton (2002) cautions against dogmatism in advocating Matthew's knowledge of a Hebrew or even LXX text, it is interesting to note that outside of the formula-quotations, Matthew has a "LXX character" (Stendahl 1991, 205). Krister Stendahl rather sees Matthew as "originator of the formula quotations" in the infancy narratives (Stendahl 1991, viii), signalling his fluency with both Greek and Hebrew. Thus, such hints, that demand a knowledge of Hebrew, would presuppose the existence of some in his audience who were also familiar with that language. Therefore, as Matthew's Gospel is written from a Jewish perspective and to a primarily Jewish audience, one would expect it to yield valuable data concerning Jesus' relationship to Israel as a nation.

Though considerable debate has ensued, concerning the redactional structure of the Matthean infancy narratives (Prabhu 1976), it is still clear that the final literary structure consists of five episodes each of which centres around an OT formula-quotation. Kynes states that Matthew's "formula quotations are found in their highest concentration" in the infancy narratives (Kynes 1981, 9). Matt. 1:18-25 concerns the fulfillment of Isa. 7:14. Matt. 2:1-12 concerns Mic. 5:2. Matt. 2:13-15 concerns Hos. 11:1 and allusions to Exodus. Matt. 2:16-18 concerns Jer. 31:15 with possible allusions to Exodus. Matt. 2:19-23 concerns the fulfillment of some unstated OT reference(s).

To discern the message that Matthew attempted to communicate through his use of the formula-quotations, it is important to speak of

methodology. How did Matthew handle OT scripture? Did he simply proof-text? Did he read the OT text literally and find a direct fulfillment in Jesus' infancy narratives? Did Matthew reinterpret the OT to fit in with the infancy narratives or did the OT texts influence his appreciation and presentation of those infancy narratives? George Soares Prabhu believes that Matthew engaged in a dialectical approach whereby "context and quotation each influences and is influenced by the other" but the guiding principle lay in Matthew's own theology (Prabhu 1976, 160). Though this approach is adept at accounting for the complexities of Matthew's handling of OT scripture, the point of Matthew's fulfilment motif is to prove Jesus' fulfilment of OT scripture. The context of the narrative did not influence the OT text, but rather illuminated Matthew's appreciation of it and vice versa, even if Matthew's theology was the hermeneutical key. Though this may seem an overstated semantic issue, it highlights an important hermeneutical consideration articulated by Walter Kaiser Jr. when he questions the "apologetic value" of handling an OT text in a way that violates the historic context (Kaiser 2001, 14). Even though Apostolic hermeneutics demonstrably exceeded the limitations of western historical-grammatical exegesis (Longenecker 1975) Kaiser has a point. Surely, if Matthew wanted to prove that Jesus fulfilled OT scripture, he would have arguably failed if he negated the OT context or contradicted it. Matt. 26:56 seems to indicate that Matthew believed Jesus fulfilled the whole of OT scripture and not simply certain proof-texts. Far from "atomistically... prescinding" (Prabhu 1975, 217) the text from its original context, as Prabhu considers is possibly, though not likely, Matt. 2:15's handling of Hos. 11:1, it rather necessitates the historical meaning of the OT context to explain how Jesus fulfilled Israel's calling. The necessary methodology of understanding and comparing both the contexts of the OT citation and of the Matthean infancy narratives must lead to a nuanced understanding of how Jesus fulfilled those texts. Therefore, this paper will analyse each narrative individually, examining both the context of the OT citation and that of the Matthean narrative surrounding the citation. It is not the case

that each formula-quotation paints a Christology of identification with Israel, but when Matthew's formula-quotations are evaluated together, the composite Christology which emerges is a nuanced identification Christology. Jesus fulfils Israel's identity and mission, not only in place of Israel, but also in concert with them in order to guarantee the restoration of the remnant of national Israel to their God and their land.

JESUS IS ONE WITH ISRAEL,  
IDENTIFIED WITH THEM AND YET DISTINCT  
(HOS. 11:1 IN MATT. 2:15)

This paper commences with Matthew's third OT citation, of Hos. 11:1 in Matt. 2:15, because this citation proves that Matthew's Christology is an identification Christology. The remaining citations nuance the Christological identification with Israel. As Stendahl notes, the LXX and the Targum renders the Hebrew plurally as 'sons', likely indicating Matthew's use of the Hebrew text (Stendahl 1991). Hosea makes allusions to Israel's Exodus in Hos. 11:1 and their exile in Hos. 2:14-15. Matthew highlights the significance of the Exodus, claiming that Jesus fulfilled Hos. 11:1. Yet when Hosea states "Out of Egypt I called my son?" does the son refer to the Messiah or to Israel?

John Sailhamer (2001) argues that Hos. 11:1 is about the Messiah. Matthew understood that the Hosean reference was Messianic and, therefore, the Hosean text is arguably predictive. Dan McCartney and Peter Enns (2001) counter-argue, claiming Sailhamer derives his interpretation of Hos. 11:1 on the basis of NT revelation. Daube notes "the LXX, the Targum and the Rabbinic exegetes" (Daube 1956, 191) all define the referent as the nation and not the Messiah. There is nothing explicitly messianic about the passage. Although we do well to note with Darrell Bock that "there is an eschatological element in the near context" (Bock 2008, 230), Hos. 11:1-4 is retrospective, and not predictive.

In the Hosean context, God declares His judgment on Israel because

of their rebellion. Israel continually engaged in Baal worship. Therefore, they will serve Assyria (Hos. 11:5). However, in the Hosean text, God's chastening of Israel will not result in their termination. He still feels compassion for them and in Hos. 11:11 God promises that afterwards He will restore Israel to their land. God's son in Hosea, is an unrepentant, disobedient son. Therefore, how did Matthew apply that passage to Jesus?

In the Matthean context Jesus is God's obedient, perfect son who, despite His innocence, will be exiled but will also be restored back to the land. Arnold Fruchtenbaum identifies Matthew's hermeneutic as "literal plus typical" (Fruchtenbaum 1992, 843). According to Fruchtenbaum, Matthew does not change Hos. 11:1's meaning and does not deny the historical Exodus. Israel rather acts as a type of Messiah. Therefore, contrary to the wording of Matt. 2:15, Jesus did not fulfil "that which was spoken by the prophet" but is rather the antitype of the Exodus to which Hosea alludes. Yet that is not what Matthew states. Kaiser (2001) argues that the term, "My Son" was a technical one that spoke about Israel collectively and Messiah individually. Therefore, Hosea would have understood its application concerning Messiah. However, even if Hosea understood this, it does not automatically mean that Hosea intended to write about the Messiah. Understanding aviation does not automatically imply that writing about a wing must indicate an aeroplane. Matthew likely saw more meaning in the Hosean passage than Hosea intended to communicate. Matthew claimed that Jesus fulfilled Hos. 11:1, not merely the Exodus typology. However, the Hosean context is instructive concerning Matthew's appreciation of Jesus' own exile. In some way the Hosean passage, in relating to the nation, speaks ultimately about the Messiah.

Mark Elliott describes the Christology of, what is arguably, popular Second-Temple Judaism when he lists four types of messianic figures in the pseudepigrapha. He labels them "progenitors... paradigmatic figures... mystical or revelatory figures" (Elliott 2000, 435) and actual "messianic figures" (Elliott 2000, 436) albeit in a guarded sense.

Many of these Messianic figures stood in some form of identification with a remnant of righteous Jews. The paradigmatic individual and the righteous community are so intertwined that it is “quite difficult... to divide between references to a single personage in history, references to his direct physical ancestors and references to entire communities who carry his name!” (Elliott 2000, 458). Though Elliott does not believe that one is to describe the community in nationalistic terms (i.e. including the whole nation) the remnant’s identity resides in a righteous remnant *within* the nation.

It seems likely that Matthew also perceived a symbiotic relationship between Messiah and Israel. The Messianic individual is also representative of the nation as a corporate solidarity, experiencing in microcosm that which the rebellious nation experienced macrocosmically. The fact that Matthew resorted to the Hosean reference and not to one from Exodus surely indicates that Jesus fulfilled the Hosean reference.

Kaiser states that both Hosean and Matthean contexts emphasise “the preserving love of God for his seed, Israel” (Kaiser 2001, 51). Israel’s restoration is not incidental to Matthew’s purpose. Jesus’ return to Israel likely affirms God’s preservation and restoration promises to the nation. There is something to be said for Kaiser’s point that Jesus’ Exodus is not from Egypt, and an Egyptian pharaoh, but from Israel and Herod. Recognising that the Exodus is not Hosea’s only motif, but the exile also, indicates that Matthew believed Jesus’ flight to Egypt also recapitulated the exile, though He did not deserve it as they did. Nevertheless, the Exodus cannot be absent from Matthew’s mind and surely Egypt was significant in light of the Hosean reference. One could say that Matthew understood Jesus’ fulfilment of Hos. 11:1 to be multifaceted.

Contra France, who argues that Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel in such a way that those who follow Jesus “are to be seen as the true continuation of Israel” (France 1981, 211), Matthew may present Jesus as the ‘true Israel’ but the ‘true Israel’ stands in solidarity and identification with the nation, not in substitution of them. It is true that Jesus’ obedience

fulfils the calling that Israel failed to attain. However, in doing so, He affirms God's restoration promises to Israel. Jesus' designation as the *true Israel*, preferred by France (1990), cannot relegate the nation to the level of *pseudo-Israel*. There must be at least two Israels. Israel is both the Messiah, as the *perfect Israel*, and the nation, as the *imperfect Israel*.

France (1990) believes that Matthew's judgement pronouncement, unlike the judgements alluded to in Matthew's citations, is final. Accordingly, the vineyard parable in Matt. 21, and the turning of the crowds against their Messiah, speaks of the loss of the nations' elect status before God. However, the co-operation between Jew and Gentile in Jesus' execution cautions against such a firm judgement on the Jewish people. Matthew certainly regarded his people as responsible for Jesus' crucifixion, but he surely did not regard Gentile authorities as bearing no responsibility, notwithstanding the protestation of Pilate and the cry of the crowd. Jesus promised the Jewish leaders that they would not see Him *until* they recite the *Great Hallel* of Psa. 118:26, which they had refused to do at the triumphal entry. Though France believes that Jesus held out the hope of Israel's restoration, He "makes no promise that this will ever happen, and Israel's stance both in the period of Jesus' ministry and at the time of Matthew's writing gives no ground for optimism" (France 1981, 238). Nevertheless, if Jesus promised that Israel would not see Him again *until* they accept Him, it would stand to reason that the next time Israel sees Him (signifying His second coming) would be when they, as a nation, accept Him as their Messiah, otherwise they will *not* see Him. When one considers this promise as part of the equation, it would seem that Jesus' judgement pronouncement was not final. There was still the prospect of the nation's restoration and the other OT citations Matthew has chosen, as will be seen, contain restoration as an integral aspect of their OT context.

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JESUS AS A SIGN OF ISRAEL'S  
JUDGMENT, DELIVERANCE AND RESTORATION  
(ISA. 7:14 IN MATT 1:23)

How did Matthew perceive Jesus' fulfillment of Isa. 7:14? Isaiah's context concerns the threat that kings Rezin of Aram and Pekah of Israel posed to Ahaz of Judah. "Ahaz had an opportunity to trust God for deliverance. Instead, he trusted Assyria", (Oswalt 1986, 194) whereas God wanted Ahaz to believe in Him. Therefore, God would send a sign that He was with them; the birth of a child. As Oswalt notes, several children are employed to emphasise God's presence with His people. These children consist of "Shear-jashub in 7:3; Immanuel in 7:14; 8:8, (10); Maher-shalal-hash-baz in 8:3; Isaiah's children in 8:18; and the royal child in 9:5 (Eng. 6)" (Oswalt 1986, 195). God chooses the weak and lowly to signify His protection against powerful and oppressive forces. However, "because he trusted something less than God, that object of trust now becomes the instrument of the very devastation he dreaded" (Oswalt 1986, 216). Assyria would judge Judah. In Isa. 7:10-16, there are certain aspects of the prophecy Ahaz should recognise. Firstly, a maiden, or virgin, will bear a child. Secondly, she will have a son. Thirdly, she will call his name, Immanuel. Fourthly, he will eat curds and honey by the time he can distinguish between good and evil. Fifthly, before he gets to that age, Rezin and Pekah's lands will be forsaken.

Matthew portrays Jesus' birth to a virgin who has conceived Him by the Holy Spirit during a time when an ungodly king, Herod, ruled over Israel with an ineffectual priesthood to challenge him. Judah was not under threat of oppression from Syria and Israel. Rather, the whole country was under Roman rule. It is clear from Matt. 23:37-39 that Matthew perceived Rome, like Assyria, would become God's instrument of judgment to leave God's people desolate. So how does Matthew relate Isaiah's prophecy to Jesus if it spoke of a sign for Isaiah's day?

Isaiah predicts that a "virgin" will be with child. Scholars disagree

as to whether the Hebrew word, ‘עלמה’, refers to a virgin or girl of marriageable age. Regardless of the referents for both ‘עלמה’ or ‘בתולה’ it is clear that the LXX employed the referent ‘παρθενος’, meaning virgin. Therefore, Richard Longenecker believes that Matthew applied this prophecy to Jesus as “a literal fulfilment of an explicit messianic prophecy” (Longenecker 1975, 144). Matthew employs Isa. 7:14 to stress the fact that Joseph had no relations with his wife until Jesus’ birth. Yet how does verse 14 relate to the rest of the prophecy concerning Isaiah’s day? Did Matthew pay little attention to the Isaian context and eisegetically apply verse 14 to Jesus? Soares Prabhu believes that the original meaning of the passage is irrelevant, for Matthew understood it to predict the virgin birth of Messiah (Prabhu 1976). Yet any charge of arbitrariness in Matthew’s hermeneutic is unnecessary if one recognises that the OT context informs Matthew’s appreciation of how Jesus fulfilled that prophecy.

The main point of Matthew’s passage is not simply to portray Jesus as born of a virgin, but when the Isaian passage is taken in its own context, and compared with the circumstances surrounding Israel in the Matthean narrative, it illuminates the entire significance of Jesus’ birth. Thus, Jesus was also the promised ‘Immanuel’. Matthew’s use of the LXX is no proof-text. As Maarten Menken (2001) argues, all other formula-quotations in Matthew significantly differ from the LXX. Thus, it is likely that Matthew evaluated the Isaian reference before applying it to Jesus. Fruchtenbaum believes that Isaiah’s prophecy is an example of “double reference” (Fruchtenbaum 1998, 33). Not double in the sense that Craig Blomberg (2007) means; as the fulfilment of Scripture both immediately and eschatologically. Fruchtenbaum believes that one point of prophecy can only have one fulfilment. Thus, Isa. 7:14 refers to Jesus and the rest of the prophecy refers to Isaiah’s son. Andy Woods concurs, arguing “the switch from the plural you... to the singular... makes it clear that this part of the prophecy is not directed to all the house of Israel... but rather to Ahaz personally” (Woods 2007, 7). The Hebrew word ‘לכם’

in verse 14 is plural, whereas the other verses address a singular second person. Therefore, the boy in verse 14 is a sign to Israel collectively and the boy of the other verses is a sign to Ahaz. But what was the sign's significance to Israel? The sign concerned the two kings whom Ahaz dreaded, as demonstrated by the preceding verses. Thus, Jesus could not signal the removal of that threat if He were not born in Ahaz's day. The use of the singular "you" in verse 16 clearly relates to Ahaz because Ahaz is responsible for making the alliance with Assyria. It does not mean that the child in that verse has a different referent to verse 14.

As Oswalt (1986) and Blomberg (2007) both suggest, the passage's immediate fulfillment probably relates to Isaiah's son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, whose birth Isaiah writes of in chapter 8. Isaiah highlights the significance of that birth when he writes the name of the boy down before he is conceived, with two witnesses present. Raymond Brown's objection that Isaiah's wife could not have been the virgin because she was already mother to Shear-jashub (Brown 1977) could only hold weight if Isaiah was monogamous or Shear-jashub's mother was still alive. On the contrary, Oswalt claims that the term in Isa. 8:3 "*drew near* is a euphemism used several times in the OT for the first intercourse between a man and his wife" and claims some scholarly support for the idea that Shear-jashub's mother may have died (Oswalt 1986, 222). Thus, Isaiah enters the virgin prophetess, she conceives from that single encounter and the child turns out to be a boy. One cannot assume the certainty of a conception from a single sexual encounter, much less determine from that encounter the gender of that particular child. Isa. 8:8 relates the name 'Immanuel' to Maher-shalal-hash-baz's birth. It is on the basis of Isa. 8:10 that Richard Beaton believes Matthew to have drawn the interpretation of the name 'Immanuel' (Beaton 2002). Though the LXX translates 'Immanuel' into Greek, instead of transliterating it as formerly in Isa. 7:14, Matthew would have needed a working knowledge of Hebrew to discern that the Greek of Isa. 8:8, 10 was a translation of that Hebrew name.

If Matthew did not disregard the Isaian context, what can be said?

Matthew envisioned the fulfillment of Isa. 7:14 as a prophetic pattern first fulfilled by Maher-shalal-hash-baz with special significance for Israel in Isaiah's day. This child pattern continues past Isa. 8 into Isa. 9 promising a child who is more than Isaiah's son could ever be. It may be that the children whom God had given Isaiah in Isa. 8:18 are not only for signs of judgment and restoration but signs of the ultimate child, Messiah Himself.

The prediction of Immanuel's birth was given when Isaiah stood with Shear-jashub (the remnant will return) and therefore, the birth of the child is a sign of Israel's restoration. Therefore, Jesus' birth is also a sign in which Israel's salvation, judgment and restoration is ultimately bound up with Him. There is a promise for the future, even if there is judgment in the interim (Matt. 23:37-37). Though Matt. 2:15 identifies Jesus as the perfect Israel, Matthew did not mean to dissolve Israel of its national import. Jesus is the 'true Israel' but the term 'Israel' still retains a national dimension in Matthew's theology.

### MESSIAH IS RELATED TO ISRAEL'S SUFFERINGS, ANTICIPATING ISRAEL'S RESTORATION (MIC. 5:2 IN MATT. 2:6)

The following fulfillment citation, Mic. 5:2, is part of the narrative concerning the visit of the Gentile Magi. It is to be noted that this formula-quotation is not simply an editorial remark but on the lips of the priests. Thus, the text form in this case may possibly be derived from Matthew's source.

Micah's context is the attempted Assyrian invasion of Judah. Micah lamented the destruction and exile of Samaria and the fact that Samaria's sins infected the southern kingdom (Mic. 1:6-9). The restoration of Israel to the land was prophesied in Mic. 2:12-13, which would give way to a brighter future than Israel had heretofore experienced. Though

Judah would be preserved despite the Assyrian devastation to her, Micah prophesied her exile into Babylon (Mic. 4:10-5:1), of which Assyria was a foretaste and a warning. Hence, the king emerging from Bethlehem in Mic. 5:2 is the one who guarantees the restoration of those exiled after the southern kingdom has experienced its judgement. As Leslie Allen states, "In the God-given power of this coming king is grounded the security of his people; once more the solidarity of king and people comes to the fore" (Allen 1976, 342) and Allen ties this promise to Nathan's prophetic oracle to David which promises national Israel a planting in the land, which will not be disturbed.

In the Matthean context, the whole of Jerusalem is stirred with the Magi's arrival. The 'King of the Jews' motif in this narrative emphasises Jesus' role as Son of David. France highlights the allusion to the star in Balaam's prophecy in Num. 24:17. He also takes this to "point forward to the concepts of King David, and... foreshadows the victory of the "son of David"" (France 2007, 62). As the sceptre is not to depart from Judah (Gen. 49:10), Matthew understood Balaam's prophecy to refer to David's son; David was of the tribe of Judah.

David Turner believes that the Magi allude to Gentiles' acceptance of Jesus in contrast to Jewish rejection. For John the Baptist, "repentance, not descent from Abraham, was required to avoid the coming judgment" (Turner 2008, 33). Such Gentile positivism seems overstated in light of certain anti-Gentile statements highlighted by Anthony Saldarini (1994) and David Sim (1998) in Matt. 6:7; Matt. 5:46-47; and Matt. 6:32. Though descent alone was insufficient for salvation, the division between the repentant and the religious hypocrites remained within the sphere of national Israel. However, Sim also overstates his case when he places Matthew's Jewish theology in antithesis to Paul's supposedly *Torah-free* theology, using Matthew's anti-Gentile statements as proof of this antithesis. Yet Paul also makes pejorative statements about Gentiles in 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:15; Eph. 4:17; and 1 Thess. 4:5, but one could hardly call him anti-Pauline. Therefore, it is true there is a hint

of Gentile acceptance in Matthew's Gospel.

Thomas Graves (1987) and France (2007) note that the birth narrative is a precursor of the passion narrative. Jewish leadership conspires with a secular ruler against Jesus with Jerusalem at the centre of such persecution. The parallel, however, is not exact. Herod is part Jewish, and secondly, he is the one who actively seeks Jesus' death. The chief priests maintain a passive role but in the passion narrative, they are the instigators with a reluctant Pilate, which should guard against overstating the contrast between Jewish opposition and Gentile acceptance. Gentiles, as well as Jews, reject the Messiah in contrast to Jews that suffer with Him.

France believes that scriptures "such as... Isa. 60:6" (France 1990, 84) probably gave rise to the tradition that the magi were kings. Isa. 60:1-7 speaks of a future restoration of all Israel predicated on the redeemer who will come to Zion and bring Israel to repentance (Isa. 59:20). Kings will bring gold and frankincense to Israel. However, the Magi cannot constitute an ultimate fulfilment of these scriptures. Wise men from the east hardly represent "all those from Sheba" and no flocks of Kedar were brought to Jesus as was predicted in Isa. 60:7. As J. Duncan Derrett (1975) points out, those kings are to bring back the dispersed Jews which he believes the gifts of gold and frankincense, in Matthew's gospel, to represent. The gold and frankincense in Matthew may at least prefigure the future nations' wealth accompanying the dispersed Jews, regathered to their land.

It is possible that the narrative of the Magi also prefigures a future Gentile worship of Jesus in the Davidic kingdom. On this basis, and in contrast with the Jewish leaders' rejection of Jesus, Soares Prabhu believes that Matthew's Church, which he regards of consisting mainly of Gentiles, is presented as the new Israel (Prabhu 1976). However, aside from the aforementioned likelihood that Matthew's audience was predominantly Jewish, if the context of the OT citation must guide our appreciation of Matthew's hermeneutic, note that Mic. 5:2 is ethnocentric

in its vision for Israel. He who originates from Bethlehem is the king of Israel who will come to Zion. As “Bethlehem” and “clans of Judah” have literal geographic and ethnic significance, therefore, the term “ruler in Israel” must also have literal and ethnic significance. Matthew emphasises the Jewish Exile as precursor to Messiah’s appearance in his genealogy. Graves (1987) certainly has a point in stating that Matthew’s emphasis on geography is intentional. Kynes notes that “Matthew uses Scriptural proof with every geographical location mentioned in connection with the life of Jesus” (Kynes 1991, 10). The land of Israel was obviously significant to Matthew. In light of the fact that his OT citations maintain the promise of restoration from Exile in their immediate context, it would seem probable that Matthew regarded Jesus as the one to realise those promises. Even if Jesus’ birth did not realise Israel’s victory over her enemies, it certainly signalled that Israel’s liberty was to be found in Him.

Is the birth of the Bethlehemite child an allusion to the aforementioned scripture in Isa. 7:14? Blomberg rather states “the common prophetic motif of messianic birth pangs is applied to the corporate sufferings of Israel often enough” (Blomberg 2007, 6). The woman in Micah is the nation of Israel. Her sufferings are necessary for the messianic child to be born. In Matthew, Israel is a nation not only under Roman occupation but also ruled by a cruel Herod and then plagued by poverty, disease, sickness and demons (Matt. 4:23-25), a people who worried about what they would eat, drink and wear (Matt. 6:25-31) and would eventually have their house left desolate to them by the Romans, though this would be due to their rejection of Jesus (Matt. 23:37-39). Therefore, in Matthean theology, Jesus not only suffered *for* Israel, but also suffered *alongside* them. Matthew presents a Messiah who is inseparable from Israel’s sufferings. His existence necessitates their existence also. In view of the Mican prophecy, Israel’s suffering at the hands of the Romans and Herod anticipate the birth of the Messiah and the Messiah’s birth and suffering anticipate Israel’s restoration. Though Jesus is identified with

Israel, as the *perfect Israel*, His fulfilment of Israel's calling and identity necessitated Israel's existence. Jesus not only participated in Israel's past sufferings but also in their present ones and His fulfilment of Mic. 5:2 signals Israel's future restoration.

JESUS AND ISRAEL  
ARE BOTH YHWH'S SERVANT  
(JER. 31:15 IN MATT. 2:18)

The theme of exile continues in Matt. 2:18, concerning the slaughter of the innocents. Matthew quotes from Jer. 31:15, which Stendahl (Stendahl 1991) regards as Matthew's own translation of the MT, implying that Matthew knew Hebrew. Matthew relates it to Herod killing the male children under two. Whereas the Hosean reference speaks of the Assyrian exiling of northern Israel, Jer. 31:15, as with Mic. 5:2, speaks of the Babylonian exiling of Judah. Therefore, the theme of exile in Matthew concerns all twelve tribes. As with Matthew's other citations, the theme of judgement and exile is never far from the promise of the nation's restoration to the land of Israel.

In the context of Jer. 31:15 Ramah is "the place of mourning where the exiles stopped on their way to Babylon" (Lalleman 2013, 231). The following verse promises that the exiles "will return from the land of the enemy." There is a significant difference between Matthew's context and Jeremiah's. In Jeremiah many children are exiled, but in Matthew a few children are executed. If France is correct, there "could hardly be more than twenty, even allowing for "all its district"" (France 2007, 85). Kaiser notes that the mothers' weeping, in Jer. 31:15, is written "in the piel stem" (Kaiser 2001, 55). It signifies continuing action in what he calls "a characteristic perfect" (Kaiser 2001, 55). Jeremiah does not limit Rachel's weeping to the punctiliar timeframe of the Babylonian captivity. It continues for any amount of time. Rachel does not merely weep because

of the exile but because she will never see her children again. Yet the whole tenor of Jer. 31 is not to emphasise sorrow but hope. Jesus' return to the land of Israel mirrors the eschatological restoration. Therefore, the point of similarity between the two passages is not limited to the mothers' grief but incorporates the theme of restoration. Turner notes that the wider context of Jer. 29-33 emphasises that future restoration is not only unto God, but also regards "the Davidic dynasty (30:8-9; 33:14-15, 17)" (Turner 2008, 94).

Yet how does one account for the fact that the Bethlehemite children are killed and not exiled? Perhaps the answer lies in France's discussion concerning the relationship between the slaughter of the innocents and the passion narrative. France rejects the suggestion that the execution of the innocents is a sign of judgment on Israel who rejects her Messiah. He notes that "killer and killed represent the same entity, Israel" (France 1979, 111). The children do not represent the rebellious nation but if the essence of the passion narrative is a recapitulation of the infancy narrative then it is more likely that the innocents' deaths prefigure Messiah's. Matthew believed that death was not the end of the story in the case of Jesus' resurrection. Did Matthew think Jeremiah's promise of eschatological return to the land related to eschatological resurrection? Whatever the case may be, Jesus is not pictured as one who merely suffers *for* his nation, but also one who suffers *alongside* a remnant of Israel. Jesus' relationship to Israel is one that, though distinct from them, enjoys an experiential oneness with them that continues beyond merely analogical categories.

Blomberg also notes the allusion of Jer. 31:15 to Gen. 37:35 where "Jacob refuses to be comforted at the initial loss of Joseph... and when Joseph is described as no longer existing" (Blomberg 2007, 9). Kynes also notes a possible allusion to "The Joseph cycle in Genesis 37-50... with the identical names of the two protagonists (the patriarch and the father of Jesus), the interest in dreams, and the mention of Egypt all providing context" (Kynes 1991, 19). There is a connection between Israel, Jesus

and the suffering servant of Isa. 53. Rabbis later came to designate the suffering Messiah, of passages such as Zech. 13:7, as ‘Messiah son of Joseph’ (Blomberg 2007). Joseph is the archetype of a suffering saviour throughout the OT. Jesus’ connection to the suffering servant is certainly present in Matthew. Both Terence Donaldson (2005) and Frank Stagg (1962) highlight the allusion to Isa. 42:1 at Jesus’ baptism and Isa. 53:4 is applied to Jesus in Matt. 8:17 However, is YHWH’s servant in Isaiah the nation or an individual? Fruchtenbaum (1998) notes that the Targumic writings of Jonathan Ben Uzziel identify the servant of Isa. 52:13 as the Messiah. Risto Santala (2003) notes that later Jewish tradition favoured the referent as Israel, even in Isa. 53. The solution seems difficult once one engages with the Isaian context.

The servant is called to accomplish ‘justice in the earth’ in Isa. 42:1-4. But Isaiah later tempers that call with the criticism; ‘Who is so blind as he that is at peace with Me, or so blind as the servant of the LORD?’ (Isa. 42:19). Oswalt (1998) highlights the servant’s calling to ‘open the eyes of the blind’ in verse 7. However, he argues that YHWH’s servant in verse 19 cannot be the same servant, for one cannot expect the blind to lead the blind. However, the blindness of the nation in Isa. 43:22-24, is forgiven and reversed in Isa. 43:25. In Isa. 44:1-5 God tells Israel that He will pour His Spirit on the nation. The result is that Jews and Gentiles will call on the name of Jacob and ‘name Israel’s name with honor.’ Therefore, it is when Israel gains their sight that they fulfil their calling as YHWH’s servant.

