Contents

Editorial ....................................................................................................................... 105

Peter’s Denials:
Part I: Important Background Considerations ............................................. 107
Max G. Mills

The Terminus Ad Quem of Daniel’s 69th Week:
A Novel Solution ................................................................. 119
Christopher A. Hughes

The Proverbs 31 Wife: What Determines Virtue? ........................................ 143
Marcia Hornok

God’s Sovereign Work:
An Exegetical-Theological Study of Romans 8:28-30 ...................... 161
David Q. Santos

Book Reviews

Bateman IV, Herbert W. Charts on the Book of Hebrews ............. 183
Cone, Christopher (ed.). An Intro to the New Covenant .......... 177
Enns, Peter. The Evolution of Adam .............................................. 185
Hodges, Zane. Romans: Deliverance from Wrath ................. 179
Matheny, G. M. Exodus ................................................................. 189
Proctor, Bruce A. A Definition,Critique of Postmodernism .... 187
Ramey, Ken. Expository Listening ............................................. 193
Thomas, Gil. Gaining Ground with Good Soil ......................... 195
The *Journal of Dispensational Theology* is published three times per year (spring, summer/fall, winter) by the *Society of Dispensational Theology* in cooperation with *Tyndale Theological Seminary* as a means for conservative evangelical scholarship from a traditional dispensational perspective. *Tyndale Theological Seminary*, its administration, or its faculty does not necessarily endorse all the interpretative views represented by each of the respective authors.

Manuscripts and communications can be emailed to editor@tyndale.edu. Authors of articles are expected to use *A Manual for Writers* by Kate L. Turabian as the style manual. Please avoid formatting articles or using non-standard fonts. Potential contributors are encouraged to peruse the most recent volume to observe submission guidelines or to view those specifics online.

Books for review should be sent to the address below
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701 W. Pipeline Road
Hurst, TX 76053

Change of address notification, subscriptions, and renewals can be submitted online at www.tyndale.edu/journal.html or through written communication to the above address.

**Subscription Rates**
United States non-Tyndale student: $25 per year
Foreign non-Tyndale student: $35 per year (includes Canada and Mexico)
All subscriptions payable in United States currency

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### Contents

**Journal of Dispensational Theology** – Summer/Fall 2013

**Editorial** ............................................................................................................................................. 105

**Peter's Denials:**
Part I: Important Background Considerations ................................................................. 107
   *Max G. Mills*

The *Terminus Ad Quem* of Daniel’s 69th Week:
A Novel Solution ......................................................................................................................... 119
   *Christopher A. Hughes*

**The Proverbs 31 Wife:**
What Determines Virtue? ............................................................................................................. 143
   *Marcia Hornok*

**God's Sovereign Work:**
An Exegetical-Theological Study of Romans 8:28-30 ............................................................. 161
   *David Q. Santos*

**Book Reviews**

Bateman IV, Herbert W. *Charts on the Book of Hebrews* ..................................................... 183

Cone, Christopher (ed.). *An Introduction to the New Covenant* ........................................... 177

Enns, Peter. *The Evolution of Adam* .......................................................................................... 185

Hodges, Zane. *Romans: Deliverance from Wrath* ................................................................. 179

Matheny, G. M. *Exodus* ............................................................................................................. 189

Proctor, Bruce A. *A Definition and Critique of Postmodernism* ............................................ 187

Ramey, Ken. *Expository Listening* ........................................................................................... 193

Thomas, Gil. *Gaining Ground with Good Soil* ......................................................................... 195
EDITORIAL

Many a time, someone has attempted to assemble something and muttered the words, "I suppose that I need to read the directions?!” Many a time, projects are all but completed and look good, and then someone remarks, “What’s the purpose of this little piece?” Of course, the entire project then needs to be disassembled to insert that little piece. The manufacturer certainly knew that the instructions were necessary for the project, and thus will often include a warning to read the directions prior to attempting things one’s own way.

Why is it that most people do not read the directions, the legal document papers, the owner’s manual, or most anything explanatory? The primary purpose of those types of things is to familiarize one with the manufacturers intended use of their product and how to fix it should anything ever go wrong. Good sense certainly assumes that one will desire to achieve the most from the manufacturers intended purpose and use of their creation. However, in reality, human nature is such that we are typically content only with learning or reading enough to satisfy the immediate need that has presented itself to us. Consequently, many things that are accomplished may be limited in the capacity to achieve things of enduring value.

If we are to realize the abundant life that has been given to those who have a relationship with God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, by the One who has created us, certainly it would be wise to learn all that is possible to know regarding the Creator. Moreover, such an abundant life as the Creator intended would be realized by “rightly dividing” God’s life-giving Word so the eternal truths would fill our hearts and minds so that we could be prepared to live the life that the Creator-Redeemer intended.

Of course, the reason why the Christian seeks to learn all that is possible regarding the holy Word of God is that it is both inspired and inerrant. Readers of the Journal of Dispensational Theology can be thankful for Professor Mills’ article, which addresses Peter’s denials, as his concern was to defend the inerrancy of Scripture. Likewise, the article by Dr. Hughes addresses one of the most evident proofs of God’s inspired Word: the fulfillment of prophetic Scripture (viz. Daniel’s 70th week). Marcia Hornok demonstrates that Scripture alone is sufficient to determine virtue for a godly wife. One could argue that given the perfection of God and the need for unquestioned authority, the inerrancy of Scripture is a logical necessity. The final article by Pastor Santos provides an exegetical and theological study of Romans 8:28-30, which is “a stunning depiction” of the sovereign perfection of God, as evident in his salvific work. Having been edified by the articles and book reviews herein, may we all say, “I have not departed from the command of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food (Job 23:12).