Isa. 49:3 refers to Israel as YHWH’s servant and yet verses 4-7 indicate that this cannot possibly apply to the nation. These verses refer to one whom Israel despise and abhor (Isa. 49:7). Yet He is chosen to bring Jacob back to repentance and raise up Israel’s tribes (Isa. 49:5-6). Hence, another servant of YHWH, also called ‘Israel’, must deliver national Israel from her blindness and attain the calling God has given her as YHWH’s servant (Isa. 52:13-53:13).

Beaton (2002), however, notes the paucity of early Christian

references relating Isa. 42:1-4 to the suffering servant, hence questioning the idea that the servant songs constitute a composite picture of a single figure known as *the servant of the Lord*. Yet, if Matthew regarded Jesus as the fulfillment of OT history and prophecy, would Matthew perceive the OT as a series of disparate and disjointed texts bunched together? They were one united whole. Therefore, it also stands to reason that Matthew did not regard the servant songs as disjointed either but as portraying different aspects of Jesus' person and ministry. As Beaton concludes, if God regarded certain Israelites as *My servant*, "there is seemingly no logical reason why a messianic figure could not also be considered 'my servant'... even... servant *par excellence*" (Beaton 2002, 42). Therefore, it is probable that there is not only one servant of YHWH, but two, which matches Matthew's identification Christology. The servant is both Israel and Israel's Messiah, the perfect Israel.

McCartney highlights the relevance of identification Christology in the area of Ecclesiology. He applies the servant songs that relate to Israel, "to the church through the particular Servant, Jesus" (McCartney 2004, 177). He believes that "the believer is by virtue of that work covenantally identified with the Suffering Servant" (McCartney 2004, 188). Jesus is the Perfect Israel, who identifies with the nation, yet is distinct from her and also affirms Israel's national restoration. If the Church is the body of Messiah, what does that say about the Church's relationship to Israel? Kynes (1991) believes that the Church is not directly identified with Israel but this identification is mediated through Jesus alone. The ecclesial dimension of this Christology cannot be investigated here, but it is interesting that McCartney's vision of Christian identification with Messiah concerns the sufferings of the pre-resurrection incarnate Christ (McCartney 2004).

THE NAZARENE  
AS THE ONCE DESPISED AND EXALTED RULER  
(GEN. 49:26 IN MATT. 2:23)

Matthew's fifth citation concerns Jesus' designation as 'Nazarene'. This prophecy is generically written by 'the prophets' but there are no OT references that call Israel, or any individual, a Nazarene. Scholars propose three main solutions concerning Matthew's reference, two of which derive from wordplays within the LXX and MT and the third relates to the appellation's contemporary significance.

According to Longenecker "Many are of the opinion that the Evangelist is making a "punning allusion" to the "branch"... of Isa. 11:1" (Longenecker 1975, 145). Though Matthew wrote in Greek, the Hebrew rendering of Nazarene, "נָצְרִי", is practically similar to the Hebrew for branch, "נֶצֶר", which in Isa. 11:1 relates to David's son who will rule as judge, bring justice to the oppressed, and peace to the land. In Isa. 11:10 Jesse's branch is also called the "root of Jesse". According to Oswalt, "Eventually, like "branch," šōreš became a term for the Messiah (Isa. 53:2...)" (Oswalt 1986, 284. n. 1) connecting the righteous branch to the suffering servant. The branch is connected with Israel's restoration in Isa. 60:21. Nevertheless, even if one were to include the reference to the suffering servant, these allusions are only found in Isaiah and not the prophets generically.

The second allusion regards the relationship of the Greek word "Ναζωραῖος", Nazarene, to the Greek word "ναζιραῖος", nazirite. Only one vowel difference stands between the two Greek words. However, the Hebrew for nazirite is "נָזִיר", "its second consonant represents a different Hebrew consonant" (France 2007, 93). Nevertheless, if Matthew, and some of his audience, knew both Hebrew and Greek, one should not automatically discredit the pun because it is "totally invisible in the Greek" (France 2007, 93). Otherwise, would his audience not have questioned Matthew's departure from the familiar LXX when he

resorted to the MT? In particular, some scholars believe that Matthew is alluding to Samson in Judg. 13:5-7 (Longenecker 1975). Samson's birth is announced in similar fashion to that of Jesus. France, highlights the fact that Jesus and Samson are related in terms of being Holy men and saviours (France 1981). However, the term Nazirite in this context is intimately tied to the Nazirite vow, which makes the application to Jesus problematic if Samson's calling as a Nazirite is the only referent that Matthew had in mind. The careful exegete, discerning Matthew's referent, would immediately be struck by the fact that Jesus was not a Nazirite as was Samson.

Scholars, such as Fruchtenbaum, propose a third solution. "Nazarenes were a people despised and rejected and the term was used to reproach and to shame (John 14:6)" (Fruchtenbaum 1992, 845). The idea of a despised Messiah would link with prophetic passages, such as Isa. 53:3.

The first and third options seem most plausible in light of Matthean Christology. However, one must determine the referent by means of Matthew's citation formula which generically concerns the prophetic literature. However, to define the scope of writings as 'the prophetic literature' may be misleading. Matthew uses an almost identical citation formula in Matt. 26:56 where Jesus speaks of 'the Scriptures of the prophets.' Donald Senior does not limit the referent of 'the prophets' to the prophetic literature but to "the whole span of the Scriptures, which... speak as one prophetic voice pointing to the Messiah" (Senior 1998, 309). Likewise, Gilbert Weaver understands the Matthean reference as inclusive of "the O.T. as a whole" (Weaver 1965, 24). When the term 'the Prophets' is used in conjunction with the phrase 'the Law' (Matt. 5:17) its referent is limited to the prophetic literature. When Matthew employs it generically it speaks of the whole OT. Such is the case concerning Acts 3:18, 21-23, where Moses is regarded as the "first and great of Israel's prophets", (Bruce 1988, 86) and concerning Rom. 1:2 (Cranfield, 1975; Moo, 1996; Schreiner, 1998).

Soares Prabhu claims that the term 'נזיר' is also employed in Lam.

4:7 and its meaning “of “prince” or “noble”, is an acceptable designation for Jesus” (Prabhu 1976, 203). But not only is this passage too obscure to discern any messianic significance, as Prabhu argues, but it also lacks any concrete relationship to the Matthean context and theology already elucidated throughout the infancy narratives. One may discern that the first ‘נזיר’ in the MT is not even Samson but Joseph in Gen. 49:26 and Deut. 33:16. In this case the concept of ‘נזיר’ links to the aforementioned notion of ruling, as portrayed in the Isaian Davidic Branch. Jacob’s prophecy about Joseph, in Gen. 49:22-26, begins by likening Joseph to a ‘בן פרת’ (fruitful son) whose ‘בנות’ (daughters) run over a wall. Most Bible versions translate this imagery in horticultural terms. Joseph is the fruitful vine/tree and most Bible translations render ‘בנות’ as branches. In Gen. 49:23 Jacob speaks of the enemies that attacked Joseph. Victor Hamilton believes that the referent is easier to discern if it concerns Joseph as an individual rather than the tribe. In this case, “the reference is to the brother’s harsh treatment of Joseph” (Hamilton 1995, 684). In the end, Joseph becomes the ‘נזיר.’ The word in the NKJV, RSV and ESV is translated as ‘separated’ or ‘set apart,’ linking to the theme of the Nazirite. The NASB renders the word ‘distinguished’, but the NLT, NIV and the HCSB render it ‘prince.’ The blessings bestowed on Joseph, in verses 25-26, will be on the head of one who was despised by his unbelieving brethren but is afterwards reconciled and rules over them.

According to Elliott, one should not take Joseph as an isolated OT figure but as archetypal of later Israelite history. “In the Testaments Joseph’s brothers, who persecute him wildly, would seem to function as paradigms of the rest of Israel who mistreat the righteous community” (Elliott 2000, 447. n. 30). Joseph is first in a line of suffering servants, including Jeremiah; despised by his Israelite brethren, but then afterwards esteemed. Yet some scholars believe there is no evidence that the Qumran sect believed in a dying Messiah. One possible reference, in ‘4Q285 frag. 5,’ that could speak of such a Messiah is heavily disputed. The notion of a dying Messiah, before the advent of Christianity, “finds little support

in contemporary Jewish interpretation of the relevant Old Testament passages, and probably none in the Dead Sea Scrolls” (Bockmuehl 1992, 167). Yet, according to Israel Knohl there is a Hebrew text, written in stone and dated to the late first century BCE, or early first century CE, which speaks of Ephraim in messianic terms, “as the suffering Son of God” (Knohl 2008, 152). He argues that there are two other Second Temple period texts that regard Joseph as a suffering servant. In one of those texts, “we find a connection between Joseph and the figure of the “Suffering Servant” (Knohl 2008, 152). The pseudepigraphal writers seem to regard Joseph as paradigmatic of Isaiah’s suffering servant.

Though the sources this paper has referenced do not consider this interpretation, Matthew may well have alluded to Gen. 49:26 concerning Joseph the ‘נַיִר’ as first in a long line of OT suffering servants. If so then all three aforementioned possible referents concerning ‘Nazarene’, “presenting Jesus as regal prince or hinting at his roles as suffering servant or Spirit-Anointed holy man” (Blomberg 2007, 11) are essential components in the picture of Joseph. Joseph was also a saviour figure, bringing salvation to Israel and Gentile nations during a time of great famine. One need not choose one interpretation over the others. In the Matthean context the implication is clear. Jesus was rejected, opposed and persecuted by Herod and then later by the Jewish leaders. Joseph’s sufferings typify Jesus’ own to such an extent that Jesus, like the Jewish contingent of Matthew’s community, is estranged from his countrymen as Joseph was to his brothers. The rejection of Jesus by the nation brings the nation under judgement in such a way that it seems that Matthew “presents Israel only as a figure of disobedience, disinherited by God” (France 1989, 239). However, because Jesus is the Nazarene, the fulfilment of the Joseph archetype of the suffering servant, there is again a hint that the unbelieving nation would eventually be restored, reconciled to Him, and He will rule over them as David’s Son, the righteous branch.

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## CONCLUSION

When Matthew's five OT formula-quotations are evaluated *in toto*, Matthew does not dissolve Israel of their national importance or identity. In the first section it was observed that Matthew portrays an identification Christology with Jesus as the 'perfect Israel'. Jesus experiences both exodus and exile in identification with Israel. His return to the land prefigures Israel's restoration to the land (Hos 11:11). In the second section Jesus fulfilled the Isaian child-motif especially that evidenced by Maher-shalal-hash-baz who was a sign that God was with His people. He was also a sign of Israel's judgment, deliverance, and restoration. The identity of the messianic child is intimately bound up with God's prophetic purposes for the nation. Because Jesus is a sign of Israel's restoration it must be concluded that He does not dissolve the term Israel of its national significance but rather affirms it. In the third section, Matthew employed Mic. 5:2 to demonstrate that Messiah's birth is significant to the geographical land of Israel. Matthew portrays a Messiah whose existence necessitates Israel's existence also. Israel's sufferings at the hand of the Romans anticipate the birth of the Messiah and the Messiah's birth and sufferings anticipate Israel's restoration (Mic 5:3) which the Magi's gifts also prefigure. This means that Jesus, as the 'perfect Israel' is not merely Israel's antitype but also fulfills OT scripture in concert with the nation, which maintains the continuing validity of Israel's national identity. In the fourth section, Jesus' exile from the land is not only related to Israel's history but the same wrath that Herod directs at Him, he also directs against other Israelite children. Their deaths prefigure Jesus' own death at the passion, which is arguably a recapitulation of the infant massacre. Jer. 31:15 speaks of the weeping of Israelite mothers before the promise of restoration to the land which Jesus' return from Egypt prefigures. Jesus is one with His nation, sharing in their sufferings, and yet distinct. Both Israel and Jesus are YHWH's servant and, therefore, Jesus co-exists with His nation; He does not supersede them. Finally in the last section,

Jesus is portrayed as the 'son of Joseph', the ultimate Nazarene, who was despised by His Israelite brethren. Matthew looked forward to a future time when national Israel will be reconciled to the Nazarene (נְזִיר). Then Jesus will rule over them and be esteemed as the 'נְזִיר'. Hence, their rejection of the Messiah would not continue perpetually.

When these formula-quotations are evaluated together they form a composite picture of Jesus' identification with Israel's identity and mission, which far from dissolving Israel of their ethnic or national distinctiveness, actually affirms their identity and restoration. Restoration and reconciliation are integral aspects of each of Matthew's OT citations. This indicates the continuing importance the nation of Israel holds in Jesus' fulfillment of OT scripture. Matthew has maintained consistent allusions to promises that Messiah, though initially despised, would accomplish Israel's restoration, both to their land and their God. In this nuanced sense this paper affirms Matthew's Christology as an identification Christology.

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# Mark's use of Isaiah

Daniel Martin

## KEYWORDS:

| Mark | Isaiah | Servant of the Lord |  
| New Testament use of Old Testament | Hermeneutics |  
| Markan Christology |

## ABSTRACT:

Mark's gospel makes plentiful cryptic references and allusions to the Old Testament whilst being sparing with explicit quotations. Texts from Isaiah are frequently alluded to. This study examines Mark's use of these texts in order to ascertain the essential theological burden that is drawn from Isaiah. It is apparent that Mark has drawn on three core themes and developed them in his Gospel. Firstly, that the 'way' of the Lord coming to save is the way of Jesus to the cross. Secondly, that Jesus characterises the divinely-appointed, Spirit-filled servant of Yahweh. Thirdly, that Jesus characterises the enigmatic suffering servant of Yahweh.

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to study how the author of Mark uses texts from Isaiah and synthesise the contribution that Isaiah makes to the theology of Mark's Gospel. Specifically, this will involve a consideration of which Isaianic texts are quoted or alluded to in Mark, and their significance in

both their original contexts; commenting on the hermeneutical methods employed by Mark in his use of these texts; and synthesising the exegetical and hermeneutical data in order to articulate the essential theological burden that Mark draws from Isaiah.

Some prefatory remarks are necessary. Firstly, this work will include exegetical and hermeneutical notes on the chief quotations and allusions to Isaiah in the gospel of Mark, namely<sup>1</sup>:

- a) Isaiah 40.3/Mark 1.2–3
- b) Isaiah 64.1/Mark 1.10
- c) Isaiah 42.1/Mark 1.11
- d) Isaiah 43.25/Mark 2.7
- e) Isaiah 49.24/Mark 3.27
- f) Isaiah 63.10/Mark 3.29
- g) Isaiah 6.9–10/Mark 4.12
- h) Isaiah 29.13/Mark 7.6–7
- i) Isaiah 6.9–10/Mark 8.18
- j) Isaiah 52.13–53.12/Mark 8.31, 9.12, 9.31, 10.33–34, 45
- k) Isaiah 66.24/Mark 9.48
- l) Isaiah 56.7/Mark 11.17
- m) Isaiah 5.1–2/Mark 12.1
- n) Isaiah 19.2/Mark 13.8
- o) Isaiah 13.10/Mark 13.24–25;
- p) Isaiah 53.11–12/Mark 14.24
- q) Isaiah 53.7/Mark 14.60–61, 15.4–5

Secondly, I will take a canonical approach to the book of Isaiah in this essay and consequently will not engage in discussions surrounding the

1 This list was generated from Watts, R. E. “Mark.” Pages 111–249 in *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, edited by G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007, and from the list of quotations and allusions in the Greek New Testament (UBS4).

compilation, text<sup>2</sup>, authorship<sup>3</sup> or division of Isaiah<sup>4</sup>.

Thirdly, with reference to his hermeneutical methods, Mark does not seem to differ significantly from his contemporaries. In short, Mark – and the other NT authors – were ‘explaining what the Old Testament means in light of Christ’s coming’<sup>5</sup>.

Fourthly, it must be acknowledged that Mark’s use of OT texts is both sparing and cryptic:

Mark’s allusive use of scripture contributes significantly to the plot of his narrative. Mark, the narrator, uses the Hebrew Bible much as Jesus, in the narrative, uses parables, miracles, and symbolic acts. His use is principally allusive rather than explicit quotation, so that only those who know the Hebrew Scriptures recognize either the biblical references or their significance within the present context. If Mark’s readers are to have ears that hear and eyes that see who Jesus truly is, they must exercise their spiritual senses, especially with reference to the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, Stein has highlighted a number of key exegetical issues that must be recognised in Mark’s gospel, including the significance of the first verse, the demonic Christological statements, the significance of Mark’s summary statements and the significance of repetition (in particular, repetition of the passion prediction)<sup>7</sup>; likewise, trying to ascertain what kind of audience Mark was writing for leads us to notice similar features<sup>8</sup>.

2 Wyngaarden, M. J. “The Servant Of Jehovah In Isaiah And The Dead Sea Scrolls.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 01:3 (Summer 1958), pp. 20–24.

3 Cowles, H. “On The Authorship Of Isaiah 40–66.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 030:119 (July 1873), pp. 521–533.

4 Osgood, H. “Isaiah The Myth And Isaiah The Prophet.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 058:229 (January 1901), pp. 68–87.

5 Enns, P. *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*. Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005 (kindle edition), location 2321.

6 Caneday, A. B. “Mark’s Provocative Use of Scripture in Narration: ‘He Was with the Wild Animals and Angels Ministered to Him’.” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 9 (NA 1999), pp. 19–36.

7 Stein, R. H. “Exegetical Issues in Mark’s Gospel.” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 08:3 (Fall 2004), pp. 4–11.

8 Stein, R.H. “Is Our Reading The Bible The Same As The Original Audience’s Hearing It? A Case Study In The Gospel Of Mark.” *Journal of the Evangelical*

All of these issues will feature in this study.

### ISAIAH 40.3/MARK 1.2–3

In its original context, Isaiah anticipates the coming of YHWH to his people's aid in a New Exodus<sup>9</sup>. The mention of 'a highway' denotes processional preparation and thereby the importance of YHWH, rather than a literal, physical highway<sup>10</sup>; the sense is to make appropriate preparations for YHWH's anticipated arrival<sup>11</sup>. The 'voice' is anonymous<sup>12</sup> but this poses no problem; the coming of YHWH to his people's aid is an event of such significance that it *requires* announcement:

God is seen figuratively as coming from his distant residence in Sinai to aid his people in their hour of distress. The people cannot help themselves, and there is no one else, so God himself must come.<sup>13</sup>

Given Mark's sparing use of direct OT quotation, and the likely Roman Gentile audience, this opening quotation is remarkable<sup>14</sup>. Mark's 'prismatic'<sup>15</sup> use of this text so early on in his gospel thus makes a clear identification of Jesus with YHWH; John the Baptist's announcement of the coming Christ is to be understood in the same category as Isaiah's 'voice' announcing the coming of YHWH to aid his people<sup>16</sup>. Mark

*Theological Society* 46:1 (March 2003), pp. 63–78.

9 Watts, R. E. "Consolation Or Confrontation? Isaiah 40–55 And The Delay Of The New Exodus." *Tyndale Bulletin* 41:1 (NA 1990), pp. 31–59.

10 Motyer, J.A. *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999, p. 300.

11 Smith, G.V. *Isaiah 40–66*. Kindle edition. New American Commentary Series. Tennessee: B & H Academic, 2009, location 2491.

12 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 2491.

13 Oswalt, J.N. *The Book of Isaiah: chapters 40–66*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998, p. 52.

14 Edwards, James R. *The Gospel according to Mark*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002. p. 26

15 Caneday, "Mark's Provocative Use of Scripture in Narration."

16 Watts, R. E. "Mark." Pages 111–249 in *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament*, edited by G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker

appears to link these two quotations<sup>17</sup>, from Malachi and Isaiah, because Malachi contains a clear mention of God's appointed herald, and Isaiah 40.3 contains a fitting comment; they share generally 'the idea of a herald for the eschatological coming of God'<sup>18</sup>. Isaiah's text is quoted from the LXX, and αὐτοῦ is substituted instead of τοῦ θεοῦ; this may be an intentional device in order to allow 'the Christian reader to understand the κυρίου of the previous line to refer to Jesus'<sup>19</sup>. Similarly, Mark aligns 'in the desert', the place where – in the LXX and MT – God will prepare the way for his people, with Jesus' forerunner<sup>20</sup>.

Thus 'in 1.2–3 the groundwork is already in place that will define and characterise Jesus' bearing throughout the Gospel'<sup>21</sup>. Jesus' person and work is identified with God's person and work. From the start of the Gospel, 'the way of God is ultimately the way of Jesus to the cross.'<sup>22</sup>

### ISAIAH 64.1/MARK 1.10

Isaiah is reviewing Israel's tragic past<sup>23</sup>, and wishing for a divine theophany like those of his people's history<sup>24</sup>. An accurate rendering of the Hebrew gives the sense, 'oh, that you had rend the heavens and come down...'<sup>25</sup>; Isaiah wistfully wishes that YHWH's 'inactivity' had ended long ago<sup>26</sup>; he struggles to understand 'why God would let the situation get so desperate without having done something about it.'<sup>27</sup>

Academic, 2007.

17 Sanders, H. A. "The New Testament Quotation of a Twice-Repeated Prophecy." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 071:282 (April 1914), pp. 275–282.

18 France, R.T. *The Gospel of Mark*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary Series. Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002, p. 63.

19 France, *Mark*, p. 64.

20 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 27.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

23 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 518.

24 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 21194.

25 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 518.

26 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 21194.

27 Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, p. 621.

Mark's choice to use the verb *σχιζόμενος* makes his allusion to this Isaianic text readily discernible to readers who were accustomed to the Hebrew text קרע of Isaiah. Intertestamental rabbinic tradition spoke of the *bat-qol*; the whisper of God's voice since the last of the prophets, anticipating the return of God's voice<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, there is intertestamental evidence anticipating that the Messiah would be endowed with God's Spirit.<sup>29</sup> Thus what Mark writes here is staggering; YHWH *has* torn open the heavens, he *has* spoken from heaven, and his Spirit *has* come down – there is some rabbinic evidence to suggest that, from the Hebrew of Genesis 1.2, God's Spirit was likened to a dove – and endowed his servant figure<sup>30</sup> in a profound way (cf. Isa. 11.2; 42.1; 61.1), expressed εἰς αὐτόν in the Greek. Thus Jesus' submission to John's baptism becomes his commissioning; the one for whom John has been preparing, the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit, is now equipped for that role<sup>31</sup>.

### ISAIAH 42.1/MARK 1.11

This text is characterised by the language of 'presentation'; YHWH presents his servant and commissions him to do justice<sup>32</sup>. Contrary to collectivist theories, a close examination of the first servant song concludes that the anonymous servant 'can be neither Israel nor Cyrus nor any person other than the royal Davidic Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ'<sup>33</sup>. The servant is inseparable from YHWH's mission, for he will put his

28 1 Enoch 49:3; 62:2; IQS 4:6; see also Edwards, J. R. "The Baptism of Jesus According to the Gospel of Mark." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34 (1991), pp. 46–47.

29 Edwards, *Mark*, p36.

30 Cranfield, C.E.B. *The Gospel According to St. Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*. Cambridge Greek Testament Commentaries. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, p. 52.

31 France, *Mark*, p. 76.

32 Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, p. 109.

33 Lindsey, F. D. "Isaiah's Songs of the Servant Part 1: The Call of the Servant in Isaiah 42:1–9." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139:553 (January 1982): p. 12–27.

personal presence upon him. At this stage in Isaiah, the servant’s task is more clearly discernible than his identity. ‘Bringing justice to the nations’ may be best understood as bringing definitive revelation about God and his will, to the world<sup>34</sup>; he is a nonviolent figure achieving justice for the nations under the Spirit of YHWH’s direction<sup>35</sup>. The delight that YHWH takes in this unnamed servant is a stark contrast to his displeasure at his ‘blind’ servant Israel (cf. Isa. 42.18–22)<sup>36</sup>.

In Mark then, this allusion serves to confirm Jesus’ self-consciousness as God’s son and servant<sup>37</sup>. It is debatable whether ‘my Son’ represents ‘my servant’ of Isaiah 42.1, although in the context it would appear highly likely that Mark is making a deliberate allusion to Isaiah 42.1, as God’s Spirit is put upon Jesus. In rabbinic tradition the concept of the *bat-gol* anticipated the time when God would again speak definitively<sup>38</sup>; Mark states that this has happened at the presentation of YHWH’s servant–Son Jesus. Thus Jesus’ baptism marks ‘the confirmation of Jesus’ Sonship and the commencement of his servanthood’<sup>39</sup>; we must note that the God’s words to Jesus at his baptism do not so much establish as presuppose a Father–Son relationship; εὐδόκησα is a timeless aorist<sup>40</sup>.

Caneday observes that, with subtle irony, Mark’s baptism narrative foreshadows the crucifixion narrative, thus forming an *inclusio* structure whereby the whole gospel moves from the anointing (baptism) to the enthronement (crucifixion) of the Son of God<sup>41</sup>.

34 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 318.

35 France, *Mark*, p. 81.

36 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 4000.

37 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 54.

38 ‘The *bat-gol* (= ‘daughter of a voice’, i.e. an echo of a heavenly voice) is in Jewish thought an inferior substitute for the Word of God given directly to the prophets by the Holy Spirit ... apparently Mark was thinking in terms of a *bat-gol*, and we may assume that Jesus had thought of the message he had received in that way too. During his earthly life his intercourse with the Father was subject to human conditions and limitations.’ Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 54.

39 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 38.

40 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 55.

41 Caneday, A. B. ‘Christ’s Baptism and Crucifixion: The Anointing and Enthronement of God’s Son.’ *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 08:3 (Fall 2004), pp. 70–81.

ISAIAH 43.25/MARK 2.7

In contrast to Israel's failures, which have been outlined in the preceding verses, God promises that he will wipe away their sins<sup>42</sup>; he declares forgiveness. Not only will God defeat the 'gods', but he will defeat sin itself<sup>43</sup>. The repetition, 'I, even I', adds emotional intensity, and the 'blotting out of sins' is cast clearly as a divine attribute. 'For my own sake' highlights that the motives for forgiveness originate within God's very nature.<sup>44</sup>

This declaration of YHWH's forgiveness is precisely what Mark portrays Jesus as making, and precisely why Jesus is met with such a response in Mk.2.7, where the entire interrogative sequence carries the clear tone of an unspoken charge of blasphemy<sup>45</sup>. The authority Jesus is claiming here was unexpected and unanticipated:

The classic description of the Messiah in *Psalms of Solomon* 17–18 speaks of his overcoming demons, ushering in a perfect government, judging the godless, and of his righteousness and even sinlessness (17:36), but not of his ability to forgive sins...forgiveness of sins remains everywhere the exclusive right of God.<sup>46</sup>

It is clear that Jesus is exercising the divine prerogative<sup>47</sup>. Thus Dunn, 'it is impossible to soften the Christological force of 2.7,10: Jesus is able and has authority to forgive sins, not merely to declare them forgiven.'<sup>48</sup>

42 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 5318.

43 Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, p. 161.

44 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 340.

45 France, *Mark*, p. 126.

46 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 78.

47 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 98–99.

48 Dunn, J.D.G. *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990, p. 27.

## ISAIAH 49.24–25/MARK 3.27

There is some disagreement between Masoretic and Qumran readings of this text<sup>49</sup>. In the context, YHWH asserts his power over and against the 'mighty', the foreign conqueror<sup>50</sup>. God is affirming his superior force and his righteousness<sup>51</sup>; hence the emphasis of v. 25 ('I myself will contend...'). ׀ can communicate an adversative sense following a negative, which may be the sense here. The sense of contrast is heightened by ׀; 'even though it is not easy, the prey *will* be taken from the mighty man'<sup>52</sup>. No particular enemy or military defeat is mentioned, rather 'the force of the statement emphasises only God's role in this marvellous act of deliverance'<sup>53</sup>.

Again, Mark's allusion is cryptic. Jesus identifies himself with YHWH, as the one who will bind the 'strong man'<sup>54</sup>. The 'prey' of Isaiah 49.24 are people whom Jesus rescues from Satan's oppression, and the 'binding' is being achieved by a man through whom the Spirit of YHWH is working<sup>55</sup>. This binding of Satan, implemented through real conflict, is eschatological; his power is broken but not yet finished. Moreover, this concise parable reveals something important of Jesus' self-understanding; 'as the Son of God, he does something for humanity before doing something to it.'<sup>56</sup>

## ISAIAH 63.10/MARK 3.29

Isaiah's choice of terminology, 'my Holy Spirit', is rare in the OT<sup>57</sup>. Most likely his use of the descriptor 'holy' is to highlight that God's people

49 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 11693–11715.

50 *Ibid.*, location 11693.

51 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 396.

52 Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, p. 314.

53 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 11715.

54 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 137–139.

55 France, *Mark*, p. 172–174.

56 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 122.

57 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 20844.

have become his enemy<sup>58</sup> by assailing his *holiness*<sup>59</sup>. Indeed, rebellion is essentially hostility to God’s transcendent power and perfection; thus sin is finally a matter of the will<sup>60</sup>.

In context in Mark, Jesus’ exorcisms have been attributed to Satan by the accredited theological teachers<sup>61</sup>. It is this allegation – that Jesus’ empowerment is from Beelzebub, not the Spirit of God – that represents ‘total repudiation’ of God’s rule and a posture of deliberate antagonism and rejection<sup>62</sup>. Since his baptism, Jesus has been authorised by the Spirit of God; thus any person attributing his work to the devil is lost without hope<sup>63</sup>. Jesus shows that it is his accusers who are blasphemous, because they have attributed the Spirit’s work to Satan<sup>64</sup>.

#### ISAIAH 6.9–10/MARK 4.12

There is a distinction between inner and outer faculties made here, thus Isaiah’s hearers may ‘hear, but not understand’. Isaiah’s commission is to tell God’s message to a people whose inner faculties will not recognise or accept it. The only possible response will be to tell it again<sup>65</sup>.

Isaiah 6.9–10 is used extensively in the New Testament, and the different writers present ‘complementary notions regarding the theology of obduracy’<sup>66</sup>. Although I cannot here engage at any length with related text–critical discussions<sup>67</sup>, two textual observations are noteworthy.

58 Watts, “Mark,” in Beale and Carson, *Use of the Old Testament*, p. 149.

59 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 514.

60 Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, p. 607.

61 Cranfield, *Mark*, p141–142. Cranfield quotes Calvin, ‘Christ did not pronounce this decision on the mere words they uttered, but on their base and wicked thought.’

62 France, *Mark*, p. 174–176.

63 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 123.

64 Stein, *Mark*, p. 186.

65 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 78–79.

66 Mills, D. W. “The Use of Isaiah 6:9–10 in the New Testament with Special Attention to the Gospel of John.” *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 04:2 (Fall 2002), pp. 16–40.

67 Wenham, D. “The Synoptic Problem Revisited: Some New Suggestions About The Composition Of Mark 4:1–34.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 23:1 (NA 1972), pp. 3–38.

Firstly, Mark's quotation appears to be from the Targum rather than either the Hebrew text or the LXX<sup>68</sup>. Secondly, there is no evidence of a mistranslation, in contrast to the suggestions of some commentators<sup>69</sup>. Mark seems intent to hold divine sovereignty and human responsibility in tension<sup>70</sup>.

His use of *iva* connotes the *purpose* of this concealment<sup>71</sup>. The significance of this quotation is less that of fulfilment, and more of 'typological correspondence'<sup>72</sup>; those who hear Jesus' parables but are not enlightened are like Isaiah's hearers. Moreover, they – like Isaiah's hearers – are nevertheless part of the divine plan. In Mark, the apparent difficulties of this text dissipate if it is understood that the focus is not so much on an *intention* that the parables be not understood, but on a confident *fact* that they will not be understood. If this is true, then the context of Isaiah's text fits well. In fact, the only remarkable difference is that Jesus affirms that – unlike Isaiah's ministry – his parables will find some 'good soil' to take root in<sup>73</sup>: 'God's self-revelation is truly revelation [because] it is precisely *veiled revelation*.'<sup>74</sup>

### ISAIAH 29.13/MARK 7.6-7

Isaiah writes here of religion without reality; of the use of correct words but wayward inner devotion. Indeed, even what has the appearance of an 'heart response' – their 'fear' – is in response to the teaching of man<sup>75</sup>.

Outside of Mark's opening, this is the only explicit reference Mark

68 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 133.

69 Thus Black, 'nothing is more certain than that Mark wrote and intended' [the text as it stands]. Black, M. *An Aramaic approach to the Gospel and Acts*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967, p. 211–216.

70 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 134.

71 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 156.

72 France, *Mark*, p. 199.

73 *Ibid.*, p. 199.

74 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 157.

75 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 240.

makes to Isaiah, which highlights its significance<sup>76</sup>. This theme of internal and external inconsistency is picked up in Mark's gospel, reaching its climax in Jesus' statement in 7.8, 'you leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men'<sup>77</sup>. Jesus' acidic use of the term 'hypocrite' serves to accuse the Pharisees of nothing less than idolatry, the 'replacement of the divine by the merely human'<sup>78</sup>. Thus here, as in 4.12, Mark's use of Isaiah is more typological than predictive fulfilment<sup>79</sup>. It is noteworthy that Mark's quotation of Isaiah here differs slightly from the LXX, which in turn differs slightly from the MT<sup>80</sup>.

### ISAIAH 6.9–10/MARK 8.18

Here again Mark alludes to Isaiah 6.9–10. Jesus is implying that, at present, his disciples seem to be behaving just like those outside the kingdom; their 'privileged insight into the secret of the kingdom of God seems for now to have deserted them'<sup>81</sup>. This effect is heightened by the adjacent pericopes, whereby Jesus' miracles bring about clear perception. We must note that Jesus is distressed not so much that the disciples do not believe, but that they do not understand; for faith is only possible through understanding. As Edwards points out, 'the hardened heart is a particular problem for religious and moral people. An ignorant heart cannot harden itself. Only a knowing heart can harden itself, and that is why those closest to Jesus – the Pharisees (3.5–6) and the disciples (6.52; 8.17) – stand in the gravest danger'<sup>82</sup>. Jesus is not expecting his disciples always to anticipate a miraculous meal, but rather to recognize and trust

76 Watts, "Mark," in Beale and Carson, *Use of the Old Testament*, p. 166.

77 Stein, *Mark*, p. 341.

78 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 209.

79 France, *Mark*, p. 283–285.

80 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 235.

81 France, *Mark*, p. 317.

82 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 240.

his authority, instead of hardening their hearts through dull unbelief<sup>83</sup>.

### ISAIAH 52.13–53.12/MARK 8.31

Isaiah's fourth servant song has a clear structure, beginning (52.13–14) with YHWH's 'testimony to his servant merging into a description of the Servant's suffering and of reactions to it'<sup>84</sup>, and ending (53.10–12) as the explanation of the servant's suffering merges into YHWH's testimony to his servant. Two contrasts, heightened by word repetition<sup>85</sup>, are present; between the servant's humiliation and exaltation, and between what people thought about the servant, and 'what was really the case'<sup>86</sup>. Verses 1–9 breakdown naturally into the servant's suffering observed and misinterpreted (v1–3); his suffering explained (v4–6); and further explanation of the voluntary nature of his suffering (v7–9). Much ink has been spilled over these verses<sup>87</sup>, and although there seems to be an intentional ambiguity in this song<sup>88</sup>, the text is very clear on a number of points when considered in context<sup>89</sup>.

Clines<sup>90</sup> translates the first phrase, 'See, my servant: his wisdom prospers'. The emphatic exaltation of YHWH's servant expresses 'a dignity beyond what any other...receives and is surely intended as a clue leading to the identity of the servant. It is impossible not be reminded of the resurrection, ascension and heavenly exaltedness of the Lord Jesus.'<sup>91</sup>.

Central to the enigma of Isaiah's servant is how he can, on the one

83 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 262.

84 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 423.

85 Raabe, P. "The Effect of Repetition in the Suffering Servant Song." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103 (1984), pp. 77–81.

86 Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, p. 376.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 377.

88 Clines, D. J. A. "I, He, We and They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 1* (1976), pp. 11.

89 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 13089.

90 Clines, D. J. A. "I, He, We and They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 1* (1976), p. 11.

91 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 424.

hand, evoke a response of revulsion (52.14), and on the other hand evoke a response of overwhelmed submission (52.15). The sense of ‘his form’ being ‘beyond that of the children of mankind’ is that of onlookers wondering, ‘is this the servant?’, and also, ‘is this human?’<sup>92</sup>. ‘Many’ (v14) is a crucially theological term in Isaiah, ‘referring to the whole company for whose benefit the servant acts’<sup>93</sup>. The enigma persists; what is it that silences kings when they learn it? This is an expansion of the servant’s promised exaltation (v13).

It must be remembered that, in Isaiah, the ‘arm of YHWH’ is not distinct from YHWH, but rather YHWH in power to save<sup>94</sup>. What is remarkable is that this ‘Arm revealed’ is so unremarkable (v2). The servant is a ‘man of sorrows’ (v3) not by temperament or constitution but by virtue of the fact that he bore our sorrows and weaknesses as his own (v4). Motyer’s summary of 53.1–3 is deeply perceptive;

...Isaiah completes a diagnosis of our human condition, which he has been unobtrusively pursuing throughout these three verses: to see the servant and find no beauty in him (2cd) reveals the bankruptcy of the human emotions; to be one with those who despise and then reject him (3ac) exposes the misguidedness of the human will; to appraise him and conclude that he is nothing condemns our sinful minds as corrupted by, and participants in, our sinfulness. Thus every aspect of human nature is inadequate; every avenue along which, by nature, we might arrive at the truth and respond to God is closed. Nothing but divine revelation can make the servant known to us and draw us to him.<sup>95</sup>

Verses 4–6 reveal that the servant suffers alone (v4); vicariously (4ab, 5ab, 5c, 5d, 6c) – using language clearly drawn from Leviticus 16 (v6); and so dealt with the manifold nature of our plight – ‘infirmities’, ‘sorrows’, and guilt – as God ‘laid on him the iniquities of us all.’<sup>96</sup>

92 *Ibid.*, p. 425.

93 *Ibid.*

94 *Ibid.*, p. 427.

95 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 427.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 429.

Verses 7–9 stress the voluntariness of the servant's death. We glimpse the existential perspective of the servant himself, and we learn that, far from being 'caught in a web of events, [he is instead] masterfully deciding, accepting and submitting'<sup>97</sup>. The picture is one of decided self–submission. We read of his willingness to be lead out to die (v7), and his death at the hand of 'thoughtless contemporaries'<sup>98</sup> (v8), and of his mysterious burial, which somehow involves wicked people and a rich man (v9). This last fact sustains the enigma of the servant; why is it that the servant, who dies as a criminal – albeit as self–consciously innocent<sup>99</sup> – should not meet with a criminal's grave? Thus three enigmatic questions remain: How could such suffering lead to such exaltation (52.12–15)? How could the Arm of YHWH be so very unremarkable (53.1–3)? and now, how can a criminal's death be followed by a burial befitting a wealthy man?

Jesus' first passion prediction is met with stupefied bewilderment. We do not have any evidence<sup>100</sup> that Isaiah's suffering servant had ever been identified with the Messiah<sup>101</sup>; thus Jesus' insistence that the Messiah *must suffer* many things meets misunderstanding and dismay<sup>102</sup>. It is certainly most likely that Jesus' conviction originates largely from Isaiah's servant<sup>103</sup>. Δεἶ refers to 'a necessity beyond human comprehension, grounded in the will of God'<sup>104</sup>, and the title 'Son of Man' is likely used by Jesus since it 'could hold together the ideas of transcendent majesty and vicarious suffering, [making it] peculiarly suitable for Jesus' purpose'<sup>105</sup>. Edwards notes that there is an irony in the fact that Jesus' suffering will be at the hands of the 'elders, chief priests and teachers

97 *Ibid.*, p. 432.

98 *Ibid.*

99 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 13529.

100 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 253.

101 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 13955.

102 France, *Mark*, p. 334.

103 France, R. T. "The Servant Of The Lord In The Teaching Of Jesus." *Tyndale Bulletin* 19:1 (NA 1968), pp. 26–52.

104 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 271.

105 *Ibid.*, p. 275.

of the law’; as a consequence of ‘careful deliberations from respected religious leaders who will justify their actions by the highest standards of law and morality’<sup>106</sup>. The rejection of Jesus by Israel’s leaders ‘raises as acutely as possible the paradox of the unrecognised Messiah’<sup>107</sup>.

### ISAIAH 53.3/MARK 9.12

Jesus again self-consciously identifies himself with the suffering servant of Isaiah. It appears that in this interchange Jesus challenges the idea that the final restoration ‘can be achieved apart from the suffering of the Son of Man’<sup>108</sup>; Jesus acknowledges that the scribes are correct to assert that Elijah will precede the restoration, but ‘suggests that this “restoring all things” cannot mean just what on the surface it seems to mean, since scripture foretells suffering for the Son of Man’<sup>109</sup>. The use of *γέγραπται* makes it explicit<sup>110</sup> that these things are ‘necessary’ because of the pattern already established in the OT.

The Son of Man’s experience here described by Jesus, whilst a clear allusion to Isaiah’s suffering servant’s experience, may also allude – in this context – to the rejection experienced by Elijah (1 Kings 17–19). Thus, Jesus is ‘linking the suffering and rejection of the returning Elijah with his own’<sup>111</sup>.

### ISAIAH 52.13–53.12/MARK 9.31

All three passion predictions share the components of a statement of the necessity of the Christ’s suffering, a statement of his death, and a

106 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 254.

107 France, *Mark*, p. 335.

108 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 274.

109 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 298.

110 Marcus, J. *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the OT in the Gospel of Mark*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993, p. 94–97.

111 France, *Mark*, p. 360.

statement of his resurrection. This second prediction is the briefest, and identifies Christ's suffering with being betrayed into, simply, the hands of men; 'the one who gives himself for others will die at their hands'<sup>112</sup>. The sequence of future tenses following the present tense communicates the sense of a process being initiated as they journey to Jerusalem<sup>113</sup>. Mark's use of *παραδίδοται* is significant; Judas is going to 'hand over' Jesus; yet, within the broader context of Isaiah's suffering servant figure, this may be a 'divine passive'<sup>114</sup>, an allusion to God handing over his servant (Isaiah 53.6,8,10)<sup>115</sup>.

### ISAIAH 66.24/MARK 9.48

It seems likely that Isaiah has picked up on imagery from the destruction of the 185,000 Assyrian corpses (Isaiah 37.36) to speak of the future consequences of those who have not 'trembled' at the word of YHWH. The redeemed look here not to gloat, but 'to be repelled'<sup>116</sup>; not to mock, but to remember. Thus Isaiah sharply focuses the minds of the hearers of his message on the reality of God's judgement as his prophecy comes to a close<sup>117</sup>.

Jesus has clearly picked up the 'worm' from Isaiah's imagery. The 'fire' almost certainly has *γέενναν*<sup>118</sup> in mind<sup>119</sup>. It may be that Mark records this comment in this way so as to provide a brief comment for Gentile readers<sup>120</sup> on the nature of 'hell'. In this context of leading little ones to sin, Jesus is highlighting how great the stakes are. Whilst Jesus

112 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 283.

113 France, *Mark*, p. 372.

114 Stein, *Mark*, p. 439.

115 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 306.

116 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 544.

117 Oswalt, *Isaiah 40–66*, p. 692; Smith, *Isaiah*, location 22820.

118 Scharen, H. "Gehenna in the Synoptics." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155 (Jan–Mar 1998): 324–37.

119 France, *Mark*, p. 382.

120 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 314.

does not intend to be taken literally in his preceding words, he is being superlatively emphatic in saying that nothing can be allowed to stand in the way of eternal life. Verse 48 is appended to the depiction of *gehenna* and serves a similar function in Mark as it did in Isaiah; a warning in the strongest possible terms. Particularly, Jesus is warning against disregard or complacency in discipleship<sup>121</sup>.

### ISAIAH 50.6/MARK 10.33–34

At this point in Isaiah's prophecy, his servant can be clearly identified as an individual, who undergoes this threefold suffering<sup>122</sup>. We learn that he voluntarily allows this to be imposed upon himself, although no guilt is admitted. Furthermore, we do not learn who is opposing him, nor why<sup>123</sup>. Oswald observes that, in Israel, true prophets stood at the periphery and received opposition and humiliation, unlike false institutional prophets who enjoyed social acceptance and influence<sup>124</sup>.

Mark's third passion prediction, the most detailed of the three, builds upon his two earlier ones. Now there is specific mention of Jerusalem, a further repetition of being 'handed over', and clarity about who he will be handed over to. The subject of the string of plural verbs in verse 34 is the gentiles; this is not paralleled in either of the earlier passion predictions<sup>125</sup>. The wording very clearly alludes to Isaiah 50.6 and 53.3; specifying mockery, spitting, scourging, and death. This represents not mere Markan hindsight, but Jesus' own self-awareness. If this text were the product solely and merely of Mark's hindsight, we might expect crucifixion to be mentioned here<sup>126</sup>. Moreover, the facts that the second passion prediction

121 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 293–295.

122 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 400.

123 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 11951.

124 Oswald, *Isaiah* 40–66, p. 325.

125 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 336.

126 France, *Mark*, p. 412–413.

is less detailed than the first or third, and that the third prediction does not correspond exactly sequentially with the passion events recorded later in Mark's Gospel, implicate against an artificial harmonisation<sup>127</sup>; originality lies with Jesus' words expressing his self-awareness as the suffering servant. Thus Chisholm,

Jesus identified Himself as Isaiah's royal servant, offering the kingdom with the full realization that He must first suffer rejection. But His suffering qualifies Him to be king, a fact that Paul wrote about in Philippians 2:8–10.<sup>128</sup>

### ISAIAH 53.10–12/MARK 10.45

We note that Jesus was served by many others in practical ways in this gospel, and indeed there is a fascinating link between hospitality and discipleship in Mark<sup>129</sup>. However, his words here are intended to make a specific point regarding his mission. This verse is unlikely to allude directly to Isaiah's servant figure. Moreover, the service Jesus speaks of here is general service to fellow men and women, rather than the specific mission of the servant of YHWH. At the same time, however, Jesus is clearly and emphatically – the *καὶ* having the sense of, 'even the Son of Man *himself* did not...' – talking about the 'paradoxical subordinate status of the one who should have enjoyed the service of others'<sup>130, 131</sup>. Thus, in a more general, paradigmatic way, Jesus is saying the 'the Son of Man came to fulfil the task of the servant of YHWH'<sup>132</sup>.

127 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 320.

128 Chisholm, R. B. Jr. "The Christological Fulfillment of Isaiah's Servant Songs." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163:652 (October 2006), pp. 387–404.

129 Asumang, A. "'And The Angels Waited On Him' (Mark 1:13): Hospitality And Discipleship In Mark's Gospel." *Conspectus* 08:1 (September 2009), pp. 1–22.

130 France, *Mark*, p. 419.

131 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 342.

132 France, *Mark*, p. 419.

In Semitic thought the ‘many’ has the sense of ‘totality’, rather than a particular subset<sup>133</sup>, and its use in Isaiah 52–53 is certainly consistent with this. Jesus’ self-awareness as the servant of YHWH is pronounced here, with a clear allusion to Isaiah 53.10–12<sup>134</sup>; ‘Jesus is supremely conscious of offering a payment to God that can be offered by no one else’<sup>135</sup>; λύτρον here likely has the sense of ‘guilt offering’, an echo of Isaiah 53.10<sup>136</sup>.

### ISAIAH 56.7/MARK 11.17

The conclusion of this section of Isaiah 56 is one of fulfilment rather than concession<sup>137</sup>; YHWH’s temple had always – the language is emphatic<sup>138</sup> – been intended for the nations (1 Kings 8.41ff). That Isaiah describes it as a house of *prayer* highlights the foundation of true worship as the enjoyment of personal communion with YHWH. It is a significant nuance that YHWH will *bring* the nations; just as he will *bring* Israel back from exile. The burnt offerings and sacrifice reflect the privilege of sins atoned for, and the centrality of prayer reflect the privilege of immediate access to YHWH<sup>139</sup>. Thus Oswalt,

All of Israel’s separation from the world was in order to keep Israel from being absorbed into the world...but should Israel ever come to believe that its separation was so that Israel could keep her God and his blessings to herself, then all was lost. It is precisely this attitude...that Isaiah is countering.<sup>140</sup>

133 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 327.

134 France, R. T. “The Servant Of The Lord In The Teaching Of Jesus.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 19:1 (NA 1968), pp. 26–52.

135 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 328.

136 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 342.

137 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 467.

138 Smith, *Isaiah*, location 17471.

139 Oswalt, *Isaiah* 40–66, p. 460.

140 *Ibid.*, p. 461.

In Jesus' day, we have reason to believe that the Court of the Gentiles had been prevented from use for worship, due to the commercial use of the space<sup>141</sup>. Mark records Jesus' quotation sandwiched in the context of the cursed fig tree, thus intending readers 'to see in the fate of the unfruitful fig tree the judgment of God on the unfruitful temple'<sup>142</sup>. Mark is careful to include *πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν* and thus refer explicitly to Isaiah's promise of the future ingathering of the nations<sup>143</sup>.

Jesus' words here reveal that he is a very different Messiah to the one expected. In contrast to the Messiah of, for instance, the *Psalms of Solomon*, Jesus is explicitly stating that access to God is available to those whom it had previously been inaccessible, to 'all nations'<sup>144</sup>.

### ISAIAH 5.1-2/MARK 12.1

Isaiah's song for the vineyard Israel highlights the bleak conclusion, 'what more can be done for a tended vine that does not bear fruit?'<sup>145</sup> The 'wild grapes' are literally, 'stink-fruit'.

When Jesus speaks to them *ἐν παραβολαῖς*, Mark refers to the manner of his speaking<sup>146</sup>. Although Jesus is very clearly alluding to Isaiah's vineyard-song, he makes a clear diversion from it – thus commanding his listeners' interest<sup>147</sup> – by talking about its being leased to tenants, and in speaking of a new beginning with new tenants (v9)<sup>148</sup>. Furthermore, Jesus has embellished the story to develop the theme of the *υἶὸν ἀγαπητόν*.

141 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 358.

142 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 339.

143 France, *Mark*, p. 445.

144 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 343.

145 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 68.

146 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 364.

147 Stein, *Mark*, p. 534.

148 France, *Mark*, p. 456.

### ISAAH 19.2/MARK 13.8

In context, Isaiah is clearly predicting the self-destruction of Egypt<sup>149</sup>. France<sup>150</sup> highlights that the descriptor ‘birth pains’ often depicts the suffering of a nation or city in crisis, as in Isaiah 13.8.

We must be careful not to overstate what Jesus is saying in these verses; he is not saying that these things mean the end has come, but ‘they do point to it and are a pledge of it’<sup>151</sup>. The pains of childbirth are also necessarily the promise of what is longed for. Edwards sees particular correlation to the subsequent experience of first century Christians in these verses, but notes that ‘the purpose of the litany of woes in 13:8 is *not* to lure believers into speculations about the end, but to anchor them to watchfulness and faithfulness in the present’<sup>152</sup>. There is some textual evidence to suggest that ‘famines and troubles’ may be the original rendering of v. 8<sup>153</sup>.

### ISAAH 13.10/MARK 13.24–25

Although this passage lies within the broader context of YHWH’s judgement to Babylon, the immediate context – concerning the day of YHWH – contains no overt reference to Babylon<sup>154</sup>.

Scholars are divided over the interpretation of this Markan text. Cranfield<sup>155</sup> argues that this is not apocalyptic, but a use of prophetic imagery against Jerusalem; in other words, Mark is communicating the imminent judgement and establishment of a new order. In contrast Edwards<sup>156</sup> views this more apocalyptically; darkness spells the defeat,

149 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 164.

150 France, *Mark*, p. 512.

151 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 396.

152 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 392.

153 *Ibid.*, p. 392.

154 Motyer, *Isaiah*, p. 138.

155 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 531–534.

156 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 402–404.

not the victory, of the 'dark side'. Others including France<sup>157</sup> suggest that the Hebraic imagery is connoting pagan deities, and their defeat, and that ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις is explicitly not talking about an eschatological time period, but about impending 'drastic events on the world scene, interpreted in the light of judgment and purpose'<sup>158</sup>. Cranfield<sup>159</sup> notes the similarities to Isaiah 34.4 and 24.23, arguing that Mark's purpose here is to use picture–language that should not be pushed for a literal interpretation. Certainly it would seem that the predominant genre here is plainly eschatological; this is particularly apparent in vv. 17, 18, 20, 24, and 32. Furthermore, we can validly question what interest Mark would have had – writing in this context – with the downfall of Greco–Roman deities.

#### ISAIAH 53.11–12/MARK 14.24

At this New Covenant meal<sup>160</sup>, Jesus' use of πολλῶν is a significant allusion to his vicarious death<sup>161, 162</sup>, further echoing Isaiah 53.12<sup>163</sup>, and Mark 10.45<sup>164</sup>; 'without Isa. 53 the eucharistic words remain incomprehensible'<sup>165, 166</sup>. This is a particularly clear allusions made by Jesus to his identity as the Isaianic suffering servant<sup>167</sup>.

157 France, R.T. *Jesus and the Old Testament*. London: Tyndale Press, 1971, pp. 231–233.

158 France, *Mark*, p. 533.

159 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 405.

160 Watts, "Mark," in Beale and Carson, *Use of the Old Testament*, p. 232.

161 Edwards, *Mark*, pp. 426–427.

162 France, *Mark*, pp. 570–571.

163 Stein, *Mark*, p.652.

164 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 427.

165 Jeremias, J. *New Testament Theology, Vol. 1: The Proclamation of Jesus*. London: SCM, 1971, p. 291.

166 Watts, R.E. *Isaiah's New Exodus and Mark*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997, pp. 354–362.

167 France, R. T. "The Servant of The Lord in the Teaching Of Jesus." *Tyndale Bulletin* 19:1 (NA 1968): p. 26–52.

ISAIAH 53.7/MARK  
14.60-61; 15.4-5

‘The Blessed One’<sup>168</sup> is a semitic periphrasis for the divine name<sup>169</sup>. The spitting at, and blindfolding of Jesus develops further the Isaianic link (Isaiah 50.6). Jesus’ silence is not merely strategic, but represents his innocence, and his total surrender to God<sup>170</sup>. We note that,

...until the question of the high priest...Jesus has steadfastly silenced all proclamations of his divine Sonship. In order truly to understand the meaning of his person something has been missing. The missing element has been the necessity of his suffering. Only in the light of suffering can Jesus openly divulge his identity as God’s Son.<sup>171</sup>

15.5 is not a direct quote of Isaiah 53.7, but a clear reinforcement<sup>172</sup> of the sustained identification of Jesus with YHWH’s servant. We note indeed that Jesus’ silence<sup>173</sup> ‘in the face of hatred, abuse, and cruelty dominates Mark’s portrayal of the passion from here onward’<sup>174</sup>.

SYNTHESIS: CONCLUSION

There are three broad ways in which Mark has used Isaiah in his gospel:

***1) The ‘way’ of YHWH’s coming to save is the ‘way’ of Jesus to the Cross.***

168 It is interesting to note in passing that, in the majority of manuscripts and text traditions, the high priest’s question – as conveyed by the NIV – demands Jesus’ response to the accusations. There is another set of manuscript evidence (B W ψ) which has the high priest demanding Jesus’ response to the very fact of his accusations.

169 Cranfield, *Mark*, p. 443.

170 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 445.

171 *Ibid.*, p. 447.

172 France, *Mark*, p. 608.

173 To v. 3 some late uncial manuscripts add, no doubt intending to heighten this feature, ‘[Jesus] said not a word to [Pilate]’.

174 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 459.

The very opening quotation is significant: Jesus' gospel 'is good news precisely because it is the fulfilment of Scripture. Thereafter, Jesus' words and activities constantly echo OT scenes and language until what is 'written' of the Son of Man is finally fulfilled.'<sup>175</sup> Moreover, the very shape of the gospel finds its climax in the cross; thus the 'way' of YHWH, announced cryptically at the start, is seen ultimately to be the 'way' of Jesus to the cross, a way prepared by the suffering and rejection of John. Thus Caneday,

Paradoxically, Jesus' baptism with darkness is his glory, his enthronement. Jesus, who receives the exalted investiture of "Son" from his Heavenly Father as he is anointed for his mission at his baptism and again at his transfiguration, endures another baptism that brings his earthly mission to its God-appointed goal. Crucified upon the cross he is overwhelmed with anguish and suffering as he gives his life as a ransom for many. The heavenly voice is silent. The cloud of God's presence and glory that overshadowed those on the mountain signified heavenly approbation. Now the cloud descends as the darkness of God to enshroud Jesus...this darkness departs only with Jesus' passage from this life, ripping the temple veil, an apocalyptic sign of the temple's destruction and the opening of "the way of the Lord" for Gentiles.<sup>176</sup>

The 'way' of the Lord to save relates integrally to the 'secrecy' motif in Mark, which in turn relates integrally to Jesus' self-conscious identification with Isaiah's servant, a point to which we now turn<sup>177</sup>.

## ***2) Jesus is the Spirit-filled, divinely commissioned servant of YHWH.***

In Mark, Jesus personifies Isaiah's Spirit-filled, divinely commissioned servant of YHWH, as he 'does justice' (1.40ff, 2.28); proclaims

175 Hooker, M. D. *It is Written: Scripture citing Scripture*. Edited by D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

176 Caneday, A. B. "Christ's Baptism and Crucifixion: The Anointing and Enthronement of God's Son." *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 08:3 (Fall 2004), pp. 70–81.

177 Edwards, *Mark*, p62–64.

forgiveness (2.5, 15); makes warfare against spiritual opposition (1.24); rebukes sin, idolatry, unbelief, and opposition to YHWH's rule (7.1ff, 11.12ff, 14.61ff); grants enlightenment to the kingdom of God, the way of YHWH's rule (4.1–34, 12.1–12); and insists on true worship of YHWH (7.1–23; 12.13–44). It must, of course, be noted that Mark highlights this allusively – rather than literally – for the most part; there are ‘as many allusions to the Servant of God in the first half of the Gospel with reference to the ministry of Jesus as there are in the passion narratives in the second half of Mark.’<sup>178</sup> In other words, Mark sees YHWH's mission and forgiveness as *exactly* transferred on the person of Jesus: he did not simply proclaim the good news, he was the good news; if the parable of the sower reflects the mission and experience of Isaiah's servant, then ‘it seems justified to assume that Jesus found within the profile of Isaiah's Servant a paradigm for his own ministry’<sup>179</sup>.

Jesus' baptism – the point of his identification both as Son and servant – is of huge importance to Mark's gospel;

The baptism is the keystone in the life and ministry of Jesus. The empowerment by God's Spirit to be God's servant, and the declaration from heaven, “You are my Son,” enable Jesus not only to speak and act *for* God but *as* God.<sup>180</sup>

One could argue that, broadly speaking, the first half of Mark's gospel portrays Jesus in fulfilment of the first servant song, while the second half increasingly reveals Jesus as the enigmatic suffering servant:

The anonymous servant of Isaiah 42:1–9 can be neither Israel nor Cyrus nor any person other than the royal Davidic Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. This first servant song introduces the servant and highlights the successful completion of the task to which He is divinely called. Only a hint is given of the pathway of suffering

178 Edwards, J. R. “The Servant of the Lord and the Gospel of Mark.” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 08:3 (Fall 2004), pp. 36–47.