— Ron J. Bigalke, Ph.D., editor@tyndale.edu
PETER’S DENIALS
Part I: Important Background Considerations

Max G. Mills

The accounts of Peter’s denials in the Gospels contain many difficulties, which have been frequently cited as contradictions. Harmonization of these narratives has been a matter of debate for many years. Arthur Wright, at the close of the nineteenth century, declared, “The Gospels have so mixed up the various incidents, that their statements are often confused.”¹ Those who seek to ridicule literal interpretations of the Bible use such instances of supposed Scriptural contradictions today. In denying the historical accuracy of the Gospels, James Barr said, “Harmonization through the production of multiple events is the most thoroughly laughable of all devices of interpretation.”²

The questions regarding a harmonization of Peter’s denials directly relate to the prophecy given by the Lord Jesus Christ regarding those denials. The predictive statements of Christ must be evaluated as all other prophets on the basis of Deuteronomy 18:22: “When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him” (NASB). Both the credibility of the Lord’s prophecy and the credibility of the Bible as God’s revelation are at issue. Paul Feinberg correctly evaluated the importance of this issue when he stated, “The truth of His Word will be demonstrated in the fulfillment or failure of His words . . . the prophet is accredited by the total, absolute truthfulness of his words.”³

Therefore, it is important to prove that in the accounts relating to Peter’s denials, while the Gospel narratives are not exhaustive in their comprehensiveness, they are without error. The purpose of this article is

to reconcile the divergences of circumstances in the Gospel accounts of Peter’s denials as far as it is necessary to demonstrate the historical accuracy of the events. The elements recorded in the narratives of the four Gospels can be harmonized. The article herein will establish from the grammatical and contextual evidence that Peter’s denials are limited to three occasions, that the denials are not necessarily recorded in the same order by all four Gospels, that the three denials recorded by each Gospel are portions of three episodes containing more extended argumentation, and that there is no valid basis for the claim that the differences in the narratives constitute error.

Liberal theologians, claiming that textual detail invariably supports critical instead of conservative scholarship, often fault evangelical scholars for employing a characteristically vague hermeneutic when harmonizing Scripture.4 Certainly, it is true that some incorrect evaluations have been made in the attempts to harmonize these narratives. There are differing views among conservative commentators and a good deal of debate with regard to how the denial accounts should be considered. The present study gathers the defensive answers supplied by conservative commentators and a good deal of the debate regarding how the denial accounts should be considered. The answers are presented in proof of an inerrant history of Peter’s downfall.

As Feinberg clearly evaluated, “Inconsistencies are errors of the surest kind.”5 However, inerrancy does not mean complete recall of an event, nor does selective or artistic omission constitute inconsistency. Each Gospel omitted certain points, and the statements made by the writers of the Gospels do not present an exhaustive account of every word spoken on the night of Peter’s denials.6 Far from inconsistent, however, the Gospels are complementary, with each Gospel adding to and amplifying editorial elisions and omissions in other Gospels, which is why harmonization is necessary, and why interpolating the Gospels provides a more full—yet consistent—understanding of the events of the night Peter denied his Lord.

In a second article in this series, an evaluation of the context of each denial will be made regarding location, source and content of accusation, and the nature of Peter’s response. However, preliminary attention must first be given to several important background considerations, including the definition of “deny,” the number of “cock-crowings,” and the meaning of “cock-crow,” including the textual critical problem of Mark 14:30.

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6 Ibid. 32.
THE MEANING OF THE TERM “DENY”

The meaning of the term “deny” is essential to understand in order to evaluate the statements made by Peter in the Gospel narratives. The Greek word used in the Lord’s prophecies of Peter’s denials is ἀπαρνήσομαι, and the Greek word used in indicating the fulfillment of the prophecy is ἀρνήσομαι. Arndt and Gingrich gave the following meanings for ἀρνήσομαι: (1) “refuse,” “disdain;” (2) “deny;” (3) “repudiate,” disown someone or something;” and, (4) “deny, disregard oneself.” Their definition of ἀπαρνήσομαι is “to deny in full.” Gray said that ἀρνήσομαι, with the prefix ἀ, means “to disown” but when the prefix is added it has the meaning, “to disown totally” or “to the fullest extent.”

Schlier indicated that in the New Testament the compound in no sense differs from ἀρνήσομαι, whether by suggesting treachery or by giving greater intensity. By New Testament times the original intensification had been largely lost. Such misplacement is suggested by (a) the interchangeability in parallel passages; (b) the alternate use within the same sentence or short sections; and, (c) the textual variants. Schlier defined ἀρνήσομαι as “to say no,” “to deny,” in description of a negative attitude towards a question or demand. According to Schlier:

The following constitutive elements may be discerned in the concept of denial.
(a) It relates primarily to a person, so that properly one can speak only of denying someone and not something. Its tendency is to be linked with a person.
(b) ἀρνήσομαι implies a previous relationship of obedience and fidelity. It can take place only when there has first been acknowledgement and commitment.
(c) . . . a failure to meet correctly the claim of Jesus Christ for a confession of discipleship (Matt. 10:33 and par.). The recorded instance is that of Peter’s denial. This is anxiety born of doubt as to

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8 Ibid. 81.
the truth of the Lord, lest the judgment of the world in which we live
will be one of contempt.11

Liddell and Scott defined ἀρνήσομαι as (1) “deny,” “disown,” (2)
“refuse,” “renounce a duty or office,” “cast aside,” and, (3) “say, no,”
“decline.”12 They listed the meaning of ἀπαρνήσομαι as “deny utterly.”13
Moulton and Milligan gave the meaning for both ἀπαρνήσομαι and
ἀρνήσομαι as “disown.”14 On the basis of the definitions listed, it is
reasonable to conclude that denial may be expressed in a number of ways
and may mean a number of things, including refusal, declination, disregard,
disdain, disowning, and many other expressions of a negative attitude.
During New Testament times, there seems to be very little difference in
intensity when the prefix ἀπ is used with ἀρνήσομαι. The choice of the
term ἀπαρνήσομαι by the Lord in his prophecy was, therefore, not to
indicate a type of treachery by Peter. The term then reasonably indicates
the complete series of Peter’s three denials.

Lane described Peter’s reply in Mark 14:68 (“I neither know nor
understand what you are talking about”) as a denial of the charge using the
form common in Rabbinical law for a formal legal denial.15 The refusal to
acknowledge his relationship to Jesus may seem to the reader nothing
more than a means of avoiding the issue, but in reality it constitutes the
fact of denial. Peter failed to acknowledge his discipleship. The use of
πάλιν (again) in 14:70a demonstrates that Mark regarded both replies by
Peter as denials.16 Therefore, the terms used in both the prediction of
Peter’s denials and in the narrative accounts of their occurrence agree as to
basic definition. The definition has a broad enough meaning to adequately
include Peter’s responses occurring each of the three occasions.

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11 Ibid. 469-70.
12 Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek English Lexicon (Oxford:
Clarendon Press, 1973) 244.
13 Ibid. 180.
14 James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of The Greek
Commentary on the New Testament). gen. ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids:
Eerdmans, 1974) 542.
1952; reprint, 1957) 575.
HOW MANY COCK-CROWINGS?

In Mark 14:30, the prophecy of Jesus concerning Peter’s denials states that the fulfillment would come “before a cock crows twice.” The quote is different from the other Gospels. Matthew, Luke, and John do not record the Greek word δίς, meaning “twice,” in their account. The term has been omitted by some important manuscripts in Mark 14:30. For that reason it has been rejected by some translators and commentators.

Two other verses in Mark 14 are involved in the textual problems concerning the number of cock-crowings. Doubt has been expressed concerning the phrase ἐκ δευτέρου (“a second time”) in verse 72. The phrase καὶ ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησεν (“and a cock crowed”) in verse 68 is also questioned. The phrase, in verse 68, has been rejected by Nestle and was given a “D” rating in the United Bible Society text. Hendriksen, however, believed that the argument for retention of these terms is stronger than some seem to think.

Is it not possible that a scribe, thinking that a mention of a rooster crowing in Mark 14:68 was in conflict with the story as presented in Matthew, etc., started the process of omitting it? May not something similar account for the omission of “twice” from verse 30 and of “the second time” from verse 72? It is easier in these cases to explain omission from the text than interpolation into it.17

Vincent Taylor said that there is good reason to accept δίς in Mark 14:30 on the basis that it is necessary to Mark’s story. He further reasoned, “The authorities for omission are mainly Alexandrian with partial Western support, and seem to reflect desire to cancel the Markean allusion to two cock-crowings in favor of the one mentioned in Mt., Lk., and Jn.”18 Wenham, in support of two crowings, declared that the whole Byzantine text of Mark bears consistent witness to this version of the story and records the two crowings separately, the first at verse 68 and the second ἐκ δευτέρου in verse 72.19

Metzger also remained positive regarding the inclusion of the phrases in all three verses in question. He believed their omission arose from scribal assimilation to the parallels in Matthew 26:34, Luke 22:34,

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and John 13:38.\textsuperscript{20} Wenham, in 1979, strongly supported the source of confusion as being an early interpolation of καὶ ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησεν into Mark’s text.\textsuperscript{21} However, later during the same year, Wenham wrote that he now disbelieved his own theory of interpolation.\textsuperscript{22}

The observations herein give good reason to conclude that Mark’s detailed account of the double cock-crowing is reliable. As Smith said, in contrast with Mark’s more specific record, “Matthew, Luke and John would thus be giving a general statement” (emphasis added).\textsuperscript{23} With the validity of Mark’s account established, it is important to understand the meaning implied when the Gospels refer to “the cock crowing.”

**THE MEANING OF “COCK-CROW”**

The explanations for the term “cock-crow” may be classified into three general categories: (1) The reference is to a bugle call, known as “gallicinium,” which sounded the end of the third watch of the night from 12:00am to 3:00am and designated the changing of the guard; (2) The term simply is an expression which implies “before dawn;” and, (3) The words are to be taken literally as referring to the crowing of a rooster.\textsuperscript{24}

**First Explanation**

The first view, that the term “cock-crow” as used in the denial narratives refers to the signal known as the gallicinium, is perhaps better understood when viewed in the text of Mark 13:35.\textsuperscript{25} Listed here in the verse are the four watches of the night. According to the Roman system, each watch lasted three hours. The sentries are recorded as follows: (1) ὀψὲ, “the evening” or “late,” which was the first watch, lasting from 6:00pm to 9:00pm; (2) μεσονύκτιον, “the middle of the night,” the second watch, from 9:00pm to 12:00 midnight, (3) ἀλέκτοροφωνίας (only here in the New

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\textsuperscript{21} Wenham, “How Many Cock-Crowings?,” 524.


\textsuperscript{25} Ibid. 422-23.
Testament), the third watch, was from 12:00 midnight to 3:00 am; and, (4) πρωί, “early” or “at dawn,” the fourth watch, from 3:00 am to 6:00 am.  

Regarding this interpretation, Bernard stated his opinion as follows: “Before the cock shall crow’ (John 13:38) would be a vague note of time, for cocks are apt to crow at uncertain hours during the night. But ‘before the ἀλεκτροφωνίας’ is precise; and the hour of ἀλεκτροφωνίας was made public by a military signal.” Vincent Taylor also regarded the statement as a reference to the gallicinium or third watch of the night, sounded by a bugle call. Additionally, Mayo understood the words to refer (in a metaphorical sense) to the gallicinium, the signal given on the buccina for the change of the guard at the close of the third night watch.  

There are several objections to this theory on the basis of language. First, it should be noted that Jesus did not state πρὶν ἀλεκτροφωνίας, “before cock-crow,” but rather πρὶν ἀλέκτωρ φωνῆσαι, “before a cock crows” (Mark 14:30). Brady explained the significance of this objection.

When I write, “I heard a wolf whistle,” we are referring to something far more remarkable than if we write, “I heard a wolf-whistle,” for the latter sense contains a noun phrase which makes it quite clear that I did not hear the literal sibilations of a canine, but something far more human, and metaphorically described.

While the Lord referred to a particular time, He did so by referring to the sound of a rooster, not the sound of a bugle, and this is evident by his choice of terms.

The second objection is that ἀλέκτωρα is anarthrous in the Gospels; it is best rendered into English as “a rooster.” If an event were intended (such as the gallicinium), then the definite article would most likely have been used with ἀλέκτωρα. Brady further explained, “The force of the undefined noun is ‘any cock at all,’ and in particular, any cock that Peter may hear to crow that day.”

26 Ibid.
30 Brady, “Alarm to Peter in Mark’s Gospel,” 45.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
A third objection is that ἴς δὲ πρωί in John 18:28 is not taken in the technical sense as meaning the fourth watch of the night (the period technically known as πρωί). Therefore, it is better to translate ἴς δὲ πρωί in the non-technical sense, meaning, “and it was early.” Therefore, πρὶν ἄλεκτυρ φωνήσαπ should also be rendered in the non-technical sense, because both phrases are within the same context. Lane explained that the third watch of the night was named “cock-crow” because of the comparative regularity of the cock-crowing during the period between midnight and 3:00 am. Therefore, in evaluating this first explanation, it must be conceded that the choice of language used in the text does not favor a reference to the gallicinium.

**Second Explanation**

The second view, that the phrase “before the cock crows” is simply an expression, which implies “before dawn,” is a more widely accepted interpretation. Hendriksen defined this phrase as “before dawn.” Burton declared that the words “before a cock crows” are equivalent to saying, “tonight, before the day breaks again.” Lenski believed that two crowings were distinguished as marks of time, one near midnight, the other just before dawn. He said, “In the present warning, Jesus refers to both crowings: “before a cock crows twice” (i.e. “before the day dawns”). Arndt defined the phrase as simply another term for “daybreak.”