179 Edwards, “The Servant of the Lord and the Gospel of Mark.”

180 Edwards, *Mark*, p. 38.

that the servant must tread to arrive at the glory of a completed mission when He will have caused a righteous order to prevail on the earth.<sup>181</sup>

### ***3) Jesus is the enigmatic, suffering servant of YHWH.***

The Isaianic servant songs are the 'link' between the idealised Davidic king and the suffering servant<sup>182</sup>, and Jesus' self-conscious self-identification as the suffering servant who dies 'for many' escalates from 8.31 onwards, clustering particularly around the three passion predictions and the passion narratives themselves. Like Isaiah's servant, Jesus is misunderstood, and we remember from the second servant song (Isaiah 49. 1–13) that,

Yahweh's called and gifted Servant is rejected at first by His own people Israel, but in a future day of grace He will ultimately succeed not only in fulfilling an expanded mission to bring salvation to the Gentiles, but also in restoring Israel both to the land (physically and politically) and to Yahweh (spiritually), thus eliciting universal praise to Yahweh, the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel.<sup>183</sup>

The hidden 'way' of the Lord, the divinely appointed servant, and the suffering servant; many years ago Cranfield summarised masterfully:

Throughout [Jesus'] ministry we can see these two motives (revealing and veiling) at work. On the one hand, Jesus gathers the crowds about him and teaches them, sends out the twelve to preach, and reveals the power and compassion of God by his miracles. God's self-revelation is not to be accomplished in a corner. On the other hand, Jesus teaches the crowds indirectly by means of parables, seeks to conceal his miracles, and forbids the demoniacs to declare his identity. The two motives, both of which

181 Lindsey, "Isaiah's Songs of the Servant Part 1".

182 Chisholm, R.B. Jr. "The Christological Fulfillment of Isaiah's Servant Songs." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163:652 (October 2006), pp. 387–404.

183 Lindsey, F. D. "Isaiah's Songs of the Servant Part 2: The Commission of the Servant in Isaiah 49:1–13." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139:554 (April 1982), pp. 129–143.

are necessary to the divine purpose, are constantly in tension – a fact which explains some apparent inconsistencies...his ultimate purpose is salvation...God's self-revelation is veiled, in order that men may be left sufficient turning room in which to make a personal decision.<sup>184</sup>

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184 Cranfield, *Mark*, pp. 157–158

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**Review Articles**

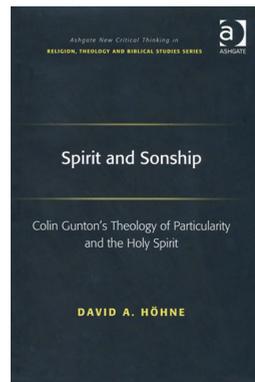
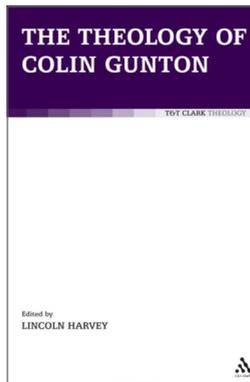
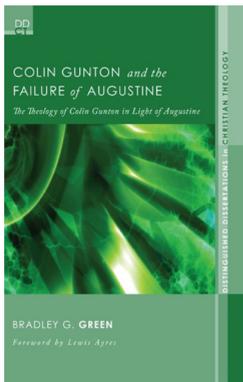






Review Article  
Evangelical Orthodoxy:  
A Trinitarian Revival?

P.H. Brazier



KEYWORDS:

| Doctrine of God | Trinity | Evangelical | Reformed |  
| Creed | Systematic Theology |

Lincoln Harvey (ed.), *The Theology of Colin Gunton* (London & New York, Continuum, T&T Clark, 2010), pp. xiv and 217.

David A. Höhne, *Spirit and Sonship. Colin Gunton's Theology of Particularity and the Holy Spirit* (Series: New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies; Farnham, UK, Ashgate, 2010), pp. viii and 187.

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Bradley G. Green, *Colin Gunton and the Failure of Augustine: The Theology of Colin Gunton in the Light of Augustine* (Eugene, OR, Wipf & Stock, Pickwick Publications 2011), pp. xiv and 226.

Colin E. Gunton (1941-2003) is considered to be one of the more important orthodox theologians of the post-war generation: British, non-conformist, with a strong presence and respect for his work in the United States, and in German theological circles. Gunton taught for his entire career at King's College London initially lecturing in philosophy of religion, then as Professor of Christian Doctrine from 1984. As a Classicist, a trained philosopher, and a theologian, and as a United Reformed Church minister, Gunton understood the interface between revelation and reason like few of his peers. (King's was founded in the early part of the nineteenth century as a Church of England college within the University of London; today King's is theoretically Anglican with the Archbishop of Canterbury as official "Visitor", and the Dean an ordained clergyman.)

Fundamental in the Postliberal reassertion of an axiomatic Trinitarian basis for anything we dare say about God, Gunton asserted how the Trinity should be at the heart of theological exposition. By the 1970s, with the exception of some orthodox theologians (in effect Roman Catholic and Evangelical, Reformed, Protestant) in Germany and America, the appearance in the academy was that the Trinity was a redundant and embarrassing doctrine. For example early in his career at King's one of Gunton's elder colleagues commented to him that believing in the Trinity was like believing in pixies! Gunton was orthodox and evangelical in the sense that he was a creedal Trinitarian theologian, a believing minister and academic, not a subscriber to the late twentieth century liberal neo-Gnostic pseudo-Christian religions of Hickianity (John Hick's de-Christianized philosophical, though personalized, religion), Cupidity (Don Cupitt's nihilistic religious atheism), Armstrongism (Karen Armstrong's highly personalized syncretistic unified religion, centred on a unified mono-goddess) or the deconstructive humanism of the Jesus Seminar – all of which were subjective yet presented as universal.

Gunton co-founded with Christoph Schwöbel the internationally renowned Research Institute for Systematic Theology at King's in 1988. A passionate academic who was unafraid to assert the truth of the Gospel within an academy that expected staff and students to proclaim universally an indifferent, impartial, neutral study of all religions, Gunton was responsible for a considerably large number of doctoral students who went on to teach all over the English-speaking world. His unexpected, premature death in 2003 left a vacuum in English theology yet to be filled. There has been *post mortem* unfinished work/projects published, however, we are now beginning to see analytical studies emerging. Is it possible to understand fully someone's work prior to their death? Death does complete someone's work in ways that are impossible in life! Yet, *post mortem* Gunton's *corpus* continues to develop. Initially volumes of sermons were published; then two volumes of his lecture programmes were published (for example the "famous" The Barth Lectures, an annual lecture programme attended by visiting doctoral students from many other countries). There are still plans to publish Gunton's unfinished Systematic Theology, though eleven years on this is still bedevilled by delays. In addition Gunton's work is being analysed in various seminaries, colleges and university departments around the globe with studies just beginning to emerge.

The Revd. Dr. Lincoln Harvey (tutor in theology, St Mellitus College, London) in *The Theology of Colin Gunton*, has drawn together essays which provide an assessment of Gunton's work. Harvey, as with most of the contributors, either worked with Gunton or studied under him. Such a connection to Gunton could be considered a criticism – all the authors are supportive and working from the same theological perspective as Gunton, all are like-minded. Is this collegiality a weakness? Or is it a strength? The range of authorship is wide. There are some big names such as John Webster, Robert Jenson and Christoph Schwöbel, while others are anonymous, barely-out-of-the seminary/college: this young blood is refreshing for such a volume; nothing but great and famous can result in a

staid predictable volume of writers looking over their shoulders to ensure their CV credits are safe. All these writers know Gunton's work in depth. There are twelve essays in all—with an index.

So what do we have? The essays focus on the detail of Gunton's developed theology and attempt to contextualize them to what can now be seen as the Postmodern, Post-liberal developments of the later twentieth century. Gunton died in 2003, and therefore his corpus was complete before the ramifications of 9/11 and the hardening of attitudes between liberals and orthodox within Christian theology. The volume opens with "A Decision Tree of Colin Gunton's Thinking" by his long-time friend and theological colleague Robert W. Jenson; John Webster, also an associate, contributes "Gunton and Barth," focusing on the relationship between Gunton and perhaps the strongest influence on his thinking: the Swiss theologian, Karl Barth. A former student of Gunton's, Stephen R. Holmes, looks at "Towards the *analogia personae et relationis*: developments in Gunton's Trinitarian Thinking." Alan Spence develops the debate into "The Person as Willing Agent: Classifying Gunton's Christology," while Paul Cumin examines "The Taste of Cake: Relation and Otherness with Colin Gunton and the Strong Second Hand of God." Lincoln Harvey (the volume's editor, and also a former student) considers a detail that extrapolates on Gunton's theological agenda, "The Double *Homoousion*: Forming the Content of Gunton's Theology." John E. Colwell and Paraskeve Tibbs continue Harvey's debate by examining, respectively, "Provisionality and Promise: Avoiding Ecclesiastical Nestorianism?" and "Created for Action: Colin Gunton's Relational Anthropology." There is a heavy presence from former students of Gunton, for example, "Colin Gunton's Doctrine of Atonement: Transcending Rationalism by Metaphor" by Justyn Terry; "Colin Gunton on Providence: Critical Commentaries," from Terry J. Wright; and Brad Green's "Colin Gunton and the Theological Origin of Modernity." The final essay is from Gunton's colleague for many years at King's, Christoph Schwöbel, who concludes on "The Shape of Colin Gunton's Theology: on the Way Towards a Fully Trinitarian Theology."

If one is allowed to be selective, Brad Green's "Colin Gunton and the Theological Origin of Modernity" is particularly pertinent given the background to Gunton's enterprise where still by the 1980s English theology had not come to terms with a Barthian-type agenda: "Gunton's understanding and explication of modernity is a recurring theme in his writings" (p.166), Green succinctly shows how Gunton knew modernism (and its Cartesian, Kantian, Lockian, and Humeian roots) and how the Enlightenment "god" was roundly exposed as a chimera by Gunton. Paraskevè Tibbs' in "Created for Action: Colin Gunton's Relational Anthropology" illustrates the relative uniqueness of Gunton's anthropology – "the principle consideration for any Christian anthropology is humanity-in-relation to God as opposed to the uniqueness of human creation vis-à-vis non-human creation" (p. 116); Gunton's anthropology of course exposes the Darwinian agenda that bedevils so many of today's New Atheists. Tibbs opens with a reference to John S. Mbiti's contradiction of Cartesian egocentricity (*cogito ergo sum*, or given the obsession with consumerism, should it now be *Tesco ergo sum*?) which epitomises Gunton's relational theology: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am" (quoted on pp. 116 & 127, from, John S Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann, 1989). Stephen Holmes in his essay examines how at the centre of Gunton's Trinitarian thinking is how we speak of and about God – the *analogia personae et relationis* – Holmes' comments resonate with the work of John Zizioulas (who for many years attended the Research Institute for Systematic Theology at King's) more than with Barth. The question and use of analogy is taken further by Justyn Terry in, "Colin Gunton's Doctrine of Atonement: Transcending Rationalism by Metaphor," and how transcendent rationalism can be seen in Gunton's doctrine of creation, which is one of his more enduring legacies, along with his doctrine of atonement. The essays—often focusing on specific doctrines—chart the manner in which Gunton's theology and philosophy developed, particularly in the context of his work at King's.

David A. Höhne (Lecturer, Moore Theological College, Sydney) in,

*Spirit and Sonship. Colin Gunton's Theology of Particularity and the Holy Spirit*, provides what is probably the first monograph on Gunton's theology since his death. Höhne's work is therefore essentially the first assessment of Gunton's work as a systematic theologian. Höhne's work is a valuable restatement of the central thesis from Gunton's *The One, The Three, and the Many* (1993); Höhne grounds his observations about Gunton's work in the Fathers, in particular the Cappadocians (who, along with Irenaeus, Gunton readily acknowledged as in many ways parallel to Barth in importance to him). Höhne frames his assessment, critically, in the context of Augustine's theological anthropology (the "failure" to distinguish between *ousia* and *hypostasis* adequately), an insufficiency that Gunton addressed: "persons are ultimately particularised by the Spirit perfecting, for them, filial relations with the Father, through the Son. The Spirit opens the sonship of the Son to incorporate others and they are given a name son or daughter. This is the ultimate sense of what Gunton described as personal *hypostoses* bearing the image of the Messiah." (p. 175). However, Höhne takes the hypothesis further with an interpretation of scripture, but methodologically gets somewhat "lost" in a conversation, as he terms it, between Gunton and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. This conversation is essentially a restatement of human personhood from Gunton's theological description of particularity. Therefore Höhne's work is towards the development of a theology of particularity: "to explore, appraise and develop Gunton's theology of particularity . . . [with] the need for greater exegetical description in the form of a theological interpretation of the Luke-Acts narrative . . . [T]hus the particularities of the Lucan narrative gave coherence to the actions of God through the Spirit, for the Messiah, in the economy of salvation." (p. 173.) Therefore, as Höhne notes pertinently, "Gunton contended that we could only understand the identity of the eternal Son in the life of the man Jesus. . . . Furthermore, our development of Gunton's personal *hypostases*." (p. 176.) Gunton not only drove—with a handful of other British, German and American theologians—a revival of Trinitarian thinking in the latter

third of the twentieth century, but drove deep into an exposition of what trinity meant for humanity adopted through the Incarnation.

Along with many other Reformed theologians, essentially Barthians, Colin E. Gunton repudiated the theological heritage of Augustine of Hippo. Karl Barth and Thomas Torrance regarded the influence of Platonic dualism as a flaw in Augustine's theology; Torrance asserted that Barth referred to Augustine's theology as *süses Gift* (sweet poison). Gunton likewise saw Augustine as suspect. Bradley G. Green, a former student of Gunton's, takes Gunton to task in a systematic piercing and well-thought out study: *Colin Gunton and the Failure of Augustine: The Theology of Colin Gunton in the Light of Augustine*.

Gunton's premise was that Augustine's influence on Western theology was great but this also bestowed fundamental shortcomings. The focus of Gunton's criticism was Augustine's doctrine of God, which created—so Gunton believed—unsolvable problems between creation and redemption. This defect was, claimed Gunton, Trinitarian: Augustine's apparent highlighting of the singularity of God over the triune simultaneity dislocated creation and redemption: Augustine's supposed emphasis on the timeless essence of God at the expense of the three real persons. For Gunton, as a follower of Irenaeus and the Cappadocian Fathers, this dislocation between creation and redemption had ontological implications and creates a veil over our redemption. Bradley Green successfully argues that Gunton's conclusion is to be seen as wrong-headed. He demonstrates how Augustine did not dissolve a relative connexion between salvation and the created order. Such a demonstration requires a cautious acceptance of the *analogia entis* (which could have been more fully analysed, if creation allows us knowledge of redemption), in complementarity to Christ's Cross. For Green, teleology will allow the two to sit together: both represent an eschatological movement. Green does provide a cautious criticism of Gunton's position (but does not disparage or denigrate), and offers the sort of systematic analysis, building to a conclusion, that Gunton would—and did—rigorously train his students

in. Can Augustine be re-read by Reformed and Evangelicals who soak up Barth's criticism (and Gunton's – in the wake of Barth) without really thinking through the issues? Bradley Green has done a good service in his work. There has been a significant revival in Trinitarian thinking in recent decades that has marginalized Augustine: Bradley Green's work does much to redress the errors postulated by Gunton in such a reading of Augustine, and allows Augustine to join the ranks of orthodox and traditional theologians who rightly challenge modernity. The essence for Green is on the being and ontology of God—and therefore in an analysis of *de Trinitate* (and its misuse). Green comments: "There is little doubt that Augustine does emphasise the oneness of God . . . the inseparable equality of one substance present a divine unity; and therefore there are not three gods but one God." (pp.165-66.) Green demonstrates by delving deeper into Augustine's work and the later chapters of *de Trinitate* how he defends the trinity of God and the divinity of Jesus, without harming the unity of a doctrine of creation with a doctrine of redemption: "Augustine need not be a foe of Gunton. Indeed, key Augustinian insights seem quite friendly to Gunton's theological project, and Gunton seems himself to be an Augustinian at key points in his own thinking, even if this indebtedness is not completely recognized." (p. 205) Bradley Green's work is essentially about the Trinity and how a theologian acknowledges, presents, and frames a systematic theology in the context of the trinity of God.

So what do we make of Gunton's work? What is his legacy? When he arrived at King's as a young teacher the department exuded a pseudo-Unitarianism derived essentially from John Hick's work. The new regime—post-Gunton (thirty years on)—at King's, though different from Gunton and his followers, is nonetheless Trinitarian. Gunton was a lifelong admirer of Barth, but never ceased to be prepared to criticize the great Swiss master, though John Webster in his essay for Harvey's volume does expose the flaws and inconsistencies in Gunton's appropriation and interpretation of Barth. More and more, as time flows by, Gunton's

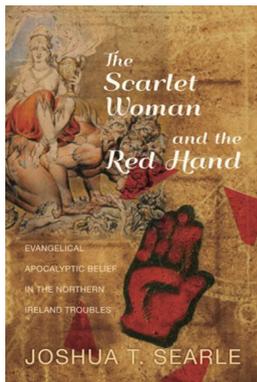
important work in reasserting a doctrine of the Trinity will characterize the man, along with his work on the doctrine of creation (crucially considering the assertiveness of the New Atheists in a Dawkinsian interpretation of Darwin's agenda which is in effect an atheistic doctrine of creation which is then extrapolated into a *Weltanschauung*). Gunton is now classified—for better or for worse—as a Postliberal. Would he have liked such a classification? Did he, like Barth, eschew such classifications and the inevitable obsession with self-identity which has bedevilled Postmodernism? Gunton was a non-Conformist (minister, and as a theologian) and can rightly be credited as having restored British theology to an orthodox creedal ground, though the extent to which such a restoration will last is another matter, particularly given the endemic and suffocating liberalism in the Church of England. These three works are an excellent start to the inevitable reflection on Gunton's work which will, in the fullness of time, see his work placed amongst the more important twentieth century orthodox, creedal, theologians.



# TER

## Review Article Apocalyptic Belief and Evangelical Interpretations of the Northern Irish Troubles: is Ulster fixated on the End-Times

Stephen Kneale



KEYWORDS:

| Apocalyptic | Eschatology | The Troubles |  
| Northern Irish Politics | Prophecy | Moral Conservatism |

J.T. Searle, *The Scarlet Woman and the Red Hand: Evangelical Apocalyptic Belief in the Northern Irish Troubles* (Eugene, OR, Wipf & Stock, Pickwick Publications 2014), pp. xxi and 278.

Although this book is written in a turgid style, the work is likely to interest a broader group than those focused solely on the history and politics of Northern Ireland. Searle interacts with millennial studies, hermeneutics, literary and critical theory as well as the historiography of the Troubles. Although the book has great inter-disciplinary reach, the Troubles – specifically Evangelical interpretations of this period – act as the primary focus.

The Troubles are that period of Northern Irish history, generally considered to cover 1966-1998, during which the conflict between the Protestant and Catholic communities were at their most intense. The Northern Irish conflict has been variously interpreted as ethno-national, political and religious due to the strong political, ethnic and sectarian elements present. The Troubles saw heightened tension between the Protestant and Catholic communities of Northern Ireland, Unionist and Nationalist political parties (who, almost entirely, line up with the Protestant and Catholic communities respectively) and an increase in Loyalist Protestant and Republican Catholic paramilitary activities. The Troubles are largely considered to have ended with the signing of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA).

From the outset, the author highlights his ‘guiding presuppositions.’ Centrally, he argues that human existence is inherently oriented toward eschatology with “an underlying will to hope.”<sup>1</sup> In the Christian tradition, he avers, this will to hope sees its fulfilment primarily in apocalyptic-eschatological texts such as Revelation and Daniel as well as other prophetic books. Secondly, he presupposes the importance of interpretation. He comments “the way the Bible is interpreted by particular communities or individuals can determine how one relates to every issue of ethical concern.”<sup>2</sup> It often seems these two underlying presumptions lead Searle to over-focus on apocalyptic-eschatological language at the expense of more ordinary explanations of Evangelical interpretations of

1. Searle, J.T., *The Scarlett Woman and the Red Hand*, (2014), p. 5.

2. *Ibid*, p. 6.

the Troubles. For example, the author cites a Fundamentalist periodical – which categorises those who dismiss biblical prophecy outside Evangelicalism – in evidence that Northern Irish Evangelicals see the world in apocalyptic-eschatological terms.<sup>3</sup> Yet, this Fundamentalist periodical is simply defining who is ‘in’ or ‘out’ of the Evangelical camp (whether we agree or not). Indeed, to support his view, Searle infers that this Fundamentalist periodical’s emphasis on prophecy specifically relates to apocalyptic-eschatological literature without explaining that not all prophecy is apocalyptic or eschatological. Here, as in a number of places, the author forces his own thesis where it may not necessarily fit.

Searle rightly notes that the differences between Evangelicals and Fundamentalists have been overstated in the Northern Irish context.<sup>4</sup> However, his definition of terms causes significant problems for readers. For instance, he fails to adequately define Protestantism and differentiate it from Evangelicalism. He states “Protestantism was not merely a radical political ideology but also a basic theological conviction,”<sup>5</sup> yet he wrongly ties it to Reformed theology. While the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) and Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster (FPCU) would fit this definition, it is a stretch for other denominations. Methodists and Anglicans (the second and third largest Evangelical denominations), along with Pentecostal, Charismatic and Brethren churches do not necessarily subscribe, or owe their heritage, to “the theology of John Calvin, or more accurately... John Knox and Christopher Goodman.”<sup>6</sup>

In addition, Searle’s categorisation of Protestant identity as more than political, and primarily theological, is certainly true for Evangelicalism but cannot be pressed to Protestantism. Claire Mitchell argues “cultural religion is a socially real process... Sometimes religious acts and symbols do just flag identity.”<sup>7</sup> Bruce (*contra* Searle) is the strongest proponent

3. *Ibid*, p. 9.

4. As per Ganiel, G., *Evangelicalism and Conflict in Northern Ireland*, (2008).

5. Searle (2014), *Op Cit.*, p. 25.

6. *Ibid*.

7. Mitchell, C., *Religion, Identity and Politics in Northern Ireland: Boundaries of*

of the cultural religion argument and makes a case for such a thing as “secular Protestants.”<sup>8</sup> Secular, or cultural, Protestants are those who identify as Protestant, associate themselves with the language and symbols of Protestantism without necessarily having any personal religiosity or involvement with their self-identified religious tradition. Cultural Protestantism is an outworking in the Northern Irish context of the cultural religion phenomenon described by Mitchell and Bruce. Cultural Protestantism accounts for the existence of almost universally Atheistic Protestant Loyalist paramilitary men as well as the many people who identify as Protestant whilst simultaneously being non-religious. Searle’s definition fails to account for cultural religion and misses how, and why, Protestants draw upon the language and symbolism of Evangelicalism. Cultural Protestant identity did not develop, as Searle supposes, from Calvinistic doctrine but the ability of Evangelicalism to reduce diverse traditions and practices within Protestantism down to one “simple, individualistic creed that stressed the primacy of personal salvation.”<sup>9</sup> As such, Evangelicalism can be seen primarily as a theological conviction whilst Protestantism should be viewed as an identity attached to the language and symbolism of Evangelicalism without necessarily including “any participation or a sense of personal involvement *per se*.”<sup>10</sup> Given his definition, when Wallis, Bruce and Taylor claim “the aspirations of Protestants were [largely] restricted to the maintenance of their position and cultural autonomy within Ulster,”<sup>11</sup> Searle insists this was not the case for those Protestants “whose aspirations were directed toward the ‘eternal glory’ (2 Tim 2:10).”<sup>12</sup> Yet, Searle’s objection surely only extends

*Belonging and Belief*, (2006), p. 6.

8. See Bruce, S., *God Save Ulster! The Religion and Politics of Paisleyism*, (1986), p. 263.

9. Jackson, A., *Ireland: 1798-1998*, (2005), p. 67.

10. Demerath, N.J. III, *Crossing the Gods: World Religions and Worldly Politics*, (New Brunswick, 2001), p. 59.

11. Wallis, R., Bruce, S. And Taylor, D., ‘Ethnicity and Evangelicalism: Ian Paisley and Protestant Politics in Ulster’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29:2, (Apr., 1987), p. 301.

12. Searle (2014), *Op Cit.*, p. 137.

to Evangelicalism and does not deny Wallis, Bruce and Taylor's, likely correct, assertion in respect to Protestantism at large. A better definition of Protestantism, and differentiation from Evangelicalism, would have helped.

Searle's chapter on texts, contexts and culture relies heavily on the literary theory of deconstructionism associated with Derrida. Searle argues:

Historians and biblical scholars have been accustomed to establishing cause and effect relationships between their texts and contexts, sometimes forgetting that a context, in common with a text, can be deconstructed: that is, it can be liberated to yield multiple, possibly infinite meanings based on the experience and aspirations of the interpreter.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, Northern Irish Evangelicalism — despite using the same biblical apocalyptic-eschatological texts that may lead to “multiple, possibly infinite meanings” — has only alighted on three major eschatological interpretations: Premillennialism, Postmillennialism and Amillennialism (of which, only Premillennialism and Amillennialism pertain for the majority of Evangelicals in the region).<sup>14</sup> This deconstructionist position becomes less tenable when one recognises, outside the Northern Irish context, these same few eschatological positions persist. Searle comments “The Evangelical appeal to a single, definitive text thus seems to be at variance to the poststructuralist critique of the notion of a single text or context that provides an omnipotent hermeneutical perspective.”<sup>15</sup> Though it is certainly true that Evangelicals would consider the Bible to be their final authority in matters of faith and practice, just as these three Evangelical eschatological positions speak against “infinite meanings” so too they speak against a belief that scripture can provide “an omnipotent

13. Searle (2014), *Op Cit.*, p. 57.

14. One could make an argument for four categories which split Premillennialism into pre-tribulation dispensational and historic. Nevertheless, Premillennialism and Amillennialism are by far and away the most prevalent views amongst Evangelicals in Northern Ireland.

15. Searle (2014), *Op Cit.*, p. 65.

hermeneutical perspective.” Indeed, many Evangelicals within Northern Ireland – even of a Fundamentalist disposition – are prepared to relegate eschatological views to the realm of secondary issues or legitimate difference.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, Searle argues “Hermeneutical issues pertain not merely to the interpretation of the biblical texts but also to their selection.”<sup>17</sup> He states that some apocalyptic-eschatological passages (most notably Revelation) resonated among Evangelicals, especially Fundamentalists. As in a number of other instances, Searle cites Alan Campbell in support of his view. Yet, as both Steve Bruce<sup>18</sup> and Ian Wood<sup>19</sup> allude, Campbell is far from representative of Evangelicalism or Fundamentalism. In particular, Searle cites Campbell’s British Israelism without noting this doctrinal position is rejected by the overwhelming majority of Evangelicals.<sup>20</sup> In fact, British Israelism only held sway amongst some paramilitary men and those sympathetic to their activities.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Searle argues that the prophecy of Zechariah was pertinent for many Evangelicals.<sup>22</sup> Yet, once again, he cites only Alan Campbell in support and gives no substantive evidence that such views were prevalent within Evangelicalism. Further, Searle quotes Ian Boxall to support his view that apocalyptic-eschatological texts were given undue preference by Evangelicals in their interpretation of the Troubles.<sup>23</sup> However, Boxall’s comments are not specific to Northern Ireland or Evangelicalism but, as Searle himself notes, pertain to Christians in general. If anything, Boxall underlines the notion that Northern Irish Evangelicals are no more committed to apocalyptic-eschatological texts than Christians elsewhere.