In evaluating this second explanation, it is necessary to mention that most commentators who affirm this view believe the reference to mean “just before daybreak.” Since Peter’s denials occurred during the time when Jesus was being questioned at Caiaphas’s palace, such an explanation would extend the length of the trial to much too long a span. Moreover, it is also asserted that the roosters in Palestine have a habit of crowing regularly from 12:00 midnight to 3:00 am, which is a great time

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38 William F. Arndt, *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1955) 70.
before the day breaks and would, therefore, place the time notation much earlier than “just before dawn.”

**Third Explanation**

Commentators and translators give greater support to explanation three, which is that the phrase “before the cock crows” refers to an actual crowing of a rooster, and which indicates a point of time rather than a time period. Morris said, “It seems that an actual crowing is meant, as the words recording the fulfillment indicate.”\(^{39}\) Bratcher and Nida stated that the words are meant quite literally as the actual crowing of a rooster.\(^{40}\) Rawlinson concluded, “Mark took it literally and provided in the sequel for the literal crowing of a cock or cocks (vv. 68, 72).”\(^{41}\) Brady argued, “The literal sense seems to be the only way to do justice to the language chosen by Mark for the text. To translate the phrase ἀλέκτορα (14:30) as indicating a ‘time period’ would be making it synonymous with ἀλεκτοροφωνίας in Mark 13:35.”\(^{42}\) McDowell and Stewart said that when Jesus referred to the cock crowing twice, he was predicting a crowing of the cock in the middle of the night long before daybreak.\(^{43}\) Kosmala said that even today in Jerusalem people keep chickens in courtyards. He reported that observation over a period of twelve years has demonstrated that the rooster crow the first time approximately one-half hour after midnight; it crows the second time approximately an hour later. The time may vary by fifteen to twenty minutes. If there is shooting or other commotion the rooster may start crowing at any time. The rooster crows the third time approximately an hour after the second time.\(^{44}\) Kosmala’s records give a better indication of the time of Jesus’ trial since they reveal the tendencies of roosters in that same country.

The crowings then are recorded to occur approximately 12:30am, 1:30am, and 2:30am, each lasting approximately three to five minutes. For this reason, Kosmala evaluated that it is incorrect to say that the time of cock crowing signifies the time of transition between night and day, since this would place cock-crowning just before daybreak. In Palestine, dawn

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\(^{40}\) Bratcher and Nida, *Gospel of Mark*, 353, 472.


\(^{42}\) Brady, “Alarm to Peter in Mark’s Gospel,” 44.


earlier in the summer than in the winter. However, the cock-crowing can be heard at the same time between midnight and 3:00am all year round, well before dawn even in summer.45 Kosmala reported, “When people had to set out early for a journey, they got up and went at the first cock-crowing, or the second or the third.”46

Biblical idiom may be illuminated by classical writings from before the time of Christ, which also refer to the second cock-crowing,47 and these texts correspond to the time observed in Palestine. Aristophanes, in his comedy Ecclesiazusae, written in 391 BC, made a reference to the second cock-crowing. He recorded that when the women who were to dominate the city left their homes, “the cock was crowing for the second time.”48 The time is later described as “in the darkness of the night.”49 After rising and arriving at the assembly, it is said that they “spent the whole night waiting.”50 The view of the second crowing of the cock in classical literature seems to be that of an actual crowing of a rooster in the dead of the night.

There seems to be nothing in the text, which argues against this third explanation of the phrase “before the cock crows.” Classical literature and present day observations reveal a second rooster crowing which occurs in the early hours of the morning, long before day. Therefore, it is a reasonable conclusion that the phrase, “before a cock crows,” is the actual crowing of a rooster, which designates a point of time approximately halfway between 12:00 midnight and 3:00am.

SUMMARY

In this article, some basic considerations have been addressed which should be understood prior to making an examination of the Gospel narratives of Peter’s denials. The definition of “deny” is revealed to be one that properly fits the responses of Peter in his time of unfaithfulness. The meaning of this term is broad enough to adequately include Peter’s responses occurring each of the three occasions. Mark’s account of the prophecy and details is proven to be accurate in the recording of a second cock-crowing. Mark’s detailed description of the event does not contradict

45 Ibid. 119.
46 Ibid.
47 Rawlinson, St. Mark, 209.
49 Ibid. 356.
50 Ibid. 344.
the more general statements of Matthew, Luke, and John. Finally, it is an established conclusion that the phrase, “before a cock crows,” is the actual crowing of a rooster, which designates a point of time approximately halfway between 12:00 midnight and 3:00 am. Having considered this important background, the second part will examine the narratives.
THE TERMINUS AD QUEM OF DANIEL’S 69th WEEK:
A Novel Solution

Christopher A. Hughes

The incredible prophecy revealed in Daniel 9:24-27 has fascinated biblical scholars and laymen alike for centuries. Most recognize that something absolutely amazing is hidden there in plain sight, for while the predictions it makes are seemingly straightforward and clear, giving very specific appeals to dispensations of time with respect to the issuing of a decree, there has yet to be any unified consensus as to either the terminus a quo or terminus ad quem of especially the first 69 “weeks” of this prophecy.

As one might unfortunately expect, there presently exists a diversity of views as to the nature of this prophecy, which is regrettable because if there were to exist a single Christ-centered explanation as to the literal fulfillment of this prophecy, it would even more powerfully testify to the supernatural nature of the Scripture and in so doing conclusively foresee and thereby validate the life, ministry, death, and (as will be argued) resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. The divergent views can be divided primarily into those that are “Christological” and others that are “non-Christological”¹ (an example of a non-Christological viewpoint being the idea that the 70 weeks culminate with the events of Antiochus Epiphanes²).

Furthermore, even among those who approach the passage from a literal and messianic point of view, it will not take the curious much time to discover as many as seven different views with respect to the starting point of this prophecy.³ There exists a similar disagreement with respect to the endpoint (terminus ad quem) of the 69 “weeks,” even among those who affirm a literal Christological view of that endpoint (i.e. does it terminate at

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¹ John F. Walvoord, Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation (Chicago: Moody, 1971) 216.
Christ’s crucifixion or at his baptism; does the 70th week involve the first advent of Christ and soon thereafter; or, does it occur entirely in the future? Some of this disagreement is a consequence of the debate as to what unit of time a “week” actually represents (i.e. should the text be understood in a symbolic and imprecise manner or does it prophecy with regard to distinct and consistent units of time). Furthermore, even among those who agree that one week represents a period of seven years (a position affirmed herein), there exists disagreement with respect to what “kind” of year meant: a solar year, a lunar year, a combination of the two, or a “prophetic” year. The purpose of this article is not to conduct an extensive review of each of those different viewpoints, especially given the fact that others have already satisfactorily that feat. Suffice it to say that this article will simply assume a dispensationalist, literal, and messianic interpretation of Daniel 9:24-27, which is a position effectively argued by the likes of Walvoord and Tanner.

The focus of this research is to address the commendable work of the late Dr. Harold Hoehner regarding this subject and humbly submit a


9 Walvoord, Daniel.


subtle modification to the fine detail of his *terminus ad quem* of the 69th week. The approach herein certainly shares his dispensationalist viewpoint regarding the literal nature of this prophecy; it also shares his conclusion that the prophecy must begin with the decree of Artaxerxes I that was given to Nehemiah in the 20th year of the king’s reign (Neh 2:1-8), and that his 20th year must have been in 444 BC (Julian calendar). The work herein even agrees with Hoehner’s conclusion that the 69th week must end in the year AD 33, using “prophetic years” of 360 days each to demonstrate this (beginning in 444 BC and ending in AD 33). For purposes of review and clarity, this article will demonstrate much of this; however, when examining the methodology that Hoehner employed to arrange the *terminus ad quem* of the prophecy to the day of Christ’s triumphal entry, there are legitimate concerns that when scrutinized demand an alternate and better explanation (i.e. a modification of professor Hoehner’s excellent work).

The purpose herein is to present what appears to be a better endpoint for the 69th week that is still consistent with the Hoehner framework (i.e. beginning in 444 BC and ending in AD 33, thus the endpoint pertains to the “cutting off” of the Christ from this planet). Of course, Hoehner himself accepted the task of correcting some of the inconsistencies of Sir Robert Anderson’s work,12 since Anderson was the first (in print) to articulate the general outline of this particular dispensational interpretation (an explanation that, in its essence, remains sustainable today). Consequently, it is probably very safe to assume that (if alive today), Hoehner would not oppose any attempt to further clarify this particular interpretive framework.

**THE “WEEKS” OF DANIEL 9:24-27**

Prior to demonstrating the proper endpoint for the 69th week, it will be necessary to first fully clarify the dispensational position with respect to the nature of the Danieleic “weeks.” First, this article employs the well established idea that the Hebrew word translated as “week” (יָמִין) refers simply to a “period of seven” and does not (in itself) stipulate that the period of seven has to be that of seven days.13 Indeed, while in Daniel 9:24-27 the word for “week” is not qualified as representing a period of seven days, elsewhere in the book the word “week” *is* endowed with such

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clarification. For instance, in Daniel 10:2 where it is recorded, “I, Daniel, had been mourning for three entire weeks,” the literal translation of the Hebrew “three entire weeks” would be rendered “three sevens of days,” which is evident in that the word translated “entire” in that sentence is simply a translation of the Hebrew word for “day” (יָיִם).

In contrast, in Daniel 9:24-27 there is not found any reference to “days” or “years” or any other qualifier of the word for “weeks” in this prophetic context. The absence of any such qualifier in Daniel 9:24-27, while the author was careful to clarify it elsewhere, would seem to indicate that something other than a period of seven days is meant when the word “weeks” (שבעתים) is used in Daniel 9:24, specifically within the context of prophetic revelation. However, the text does reveal specific and consistent periods of time that have been organized into units of seven (or why appeal to distinct “periods of sevens” at all). Therefore, it is certainly safe to assume that some sort of specific and precise time reference is meant, since the periods involved were deliberately organized into a system of equal and measurable lengths of time. If the text is not dealing with periods of seven “days,” then the next best assumption would be that the consistent unit of time defined as “week” is in reference to a period of seven “years.”

To assert that “years” are the focus is certainly consistent with the previous prophetic context of Daniel. For instance, in chapter 7 there is a reference to “time, times and half a time” (7:25), and each unspecified unit of “time” (Aram. יִלְכוּ) reflects a period of certainly more than a “day.” We know this because in Daniel 4:32 it is said that Nebuchadnezzar was to be driven mad for “seven times” (Aram. שֶׁבַּעַת), during which total period of time “his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws” (4:33), which certainly takes longer than seven days. Given the reference to the “dew of heaven” drenching him (4:25, 33), it appears safe to conclude that this must be reflecting seven cycles of the seasons (i.e. seven “years”). Therefore, if this be the case, then any other place were “time” is used the text must also be referring to a one-year cycle. Therefore, the “time, times and half a time” reference of Daniel 7:25 would have to translate to three and one half years (for “times” in the Aramaic of Daniel 4:32 and 7:25 is in the grammatical form of a “dual” meaning “two,” like the English word for “both”).

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14 Miller, Daniel, 278.
Consequently, it is then certainly reasonable to assume that any other unspecified time reference in the book of Daniel (such as that in 9:24-27) is to that of periods or cycles of years, unless otherwise explicitly clarified. Therefore, in the case of Daniel 9:24-27, these “weeks”/“sevens” must represent periods of seven years (just as the seven “times” in Nebuchadnezzar’s case were seven “years”). The idea of a seven year “week” was also not even foreign to Hebrew thinking anyway, for the concept of a year-long Sabbath rest for the land every seven years had already been introduced in the Law (Lev 25:1-22; Deut 15:1-6).16

Therefore, assuming “week” to mean a “period of seven years,” it is now still necessary to define the exact nature and length of these years. Are these solar years like those presently used in our Gregorian calendar, consisting of 365.24219879 days per year, or is some other system meant? Suffice it to say that a purely solar Gregorian type system would be highly unlikely, given that this prophecy was issued before the use of any such system. Consequently, it has been proposed that a uniform 360 day/year “prophetic” calendar is in use here,17 characterized by equally divided 30 day months, utilized primarily for the ease of a calculation that could be standardized across a variety of calendar systems. The writer of the book of Revelation perceived of such a lunar based 30 day/month and 360 day/year system because the text uses “one thousand two hundred and sixty days” interchangeably with both “forty two months” and “time, times and half a time” (Rev 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). One should note that the latter phrase (as used in Revelation) provides a direct reference to Daniel 7:25, which then correlates it directly with the 70th week of the Daniel 9:24-27 prophecy (the 70th week being divided in Daniel 9:27 into two halves of three and one half years each). Clearly, the writer of Revelation used an equally spaced 30 day/month system (deliberately not taking into account any system of leap years or calendar corrections) in order to have 1260 days correlate with 42 months, and this was clearly meant to correlate with three and one half years when used interchangeably with “time, times and half a time.”