16. For example, see Bruce, S., *Paisley: Religion and Politics in Northern Ireland*, (2007), p. 48.

17. Searle (2014), *Op Cit.*, p. 66.

18. Bruce (2007), *Op Cit.*, p. 241.

19. Wood, I.S., *Crimes of Loyalty: A History of the UDA*, (2006), p. 208.

20. Bruce (2007), *Op Cit.*, p. 242.

21. Mitchell (2006), *Op Cit.*, p. 124.

22. Searle (2014), *Op Cit.*, p. 78.

23. As quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 69.

Searle's central thesis is that:

Evangelicals used an apocalyptic-eschatological contextual paradigm not only to interpret other (apocalyptic and non-apocalyptic) biblical texts but also other non-verbal "texts" such as the decisive events in the political, social and cultural history of the Troubles. Thus when speaking of a "text" we must not confine ourselves to the analysis of literary or biblical texts.<sup>24</sup>

Yet, as Bruce points out, "a large proportion even of conservative Protestants have no firm views" about eschatology and the end times.<sup>25</sup> As such, it is difficult to maintain that the majority of Northern Irish Evangelicals "used an apocalyptic-eschatological contextual paradigm" to interpret the Troubles. Although Searle argues "many Northern Ireland Evangelicals considered the Pope to be the Antichrist,"<sup>26</sup> such views were not uniform even within the FPCU (the primary denomination pressing this view of the Papacy), let alone throughout Evangelicalism.<sup>27</sup> Searle's desire to make much of such apocalyptic-eschatological views undoubtedly explains his overreliance on Ian Paisley and Alan Campbell throughout the work. Claire Mitchell is much more tempered when she asserts "*some* Protestants read the political situation through the lens of Revelation"<sup>28</sup> whilst making clear that this is not simply theological conviction but both theology and politics helping shape one another. Most notably, "in some cases, politics reinforces theology rather than simply the other way round."<sup>29</sup>

Instead of seeing Evangelical interpretations of the Troubles in apocalyptic-eschatological terms, it is far better to understand them in relation to Protestant identity and moral conservatism. Even Ian Paisley's political responses to the GFA – the culmination of the Peace

24. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

25. Bruce (2007), *Op Cit.*, p. 48.

26. Searle (2014), *Op Cit.*, p. 120.

27. Note Stanley Barnes' quote in Bruce (2007), *Op Cit.*, p. 47.

28. Mitchell (2006), *Op Cit.*, p. 126 (emphasis added)

29. *Ibid.*, p. 127

Process – were not made with reference to eschatology but morality. For example, responses to the GFA have often been presented in moral terms, “issues such as the perceived immorality of early prisoner releases and governmental power-sharing with ‘unrepentant terrorists’ have been at the forefront of unionist problems with the agreement.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, Mitchell and Tilley note moral conservatism is the best indicator of voter affiliation and political identity.<sup>31</sup> Though apocalyptic-eschatological concerns may appear to have a similar affect, when the relative moral conservatism of Premillennialists and Amillennialists is taken into account, we see these eschatological views are best understood as an outworking of the moral conservative paradigm.<sup>32</sup>

Even when Searle quotes Evangelicals in support of his apocalyptic-eschatological theory, one cannot fail to detect the obvious moral terms employed. For example, he cites a PCI statement in the wake of Bloody Sunday which says “this orgy of lawlessness is... the natural outcome of deep-rooted tendencies in our thinking which have affected alike our religion and our law. It is a breakdown in the moral character of our people.”<sup>33</sup> Searle claims, presumably on the strength of the word “lawlessness” alone, the PCI statement shows that Evangelicals outside Ian Paisley’s narrow circle saw the crisis as a contemporary fulfilment of apocalyptic-eschatological biblical writings.<sup>34</sup> Such examples do not reinforce Searle’s thesis but underscore the moral terms in which the conflict has long been couched. Likewise, Searle enlists PCI statements regarding the World Council of Churches (WCC) in support of the view, pressed at one time by Ian Paisley, the WCC represented an eschatological grouping redolent of Revelation imagery linked to the

30. Mitchell, C. and Tilley, J., ‘The Moral Minority: Evangelical Protestants in Northern Ireland and their Voting Behaviour’, *Political Studies*, 52:4, (2004), p. 598.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 594.

32. See Kneale, S., *For God and Ulster: The Politicisation of Evangelicals in Northern Ireland, 1966-Present-day*, (unpublished master’s thesis, Kings Evangelical Divinity School accredited by University of Wales, Lampeter, 2010), pp. 45-52.

33. As quoted in Searle (2014), *Op Cit.*, p. 83.

34. *Ibid.*

Papacy.<sup>35</sup> However, these PCI statements carry no such connotation or inference. Moreover, the history of Presbyterianism is characterised by splits over increasing liberalism. The citations put forward by Searle sit better on a liberal-conservative spectrum than any sort of eschatological framework. It seems clear from the quoted PCI statements,<sup>36</sup> those who wished to remain in the WCC did so based upon more liberal concerns whereas those seeking separation argued from a conservative standpoint.<sup>37</sup> In neither case is it clear apocalyptic-eschatological considerations were paramount.

Despite his overemphasis on apocalyptic-eschatological language, Searle notes “much of the theological reflection on apocalyptic eschatology by Northern Ireland Evangelicals was not so much a response to specific events as it was a pre-determined framework through which these events were interpreted.”<sup>38</sup> Though I disagree this apocalyptic-eschatological framework was the primary paradigm for Evangelical interpretations of the Troubles, Searle is correct in noting this framework pre-dated the Troubles and did not result from the crisis itself. Nevertheless, he notes several years after the GFA and Loyalist-Republican ceasefires that “Evangelicals still used the language of crisis, *which if not explicitly apocalyptic or eschatological*, nevertheless evoked a sense of urgency which resonated with the notion of apocalyptic discontinuity, crisis and confusion.”<sup>39</sup> There is no doubt, at times, the language of apocalyptic-eschatology was brought to boot in Evangelical discussion of the Troubles. Yet, as the above quote shows, such apocalyptic-eschatological language was far less prevalent following the GFA. At best, this leads us

35. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

36. Incidentally, Searle offers no direct citation or quote of any PCI member giving reasons to leave the WCC based upon apocalyptic-eschatological grounds but does offer several linked to liberal or conservative theological standpoints.

37. That is not to say those who wished to remain in the WCC can necessarily be considered liberal. But it is to say, on a liberal-conservative spectrum, they would be more liberal than those seeking to separate. Equally, it is interesting to note how several of the statements were made in moral terms.

38. Searle (2014), *Op Cit.*, p. 85.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 87 (emphasis added).

to conclude – for at least the last c. 15 years – apocalyptic-eschatological interpretations have not been central for Evangelical understandings of the Troubles. More likely still, the GFA hasn't turned out to be the threat to the Union – fundamental to Protestant identity – previously feared. As such, employing apocalyptic rhetoric would seem exaggerated at best and redundant at worst suggesting this language is, and always was, rhetorical (rather than interpretative) and not indicative – as Searle wants to argue – of Northern Irish obsessions with the end times.

Searle is on much safer ground when he argues that the group Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland (ECONI)<sup>40</sup> rooted their language of reconciliation in apocalyptic-eschatological texts. Though this is true, two points must be made. Firstly, we cannot escape the conservative moral paradigm at play; eschatological views are often borne out of conservative moral attitudes rather than the other way around.<sup>41</sup> That ECONI use apocalyptic-eschatological language does not necessarily imply this is their primary framework for interpreting the Troubles. Instead, it is preferable to see eschatological language acting as a rhetorical device from which their desires for reconciliation, borne out of their place on the moral conservative-liberal spectrum, are given expression.<sup>42</sup> Just as apocalyptic language lent itself to the doomsday vision pressed by Ian Paisley when the Union appeared in danger, so too eschatological language lent itself to the reconciliatory vision of ECONI toward sectarian divisions. These apocalyptic-eschatological texts did not determine the interpretation; rather they were a framework within which pre-existing morally determined views could be expressed. Secondly, we cannot overlook the relatively small influence ECONI had on Evangelicalism in the region.<sup>43</sup> If Searle's overemphasis on Paisley

40. This group is now known as the Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland (CCCI).

41. See earlier comments from Mitchell (2006).

42. That is to say, their less morally conservative attitudes (or, more morally liberal attitudes) when compared with other branches of Evangelicalism led to their use of language and rhetoric this way.

43. See Mitchel, P., *Evangelicalism and National Identity in Ulster, 1921-1998*, (Oxford,

and Campbell diminish his argument that apocalyptic-eschatological texts were a key interpretative framework for wider Evangelicalism (and I would argue it does), his similar use of ECONI at the other end of the spectrum is worse still. Though Alan Campbell is far from representative, Ian Paisley was obviously influential within FPCU circles. Yet, we cannot ignore the relatively small number of FPCU adherents when compared with other Evangelical denominations. Outside of the FPCU, Paisley's influence within Evangelicalism is limited. If Ian Paisley cannot be considered representative of wider Evangelicalism, much less can ECONI whose influence was smaller still.

In short, Searle's central argument is far from proven by the end of his work. His dedication to the deconstructionism of Derrida, and his view that text is an active "change-agent" of contextual reality, forces his thesis onto Northern Irish Evangelical interpretations of the Troubles. In reality, apocalyptic-eschatological text provided the language by which moral conservatism was given expression. Though more conservative and more liberal, Paisleyite and ECONI-esque, Evangelicals all attached themselves at times to apocalyptic-eschatological language, such was always an expression of their relative moral conservatism. This, coupled with views of Protestant identity, was the key interpretative framework by which the Troubles were assessed by Evangelicals.

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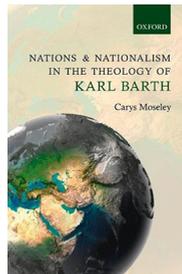
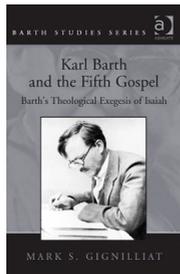
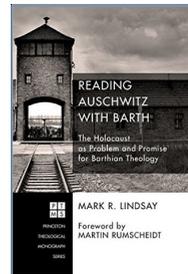
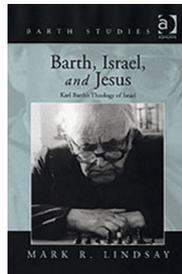
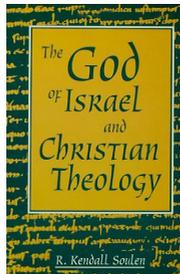
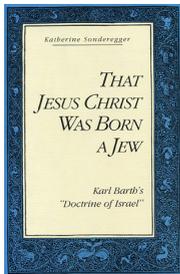
# TER

Review Article

Karl Barth:

## Supersessionism and Israel, Yeshua and God's Election – a Dialectical Balance?

P.H. Brazier



KEYWORDS:

Yeshua–Jesus–Messiah	The Universal Christ	
Salvation–Redemption	Supersessionism–Election	The Bible
Karl Barth	Israel–*Israelitisch*	Nations–Nationalism
Dialectic–Antinomy		

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this review essay is to examine the position of the Swiss Reformed-Evangelical theologian Karl Barth (1886–1968) on Israel and the Jews, and to consider the development of scholarship on Barth's position over the last quarter of a century, focusing on recent studies. Initially, we will establish exactly what Barth's doctrine on Israel (ancient and modern, ideal and

realized) and the Old Testament was, and how he regarded – teleologically – the ancient Hebrews and Jews.

Born in the second half of the nineteenth century, into a Europe dominated by agnostic liberalism and global-empire building, Karl Barth achieved the near impossible, by turning the European (and to a degree American) theological *status quo* away from Friedrich Schleiermacher and G.W.F. Hegel and back to Christ. When asked by the eminent logician and mathematician Heinrich Scholz (originally trained in theology) what was the basis on which theology operated as an intellectual discipline in the university, Barth is reported to have answered, assertively, ‘the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.’ With Barth there was no beating about the bush, no obfuscatory embarrassed apologetic squirming, no hedging around religious emotionalism, no putting any notion of a ‘god’ into a box to be analysed from the safe, secure position of the Enlightenment-endorsed human intellect. Nor did he seek refuge from the question by invoking an ill-defined semi-divine substance, invisible, but as comforting as a goddess of human desires, nor yet in paradox and mysticism. No, to Barth the resurrection was the only basis on which you could do theology as a distinctive *Wissenschaft*: all was related to this single event which had cosmic implications. Herein lies the intellectual responsibility that underpinned Barth’s massive *Church Dogmatics* (*Kirchliche Dogmatik*, circa 6 million words!),<sup>1</sup> issuing from the *analogia fidei*. Yeshua, the Messiah, the Christ, is risen! He is risen indeed.

Karl Barth’s enterprise dominated the theology of the twentieth century, and in particular the European religio-cultural landscape leading up to Vatican II: Pope Pius XII commented in 1951, that Barth was the greatest theologian since Aquinas;<sup>2</sup> no mean compliment. (Judging by

1 Karl Barth, *The Church Dogmatics* (14 Vols. translated and edited G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936–77). References hereafter are given as *CD*, followed by the volume, section number (§) and page reference from *The Church Dogmatics* (UK, 1st edition, hardback, not the new translation, paperback 31 volume, edition).

2 Quoted in Karl Barth *Fragments Grave and Gay* (The Fontana Library of Theology and Philosophy), London: Collins, 1971, p. i. For a theological biography of Barth see:

Barth's severe criticism of philosophy, and scepticism of the natural theological enterprise, he would have preferred to have been aligned with Anselm, or any number of Patristic philosophers and theologians, and less with the pseudo-Aristotle!). What was of greatest importance in Barth's work? Arguably, his bringing the doctrine of the Trinity back into the frame as the ground of all theological endeavour.<sup>3</sup> The triune God is the starting point; revelation (*a posteriori* – after the Christ event), not speculation, for Barth, is the foundation of theology, not questions about this or that 'god', or whether God might exist, or be allowed to exist. The Immanent Trinity from whom issues the action we perceive as the Economic Trinity was the ground of his theological enterprise; the Economic Trinity is then known through the Word of God (John 1, etc.) the Alpha and Omega, Yeshua the Jew, the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, Incarnated, Crucified, Resurrected and Ascended, and awaiting us in the Eschaton. This is the reality of all legitimate intellectual endeavour, the reality of all God-talk, and the nature and teleology of humanity itself. Thus Barth was out of step with most of what the Enlightenment had established as an acceptable basis for theology. So, if Barth almost single-handedly (not forgetting his colleague and friend in ministry and theology, Eduard Thurneysen) brought the triune God back to centre stage, and since it is moving towards half-a-century since his death, a central question is, whither is Trinitarian theology to go after Barth? But, more pertinently, how did Barth overcome the inherent anti-Semitism of European religion generally, the marginalization of Yeshua the Jew

Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barths Lebenslauf: nach seinem Briefen und autobiographischen Texten* (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1975); ET: Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1976). For an introduction to Barth's theology see: John Webster, *Barth* (series, *Outstanding Christian Thinkers*; London: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2000). Pope Pius XII (1876-1958; pontiff 1939-1958).

3 Colin E. Gunton, the late professor of Systematic Theology at King's College London, a noted Barthian scholar, had to fight for acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity. An anecdote that illustrates the liberal malaise that had engulfed predominantly Anglican theology from the 1960s is that early in his career one of Gunton's older colleagues at King's, commented to him that believing in the Trinity was like believing in pixies!

specifically? In answering this question we can consider three recent books, studies of Barth's theological enterprise: Mark R. Lindsay's *Barth, Israel and Jesus*, Mark S. Gignilliat's, *Karl Barth and the Fifth Gospel: Barth's Theological Exegesis of Isaiah*, and Carys Moseley, *Nations and Nationalism in the Theology of Karl Barth*; in setting the scene, we can examine two original studies from over twenty years ago, which laid the ground rules for studying Barth and Israel: Katherine Sonderegger, *That Jesus was Born a Jew: Karl Barth's Doctrine of Israel*, and R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*.

But first, what was Barth's position on these issues: the eternal Israel, the ancient Hebrews, the modern Jews, their unique status as God's chosen people, and on the post-war, essentially secular, nation state of Israel?

#### KARL BARTH AND ISRAELITISCH

Barth acknowledged the indisputable election of the ancient Hebrews and the Jews as the chosen people of God, yet also the undeniable failure of the Jewish people now to accept and acknowledge the Christ, their Messiah: born Yeshua the Jew, crucified and resurrected, for all of humanity's potential salvation. Barth develops a kind of dynamic theology whereby the history of the ancient Hebrews, the progress of salvation history, the Christ event, are all time-bound, particular, and yet also universal, where the first axiom – of crucial and fundamental importance – is God speaking to Israel. For Barth, as Colin Gunton has identified, 'the first commandment makes it a different sort of science to all others. You might say history is similar but the point Barth is making is the distinctiveness of theology.'<sup>4</sup> Barth himself on this question commented, 'The fact that God does not permit Israel, the righteous, or the Church to perish means that he cannot allow them to go their way un-accused, un-condemned, un-

4 Colin E. Gunton, *The Barth Lectures* (London & New York: Continuum, 2007), p.50.

punished; so grace includes a kind of holy judgement.<sup>5</sup> Israel's calling is eternal: 'This is the point about Israel; Israel is called to be God's people.'<sup>6</sup> Barth relies heavily on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in particular the fact that Israel has been chosen and cannot be rejected, unchosen, or de-selected, but also that the Gentiles have been chosen temporarily in order to invite Israel to come, to reconsider, and turn to the Messiah, Yeshua, one of them:<sup>7</sup> this is the primary mission of the Church: to the Jew first, then the Gentile! (Romans 1:16.) Israel has set the terms by not so much rejecting the Christ but by not accepting, just yet. This is *resistance*—for a time. This is no rejection of Israel, wrote Barth, but a temporary setback. Israel's election is particular but of universal intent: Abraham is called that *all nations* might be blessed, thus Israel is called on behalf of *all nations*.<sup>8</sup> All have committed disobedience, and all may know God's mercy (Rom. 11:30–32.) This position is, for Barth, universal in intent and is grounded in Israel's election as God's chosen and beloved. Barth commented:

Israel is the people of the Jews who resists its election – it doesn't reject – it resists it, the Church is the gathering of Jews and Gentiles called on the ground of its election.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the Gentiles, for Barth, accept this election, but Israel still resists (*widerstehen, sich widersetzen*): the two sides of this are brought out by him. But where does this leave Israel? Israel, for Barth, is still Israel. Even in its refusal it is still the people of Yeshua, Jesus the Messiah, the anointed one, the resurrected universal Christ (Χριστός): <the electing God and the elected community embrace even this Israel that steps into the void.<sup>10</sup> Israel's resistance is therefore not the final word.

Therefore, for Barth, even Israel is included in this election; everybody

5 Barth, *CD II/1*, §30, p. 357.

6 Gunton, *Barth Lectures*, p.111, on Barth, *CD II/2*.

7 Barth, *CD II/1*, §30, p. 148 ff.

8 Barth, *CD II/1*, on Romans 11:30–32

9 Barth, *CD II/2*, §34, p. 236.

10 Barth, *CD II/2*, §34, p. 303.

is amongst the elect – *in Christ*.<sup>11</sup> He commented, 'Both Jews and Gentiles are shut up by God in the same prison – then the prison opens and again they are all together. Because God has determined the Gentiles for the mercy in which they now participate and the Jews for future participation and the same mercies.'<sup>12</sup> So for Barth there are two communities (Israel and the Gentiles) but they are one community in the sense that they are both in different ways called and elected.<sup>13</sup>

Barth never ceased to emphasize the fact – lost in much European theology from the time of the so-called Enlightenment – of Jesus's Jewishness. Yeshua the Messiah is Jewish flesh; we are saved by Jewish blood; atonement is grounded in the shedding of blood: holy Jewish blood. (And this assertion was before the Second World War and the holocaust, and the guilt-trip many Europeans experienced following the discovery of Hitler's death camps). If we ignore or marginalize *His* Jewishness, then,

The Church's whole doctrine of the Incarnation and the Atonement becomes abstract and valueless and meaningless to the extent that this comes to be regarded as something accidental and incidental ... [Jewishness] prevents this rounding of the picture of Jesus into a kind of ideal picture of human existence.<sup>14</sup>

For many in a late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century post-modern generation, this very Jewishness thwarts the attempts by Enlightenment-led theologians and philosophers – for example, Schleiermacher and Hegel, or today's self-confessed liberals, also multi-faith religionists – to remove Jesus, the historic Yeshua, from his Jewish roots.<sup>15</sup> Jesus's Jewishness is a stumbling-block to those who would seek to reinvent Him into an archetype of ideal human – for example the idealized super-religious

11 There is a long discussion of the biblical evidence for this: Barth, *CD* II/2, §34, p. 305 ff. However, it may be argued that Barth falls short in acknowledging the wilfulness of humanity in resisting this election and therefore its salvation.

12 Barth, *CD* II/2, §34, p. 305; Romans 11.

13 Gunton, *Barth Lectures*, pp. 118-119)

14 Barth, *CD* IV/1, §59.1, pp. 166 and 167.

15 Gunton, *Barth Lectures*, p. 165.

shaman Schleiermacher tried to make Jesus into: Christian pseudo-divinity without Jewish flesh. This heresy is epitomized by Germanic art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, such idiomatic imagery reached its height in German civic religious art where Jesus was often reduced to a mere human presented with neo-Classical pagan imagery derived from Greek and Roman culture. An example of this was Max Klinger's *Christ on Mount Olympus* (1897): Jesus as a wise Germanic religious leader, a blond-haired, pale-skinned 'Aryan', a fair-haired-blue-eyed young man conversing with young Greek men and women (an early version of Hitler's vision of the Darwinian triumph of the ideal human, a German, representative of an obedient German Christian and a German Christianity: do we see here god-like Germanic flesh in the place of incarnated Jewish flesh?). (See figure 1.) Barth's agenda is to work explicitly against this heterodox humanism that had come to represent European theology. Colin Gunton, writing on Barth's emphasis on the central importance of Yeshua's Jewishness and the danger of reducing Jesus to an idealized human, asserted:

You must not produce some ideal of humanity which is independent of the *israelitisch* equivalent of the New Testament. Therefore, of course, you rule out all forms of Docetism – the doctrine that Jesus only appeared to be human – and you do that by keeping the Old Testament in the picture.<sup>16</sup>

Barth commented that by retaining the Old Testament, the adherents of the New Covenant are protected against all of the multiple forms of Docetism that have bedevilled the Church throughout its history.<sup>17</sup> It is of fundamental importance, and this is clear from Barth's early works (the two commentaries, for example, on the Epistle to the Romans, 1919 and 1921) that we are talking about a Jewish Messiah, sent for the lost sheep of Israel. Yes, He is representative of universal humanity, but this is a Jewish Messiah who represents God's purposes for the world, purposes

16 Gunton, *Barth Lectures*, p. 165 (referring to CD IV/1, §59.1, pp. 160 f.)

17 Barth, CD IV/1, §59.1, p. 168.



Figure 1. Max Klinger, *Christ on Mount Olympus* (1897).  
Fresco on plaster. Christ as a blond-haired pale-skinned Aryan,  
a fair-haired-blue-eyed young man

that teleologically will be realized through what He did: first through Israel, then through the resurrected Christ, and finally through his present people, the Church (both Jew and Gentile).

In 1934 Barth was largely responsible for the writing of the *Barmer Erklärung* (*The Barmen Declaration*), which explicitly rejected the National Socialist Party, repudiated Hitler's messianic pretensions, and rejected the Third Reich. It also lamented the influence of Nazism on Germanic Christianity. The declaration argued for the allegiance of the Church to Jesus Christ – God incarnate – and therefore all who claimed to be Christian should resist and repel false 'gods' and false lords, such as the Führer (Barth is reputed to have personally mailed a copy of the Barmen Declaration to Hitler). Within months, Barth was dismissed from his post as professor at the University of Bonn, and was exiled from Germany (returning to his native Switzerland), for refusing to take an oath of loyalty to Adolf Hitler. Most academics whether they agreed with National Socialism or not had capitulated; Barth could easily have done so, so as to maintain his exalted position, his chair at the University of Bonn, but he did not: history judges the others, Barth stands clear of the compromise. A few years earlier Hermann Otto Hoyer had painted a picture of Hitler in full rhetorical preaching mode entitled, 'Am Anfang war das Wort' ('In the Beginning was the Word'): according to Hoyer's twisted version of John's Gospel, the Word did not descend into Yeshua the Jew, but into the Aryan-European pagan supremo-'god'-and-führer, Adolf Hitler. (See figure 2.)

### WHY BARTH AND WHY YESHUA THE ISRAELITE?

Those who criticize Barth for not reflecting the current politically correct apologetic position devoid of value and meaning towards the Jews and



Figure 2. Hermann Otto Hoyer, *Am Anfang war das Wort* (In The Beginning Was The Word). Oil on Canvas, c. 1930.

towards the state of Israel, would do well to remember that this is the man who in front of thousands in 1946, in Germany, in the ruins of the once magnificent, beautiful and palatial *Kurfürsten schloss* in Bonn, in the land that gave us the Holocaust, stood, and in a lecture, asserted to people who were just recovering from the destruction of Nazi Germany, the absolute ground for our faith in the ancient Hebrews, the Old Testament and the Jews. Let us consider Barth in full flow, pressing home the importance and significance of Israel in relation to Yeshua – Jesus the Messiah. Speaking of the evil that had engulfed Europe over the previous two decades Barth insisted,

... right from its roots it [National Socialism] was anti-Semitic, this movement was realized with a simple demonic clarity, that *the* enemy, to them, was the *Jew*. Yes, the enemy in this matter had to be Israel. Because in this Jewish nation there really lives to this day the extraordinariness of the revelation of God.

Jesus, the Christ, the Saviour, and God's Servant, is the one who sets forth and reveals the mission of the nation of Israel; *He* it is that fulfils the Covenant concluded between God and Abraham. When the Christian Church confesses Jesus Christ as Saviour and the Servant of God for us, for all men, also for the mighty majority of those who have no direct connection with the people of Israel, then it does not confess *Him* fully, because *He* was a Jew (as if this 'Jewishness' in Jesus were a *pudendum*, which we had to ignore!). No! nor can the view be that we believe in Jesus Christ, who was just an Israelite, a Jew, by accident, but who might quite as well have sprung from another nation. No!, we must strictly consider that Jesus Christ, in whom we believe, whom we Christians drawn out of the heathen call our saviour, whom we praise as the consummator of God's work on our behalf: *He was of necessity a Jew*. We cannot be blind to this fact; it belongs to the concrete reality of God's work and God's revelation. For Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of the covenant concluded by God with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and it is the reality of this covenant – not the idea of any or every religious covenant – which is the basis, the meaning and goal of creation, that is, of everything that is real in distinction from God. The problem – if there is one – of Israel is, since the

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problem of Christ is inseparable from it, the problem of existence as such. The man who is ashamed of Israel is ashamed of Jesus Christ and therefore of his own existence.<sup>18</sup> (See figure 3.)

So, the self-revelation of God is in the person of Jesus Christ who was formed from God's chosen people. So if there is – from the perspective of neo-Pagan European religion – a problem with Israel, then this problem is with existence itself: it represents the *krisis* of humanity. For Barth, if you deny Israel, you deny yourself as made in the image of God. Most of the critics of Barth's regard for Israel hold a religiously syncretistic view, which expects Barth to write in an isolated pluralistically self-contained mode oblivious to contradiction and objective truth.

Relative to the enormous body of scholarship on Barth generated over the last half a century, very little has been written on Barth's doctrine of Israel, particularly considering the very heavy Christocentricity of the fourth volume of the Church Dogmatics. It was not until the early 1990s that studies began to emerge.

### *Sonderegger*

Katherine Sonderegger in *That Jesus was Born a Jew: Karl Barth's Doctrine of Israel*,<sup>19</sup> offered a nuanced view of Barth's doctrine, but questioned whether Barth really did give religious independence to Israel, independent of the Christ event. Published nearly a quarter of a century ago her findings now have the colour of a particular post-1960s generation (she, likewise, identifies the particular post-WWII central European position of Barth's generation!), but her research is impeccable. She considers Barth's *Epistle to the Romans*, and the absolute assertion

18 Karl Barth, *Dogmatik im Grundriß* (München: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1947), p. 67. My translation, but with Barth's emphasis.

19 Katherine Sonderegger, *That Jesus was Born a Jew: Karl Barth's Doctrine of Israel*, (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992).

of the missed Messiah; she analyses the *Church Dogmatics* thoroughly to ascertain the philosophical and theological roots of the election of Israel but also Barth's apparent aversion to Jews despite his assertion of them. Sonderegger then considers in detail Barth's doctrine of Israel, and in particular the election of the chosen people and their present standing. This is all weighed against what she terms Jewish-Christian solidarity (the ecumenical efforts of assorted tribes of religious professionals). Reliant upon closer inspection of *Church Dogmatics*, her conclusion and evaluation considered the relationship of Barth's doctrine of Israel as the divine act of justification by Grace. For Sonderegger Barth is a fully dogmatic theologian, with an authoritative doctrine of Israel framed by his understanding of the chosen people. That Barth draws Israel into the 'compass' of Christology, refashioning election and reprobation into the form of the covenanted people, is clear; however, the Jews, Sonderegger asserts (summarizing Barth), pass away to rise with Christ (i.e. Yeshua the Israelite!). This can be seen by some as anti-Semitic, yet Barth set his face against German anti-Semites, particularly when confronted by the Nazis' pogroms, and he stood in solidarity with the Jews. The problem comes in Barth's refusal to countenance the Christian religion and Jesus as yet another parochial world religion that must assert no truths that upset or contradict other religions. Barth scorned liberals, whether so-called or self-confessed, who rejected Jesus's divinity while celebrating Judaism as a quaint ancient religion. Sonderegger notes—

In the *Israellehre* of Karl Barth, in the mastery, power, and elegant description of the one community of God in Christ, Christian theology can look forward and back, taking up into its doctrinal thought the weight, significance, and gracious condescension of its Messiah, Jesus, born a Jew, and straining ahead to grasp the mystery of the two forms of Israel and the Church, each called and created by God, each determined for its own task, and each waiting in its own place for that one day when God will be all in all.<sup>20</sup>

20 Sonderegger, (1992), p. 179.



Figure 3. Karl Barth (1946): “He was of necessity a Jew. We cannot be blind to this fact. *He* belongs to this concrete reality of God’s Word, and *His* revelation ... The man who is ashamed of Israel is ashamed of Jesus Christ and therefore of his own existence.”

## *Soulen*

R. Kendall Soulen presented a chapter/essay on Barth and Israel in *The God of Israel and Christian Theology*: ‘Consummation at the End of Christendom.’<sup>21</sup> Soulen, in a sub-section entitled ‘Barth on Consummation’ presents an accurate and detailed reading of Barth on Israel.<sup>22</sup> Soulen outlines how, for Barth, human history is defined by creation and covenant and the key lies with Abraham, and God’s commitment to redeem through the long centuries of salvation history. However, Soulen accuses Barth of what he terms, Economic Supersessionism. Soulen writes of three forms of supersessionism: Punitive Supersessionism, Economic Supersessionism, and Structural Supersessionism.<sup>23</sup> The use of the term ‘economic’ appears to invoke triune language, and perhaps it is the Immanent Trinity that should be being considered, not solely or by necessity the Economic Trinity.<sup>24</sup> Despite Israel’s apparent rejection of the Messiah two thousand years ago, is not Israel eternally elected, is not Israel’s election part of the eternal counsels of God? Does the election of the Church replace this eternal immanent election? Is this a fair reading of Barth – that all the Jews will eventually accept Christ because the Church has theoretically superseded within the economic working out of salvation in the world? This is perhaps not wholly accurate: for Barth, reading from Scripture, all will be transformed and all will be changed (1 Cor 15:51f.), there will be neither Jew nor Gentile, Christian or Pagan, the boundaries, even the racial divisions will disappear: *with and in the eschaton*. Therefore within the Immanent Trinity Israel is eternally elected, Israel stands eternally.

21 R. Kendall Soulen, ‘4. Consummation at the End of Christendom’, in *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), pp. 81-106.

22 Soulen (1996), ‘Barth on Consumption,’ pp.85-89.

23 For a brief explanation see, Theological Studies website: <http://www.theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/supersessionism/325-three-categories-of-supersessionism>

24 The Economic Trinity is the operation of triune persons of God within the world; the Immanent Trinity is the inter-relationship of the triune God in eternity, within God’s self, so to speak.

Barth rejects Punitive Supersessionism (that Israel is totally rejected as a punishment), however, Barth does accept the apparent paradox of Economic Supersessionism because of the universality of Christ's redemption, but Israel does still abide: watching and waiting, awaiting the coming of the Messiah. It is perhaps important for Barth's critics to note (though Barth would perhaps not have quoted this particular parable) that Yeshua the Jewish Messiah spoke the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matt 25:31-46) to a Jewish audience: what is important is God's judgement and the individual's eternal place *post mortem*. So what importance does elected status hold in a religious context? In this context we must note Barth's oft-asserted comment that all religion is unbelief.<sup>25</sup> As Christians we are enfolded into the covenanted, chosen people of God. History, for Barth, ended with the Christ event: we live in the working-out of salvation, awaiting the last word. Soulen:

For Barth, God's covenant with Israel marks the point at which God's work as Consummator initially engages humankind in concrete, historical form. (p. 86.)

... the covenant so established, Barth insists, is eternal; it cannot be abrogated or set aside. (*CD* IV/1, p. 23). (p. 87.)

... For Barth, therefore, God's fidelity to the consummation of the world can be nothing other than God's fidelity to God's eternal covenant with the people Israel.' (p. 89.)

Argument then ensues over the role and place of Israel after the crucifixion-resurrection. However, it can be stated that perhaps Barth places too great a stress on the individual Jesus Christ, rather than on his context as a Jew and his belonging in a Jewish community, in the covenanted nation. Barth, Soulen notes, argued that Christ does not destroy God's covenant with Israel but fulfils and confirms it. Perhaps Soulen focuses too much

25 See, Barth, *CD*: I/2, §17 'The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion', p. 280; see also, II/1, §25 'The Fulfilment of the Knowledge of God', p.3; II/1, §26 'The Knowability of God', p.63; II/1, §. 27 'The Limits to the Knowledge of God', specifically, pp. 179-256; I.2, §17 '2. Religion as Unbelief', p. 298-325, and IV.1, §57 'The Work of the Reconciler', p. 45.

on the temporal reality – the ‘this world’ – of Israel (p.91) and not on the eternal in his criticism? Soulen’s work, though now nearly twenty years old, firmly established many of the ground rules and structures for examining Barth and Israel. It furthermore raised pertinent questions with universal implications, in particular the real and temporal nature of Jewish flesh and calling and how Israel stands in relation to the Church.

## BARTH, THE STATE OF ISRAEL, AND JESUS

### *Lindsay*

Mark R. Lindsay (Director of Research at MCD University of Divinity, University of Melbourne) in *Barth, Israel and Jesus*, has tackled what in many ways is the most difficult Barthian subject – with considerable political implications (and yes, theology, like the Bible, is political, Barth knew and understood this): Lindsay has traversed the minefield of post-modernity in examining the question of Barth and Israel. What the Barthian scholarly tradition makes of Barth’s relationship to, and his doctrine of, Israel varies according to the current *Zeitgeist*, and for that matter the personal politicized prejudices of academics who often seem bent on point-scoring and advancing their status than in objectively explicating Barth’s position.

So what do we make of Lindsay’s scholarship? First, this is in effect the second volume in Lindsay’s work on Barth and Israel. The first volume<sup>26</sup> was from his doctoral work on Barth’s opposition to Nazi antisemitism and the Holocaust, after which he realized that to complete the job this volume was needed on Barth’s mature work. Lindsay notes how the debate has been focused on Barth’s theological stance towards the Jews

26 Mark R. Lindsay, *Covenanted Solidarity: The Theological Basis of Karl Barth’s Opposition to Nazi Antisemitism and the Holocaust* (Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2001).

during the period of the Third Reich and the Holocaust, but the question of Barth's position towards Israel in the post-war years still needed to be addressed succinctly. Lindsay asks whether Barth's own theologising in the aftermath of the Holocaust take that horrendous event into account in his later writings on Israel and the Jews, therefore he explores potential answers through an analysis of the doctrine of reconciliation.<sup>27</sup> First we have an introduction to Jewish-Christian relations since 1945 (an analysis of obstacles along the way, an enquiry into confessional *mea culpas* – effectively church statements addressing the Holocaust). This leads neatly and logically into material on Barth and the Jewish people (in effect, the historical debate and the context of controversy. These reveal Barth's ambiguity and how scholars have understood him, an understanding that has not always taken into account Barth's personal relationships with Jews). The question of Israel inevitably leads, for Barth, into the question of and value accorded to natural theology. Here Lindsay's analysis and thesis really take off, for this is at the heart of the question – what he terms a case study of the Holocaust as a theological *locus*. Lindsay then moves into Barth's understanding of and relations with the idea of the state of Israel, the recreation of Israel: the state in relation to Barth's doctrine of creation (*De Gubernatione* and the King of Israel); the role of Israel as witness in what is termed the rule of God; and what Lindsay succinctly defines as and explores under the title, political support for Israel as a theological necessity. We now near the heart of the thesis, the point at which Lindsay makes a brave effort to extend the debate beyond the work of Katherine Sonderegger and also her criticism of Barth.<sup>28</sup> Lindsay explores the function of Israel in Barth's doctrine of reconciliation, which posits a Christological election as the presupposition of dialogic possibilities, which neatly leads into the – to adapt, as Lindsay does, a Barthian axiom/soundbite – Jews in the far country, seen in relation to the royal man and the ministry of the reconciled community (but which

27 Barth, *CD IV/1*, 2 and 3.

28 Sonderegger (1992).

community: Christian or Jewish, or Christian-Jewish?). Lindsay opens by asserting that,

We come in this chapter to the crux of the issue with which we have been dealing to this point, the question whether or not Barth's theological understanding of Israel and the Jewish people was affected by his reflections on and experiences of the Holocaust and the re-emergence of Israel as an independent nation-state. More particularly, if his *Israellehre*<sup>29</sup> was affected, how did this understanding manifest itself in arguably the most 'Christian' of all doctrines, the doctrine of reconciliation. (p. 87.)

In the conclusion Lindsay does his best to advance beyond the impasse: does Barth fail to see Israel and the Jews independently of the Christian revelation? (Should he – if we accept the Israelite nature of Jesus, and the truth of the Christ event?) Sonderegger's claim that Barth fails to accord post-biblical Judaism (issuing essentially from the inter-testamental community and from the fall of Jerusalem) religious significance, independent of the Church is, to me, treated ambivalently by Lindsay: he neither denies nor asserts, but walks an academic path:

In truth, however, the dependence is mutual. In Barth's view, Israel does indeed find its essential being in solidarity with the Christian community; but equally, the Christian community is nothing without Israel. Sonderegger is correct to say that for Barth the Synagogue has no independent existence. What she has ignored, however, is that for Barth the Church has no genuine independence as the people of God apart from the Synagogue. (p. 105).

Perhaps Lindsay needs a stronger ecclesiology in this book: either Christ Yeshua the Jew was the incarnate Son of God and the church is His temporal body, which places, relativizes (but does not deny!) Israel in relation to the body of Christ (whether *ecclesia invisibilis* or *ecclesia visibilis*), or *He* was not and we can try to live happily ever after in self-contained inward-looking religio-agnostic communities pretending that

29 *Israellehre*, Barth's teaching about Israel.

all religions are equal in the hope of offending no-one, and ignoring their contradictions. Alternatively, we can acknowledge a degree of almost dialectical complementarity which must stand within time until the *eschaton*. Complementarity because the two sides must stand as complementary theses; postlapsarian humanity will find it impossible to derive sufficient truth and understanding from the observations and information – theologically – of both Israel and the Church. Sufficient, that is, to truly assess the question: we have partial descriptions of the two because we are *in* salvation history, we await the final completion in the *eschaton*; this is why – to coin a Barthian phrase – we are living in *Krisis*. The German word *Krisis* holds to more than the English crisis because – particularly in Barth’s theological usage: God is humanity’s *Krisis*, its urgency, its promise, and its threat; without God’s revelation we can cosily move on at our own pace, losing ourselves in lifestyle consumerism, trying to build the world around us to our satisfaction, happily inventing our own religion. When God takes hold of us we are forced into the urgency of facing the reality into which we have sinned ourselves.<sup>30</sup> This emphasis on *Krisis* is so often an offensive position to post-modern religious relativists, because it fails to acknowledge Israel and the Church as independent and self-contained, autonomous and equally valid (valid, but without truth claims, so that all religions can get along nicely together). Lindsay’s work tries bravely to steer through the minefield, but not without explicit drive Barth would have given it. Nonetheless this is a bold and important study, well researched, scholarly. Sadly it will be ignored by ecumenicists and religionists who try to close their eyes to Barth, who hide from the difficulties of the Israel-Jewish question because of Western liberalism, even post-modern sentimentality,

30 See, Barth, *Der Römerbrief* (Zweite Fassung 1922; Theologischer Verlag Zürich (TVZ): Zürich, 1999), p. 532. This is Barth’s commentary on Romans 14:1 to 15:13 ‘Der Krisis des freien Lebensversuchs’ (‘The *Krisis* of Human Freedom and Detachment’), p.532. See also, Nicolaas Bakker, *Der Krisis in der Offenbarung Karl Barths Hermeneutik, dargestellt an seiner Romerbrief-Auslegung\** (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1974. \*: ‘The Crisis in Revelation - Karl Barth’s hermeneutics embodied/represented in his interpretation of the Epistle to the Romans.’

in the light of two crucial twentieth century events: the horrendous, nihilistic evil of the Holocaust, and the crisis of relations between the state of Israel and its neighbours.

Lindsay has recently continued this work with a monograph examining in detail the precise theological nature of the Holocaust in the context of Barth's systematic analysis: *Reading Auschwitz with Barth: The Holocaust as Problem and Promise for Barthian Theology*.<sup>31</sup> Here, the impact on theology of the Holocaust – the *Shoah* – of the Jews must for Lindsay be seen as profound, with far-reaching consequences for the church's self-understanding and its doctrine of God. Lindsay therefore explores the relationship between Barth's massive *corpus* and a post-Holocaust understanding; he extrapolates a dialogue demonstrating how Barthian scholars and the Church in all its forms need to gain some understanding of the implications of Hitler's so-called Final Solution, but also to balance it with Barth's call for a return by Western Christians to the Jews as the chosen people, to Israel, and to the *whole* Bible. Lindsay here, in the opening section, is prepared to face the *tremendum* (the terrible, the overwhelming nature, of the holocaust). Lindsay then moves on to what he terms 'the Barthian Barrier.' That is, Barth's position on natural theology and how this affects an understanding of the Holocaust, or the *Shoah* as witness (the extent to which the Holocaust testifies positively to God, yet also negatively to humanity's depravity). Lindsay then considers the dialectics of revelation (that is, deliberates in 'conversation' with Eliezer Berkovits<sup>32</sup>), but insists on the proclamation of the solidarity of crucified suffering; finally he issues a caution to post-Holocaust theology, that is, a warning that we may say too much and over-emphasize the *Shoah*. This dialogue does expose flaws not only in post-Holocaust theology but also in Barth's failure to confront the *Shoah* – for Lindsay – directly, or

31 Mark R. Lindsay, *Reading Auschwitz with Barth: The Holocaust as Problem and Promise for Barthian Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, Pickwick Publications, 2014).

32 Lindsay pays special attention to Eliezer Berkovits, *Faith After the Holocaust* (New York: Ktav, 1973), also, Eliezer Berkovits, *With God in Hell: Judaism in the Ghettos and Deathcamps* (New York: Hebrew, 1979).

fully. Lindsay is right that Barth failed to confront the Holocaust directly as the later volumes emerged, after WWII, of *The Church Dogmatics* (because Barth rightly gives little or no ground to natural theology: the *analogia fidei* is the sole ground for understanding God's actions in the world, not an event such as the *Shoah*, although, of course, it was horrific and shocking, diabolical and nihilistic – *tremendum*), but his approach was, nonetheless, far more enlightened than many of his contemporaries. However, Lindsay's conclusion is more positive:

Without resorting to a natural theological epistemology, and thereby risking letting the *Shoah* become too decisive a word for the church (as though there were no other), Barth's own theological grammar allows him to affirm much of what the post-Holocaust movement has wanted to say, yet avoiding the danger that some have fallen into, of allowing the Holocaust to say too much. (p. 168.)

## ISAIAH

### *Gignilliat*

Mark S. Gignilliat's, *Karl Barth and the Fifth Gospel: Barth's Theological Exegesis of Isaiah*, clearly sets the Book of the Prophet Isaiah in a Christian context; however, declaring it the fifth Gospel raises serious questions about supersessionism, which are not really tackled here, and neither is the question of Barth's doctrine of Israel. The ground of Gignilliat's work is in the history of interpretation. This is a work which charts the relationship between exegesis and dogmatics, and is not shy to expose the failure of historical criticism, seen in the limitations of an hermeneutic of suspicion. Gignilliat therefore faces the pertinent question of how to do theological exegesis – he is also critically aware of the need to engage the text rather than losing oneself in a constant analysis of method. This is a work primarily about listening to how Barth engaged as a theological

witness with the text of Isaiah. (This listening is a dialectical relationship between exegesis and theology and given the specialization that isolates all academic disciplines, any move that blurs the edges of individualistic specialized focus is to be applauded.) Therefore this work acknowledges and complements Barth's premise that the Bible is a unique means by which God communicates His presence to His church: theological explication cannot therefore be separated from exegesis. If exegetical analysis is disconnected from witness and illumination, then what is left is (as Barth never ceased to assert in his mature years) antiquarian studies, which are often of little value! For example, 'Barth understood the deadly effect of Old Testament [antiquarian] scholarship on the life of a preacher who must engage these texts as the word of God for the people of God.' (p. 23.) Gignilliat therefore asserts that in this context Barth sees the Old Testament as confessional and classical (this separates Barth from the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*<sup>33</sup> tradition). In Barth's day rejecting the confessional and classical effectively marginalized a concept of truth, yet nowadays Postmodernism and the relativity of truth generated by humanity's Fall actually aids Barth: 'The Old Testament is what it is because the self-communicative God has deemed it to be so in relation to God's revelation of himself in Jesus Christ. To seek verifiability outside this realm is to abstract the discussion into philosophical categories foreign to God's revelation of himself.' (p.59.) But this does not stop Barth rejecting elements of the Old Testament generally and certain aspects of Isaiah specifically, which Gignilliat deftly handles. All this, and more, is brought together in the final chapter which forms an extended conclusion. Here Gignilliat considers the theological implications of Barth's Isaianic exegesis: Barth may have had no single uniform methodological approach to the Book of Isaiah yet there is a single identifiable motif (typically Barthian) of Yeshua the Jew, born of Jewish flesh, rooted in the soil – the promised land – of the Old Testament. This does allow Barth to focus

33 The history/science of religions school, based on a comparative-historical method for the study of religion, which emerged amongst a group of German Protestant theologians associated with the University of Göttingen in the 1890s.



Figure 4. The young Karl Barth (1919):  
“The ancient Hebrews should not become Germans, rather the Germans  
should become ancient Hebrews.” (c.1913.)

on Isaiah's prophetic Christology without overtly reading an assumed Christological conclusion from the text (does this issue from a respect for the text along the lines of form criticism?). Therefore Gignilliat concludes that 'Barth's theological exegesis of Isaiah is multi-layered and multi-functional' (p. 139); he is, however, aware that not all of Barth's reading of Isaiah is persuasive (he identifies Barth's interpretation of Isaiah 24 as wanting, and the analysis of Isaiah 48 – a central text from the perspective of theological exegesis – is considered by Gignilliat insufficient).

This is a highly considered work that identifies an important omission in Barthian studies – the Hebrew heritage of Yeshua the Jew, and the prophetically Christological nature of Isaiah. Theological exegesis (rooted patristically in a style which fell out of fashion with the so-called Enlightenment) is receiving more and more attention. Most readers of Barth's theological exegesis focus on the New Testament leaving his theological exegesis of the Old Testament in undeserved ignominy. Gignilliat's addresses this short fall.

## THE NATIONS

### *Moseley*

Carys Moseley in *Nations and Nationalism in the Theology of Karl Barth*, takes Barth's criticism of German nationalism – the corrupting influence of Nazism on the German Protestant Churches – as her starting point. This criticism may have become fashionable after the Second World War, but Barth was issuing such a criticism from the pulpit already in the early years of the twentieth century (before the First World War)! Moseley notes:

[Barth's] notebooks preparing for confirmation classes for teenagers are valuable evidence of the development of his theology, given that he saw the task of theology as being connected to worship, preaching, and teaching within the church before it was an academic discipline. Even at this time Barth was critical of the

nationalist and anti-semitic bias in German theology, for he says 'The ancient Hebrews should not become Germans, rather the Germans should become ancient Hebrews.'<sup>34</sup> This expresses the Pauline tenet that Gentiles are grafted onto the wild olive tree of the true Israel by faith in Christ. In the 1930s, Barth would come to articulate this position with much greater dogmatic sophistication. (p. 38.) (See figure 4.)

Furthermore, she analyses the historical overview of Barth's understanding of nationhood in his early and middle periods, laying emphasis on the pneumatological roots in his exegesis of the Pentecost narrative. Therefore this situates the importance of Israel in the concept of nationhood. Barth's analysis is shown by Moseley to be by default biblically sourced, an analysis that side-lines the 'corrosive effects' of source criticism, particularly in relation to Genesis and the Acts of the Apostles. Moseley places great emphasis on Barth's critique of German nationalism whereby the answer to National Socialism is to define and recognise nationhood as *distinct* from the state. Does this work? If the key is found in the Pentecost narrative (Acts 2) then this leads, as Moseley demonstrates, to a doctrine of creation: the election of Israel is part of the election of the community of the people of God. Thus the apparent division of the people of the world into nations leads us to recognise nations as communities of people who are called to seek God, no more than that:

Nationhood . . . is understood as the sphere of the divine command, as a human construction. Barth tacitly accepts the view derived from his plain reading of Scripture that the division and re-division of human history into nations is postlapsarian . . . The Pentecostal narrative is the transformation of Babel, not its simple reversal, as people from every nation can now hear the Gospel in their own language. (p. 203.)

Do we see Israel, from the Western perspective, as essentially an ideal,

34 'Die alten Hebr[äer] sollen keine Deutschen werden, aber Sie alten Hebräer.' Moseley is here quoting from, Karl Barth, *Konfirmandenunterricht 1909-1921* (Zurich: TVZ, 1987), p. 2.

or as the confused reality of an actual nation state? Moseley deals deftly with these questions, as also she does with the question of whether the Jews are a race or a religious people. (p. 122f.) And where does this leave the secular nation state of Israel today, relative to the ideal of Israel to be realized in eternity? The jury is still out for most. Likewise, Isaiah's criticism of the nations and what little value can be accorded to them is often at best overlooked, at worst omitted from studies:

Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. ... Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

(Is. 40:15 and 17).

## CONCLUSION

As a student Barth conformed to his theological heritage in nineteenth century neo-Protestant Liberalism; however, as a young pastor in a depressed mining/working-class valley he became 'Comrade Barth, the Red Pastor.' Part of this reaction to his Liberal heritage was to espouse veiled Marxism, but also to give equality to the ancient Hebrews, the Old Testament, and the Jews who were his contemporaries. By comparison, the exponents of the nineteenth-century Liberal heritage, to which Barth was subjected as a student, sought to Germanize the ancient Hebrews, and also Aryanize Jesus: in response we noted how Barth's reaction was to state that the ancient Hebrews should not become Germans, but the kaiser's Germany should rediscover their heritage in God's chosen people! (See figure 4.) After the Second World War, and in the light of the Holocaust and the founding of the modern nation state of Israel, supersessionism fell out of favour in the West. However, Barth had already

rejected supersessionism during his first ministry in the mining village of Safenwil, (before not only the Second World War but the First!), he grounded this rejection of the Germanizing of the Jews by referring to the Bible, and the self-revelation of the one true God. Barth was ahead of his time; one only has to assess his comments on and the place awarded to Israel in his first edition of *The Epistle to the Romans* (1919) to see this. Unlike his Liberal critics he achieves this equality not by rejecting the divinity of Yeshua, Jesus Christ, reducing him to a holy man, a prophet, so as to give equality to all religions and religious perceptions, no, but by paradoxically giving equal *elected* status to both Israel and the Church. Barth was ahead of his time, but also grounded his doctrine in the early Church and the Patristic tradition of creedal Christianity.

Barth's anti-supersessionist position is consistent from circa 1913 through to his death in 1968. The expression of this rejection, complemented by the affirmation of the Jews' covenant with God and Israel changes over the decades: it become more nuanced, and theologically explicated. His early declaration was in some ways a pseudo-Marxist reaction to his nineteenth-century Liberal neo-Protestant heritage, whereas the later pronouncements are presented as deeply considered systematic theology.

An often over-looked element in Barth's dialectical theology is this antinomy: Supersessionism and Israel, the Church's authority balanced by the continuation in equality of Israel and the exalted status of the Jews as the chosen people in the promised land. Yeshua and God's Election – how do we accept the paradox of this dialectical balance? We cannot close the antinomy, we must stand and await its conclusion in the eschaton. Soulen noted how one of Barth's students – Dietrich Bonhoeffer – admonished 'that we must not speak the last word before the last but one'<sup>35</sup>

A reasoned analysis of Barth's position is that his theology is not, and cannot be classified as, supersessionist: Israel, it can be argued, has *self-elected to take a back seat* since the Christ event. This does not amount to the Jews being superseded: they are still eternally elected in the Immanent

35 Soulen (1996), quoted on p. 174.

Trinity, and if they had accepted Jesus – Yeshua – as the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, then salvation history would have been the same, but the working-out would have been different over the last two thousand years. We noted earlier Barth's severe criticism of religion, which did not stop short of the churches. While some Christians may criticise Israel for failing to acknowledge and turn to the Messiah, it is only fair to note that much of the time the churches fail to give appropriate acknowledgement to the Christ event (which hardly puts them in a position to believe they have superseded the Jews!). So does supersessionism end up as an argument between two failing and inadequate religions that focus too much on their own self-interests and the all-too-worldly? Is supersessionism merely an argument over who is the present recipient of God's favouritism: two bright and precocious children, both of whom have been top of the class, who both believe – whatever happens – they are teacher's favourite?

Barth refused to iron-out the difficulties, he refused to force a conclusion: neither liberal Judaism nor liberal Christianity could begin to approach the truth about the dialectical standing between the Church and Israel, however much this relationship appeared contradictory, the relationship between them was symbiotic. These studies by Lindsay, Gignilliat, and Moseley – whether of the eternal Israel, the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, the role of the nations in God's purposes – exemplify Barth's conclusion that the Synagogue *not only has no* independent existence from God's self-revelation, but also the Church has no genuine independence as the people of God *apart from* the Synagogue. There is still much to Barth's understanding of Israel, and the respect accorded to the Jews, the deference to the historical Israel and the ancient Hebrews, and to the place of the modern nation state of Israel, that has yet to be explicated. Lindsay, Gignilliat, and Moseley's work, building on the perceptions of Sonderegger and Soulen, is a good start in what will be a fruitful analysis of Barth and Israel.

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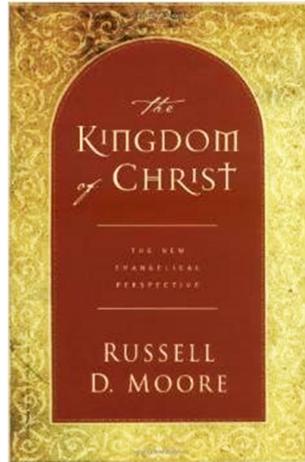




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## Book Reviews

Russell D. Moore, *The Kingdom of Christ: The New Evangelical Perspective*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway. 2004. 320 pp. \$21.99. Paper. ISBN-10: 1581346271 ISBN-13: 978-1581346275



Most honest Christians have a nagging suspicion that they do not have all the answers. Some may not admit this, but they would be labeled extremists at the least. For example, if they were raised in a Reform tradition that equates the Kingdom of Christ with the Church, they might wonder about all the place names, promises, and predictions found in the Hebrew Scriptures that seem to describe a national entity with land, a covenant people, and a future based upon an eternal election by God. Nevertheless, they still might understand the idea of “kingdom theology” only in terms of a “kingdom soteriology” in that the presence of the spiritual Kingdom of Christ precludes any eschatological, literal,

premillennial kingdom. Likewise, they might think of “kingdom ecclesiology” as only pertaining to a heavenly entity with little regard for the socio/political needs of mankind – sort of a parallel universe where the saints are in submission to the King of the Church, which is developing tangentially to the kingdom of this world.

Of course, if they were raised in the strictest form of dispensational premillennialism, they might revel in the biblical passages that predict the coming of Christ to right all wrongs, solve all social and political issues, judge all the wicked, and complete His program. When they pray “Thy kingdom come” they mean it only in a distant eschatological way. The Kingdom of Christ for them is future. Currently, however, they have little concern with ministering to a fallen world. They, too, might disengage from socio/political concerns. They understand that Jesus currently sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, but this does not refer to the Kingdom now. It only sets the stage for His return to earth to reign for 1000 years. The nagging suspicion for them, however, is that since Jesus was so compassionate toward the disenfranchised, the lost in this fallen world, they should be concerned as well. What would Jesus do?

Perhaps the two previous extremes are weak caricatures. Nonetheless, no one has all the answers. Consensus should prevail in the Body of Messiah. The Kingdom of Christ with its distinctive New Covenant must have relevance for today and tomorrow. The Kingdom of Christ with its Millennial Rule must also have relevance for today and tomorrow. Bringing the two extremes together has been the byproduct (if not the intent) of research in covenant premillennialism and progressive dispensationalism. The intent of this enlightening book, *The Kingdom of Christ: the New Evangelical Perspective*, might be stated as “can’t we all just get along.” Evangelical consensus – focused on Kingdom Theology is the goal.

Dr. Russell D. Moore has detailed the development of this *rapprochement* in an exceptional way. In what may be the very best treatment of this subject available, Moore’s research includes about 900 extensively

annotated footnotes and over 900 bibliographic entries. He accurately describes the development of an attitude of reconciliation, beginning with the altercations of the past to the prevailing spirit of respect and unity. He believes the proponents of Evangelical Theology can use the term “kingdom” in a way that seems to satisfy most and unify many. Of course, some will cry out that compromise only weakens a position. Others, however, will welcome the current state of affairs described and promoted by the author. Moore tells the story through the following outline which he uses to champion Kingdom Theology.

Toward A Kingdom Eschatology:  
The Kingdom As Already And Not Yet,

Toward A Kingdom Soteriology:  
Salvation As Holistic And Christological

Toward A Kingdom Ecclesiology:  
The Church As The Kingdom of God.

In the first chapter of the book the reader will find the stimulus behind Moore’s intensive research. He is a disciple of Carl F. H. Henry who articulated a major problem that he noticed in the evangelicalism of the post World War II church, namely, the lack of social engagement. In *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (1947) Henry opined that evangelical theologians found themselves between two extremes, a kind of fundamentalist Christian social detachment and the liberal Social Gospel (promoted by Walter Rauchenbusch), which rejected the truth of Scripture while using the social ethics of Protestant liberalism in political programs. He and other leaders of neo-evangelicalism challenged the church to be the salt and light that Jesus taught it to be by making a difference in the world through good works and sharing the Gospel.

Henry felt that there were two extremes within the evangelical world, both of which should be vigorously engaging non-evangelical thought.

Extreme dispensationalists, on the one hand, who questioned the present reality of the Kingdom of Christ were tempted to minimize the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount (if not relegate them to a future millennium) or to refuse to recite the Lord's prayer because it had to do with another age. Extreme covenantalists, on the other hand, were tempted to focus primarily on the spiritual justification of individuals while minimizing the material or socio/political needs of people. Whether the emphasis is on a "future" kingdom or a "spiritual" kingdom, both extremes could result in disengagement with the fallen world of the here and now. Both camps could fail to minister properly because of faulty Kingdom thinking. This book is a challenge to develop a Kingdom Theology. Is it possible for all evangelicals to agree on the kingdom concept so as to bring consensus in eschatology, soteriology, and ecclesiology?

Moore attributes movement toward the middle position to the progressive dispensationalists, Robert Saucy, Darrell Bock, and Craig Blaising. Those from the covenant camp who have moved to a more centrist position are Anthony Hoekema, Vern Poythress, Edmund Clowney, and Richard Gaffin. Moore states that "the coalescence with the other tradition on various disputed points seems almost coincidental in the scholarship of both groups," (23-24). Those on the outer fringes of each position struggle with the socio/political ramifications for the church. Some covenant thinkers fear the politicization of the church, and some dispensational thinkers ask if there is a difference between kingdom ethics and ecclesiastical ethics.