Furthermore, this correlation is designed to correspond with the 70th week, and in so doing invoke a system that would explain the remainder of those 70 weeks also. Moreover, if these time references do correlate with the 70th week of Daniel 9:27, then the breaking of the covenant “in the middle of the week” would divide that week into two

sections of “time, times and half a time” each. If that be the case, and “time, times and half a time” does translate into three and one half years of 1260 days/42 months, then the entirety of the 70th week (two periods of “time, times and half a time”) would—by definition—have to equal a 7 year timeframe, with each year containing 360 days each for the sake of consistency. Therefore, in order to further keep the entire system consistent with itself, within the greater prophecy of the full 70 weeks, all the other “weeks” in Daniel 9:24-27 would also have to be standardized to that system. Therefore, the first 69 “weeks” would also have to be “weeks” of 7 years each, each and every “week” of those 69 dealing with years that were 360 days in length also. Certainly, the book of Revelation can be used to reveal the meaning of the 70 weeks, given the fact that the book of Daniel itself predicts a time in the future when the prophecy would be unsealed and more fully understood (Dan 12:9). The unsealing of the prophecy was accomplished by the revelation of Jesus Christ via the text of the book of Revelation.

Of course, this system does not have anything to do with any “real” calendar; rather, it can be argued that this system was utilized simply for purposes of standardization, such that regardless of any particular calendar in use, at any particular point in human history, it can be calibrated to this “prophetic” calendar. Of course, this is not the first time that such a system was used in the Bible, for a period of five equal 30 day months is implied when comparing the 150 days that transpired before Noah’s ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat (Gen 8:3-4) to the 5 months that is also recorded as marking that same interval (cf. Gen 7:11 with 8:4).

Therefore, if this standardized “prophetic” calendar was truly used by the prophet, then there would never be a need to appeal to any system of calendar correction because this system would be able to keep itself internally simple and consistent; and, this would certainly be the best way to organize the prophecy, given that this prophecy would—by nature—need to be standardized so that it could be effectively and consistently interpreted across cultures and epochs of time (for certainly all sorts of calendars have been used throughout time), and this despite the fact that these prophecies are ultimately meant for use during the times of the end, by which time all of this calendar confusion would be worse. Consequently, one would expect some sort of standardization to be present within the text so that this prophecy could be interpreted with clarity, regardless of the reader’s own future historical context (for, if clarity cannot be achieved with respect to the painstakingly specific time references used, then why even issue the prophecy in the first place, which thus mandates that
attention be given to any solution in the text that might unravel this prophecy).

Fortunately, as already demonstrated, the solution to unraveling this standardization is certainly present in the text of the Bible, requiring nothing more than a superficial comparison of Revelation 11—13 with Daniel 7—9 to recognize it. That these time references of “one thousand two hundred and sixty days”, “forty two months” and “time, times and half a time” do link with the last half of a yet still future 70th week of Daniel 9:27 is made clear by Christ Himself in Matthew 24:15, where He refers to the events of Daniel 9:27 as being still yet in the future with respect to His own generation. Consequently, two things can be safely assumed. First, one “week” in the context of Daniel 9:24-27 means a “period of seven years.” Secondly, one “year” constitutes a period of 360 days, consisting of twelve equally spaced 30 day months (done this way for the prophetic purpose of a calendar calibration that would remain throughout the centuries).

THE TERMINUS A QUO OF DANIEL 9:24-27

In order to determine the terminus ad quem (the endpoint) of the 69 “weeks” of Daniel 9:24-27, the terminus a quo (beginning) must be clearly and accurately defined. As mentioned already, there exists a vigorous disagreement as to which of as many as seven possible decrees the prophecy is referencing when it says, “from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” (Dan 9:25). As opposed to commencing a discussion comparing all the different viewpoints,18 this article will simply demonstrate why the decree given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) in 444 BC represents a legitimate option and is the best one to use. Of course, even among those who affirm that this decree is the best one to use, there exists debate as to whether it was given in 444 BC or 445 BC;19 and, even more recently, a few individuals have attempted to argue that the first year of Artaxerxes I occurred some 10 years earlier than the presently accepted date,20 in which case the decree previously mentioned would have occurred approximately 455 BC. The latter idea has been developed more recently and is not accepted by the majority of conventional historians, such that this article will not even attempt to

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18 Ibid. 52-59.
19 Steinmann, Daniel, 470.
refute it. However, with respect to the more generally accepted dates for
the reign of Artaxerxes I, it will need to be demonstrated that 444 BC is the
most likely year that this decree to Nehemiah was given, and this will be
demonstrated in the subsequent sections.

Beginning in the first verse of Nehemiah 2, one reads, “in the month
Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes” that Nehemiah asked the
king to send him “to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may
rebuild it” (2:5). He was, of course, referring to Jerusalem, asking that the
king would release him for the purpose of rebuilding the city that the
Babylonians destroyed in 586 BC. Of course, the Temple had already
been rebuilt by this time, construction beginning approximately 536 BC
and finally completed by 515 BC. However, even as late as Nehemiah’s
time, one reads in Nehemiah 1:3 that he was told, “the remnant there in the
province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach, and
the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire,”
which then prompted Nehemiah’s request of the king to return and
“rebuild” the city of Jerusalem (2:5), specifically the “the gates of the
fortress” (2:8) and the “wall of Jerusalem” (2:17). Therefore, the primary
issue in Nehemiah’s particular situation concerns the rebuilding of the city
walls and fortifications (the latter being what the “plaza and moat” of
Daniel 9:25 would be referencing).

The rebuilding of the Temple is clearly not at issue in the Daniel
9:24-27 prophecy nor was it with respect to the task set before Nehemiah
(such that any previous decree that had anything to do with the
construction of the Temple itself and/or the provision of services for the
Temple can be effectively excluded) while, more importantly, the
rebuilding of the walls and fortifications were the primary issues both in
Daniel 9:24-27 and Nehemiah 2. Therefore, any decree that predates this
decree could not be one that specifically concerned the rebuilding of the
walls and fortifications of Jerusalem. Additionally, it is not sufficient for a
decree to include permission for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem
and yet fail to accomplish it; rather, the decree in question must be one
that meets two criteria: (1) it must be given for the express purpose of

21 The king is Artaxerxes I, the 6th king of kings of the Achaemenid Empire,
son of Xerxes I, who reigned from 464 to 424 BC [Andrew G. Traver, ed., From Polis
to Empire—The Ancient World, c. 800 B.C.—A.D. 500: A Biographical Dictionary