Chapter Two tackles the subject of Kingdom Eschatology. This, of course, is the topic most relevant to the theme of the first edition of the *Journal of Messianic Jewish Studies (JMJS)*, "Thy Kingdom Come." According to Henry and Moore, too much attention, time, and energy were given to debates about the nature of the millennium and the time of the rapture among both covenant and dispensational theologians. Rather, there should be an emphasis on a present aspect of Kingdom living which will more likely influence the non-Christian world for Christ. The scholar

who did the most to promote the “already but not yet” nature of the Kingdom, according to Moore, was George Eldon Ladd following the lead of such scholars as Oscar Cullmann and his inaugurated eschatology (31).

Moore provides excellent documentation for the reaction of earlier dispensational thinkers to the views of Ladd. They felt the messianic kingdom could not be inaugurated until the King returns to Jerusalem, literally. They felt that such an inaugurated eschatology was too much of a compromise between historic premillennialism and amillennialism. They felt that the throne of the kingdom has not been transported to heaven, nor has Jesus begun to rule as the Davidic king promised in the Hebrew Scriptures at His ascension. Moore quotes Charles Feinberg as saying, “That is not ‘historic’ premillennialism, but undiminished and recognizable amillennialism,” (35).

Similar reaction, however, came from the Reformed, amillennial side of the controversy with its Augustinian view that the Kingdom is a spiritual entity in which Christ is ruling in the present day, or somehow there are disembodied souls ruling from heaven. This view left no room for an earthly kingdom, and, therefore did not answer the whole council of God with respect to kingdom teaching. Ladd faced the unwanted theological continuum of an essentially heavenly and spiritual kingdom of the amillennialists on one end, and the essentially political and futurist kingdom of the dispensational premillennialists on the other.

Moore’s next task is to demonstrate that there has been considerable progress, primarily through the Progressive Dispensationalist movement. For the reader who is interested in a cogent, brief but thorough and irenic presentation of the view he should read this treatment by Moore. Using such key passages as 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 16, Psalm 110, and Acts 2 the progressives argue that when Jesus assumed the exalted position of His session at the right hand of the Father, He essentially is sitting on the throne of David as both Lord and Christ. Therefore, Jesus’ current rule as the “head” of the church is the same as His rule as the “Messiah” of Israel. This is more than a mere spiritual form of the kingdom, it is the kingdom

inaugurated.

For all of its emphasis on the “already” aspect of the Kingdom, progressives are adamant in their views that Jesus will rule on earth during a literal 1000 Kingdom. Geopolitical rewards to a reconstituted nation of Israel will be dispensed by the King as a prelude to the eternal state, the new heavens and new earth.

To Moore’s delight there has been movement from the other side of the controversy, as has been mentioned above. In the second chapter he provides significant details about Kingdom Theology as it has developed among evangelical covenant amillennial and premillennial writers. While it seems the major concessions have come from dispensational thinkers, Moore believes that “modified” views on both sides have made this *rapprochement* possible.

In Chapter 3 Moore discusses another area in which coming together helps solve the problem of the uneasy conscience. Socio/political engagement by evangelicals will be more likely when salvation is seen as both holistic and Christological. Moore traces the development of postwar evangelical soteriology as it is opposed by the liberal left which rejected fundamental notions of total depravity and substitutionary atonement. However, among those Christian theologians who retained Biblical convictions, there was a sense in which redemption was dichotomized into a heavenly, “spiritual” salvation of traditional covenant theology versus an emphasis on the cosmic purposes of God including the new earth. Older dispensational thinkers were thought to separate the spiritual salvation of the church from the material salvation of the nation of Israel. Regardless of how accurate this portrayal is, Moore suggests that the end result was the lack of social engagement by both extremes in evangelical theology.

Things are changing. Many have come to a centrist view on the holistic and Christological nature of soteriology. The emerging evangelical consensus of Kingdom Soteriology here runs parallel to the Kingdom Eschatology. Personal regeneration should lead to reforming societal problems. Moore shows how progressive dispensationalism is saying

the same thing. It is clear as he traces the development that avoidance of the Social Gospel was paramount to earlier dispensationalists who would speak of manning the lifeboats rather than polishing the brass on the Titanic. However, Kingdom Soteriology does not distinguish between Kingdom purposes (of Israel) and salvation purposes (of the church). Political action, social action, and structural improvement of the human community serves to ease the uneasy conscience. It is a unified Kingdom concept and a unified salvation for one people of God that makes this possible.

In Chapter 4 the logical progression continues. If the Kingdom is already inaugurated, and if salvation includes both personal redemption and the cosmic purposes of redeeming the world, then the church has a mandate to engage in socio/political concerns as a kingdom community. Moore mentions the development of evangelical seminaries reacting to the modernism of the liberal denominations. Both from the dispensational side and the Reformed covenantal side of the spectrum came trained pastors of churches and leaders of parachurch ministries. But lack of cohesion in ecclesiology added to the lack of strength in evangelical engagement with the world. Regardless of differing opinions, Moore argues that the Church is the Kingdom of God.

Again, the emphasis of Moore's book is that consensus is occurring as progressive dispensationalists and modified covenantalists honestly evaluate the weaknesses of their past proponents and embrace a Kingdom Theology which unifies genuine believers in a common cause that is true to the Word of God and the eschatological, soteriological, and ecclesiological purposes of God.

This work must be highly recommended for all who seek to understand the development of thought among evangelical theologians, especially from the post war era to the present. Moore successfully documents an incredible array of views that are both faithfully presented and carefully analyzed. While many have learned of these things in a piecemeal fashion, Russell Moore has organized the arguments and traced the trajectory of

the subject matter in a way that excels other efforts to do so.

Clearly, all will not agree with the conclusions he draws, especially concerning the value or even the biblical defense of this growing consensus between progressive dispensationalism and modified covenantalism. Many will continue to ask if such thinking does not lead to a supersessionism that ignores the relevance of the “unbelieving” nation of Israel today. Some will not be satisfied with the terminology used to reconcile the different views. Others will ask about the role of the Holy Spirit in the already but not yet kingdom. Some will wonder what limitations there are on kingdom ethics in the church of today. The questions will continue to be raised, but this contribution by Russell Moore will advance the discussion in a wonderful way.

*Reviewed by, Gregory Hagg,*

**BOROUGH PARK SYMPOSIUM**

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

נר-לרגלי דברך ואור לנתיבותי

(Psalm 119:105)



David Zadok,  
“A Messianic Jewish Response to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,”  
*Borough Park Symposium 4*,  
[http://www.chosenpeople.com/symposium/papers2014/  
Topic\\_3\\_David\\_Zadok\\_Main\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.chosenpeople.com/symposium/papers2014/Topic_3_David_Zadok_Main_Paper.pdf).  
February, 2014.

Sandra Teplinsky,  
“Response to David Zadok on ‘A Messianic  
Jewish Response to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,’”  
*Borough Park Symposium 4*,  
[http://www.chosenpeople.com/symposium/papers2014/  
Topic\\_3\\_Sandra\\_Teplinsky\\_Response\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.chosenpeople.com/symposium/papers2014/Topic_3_Sandra_Teplinsky_Response_Paper.pdf).  
February, 2014.

Judith Rood,  
“The Messianic Movement and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:  
Understanding the Evangelical Palestinian Resistance,”  
*Borough Park Symposium 4*,  
[http://www.chosenpeople.com/symposium/papers2014/Topic\\_3\\_  
Judith\\_Rood\\_Response\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.chosenpeople.com/symposium/papers2014/Topic_3_Judith_Rood_Response_Paper.pdf).  
February, 2014.

**INTRODUCTION**

From February 16-18, 2015, the fourth gathering of the Borough Park Symposium met in New York City. Messianic Jewish leaders and scholars from around the world came together to discuss and present Messianic

Jewish perspectives on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. From the symposium organizers' own description the goal was to cover, "biblical and theological perspectives on the modern state of Israel; relationships between Israel and its neighbors, and between Jewish and Arab Yeshua-believers," as well as how to, "frame the way we speak about Israel and the Middle East within the Messianic Jewish community and to the broader Christian world." The results were not nearly as monolithic as one might expect. In this short review we would like to summarize and reflect on one of the Symposium's segments which had contributors who held some of the more divergent perspectives.

The topic of this segment was, "A Messianic Jewish Response to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict" and its primary contributor was David Zadok, pastor of Grace and Truth Congregation in Israel and the Field Director of Christian Witness to Israel, HaGefen Publishing. Responding to Zadok's presentation were author, minister, and speaker Sandra Teplinsky, president and founder of Light of Zion, a Messianic outreach to Israel and the Church based in California and Jerusalem, and Dr. Judith Rood, Professor of Middle East Studies at Biola University in La Mirada, California.

## SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

In his paper, David Zadok focuses primarily on the biblical relationship between the people of Israel and the Land of Israel. He highlights the overarching plan of God to redeem and restore mankind as He deals with the problem of sin and enmity, tracing the Land promises throughout the biblical narrative. Using an analogy similar to Messiah's statement that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath, Zadok suggests that the Land was made for man and not man for the Land. This does not negate or downplay the importance of the Land in the outworking of God's Kingdom plan, but rather helps place it in its proper context. That God is and always has been more concerned with the redemption

of people from every tribe, nation, and tongue than He has been with the Land is the paradigm through which Zadok suggests Messianic Jews ought to view the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

As Zadok applies this paradigm he mentions the vastly different hermeneutics employed by both Messianic Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Christians, briefly touching on their impact. He acknowledges the tough questions that both sides must ask about Palestinian suffering and threats to Israel's security, and concludes with suggested ways forward for Messianic Jews. He exhorts Messianic Jews to listen to and try to understand their Palestinian Christian brothers; acknowledge and at times be critical of Israel's misuse of military power; support Israel's right to protect herself from Islamic terrorism; and remember that the battle is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. Thus, Messianic Jews must continue to share the Gospel in Israel with Jew and Arab alike, and allow their views to be shaped by the Word of God and not by nationalistic identity.

Sandra Teplinsky offers her paper as a supplement to Zadok's. She provides some deeper exegetical insights on certain passages highlighted by Zadok, including Hebrews 11:10 and Genesis 3:15. Building upon Zadok's mention of hermeneutics, Teplinsky expounds upon the deleterious effects that Liberation Theology has had on some Palestinian Christians as well as their Western supporters. She summarizes their view as stating, "the Bible has no meaning in and of itself. Instead, the meaning of Scripture (especially regarding Israel) is said to derive from subjective interaction between reader and text . . . A critical question is how much subjectivity ought to be considered within the bounds of fair discussion in an honest search for biblical truth," (Teplinsky, 2). A key conclusion for her is that without being on the same page in interpreting biblical truth, there is no chance of reconciliation based on any truth.

Teplinsky addresses the historical, political, and legal issues in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, with specific responses to mainstream Palestinian culture. She does a masterful job tracing the legal rights that

Israel has to the Land in accordance with International Law, and exposes Israel's dissenters as employing lawfare—"the manipulation of traditional Western law so as to undermine the principles on which that law is based, and thereby achieve otherwise unattainable, extremist political goals," (Teplinsky, 3)—to delegitimize Israel.

She concludes with a call for Messianic Jew's and Palestinian Christian's to take their personal hurt, pride, ill feelings toward Israelis and Palestinian's to the cross; that this will open the floodgates of forgiveness, and ultimately hearken the return of the King.

With an expertise in Arab Studies, Judith Rood centers on understanding the "Evangelical Palestinian Resistance." She begins by giving a sweeping and precise overview of how the political situation in the Arab world has been shaped through the twentieth century and suggests the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict resulted from Western influence in the region post-WWII and post-Cold War. As a result the rise of radical Islamist regimes attempting to reverse those results and expunge Western influence from what were once Islamic lands, the "Palestinian Resistance" is viewed as the only viable option "for some evangelical Palestinians to express their political will, to have some sense of participating in their national rejection of the legitimacy of Israel," (Rood, 2).

This unlikely marriage between a group of non-violent evangelicals and violent resistance organizations has been forged through the introduction of Liberation Theology into the Palestinian Christian narrative, has thrived through Sabeel, an ecumenical organization spear-headed by Anglican minister Naim Ateek, and has found its most prominent expression in the "Christ at the Checkpoint" conference series. Rood provides a pointed critique of the Palestinian *Kairos Document* and concludes that its underlying philosophy, "makes it an impossible basis for reconciliation between Messianic Jews and Palestinian Christians. Like the Hamas Charter, the Palestinian Christian document articulates an eschatological rejection of the Jewish state," (Rood, 4).

With such divergent historical narratives at play, even among Messianic

Jews and Palestinian Christians, Rood suggests a way for the two groups to seek reconciliation in the absence of peace. She points to the joint work of Lisa Loden and Salim Munayer, *Through My Enemies Eyes: Envisioning Reconciliation in Israel-Palestine*, as a template to follow. This template sees the two authors coming together to hear, understand, and respect each side's historical view of events as well as biblical hermeneutic, accepting each other's presence while rejecting voices that call for the destruction of either, and meeting each other at the foot of the Cross.

Such an attempt at reconciliation in the absence of peace and in the absence of agreement on historical narrative is respectable and admirable especially for followers of Messiah. However, it is not an easy undertaking, even for followers of Messiah. This is emblematic in what is perhaps the most stirring portion of Rood's paper. Her epilogue relays the story of Palestinian Christian leader, Sami Awad, who spent the night in a children's bunk during a visit to Auschwitz. His view of Israel was greatly impacted by the experience as he stared at "drawings these children had left behind, pictures of children playing drawn by children who would never play again," (Rood, 8). He suddenly understood the impact that the Holocaust has had in shaping Israel, her desire and drive to exist and to never again be under the thumb of foreign rulers. As he shared this testimony at the "Christ at the Checkpoint" conference in 2010, he passionately called for Palestinian Christians to lead the way in seeking non-violent peace with Israel, with an understanding of Jewish history, and the fear and pain of the past. He declared, "We must be a voice of truth in suffering, on behalf of all people, including the Jewish people who have not had the opportunity to heal," (Rood, 9). His words were a glimmer of hope. Sadly, Rood shares that since he uttered the words in 2010 he has distanced himself from the comments. She believes because of pressure from the "Resistance."

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## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The three authors each took different approaches in examining what the Messianic Jewish response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ought to be. Zadok appealed primarily to Scripture understood and applied; Teplinsky reinforced Zadok's view and added the importance of the legal legitimacy of Israel's right to the Land in the face of radical "lawfare" perpetuated by extremists; and, Rood brought a greater understanding of how both Israeli and Palestinian historical narratives have impacted the current situation. In proposing pathways to reconciliation, Teplinsky and Rood hold clearly opposite views on the need for mutual agreement on biblical and historical truth. Despite this, what stood out the most to this reviewer is how each contributor emphasized the need for the centrality of the Cross in any attempt at reconciliation or peace. Even when discussing a conflict so complex, with waters muddied by outside influences, disagreements on truth, and polarized historical narratives—the Cross remains the only place where reconciliation can be found.

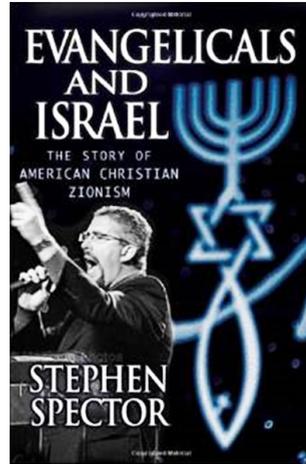
*Review by Robert Walter*

Stephen Spector.  
*Evangelicals and Israel: The Story  
of American Christian Zionism*  
Oxford, UK: Oxford University  
Press, Inc. 2009. 338 pp. \$29.95  
ISBN-13: 978-0-19-536802-4.

Stephen Spector is a professor of English at Stony Brook University. In addition to *Evangelicals and Israel* (2008) he is the author of *Operation Solomon: The Daring Rescue of the Ethiopian Jews* (2005) and most recently *May I Quote You On That?:*

*A Guide to Grammar and Usage* (2015). Although Jewish, Spector is no stranger to the New Testament or Christianity as he has spent his career studying and teaching both. Spector's nuanced treatment of the book's topic provides a significant witness to his understanding of the New Testament and conservative Christian beliefs. In addition, he seems to have invested a great deal of time and energy interacting with both leaders and members of evangelical and Christian Zionist movements for a sustained period of time across the opinion spectrum. His subsequent realization of the complexity of motivations surrounding evangelical support for Israel is further evidence of the author's intellectual honesty and competency for writing this comprehensive account of evangelical support for the Jewish people and the nation of Israel.

Spector comes at this issue from a secular Jewish perspective. His interest is academic and reflects a genuine desire to help the Jewish community in America understand the nuance and complexities of evangelical support. In doing this he conveys an insider's understanding of Jewish sensibilities on the topic and a certain Jewish bemusement over



exuberant evangelical expressions of worship and friendship.

Spector's book is an extensive and thoughtful search for the motivation behind, what is to Spector, the surprising American evangelical support for the state of Israel and its warm feelings for the Jewish people. He points out that there is great suspicion in the Jewish community towards evangelicals and their support for Israel. It is hard for them to get past their deep political differences on domestic issues; their fear of the loss of acceptance and opportunity that a more Christianized society might bring; and for many Jews, the belief that down deep evangelical Christians, in the end, expect Jewish people to convert or die based on popular Christian eschatological expectations (viii). This is why when Jewish people are asked to rate their feelings "temperature" toward evangelicals from 0°–100°, they average in at a very brisk 24 degrees fahrenheit.

But the opposite is true of evangelicals. Their average feelings "temperature" toward Jewish people comes in at a very comfortable 68° with 75% of evangelicals expressing favorable or very favorable attitudes towards the Jewish people. These feelings have only grown stronger over the last forty years (viii). Yet, Jewish people see evangelicals as second only to Muslims in their anti-Semitism (viii).

What is one to make of this unrequited love? Spector spends much of his book trying to get to the bottom of this disconnect. In the process he examines Christian Zionism. He does this by trying to explain and define Christian Zionism through his often humorous (from a Jewish perspective) personal experience of it at their gatherings. He introduces some of the major Christian Zionist groups and leaders and attempts to get a handle on their core beliefs. These core beliefs include the restoration of national Israel, aversions to replacement theology, and a view of the end-times which sees a great time of suffering for Israel and the world, followed by the return of Jesus to rescue Israel and establish his 1000 year reign from Jerusalem over the whole earth. He then goes into the particulars, identifying and describing the variety and complexity of motivations surrounding Christian Zionism. These include the promise

of blessing in the Abrahamic Covenant for all who bless the Jewish people; Israel as God's prophetic clock and proof of his faithfulness to his word; the warning of God's judgment (curses) on those who seek to oppose or harm the Jewish people; genuine love and gratitude toward Biblical Jewish faith as the root and foundation of their own faith; deep remorse over past so-called Christian anti-Semitism; and a genuine appreciation for a brave frontline ally (which acts as a bulwark) in the war against radical Islamic terrorism.

Spector then attempts to educate his non-evangelical reader on the historical theology of evangelicalism which helps Spector and the reader to understand the significant diversity of thought, paths to faith, social and political convictions, and beliefs about the relationship between the church, Israel, and the Jewish people.

Spector then devotes two chapters to unpacking the Christian Zionist perceptions and relationship to the Arab and Muslim world. Spector points to a strong belief among Christian Zionists that trading land for peace with the Palestinian Arabs will never work, that the Arab Muslims are implacable enemies of the Jewish people and will not rest until the Jewish state ceases to exist. Democracy is not the answer for the Palestinians because they will just vote in hate groups like Hamas as they did in 2006. For Christian Zionists, it is all part of the greater war with radical Islam. Once the "Saturday people" are defeated they will be coming for the "Sunday people." For many Christian Zionists, the conflict with radical Islam is an existential threat to their freedom and security and constitutes nothing less than a new (Third?) World War (69). Christian Zionists are thus convinced that radical Islam cannot be appeased, and rather, must be defeated. For their part, many Arab Muslims with the opposite and opposing perspective feel the same way toward Israel and the decadent Christian west.

In chapter five Spector delves into the theological roots of the antipathy between Christian Zionists and Islam. For many this is a clash between the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Allah. Spector points out that

evangelicals have a very low view of Islam (82). To them, according to the Koran, Islam is not a religion of peace. It has never gone through a reformation and thus the only true expression of Islam is its fundamental version (88).

Spector then goes into the history of the conflict between Christianity and Islam, including their many significant theological differences and their deep seated animosity toward each other. Spector brings out that both Christian Zionists and many Muslims have a sort of mirror image eschatology, in which a world in conflict and chaos is brought to the brink of destruction only to be rescued by each faith's version of a Savior. In fact, both sides accuse each other of trying to advance their eschatological agendas in precisely the same ways (109).

Having described Christian Zionist positions in great detail Spector examines the criticism of the movement which he says comes down to four principle charges:

1. They want Jews to return to Israel in order to speed up their deaths, mass conversion, and the return of Jesus to set up his millennial kingdom.
2. Evangelicals just want to convert Jews.
3. Christian Zionism is a distortion of true Christianity which seeks justice for all the oppressed (in this case, the Palestinians).
4. "Evangelical Zionists are allied with right-wing of Israeli politicians in opposing the exchange of land for peace," which according to many on the center-left "poses a greater danger to the Jewish state than terrorism does" (111).

Spector examines each of these charges in detail and gives the defenders of Christian Zionism an opportunity to refute them. He then spends his seventh chapter looking into the fourth charge, tracing the alliance of Christian Zionists to the political right in Israel. What the Israeli right have come to recognize as a key alliance, the left in both Israel and the U.S.

have come to distrust and view as dangerous (148).

In chapter eight Spector takes on the charge that evangelical support for Israel is grounded in tragic, dispensational end-time scenarios for the Jewish people. He shows that while such a scenario exists, it is by and large not the great evangelical motivation for supporting Israel and most Jewish leaders are not bothered by it. Rather they appreciate evangelical support whatever the motivation. Spector cites the common joke told in mostly Jewish circles: If Messiah comes and says “Hello, nice to see you again,” Jews will need to repent. If he says, “Nice to meet you” then it will be the Christians who will have to apologize to the Jews. For most Jewish leaders, Christian support trumps even some of the strange (in their eyes) reasons for that support. Many Christian leaders concede that the state of Israel will lead to the Second Coming of the Messiah Jesus, but this is not the prime motivation for their support for Israel, and warn detractors not to confuse this belief for a motive (179).

In Spector’s ninth chapter he seeks to get to the bottom of the evangelical motivation for supporting Israel. In particular: Do evangelicals, at least in significant part, support Israel to hasten the Second Coming of the Messiah Jesus and its troubling scenario, from the Jewish point of view, of convert or die? In the end, says Spector, the answer to their question cannot be fully discerned because there are so many and varied motivations at work. Yet Spector asserts that millions of Christians believe that through Israel’s rebirth in 1948, the prophetic clock has resumed its ticking, and Christian support for the Jewish state, in all its various forms, can be used of God to hasten Jesus’ return (200).

The remainder of Spector’s book has to do with President George W. Bush and the events, politics, and policies of his administration vis-à-vis the Jewish state, terrorism, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict.

Interestingly, Spector ends his volume with an end-time scenario quote from no lesser light than Hal Lindsey of *Late Great Planet Earth* fame. He quotes Lindsey declaring that soon “God will liberate his people Israel and bring a remnant to true faith in His Messiah” (253). A re-statement of

the very same painful eschatological scenario that so many Jews suspect motivates evangelical support for Israel.

Spector's purpose for writing *Evangelicals and Israel* seems to be driven by a genuine desire to understand the phenomena of conservative Christian (evangelical) support for the state of Israel and its warm feelings toward the Jewish people. As he makes clear in the preface, many Jewish people are skeptical of evangelicals and their motives for such support. Historically, the Jewish experience with conservative Christianity has not been a good one. Most of the anti-Semitism, persecution, pogroms, inquisition, and atrocities perpetuated against European Jewry has come from the right wing precincts of European society often instigated by so called Christians. Jews have a right to be concerned about right of center nationalistic movements which are often driven by religious (conservative Christian) interests. Jewish memories are long and hard to shake.

The bottom line is that Jewish people do not trust conservative Christians and their motives. One gets the sense that Spector himself does not know if this is justified or not when it comes to evangelical support for Israel, and genuinely wants to discover their motivations and report his findings. That being said, there does seem to be a part of Spector that wants to debunk the half truths, stereotypes, simplistic analysis, and myths associated with the topic. He is careful to dig deep and not settle for superficial answers. This rigorous search for the truth gives the reader a sense that Spector thinks the high level of Jewish mistrust for evangelical support is not entirely called for. One senses he would like to see a warming of attitudes toward evangelicals especially from the American Jewish side. (148)

In the end, Spector seems to sympathize with those who say "So what?" (158-161) So what if some Christians are motivated by distasteful (to Jewish sensibilities) eschatological expectations? Israel and the Jewish people need friends. There are worse motivations than sincerely held faith convictions about how history is going to unfold. As long as the support and warmth come without strings attached, who cares why it comes? (160)

So, is Spector successful in reducing Jewish suspicions of evangelical support for Israel and warm feelings toward the Jewish people? To some degree, it seems he is. Just by demonstrating how complex and varied the issue really is, a fair-minded Jewish person would have to concede that there are a number of evangelical motivations that are quite inoffensive to them. These would include Christian recognition of God's covenant love for and faithfulness to Israel, based on the Abrahamic promises, as well as the Christian desire to reflect that same covenant love and faithfulness in their own lives. In other words, these Christians want to get on what they perceive to be the side of God. (188)

That being said, one would have to imagine many readers being unpersuaded by Spector's in-depth analysis because no final definitive answer to evangelical motivation emerges. In addition, at least some of the motivations Spector does uncover would reinforce some negative Jewish narratives (e.g. the evangelical desire to see Jewish people believe in Jesus as their Messiah; the dispensational end times belief that Israel will go through a very difficult time before they are rescued by their Messiah, etc.).

Spector's strengths are as an investigator. He digs down deep to understand the motivations, positions, and practices he observes using a wide variety of means and sources. He is always looking to get at the facts and opposing positions and ideas.

Spector makes a valuable contribution to the topic. He provides a variety of perspectives - Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and secular. He then goes inside these groups to discern the variety of opinions and sub-groups that exist, and then to hear what people in these various groups are communicating to their most ardent and committed supporters.

Spector shows that even within particular sub-groups of a movement there are significant differences (e.g. different beliefs and points of emphasis that exist among evangelical dispensationalists). At the very least, the careful reader should come to appreciate the nuances and complexities of the topic.

On the other hand, Spector never fully answers the question about the motivation of the majority of Christian Zionists. In particular, what percentage support Israel in order to hasten a painful dispensationalist end times scenario? Spector cannot say, mostly because to do so scientifically is nearly impossible (188). But since dispensationalists compose only 2.5% of the American adult population he speculates that the number cannot be that high (188).

In addition, Spector does not examine the Jewish stereotype of dispensational pre-millennialism except for a brief rebuttal. It would have been helpful to have challenged the Jewish understanding of “convert or die.” Without question, no lover of Israel or the Jewish people wants them to suffer or die. While Spector does quote a few Christians on the topic, it is mostly in passing. Dispensational pre-millennialists mainly report their understanding of what they read in Scripture. It may be true that what they read and report is unpleasant for just about everybody (not just the Jewish people), but that does not mean they want that unpleasantness to occur. The suffering of any person at any time is a great tragedy to most Christians. But that does not mean they can ignore it either. That would be decidedly unloving. Christians believe they have received both good news and bad news from God. To withhold either of those messages would be the most unloving, uncaring thing they could do. It would be indifference of a diabolical kind. It would have been helpful if Spector could have shared this Christian perspective with his Jewish readers.

Spector’s book is a great lesson in cross-cultural understanding. It issues a cautionary note to anyone tempted to stereotype or generalize about the thinking, beliefs, and motivations of another group. Would that all who consider themselves to be fair-minded, take the time and care to truly understand the actions and practices of others as Spector has done with the Christian Zionist movement. I know that this reviewer plans to apply that lesson to his work going forward.

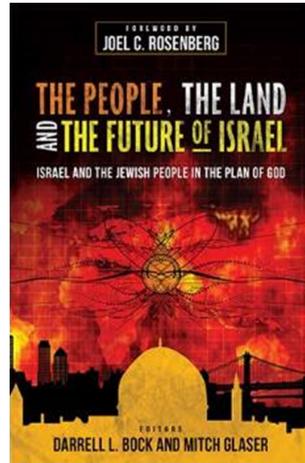
Overall, I would recommend the first nine chapters of this book to anyone interested in the topic. I do not think chapters ten and eleven on

Christian Zionist influence on the Bush administration policies are worth the read. Their content is dated and easily extracted from other more expert sources.

But the first nine chapters are unique in their insight into the topic, giving the reader, especially the Jewish reader, a balanced, perspective-broadening experience, which they might find difficult to get elsewhere on the topic of Christian Zionism.

*Reviewed by, Richard Flashman (M.Div, D.Min)*

Darrell L. Bock, and Mitch Glaser.  
*The People, the Land, and the  
Future of Israel: Israel and the  
Jewish People in the Plan of God*  
Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel  
Publications, 2014. pp 349.  
\$16.99.



## INTRODUCTION

*The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel: Israel and the Jewish People in the Plan of God* (hereafter PLFI) is a collection of essays by top evangelical minds about Israel and her people as they relate to theology in the OT, NT, Jewish Rabbinic thought, Christian hermeneutics, and eschatology. The collection was edited, as well as contributed to, by Mitch Glaser, President of Chosen People Ministries, and Darrell Bock, NT scholar, and senior research

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## SUMMARY & EVALUATION

“The People, the Land, and the Future of Israel” conference was held in New York City in October 2013. PLFI contains the papers and essays presented at this conference. The topics covered are the people, the Land, and the future of Israel as relating to the Hebrew Scriptures (chapters 1-4), the New Testament (chapters 5-8), Hermeneutics, Theology and Church History (chapters 9-13), and finally Practical Theology (chapters 14-17). Each chapter provides an excellent “suggested reading” list and questions for discussion. Experts in their respective fields, such as Walter Kaiser, Michael Brown, Darrell Bock, Craig Evans, Mark Saucy, Michael Vlach, and Mitch Glaser (et. al.) weigh in on the issues.