22 Rodney D. Stortz, Daniel: The Triumph of God’s Kingdom (Wheaton, IL:

23 Steinmann, Daniel, 461.

24 Hoehner, “Chronological Aspects; Part VI,” 51-52.
rebuilding Jerusalem; and, (2) it must be the one that directly brings that
goal to fruition. The assertion here is evident because Daniel 9:25
stipulates that the decree in question would be the one that both sought “to
restore and rebuild Jerusalem” and see that goal to its completion (viz. “it
will be built again, with plaza and moat”). Obviously, any decree that was
given prior to Artaxerxes’ decree to Nehemiah would not be one that
satisfied both criteria, having failed to actually see the walls and
fortifications rebuilt (Neh 1:1-3 testifying to the fact that by the 20th year
of Artaxerxes these walls were still in disarray and ruin), and thus should
be easily excluded from consideration (thereby excluding those given by
Cyrus in 539 BC\textsuperscript{25} and Artaxerxes I in 457 BC\textsuperscript{26}). Therefore, Daniel 9:25 can
only be referring to the very specific decree that both sought to rebuild
Jerusalem and directly brought that rebuilding to its full conclusion. Of
course, the book of Nehemiah then describes exactly how this restoration
and rebuilding of the city was, in fact, brought to its full conclusion.

Consequently, it seems abundantly clear that the book of Nehemiah
is present within the Bible to serve as an enduring testimony of the decree
that was predicted in Daniel 9:25. Furthermore, for the reader’s benefit,
the exact month and year that this decree was given was placed within the
text of Nehemiah itself so that the prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 could be
better understood (having occurred in the month of Nisan, in the 20th year
of King Artaxerxes, as specified in Neh 2:1). The only thing that is not
known is the exact day in the month of Nisan that the decree was given,
which will be important in the later discussion. The truth that a literal
decree was given is found in Nehemiah 2:8, where the king did grant
written letters of permission for Nehemiah to go and more easily
accomplish his tasks: “the king granted them (the letters) to me because
the good hand of my God was on me.” To strengthen the king’s approval,
Nehemiah indicated, “the king had sent with me officers of the army and
horsemen” (2:9).

Therefore, it may now be safely assumed that this decree of
Artaxerxes given to Nehemiah “to restore and rebuild Jerusalem” (given in
the 20th year of Artaxerxes’ reign) is the decree that Daniel 9:25
references. The next question would then be, when was this 20th year of
Artaxerxes (i.e. to what year does it correlate on the Julian calendar)? The
20th year of Artaxerxes must be calibrated to the Julian calendar for the
sake of consistency, for the terminus ad quem of this prophecy occurs at a

\textsuperscript{25} John C. Whitcomb, \textit{Darius the Mede} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959) 70-71.

\textsuperscript{26} Payne, \textit{Imminent Appearing}, 148-50; idem, \textit{Theology of the Older Testament}, 276-78.
time, historically, when the Julian calendar was in use. Additionally, the Julian dates (with their corresponding day numbers) are presently the standard by which astronomical calculations are made, and this article uses that accepted standard when calculating and calibrating the two termini of this prophecy. Although there has been confusion regarding the timing of the 20th year of Artaxerxes (some sources report 445 BC and some 444 BC), it is actually quite easy to demonstrate the exact year on the Julian calendar that this decree was given, when taking into account both the Hebrew and Persian “accession year” reckonings of the beginning of Artaxerxes’ reign. Scholars have already established that Artaxerxes’ father Xerxes died shortly after 17 December 465 BC, and his son would have taken control of the kingdom at that time. The Persians would have considered the month of Nisan prior to December 465 BC even until the following month of Nisan in 464 BC as the “accession year” of Artaxerxes (their new year starting in the month of Nisan which corresponds to the Julian March/April) using this “accession year system,” while 1 Nisan of 464 BC through the day prior to 1 Nisan of 463 BC would have then been his first year. The reason for such dating is because “the Persians had adopted the Babylonian calendar” and “the Babylonian year began with the month of Nisan in the spring.”

The Hebrews of Nehemiah’s time would have also been using their own accession year system when perceiving the years of these kings, though not quite according to the Persian reckoning. One may confirm these assertions from a study of the Elephantine papyri, a collection of Jewish legal documents written by a community of Jews living at Elephantine in Egypt during the 5th century BC (at which time Egypt was a Persian satrapy), upon which were meticulously recorded both Egyptian and Persian dates, many timed within the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes I. The Egyptians would have been using a completely different method than that of either the Persians or the Hebrews. Horn and Wood provided the following reminder:

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30 Ibid. 4.
31 Ibid. 5.
32 Ibid. 1.
although the Persians used the accession-year system, calling the interval between the accession of a king and the next New-Year’s Day ‘accession year’, the Egyptians called the interval between the king’s accession and the next Egyptian New-Year’s Day ‘year 1’. Therefore the Egyptians began any regnal year of a Persian king several months earlier than the Persians did.\(^{33}\)

Persian and Egyptian systems were quite different, thus many of these Elephantine legal documents were dated doubly (giving both the Egyptian and Persian months that were involved), so as to improve clarity in the legal setting. While the Hebrew scribes did not triple date any of these papyri in any overt attempt to correlate these official documents with the Hebrew reckoning, a careful study of these papyri does demonstrate the influence of Hebrew thought. In order to understand this, recall that while the Jews (like the Persians) did use the “accession year” reckoning, they used a “Tishri to Tishri” accession year rather than the “Nisan to Nisan” accession year that the Persians used.\(^{34}\) Consequently, they would have started “year 1” of a Persian king’s reign on the 1 Tishri (rather than the 1 Nisan of the Persians) following the king’s ascension to the throne. The interval between the king’s ascension to the throne and the following 1 Tishri would have been considered part of that king’s “accession year,” although the beginning of that accession year would also include the 1 Tishri that immediately preceded his ascension to the throne. The differences are important to understand if one is to know which system Nehemiah used (the Persian versus the Hebrew) when determining the 20th year of Artaxerxes.

There are two double dated Elephantine documents that are very important to this discussion and worthy of mention in this context. The first proves that the Jews of Elephantine did, in fact, use a Tishri to Tishri (fall to fall) reckoning when determining for themselves the “accession year” and subsequent “year 1” of a Persian king’s reign. The papyrus is known as “Kraeling 6”\(^{35}\) and, as long as it does not represent a scribal error (and it probably does not), it clearly demonstrates the use of such a system.\(^{36}\) The system then corroborates with the book of Nehemiah, which also demonstrates such a technique in use by Nehemiah when reckoning Artaxerxes’ 20th year, where a comparison of Nehemiah 1:1 to 2:1 demonstrates that both the month of Nisan and the month of Kislev

\(^{33}\) Ibid. 4.

\(^{34}\) Hoehner, “Chronological Aspects; Part VI,” 57.