### *Hebrew Scriptures*

A prominent theme in the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible) is that everything is created for God’s glory; the same goes for Israel, this section claims (37). Israel was chosen for a mission and was given the promise that the people would endure until the very end of time, and in the world to come. Walter Kaiser concludes that the Hebrew canon ends with the promise given to David, namely that God indissolubly connected His name with David, his line, and the Land (51). The prophetic vision, as observed by Robert Chisom Jr., is return from exile as a people and the restoration of Zion (66). For this to happen the people of Israel have to be a viable political entity in the Land of Israel.

Michael Brown links these themes as they are seen by the rabbis. He explains that rabbinic literature looks forward as much as it looks to the past, maybe even more so. Rabbinic literature also sees in the pages of Scripture a “paradise restored” (80). The prophets foretell, and rabbinic literature echoes, says Brown, that there will come a time when Israel will not be uprooted (82). And he reminds the readers that dwelling in the Land, in the presence of God, is the ultimate expression of Jewish future hope (*ibid*).

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### *New Testament*

Chapters 5-8 seek to engage the misconception that the gentile “international” Church has replaced Israel as the people of God. The conclusions made by the authors in contradiction to this theory are: (1) the Gospels teach that the Church is part of the promises to Israel, and the Kingdom of Heaven includes the restoration of the Land (100); (2) for the writer of Acts, gentile inclusion does not mean Israel’s exclusion (113); (3) Romans 9-11 explains the current (post-cross) and future *chosen-ness* of Israel and her coming restoration (123-30); (4) the audience of the Epistles are for the most part genetic descendants of Abraham and are constantly reminded by the authors of God’s promises to Israel (ethnic) and the application to all who choose to follow the God of Israel and place their trust in his Son, the Jewish Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth (145).

### *Hermeneutics, Theology and Church History*

This section takes the reader on a journey through the often misunderstood and more often contended issue of hermeneutics. Craig Blaising attempts to show the weakness of “replacement theology.” A more holistic reading of the Bible is preferable, he argues (165). A redefining of Israel (best case) or outright replacement (worse case) is to ignore the theological importance of Israel and its people, and trade a robust eschatology for a thin concept of the Kingdom of God (*ibid*).

The next chapters cover the necessity of Israel in Biblical Theology (Saucy), in eschatology (Feinberg), and throughout Church history (Vlach). Saucy seeks to explain the crucial part Israel plays in the biblical narrative, and not only the people, but also the Land. For his part, Feinberg looks to Daniel 9:24-27, Zechariah 12, and Isaiah 19:16-25. For Feinberg, these prophecies are proof that there needs to be a literal Israel. Furthermore, Israel’s rejection of Messiah did not cancel out these prophecies (193).

Vlach and Leventhal tackle Israel in Church history. Vlach specifically covers the view of Israel throughout Church history. He reviews for the reader the development of “replacement theology” and also the development of the Church’s recognition that there is a future for Israel. He correctly concludes that Israel is a mixed bag in Church history (209).

For Leventhal, despite the Holocaust’s dark shadow on history, the rebirth of Israel looks forward and allows for the spiritual rebirth of Israel that is envisioned by the Scriptures in the world to come. Coming through Jewish and non-Jewish thinkers and theologians who grapple with the Holocaust, Leventhal concludes that, “God planted a Zionist component” into His people, a desire to return to the Land of their fathers, and despite the horrors of history, He is leading His people home. One of the longer chapters in the book, it connects the reader with an often overlooked issue in the Christian world.

### *Practical Theology*

The last and final section of the book literally deals with more practical matters. However it begins with the immortality of the Jewish people. Its author, Michael Rydelnik, posits that the continued existence of the Jewish people is evidence for the truth of Scripture. He suggests that the Church should take God at His word; if God said that He will never forsake the Jewish people, then He meant it. God has kept His people, restored them to the Land, kept for Himself a remnant (e.g. Messianic Jews), and will also be true to His word for the future and final restoration of Zion.

The last of three chapters of the final section deal with: Evangelism (Glaser); Israel and the local pastor (Epstein); and a brief survey on the view of Israel in modern day seminaries (Hagg). Glaser and Epstein argue for the need for Jewish evangelism and the Church’s calling to love the Jewish people, respectively. Christian love for the Jewish people should lead to bridge building, and an honest, bold evangelism that shows the Jewish people their Jewish Messiah. Both do a quality job expressing the need for the Church to reach out to the Jewish community.

Hagg, commenting on a ten-question survey sent to 70 seminaries, sees an unfortunate trend in evangelical scholarship – namely, an apathy or under-appreciation of the Jewish people and Israel as they relate to the topics discussed in this book. The book ends on a somewhat low note and the last chapter offers little by way of conclusion. It simply states the case and offers no solution to the apparent apathy towards Israel in today's seminaries.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

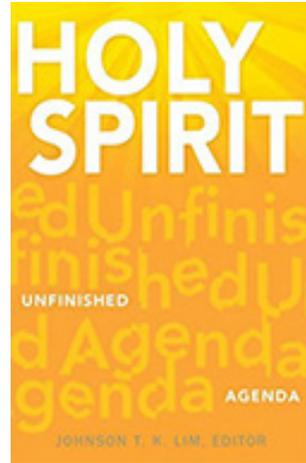
The purpose of PLFI is to present a broadly Pre-Millennial view on what the Bible teaches about the Jewish people, the Land of Israel, and the future of Israel. It can provide Bible students with a much-needed, broad biblical theology on the subject. The book, its authors, and editors accomplish this fairly well. However, PLFI's strength is also its weakness. It seems it was written for a lay audience and would not serve as a strong academic book, although this should not discourage professors from using it in the classroom. However, an expanded, more academic version of this book and its contents is needed, perhaps in a multi-volume set. The arguments presented in this book are not entirely new, but that is hardly an issue to bring up as some reviewers have. These "tested" arguments are compiled into one book, easily accessible in one volume, and this makes PLFI an excellent primer.

*Reviewed by, S. S. Ilchishin*

Johnson T. K. Lim.  
*Holy Spirit: Unfinished Agenda*  
Singapore: WordnWorks, 2015.

371+xxviii pages.

ISBN 978-981-4597-64-7. USD 49.



The theologically-untrained can finally look to a one-stop and accessible volume on a kaleidoscopic study of the Holy Spirit! Johnson Lim pulls together six-five essays, written by 70 stellar scholars (19 females and 51 males) across Christian traditions and geographical representations. Without necessarily forcing an agreement between contributors, the book presents the study of the Holy Spirit in a lively fashion, engaging robustly with biblical, historical, theological, and inter-denominational resources. Readers will walked away appreciating the complexities, dynamism, continuities and discontinuities on the subject no less because of contributions from many respected Wesleyans, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Methodists, Lutherans, Evangelicals, Charismatics, Catholics, Brethren, Baptists, Anglicans, Anabaptists, secular academicians that span across ten countries from parts of Asia, Britain, Europe, Germany, North America (including Canada), Oceania, and South Africa. Still, the ethos of the volume is evident to some, given the dedication of the work to Evangelist Billy Graham and to a former Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary president, the late Dr. Lilian Hui Kiau Lim (1959-2009).

These and more subjects fill the pages. Who is the holy spirit? What are evidence of the work of the holy spirit in the Old Testament, the New Testament, history, liturgy, missions and theology through the lens of various past and contemporary evangelists, revivalists, scholars, and

theologians? Themes are organized into nine parts after an introduction on the four phrases of studies on pneumatology in Christian history then and now by the former Nottingham University hermeneutician, Anthony C. Thiselton. In Part 1, four scholars show various intersections of hermeneutics and the study of the Holy Spirit in Scripture and theology. Besides the typical platforms of the world of the text, the world behind the text, and the world of the reader interfacing in reading the Spirit in the biblical pericopes, conversations also explore whether the contemporary Pentecostal/Charismatic readings are para-modern or a form of post-modern reading, and to what rejoinders, if any, may be helpful with voices from the Reformed tradition. Essential to these reviews showcase the dynamic relationship between Spirit, Word and community.

Part 2 brings together ten scholars to review the Spirit in various biblical genres and/or books. Among discussions include whether the Spirit of God in the Old Testament is the same as the Spirit in various books of the New Testament. The chapters show (albeit implicitly) how Christian traditioning came to embrace pneumatological perspectives as we now find in various Christian traditions. Should following the Spirit lead one to move from a naturalist and rational reading into a free-flowing subjective pneumatic impulse takes some attention. Contributors find a consonant voice that evidence of the Spirit will cause individuals and communities to become empowered conduits of God's mission, justice, rebuilding, and creativity in the face of destructive human tendencies, sins, and devastating forces. Where the Spirit is, the gospel is advanced, and souls are taken on a journey towards sanctification! Thus, the failure to recognize the spirit imperils one's spiritual life, though discernment is by no an easy task. The authors engage in their own ways how themes like the Spirit, Christ, and the witness of Christian life conflate or converge.

Parts 3 and 4 bring together theological, historical, and practical questions intentionally. Among conversations include whether the Spirit that indwelling God's people in the Old Testament and in the new covenant are the same. How do prophecies differ between the two covenants? How

is global mission energized since the early church? How is Christ's baptism and resurrection of Christ related to the Holy Spirit? How did Christian process eventually introduced the Spirit from Nicea (325)'s simple and short sentence to a full-blown treatment of the co-divinity of the Spirit in Nicea-Constantinople (381), and how did the division of pneumatological disagreement between the church of the Latin West and Eastern Orthodoxy of 1054 find new ground in the 21st century? Can there be discernment of the spirit prior to, during, and after the close of the scriptural canons? What about the theme of glossolalia (tongues-speaking), healing, and sin against the Holy Spirit? What roles did the Spirit play in the patristic age, medieval period, throughout church history, and in contemporary church growth movements?

The practical dimensions of studying the Spirit in Christian life that began in Parts 3 and 4 continue into parts 5, 6, and 7. Part 5 focuses on the Spirit in spiritual formation, worship, and prayer. Part 6 focus on the Spirit in Christian illumination, preaching, African American experience, and global missions. Part 7 examines the Spirit in pastoral ministry, mentoring women, ministry and leadership, music, discipleship, and in the workplace. The relevance of embodied ministry, empowerment, and community-support in concrete life situations are either explicitly considered or implied in the essays.

Parts 8 and 9 examine historical and contemporary evangelists, preachers, theologians, and revivalists who have either written or spoken about the Holy Spirit. The array of persons under investigation (not in order in the publication) include Augustine, Balthasar, Billy Graham, Charles Spurgeon, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, George Whitefield, Gregory of Nyssa, John Calvin, John Chrysostom, John Stott, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Karl Barth, Martin Luther, Martyn Lloyd-Jones (the volume spelt as Martin L-J), and Thomas Aquinas. Though the list is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive, which is not the goal of the volume, readers unfamiliar with the subject now find a spread of resources to enrich their biblical reading. Footnotes in the volume at times introduce secondary

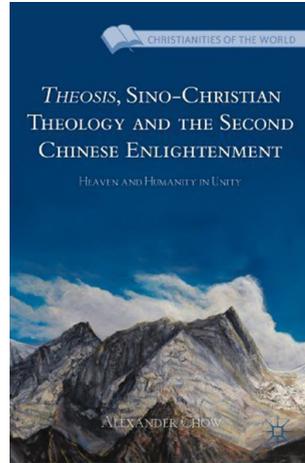
resources from as far back as the early nineteenth to twentieth centuries and would make for an interesting retrieval.

The concluding chapter by Evangelical missiologists Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo speaks about three central development of global Christianity in which the Holy Spirit is seen to be most active: in the Global South, in Pentecostal/Charismatic denominations, and in interreligious engagement, with supporting missiological statistics Christian World Database (Brill) and World Religion Database (Brill). The conclusion did not bring any radically new insights if one has been following the scholarly developments in recent centuries, especially scholarly contributions in *Zygon*, *PNEUMA*, *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, and a range of other research on Pentecostal/Charismatic studies across the globe. There are much less discussion on the intersection of science, humanities, and pneumatology that have been rigorously discussed in the Society of Pentecostal Studies. Nonetheless, to a less-informed reader, and even to early seminary students (especially those who may not be familiar with their own tradition's understanding to the many issues discussed), the volume is truly amazing in its breadth of discussion, and in truly concise manner! Most chapters fall within 4 to 6 pages, with a few chapters extending no more than 8 pages: taken together, the brevity and breadth of coverage is nearly impossible, and Johnson has done it again in pushing his contributors to such a conflated task! So, to ERTTP's readership, and especially to the editor, Johnson Lim, my friend for a decade now, I am grateful for the wisdom and charism in bringing this volume in-print, on the much polarized view of the Spirit in Pentecostal and Evangelical communities, for ourselves and for the larger Christian audience!

*Reviewed by, Timothy T. N. Lim, Ph.D.*

Alexander Chow.  
*Theosis, Sino-Christian Theology  
and the Second Chinese  
Enlightenment: Heaven and  
Humanity in Unity.*

Series: Christianities of the World.  
New York, US: Palgrave  
Macmillan, 2013.



This book is a revised version of Chow's 2012 doctoral dissertation undertaken at the University of Birmingham. It traces the development of contextual theology in China over the period of the two Chinese enlightenments that spans the early years of the twentieth century and the twenty-first. Throughout the book, Chow argues the thesis that "*theosis* is not merely a core element of Eastern Orthodoxy, but is also an underlying theme within another 'Eastern' Christianity – Chinese Christianity" (157).

Chow's project is driven by two main goals: (1) map and evaluate various types of Chinese theology; (2) explore "the Eastern Orthodox salvific view of *theosis* and its related subjects as a possibility in complementing or supplementing future developments in Chinese Christianity" (14).

Seeking to accomplish his first aim, Chow draws upon the typological recommendations of the missiologists Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, both of whom employed a revised form of tripartite typology first introduced by the church historian Justo González. This typology is expressed in terms of types A, B, and C, with Tertullian, Origen, and Irenaeus as the respective archetypes.

Type A represents law-oriented theologies that conceive of humanity's sin, salvation and eschatology in legal categories. Type B represents truth-based theologies that conceive of human culture positively in terms of its revelatory potential. Type C theologies place emphasis on

the outworking of history where God's purposes for the world is centred in the incarnation and headed towards the eschatological union of God and humanity. This third type is where Chow sees the greatest potential for enriching Chinese contextual theology with resources drawn from the wells of Eastern Orthodoxy.

In chapter one, Chow sets his study against the historical backdrop of the May Fourth movement (*wusi yundong*) in the early 1900s and the revival of interests in religions and traditional Chinese teachings since the 1980s. His discussion of these two Chinese enlightenments reveals the crucial point that the development of Chinese contextual theology must engage with the issues highlighted by China's religiophilosophical traditions and her sociopolitical quests for nation-building.

Having laid the historical stage, Chow goes on to examine the theologies of three twentieth-century Chinese Protestant theologians in chapters two to four: Watchman Nee (Nee Tuosheng), T. C. Chao (Zhao Zichen), and K. H. Ting (Ding Guangxun). Offering sensitive accounts of their theologies, Chow shows how the González and Bevan/Schroeder typologies, while useful, are nevertheless inadequate for the Chinese context. Watchman Nee, for instance, teaches penal substitution and is clearly a type A theologian. However, his efforts at gathering signatures for the Christian Manifesto and calling on supporters to work with government relief efforts meant that type B concerns are also significant (41-63).

Such is also the case with T. C. Chao and K. H. Ting. While Chao moved from type B to a type C theologian due to the stresses of war and imprisonment (65-87), Ting's theology of the Cosmic Christ makes him a type C theologian who unfortunately fails to properly address his context of the Second Chinese Enlightenment (89-111). In view of the above methodological inadequacies, Chow offers a modified tripartite typology that involves adjustments to key aspects of the typology.

Chow's second aim is explored in chapters 5 and 6. These final two chapters demonstrate the resonance of Sino-Christian theology with

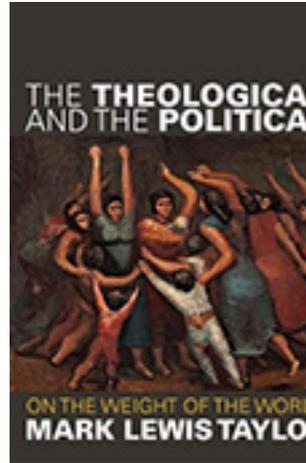
Eastern Orthodoxy. Chow shows that the Orthodox doctrines of sin, synergism, and union with God point the way towards solutions to problems in traditional Chinese concepts, problems which have been readily noted by Chinese theologians. It is in pursuit of this second aim that Chow takes his readers on a stimulating tour of possibilities for Sino-Christian theology. These possibilities are not far-fetched since Chow has already shown that inherent in traditional Chinese thought are concepts that share close affinities with Orthodox teachings.

For instance, the failure to distinguish between transcendence and immanence in the traditional Chinese concept of *Tian ren he yi* has been rightly noted by Liu Xiaofeng. T.C. Chao expresses this problem in terms of the loss of one's individuality. The Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* affirms a corresponding union (*he yi*) between God and humanity but avoids the above problem since *theosis* involves human participation in the divine energies and not the divine essence, thereby maintaining the proper distinction between God and creation. Chow demonstrates similar solutions supplied by the Orthodox doctrines of ancestral sin (130-7) and the synergy of God's energies and human will (137-43).

Although Chow's work would have been more robust if the contributions of Chinese Catholic theologians were also examined, it has nevertheless broken new grounds in the analysis of Chinese contextual theology. His proposal, if taken seriously, will not only lend theological weight to the development and maturation of Sino-Christian theology, but also contribute significantly towards ecumenical engagements and interreligious dialogue.

*Reviewed by, Edwin E.M. Tay.*

Mark Lewis Taylor.  
*The Theological and the Political:  
On the Weight of the World*  
Fortress Press, 2011. xvii + 236  
pp. pb. \$35.00.  
ISBN 978-0-800-69789-1.



The title of Mark Lewis Taylor's latest book suggests that it is a reflection on political theology; that is, an effort to bring doctrinal theology – which Taylor denotes as **Theology** – to bear upon political theory and structures.<sup>1</sup> That is, however, not the case. *The Theological and the Political*, instead, excavates elements of power, domination, and colonization that is embedded in the doing of **Theology**, showing how it has not only contributed to various oppressions in the past and present, but that **Theology** has provided the material to normalize such oppressions. The book advocates an alternative theological method that aims to push back against such normalizations, a method Taylor calls the **theological**.

Taylor's reflection begins with people who were marginalized – or, “weighed against” – by structures of oppression. One unsettling example in his book was the story of Sister Dianna Ortiz, who was burned with cigarettes, gang raped, and “lowered into an open pit filled with human bodies – bodies of children, women, and men – some decapitated, some caked with blood, some alive.” (196) Confronted with such a barbarous act, a Christian may ask what can be done so that Ortiz's story does not repeat itself. But for Taylor, such an approach necessarily deprives Ortiz (or other oppressed peoples) of her own subjectivity by reinforcing how she still needs the help of society's center in order that such heinous acts

1 For purposes of clarity, I have expressed Taylor's understanding of the **Theological** or **theological** in semi-bold throughout this review.

not be repeated.

Such a relationship of sovereignty has been reinforced by **Theology**, which maintains a transcendent ethos by uncritically maintaining certain ideas and doctrines as being unassailable and foundational to the discipline. Such an ethos subordinates theological approaches that deviate from those ideological or doctrinal norms. In academic theology, for instance, theologies which do not assume a Platonic or Aristotelian epistemology, or do not use established sources such as Scripture or tradition, are not regarded as mainstream theology. Thus, **Theology** participates in the oppression of worldviews and ideas by creating a hermeneutical resistance to contextualization, ensuring that the Euro-American patriarchal underpinnings of **Theology** persist (53-60).

Taylor argues in favor of a different theological method, which he calls the **theological**. The starting point for the **theological** is the *agonistic political*, human beings who are “so situated amid historical and social practices that a situation of sovereignty can now be said to characterize our ontological condition, set up especially by routinized exercises of symbolic force, often a symbolic violence” (111). The agonistic political feel the weight of injustice and oppression pressing down upon them, and to push back against that weight, they produce what Taylor calls “prodigious forces of artful images.” To phrase it simply, the agonistic political resort to various forms of art to speak the unspeakable. This may come in various forms, including visual forms (e.g. Berlin Wall), dramatic forms (e.g. a public protest), written or spoken forms (e.g. Ortiz’s recounting of her experiences), etc. These prodigious forces of artful images are the source material for the **theological**, one that diversifies theological method to include non-traditional sources, such as art. Such a method resists the notion that the marginalized have no agency on their own to resist the weight of oppression pushing against them.

*The Theological and the Political* is a rich but dense text, one that requires multiple re-readings to mine its riches. However, Taylor’s construction of the **theological** raises critical questions as to whether

it is helpful for resisting the problems he identifies in **Theology**. One important fundamental question is his categorization of **Theology**. One of the aspects of **Theology** that Taylor identifies as problematic is its reliance on a binary, either/or mode of thinking. God is either transcendent or immanent, for instance. Such binary forms of thought can also be found in many forms of oppression. Racial oppression, for instance, thrives on a Black/White opposition. But by essentializing doctrinal theology as **Theology**, one wonders if **Taylor** himself gives in to the binary mode of thought that he criticizes.

Such categorization has important ramifications for theological method. Because of how he understands **Theology**, Taylor cautions against solely relying on the traditional sources for doing theology in the academy, such as the Scriptures or church tradition, on the basis that they often were source material for maintaining the socio-political system that silences the agonistic political. Of course, both have been used in history to justify racial discrimination, slavery, and other forms of oppression. But by insisting on the **Theology/theological** binary, he assumes that those same traditional sources cannot be resources for the **theological**. I would suggest that the Scriptures can be a powerful source for the **theological** and that **theological** readings of the Scriptures can itself be one of the prodigious forces of artful images that resists oppressive systems of thought. The same, perhaps, could be said of church traditions. Gustavo Gutiérrez, to mention a prominent example, did not reject the Scriptures or Roman Catholic church tradition in constructing his liberation theology, providing instead a reinterpretation of both established theological sources.

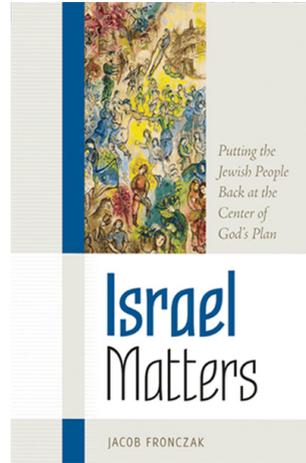
This leads to a second crucial question: where does God enter in the **theological**? Of course, the **theological** resists the transcendent ethos that characterizes **Theology**, an ethos that begins with an emphasis on a transcendent God. That is not to say, however, that the **theological** emphasizes a radically immanent God. For Taylor, immanence and transcendence are two faces of the same coin, rendering such

understandings of God impotent against resisting the oppression borne on the shoulders of the agonistic political. But Taylor does not advocate any alternative understandings of God in place of the immanent/transcendent conceptions of God. In fact, he does not make mention of God at all in his construction of the **theological**. Without God, one must ask what makes the **theological** *theo*-logical?

Problems aside, *The Theological and the Political* is an example of exemplary interdisciplinary scholarship, drawing on disciplines including Continental philosophy, art, theology, and sociology. Thus, the book is highly recommended for doctoral seminars or advanced masters-level courses investigating the intersections of theology and other academic disciplines, or on theological method. While Taylor's book cannot be considered evangelical by any stretch of the imagination, it will certainly generate much discussion and challenge readers to consider the political underpinnings of how they do theology.

*Reviewed by, Henry S. Kuo Ph.D. Student,*

Jacob Fronczak.  
*Israel Matters: Putting the Jewish People  
Back at the Center of God's Plan*  
Marshfield, MO: First Fruits of  
Zion, 2015. 186 pp., paperback  
\$15.00 ISBN 978-1-892124-98-2.



This second book, part of the *Matters* series exploring various implications of Jesus as a practicing Jew and teacher of Judaism, intends to challenge supersessionist tendencies purportedly gaining ground in growing segments of evangelical Christianity in the form of “New Calvinism”. Identifying John Piper and Mark Driscoll as culprits (41), the author subtly shifts to a sequence of veiled charges against evangelical soteriology as being too exclusive and contributing to supersessionism. Fronczak self-identifies as a “Messianic Gentile” (1) within an extended introductory section that is largely an anecdotal explanation of his journey of discovery regarding the Jewishness of Jesus that changed core aspects of his once evangelical theology. Mark Kinzer is singled-out for special thanks (5), which is an important factor because Kinzer’s highly controversial theory of ‘Unrecognized Mediation’ is palpably in the background. This theory seems plainly to serve as the catalyst placing blame upon evangelical exclusivism as a primary contributor to supersessionism; therefore, it must be corrected—especially with respect to faithful, Torah-observant Jews. The reader is being prepared for an ultimate discussion that links Israel’s continued significance with a theology of corporate salvation; i.e., Kinzer’s *unrecognised mediation*. This linkage is summarised well when the author states:

[T]he Old Testament doesn't offer any kind of clear answer to the question of personal eternal destiny—or, as we might put it, the question of heaven and hell and who goes where. . . . these concepts are hardly ever applied to individual people. Instead, we find that God's promises of salvation and redemption were made to an entire nation—the nation of Israel. (8)

The lengthy, multi-faceted Introduction closes by piercing the heart of evangelical soteriology. Faithful, Torah-loving Jews “can be saved without hearing about, knowing about, or believing in Jesus” (12). Such will be the intrinsic notion used to bolster a discussion of God's continued covenant relationship with Israel in order to argue against supersessionism. Fronczak then proceeds to present his material in two parts. The first proposes four key terms to broadly define the realm of Jewish-Christian relations. In Part Two, six chapters examine the Jewish-Christian relationship and how it is to be played-out in real life. A brief “Final Word” emphasises that Jewish people need to be restored in Christian theology and ecclesiology.

*Israel Matters* challenges a traditional framework of supersessionist theology that exists within segments of the Christian community in favour of Israel being God's continued, chosen mechanism to reveal Himself to the world. The result, therefore, is that the Church must rediscover itself in light of Israel's continued role and calling. However, this challenge is undertaken in a suspect manner throughout. Fronczak states that all books in the *Matters* series “are not academic books” (62), and this becomes apparent from the very beginning with a tendency towards broad-brush statements based on eisegetical assertions rather than sound hermeneutics. Ironically, Messianic Jewish scholar Michael Rydelnik's article “The Jewish People and Salvation”<sup>1</sup> is virtually a point-by-point, solid hermeneutical refutation of Fronczak's core premises. For example, according to Fronczak Torah-loving Jews “can be saved without hearing about, knowing about, or believing in Jesus” (12), which Rydelnik convincingly argues against.

1. Michael A. Rydelnik, “The Jewish People and Salvation”, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 165:660 (Oct 2008): 447-62.

Later, the author asserts: “Messianic Jews have a biblically ordained role and calling to show the rest of us what the early church would have been like” (83). No biblical justification is provided, only this bold assertion in light of the fact that NT writings nowhere provide detailed guidance on how the first-century believers ‘did church.’ In Part Two, “Remembering the Poor” exudes a fragrance of Liberation Theology. Contending that Matthew 25 refers not to Jews or Christians, Fronczak assigns salvation to those from among the unbelieving nations “based on their actions ... how they treated those who were in physical need ... even more specifically ... how they treated poverty-stricken Jews and Christians” (111). Therefore he concludes: “giving money, food, clothing, and other necessities to Christians, Jewish people, and presumably others who are in need *actually makes a difference in one’s eternal destiny*” [author’s italics] ... those among the nations who neglect the poor will not have eternal life” (112). Finally, Chapter four challenges why Jews don’t believe in Jesus by suggesting the need for “Repairing Jesus’ Reputation”. While there are some thought-provoking points regarding the need for Christians to reevaluate how they evangelise Jewish people, this chapter displays a shocking lack of awareness that the vast majority of non-believing Jews who come to faith in Yeshua are the result of Gentile evangelism efforts, not Jews evangelizing Jews.<sup>2</sup>

As a remedy for supersessionism, *Israel Matters* proposes a theological shift away from evangelical soteriology. What is to be favoured instead is Christians loving Jewish people by letting go of an exclusive individual salvation for a corporate salvation based on salvific mediation accomplished by Jesus even though unrecognised as such. In agreement with Rydelnik, many people understandably long for a wider hope for the Jewish people instead of the narrow way described in Scripture. Whilst motivated by love, concern and respect for corporate Israel, Fronczak seems to misunderstand how people have always been saved. Salvation

2. Rich Robinson, ed., *The Messianic Movement: A Field Guide for Evangelical Christians, from Jews for Jesus* (San Francisco, CA: Purple Pomegranate Productions, 2005), 17.

has consistently been by grace through faith in God's particular revealed will. In the Old Testament, salvation was by grace through faith in the God of Israel without a conscious faith in Yeshua as Messiah. Nevertheless, Hebrews 1:2 clarifies that, "In these last days [God] has spoken to us in His Son," and Old Testament conditions for salvation have been superseded through an exclusive salvation by grace through faith in Yeshua alone.

*Reviewed by, Brian Brewer.*

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## Notes





### *Submissions*

Scholarly submissions that are suitably respectful of the Evangelical tradition are invited from across the disciplinary spectrum. Given the broad and interdisciplinary nature of the subject matter covered by the journal, contributors should refer to our core values and submission instructions, which provide further details of material suitable for inclusion.

Intending authors should see our guidance notes for articles, review articles, and reviews and use an electronic submission form:

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