\(^{36}\) Ibid. 15 (cf. Horn and Wood’s study for details).
(December/January) that preceded it occurred within the same 20th year of Artaxerxes, which could only be true if Nehemiah used a “Tishri to Tishri” reckoning when determining Artaxerxes’ 20th year. Therefore, both Nehemiah and his contemporaries (the Elephantine Jews) used the same system when determining for themselves the regnal years of a Persian king (i.e. they both used the Hebrew accession year “Tishri to Tishri” reckoning to establish the beginning of a king’s reign).

Consequently, it is evident that the Jews of Nehemiah’s time (including Nehemiah himself) were uniformly consistent with respect to their own reckoning of regnal years and would not begin “year 1” of even a Persian king’s reign until the month of Tishri following his ascension to the throne. In the case of Artaxerxes I, he would have assumed the throne probably just prior to January of 464 BC; and, according to the Jewish reckoning, would not have begun his “year 1” until the following Tishri (fall) of 464 BC. Therefore, the month of Nisan of Artaxerxes’ first year (according to the Elephantine Jews, in addition to Nehemiah, who were contemporaries of each other) would have occurred within 463 BC. Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate Artaxerxes’ accession year and year 1 (with respect to the Julian calendar) according to both the Persian and Hebrew reckoning.

**Figure 1: Accession Year of Artaxerxes I**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew System</th>
<th>Accession Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persian System</td>
<td>Accession Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian Month</td>
<td>1 Nisan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian Month</td>
<td>Jan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julian Year</td>
<td>465 BC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Artaxerxes’ accession to the throne after 17 December 465 BC*
Figure 2: First Year of Artaxerxes I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew System</th>
<th>Persian System</th>
<th>Persian Month</th>
<th>Julian Month</th>
<th>Julian Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>1 Nisan</td>
<td>Jan 14</td>
<td>464 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Tishri</td>
<td>7 Sept</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Nisan</td>
<td>Jan 3</td>
<td>463 BC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Tishri</td>
<td>27 Sept</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second papyrus helps to prove further the exact timing that Artaxerxes I inherited the kingdom from his father Xerxes, which then will help essentially identify Artaxerxes’ “year 1” according to Nehemiah’s reckoning (as demonstrated in Figures 1 and 2). With this information, it is then easy to determine what Nehemiah would have called Artaxerxes’ 20th year with certainty. Being certain of his 20th year (with respect to Nehemiah’s reckoning) will then help to confidently assign—with precision—the exact Julian month and year of the terminus a quo of the 69 “weeks.” The second papyrus is known as “AP (Aramaic Papyrus) 6,” which says “Kislev (Chislev) 18 = Thoth [17], year 21, the beginning of the reign of Artaxerxes.”

The papyrus equates the 21st year of one king with the accession to the throne of a king Artaxerxes. Since only Artaxerxes I succeeded to the throne in the 21st year of his predecessor (Xerxes), this latter king’s name must be inferred. . . . The 21st year of Xerxes, which was also the accession year of Artaxerxes I, began in the spring (month of Nisan) of 465 BC according to the Persian system of reckoning and in the fall (Tishri) of the same year according to the Jewish civil year.

The papyrus is consistent with what was demonstrated previously, namely, that the Jews began the year of a king seven months later than the Persians. In 465 BC, the month of Kislev would have corresponded to

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37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
December until January 465-64 BC, meaning that Artaxerxes would have inherited the kingdom from his murdered father on or around December to January of 465-64 BC. According to the Persians, Artaxerxes’ accession year would have begun on the preceding 1 Nisan of 465 BC and ended the day prior to 1 Nisan of 464 BC. According to the Jews, his accession year would rather have begun on 1 Tishri of 465 BC and ended the day prior to 1 Tishri of 464 BC. His first year, according to the Jews (particularly Nehemiah, a contemporary of the Elephantine Jews), would have then begun on 1 Tishri of 464 BC. Seven months later, Nisan of his first year would have occurred in 463 BC on the Julian calendar. Therefore, if one adds exactly 20 years to the month of Nisan in 463 BC, then the Nisan of Artaxerxes’ 20th year (the Nisan in question in Nehemiah 2:1) must occur within the Julian year 444 BC.

*Figure 3: Twentieth Year of Artaxerxes I*

Therefore, according to a dispensational construct that views Artaxerxes’ decree to Nehemiah as the decree referenced in Daniel 9:24-27, the Nisan of 444 BC occurred in the 20th year of Artaxerxes I. Therefore, the Nisan of 444 BC is the terminus *a quo* of Daniel’s 69 “weeks,” which also definitively corrects Sir Robert Anderson’s errant conclusion that this decree was given in 445 BC.

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39 Ibid.
THE TERMINUS AD QUEM OF THE 69th WEEK OF DANIEL 9:24-27

The section herein now addresses the original intent of this article, which was to better establish the terminating date of this prophecy. The prophecy clearly indicates that the end of the 69th week coincides with the “cutting off” of the Messiah (Dan 9:26). The term “cut off” would have to be in reference to the death of the Messiah because הָעַל has to mean “to cut down, kill” when using this word in reference to a person. The word is certainly used in this manner regarding persons deserving of execution by means of the death penalty in Leviticus 7:20-21, and of persons deserving eradication from the earth in Proverbs 2:22 and Psalm 37:9; it is also used in the setting of destroying or killing in Genesis 9:11 and Deuteronomy 20:20. Consequently, the terminus of this prophecy must align in some way with the timing of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Sir Robert Anderson began the process of determining this terminus, and, though it appears that he was incorrect in the details, his general method for obtaining the answer is still appropriate today. Hoehner summarized Anderson’s conclusions well.

Anderson multiplies the sixty-nine weeks by seven years for each week by 360 days and comes to the total of 173,880 days. His terminus a quo for the sixty-nine weeks is Nisan 1 in Artaxerxes’ twentieth year or March 14, 445 B.C. and his terminus ad quem is the triumphal entry on Nisan 10, April 6, A.D. 32. He shows that this works out perfectly. The time between 445 B.C. and A.D. 32 is 476 years; multiplying 476 by 365 days totals 173,740 days. He adds 116 days for leap years and 24 days for the difference between March 14 (of 445 B.C.) and April 6 (of A.D. 32) and thus arrives at a total of 173,880 days. Anderson’s calculations include some problems. First, in the light of new evidence since Anderson’s day, the 445 B.C. date is not acceptable for Artaxerxes’ twentieth year; instead the decree was given in Nisan, 444 B.C. Second, the A.D. 32 date for the crucifixion is untenable. It would mean that Christ was crucified on either a Sunday or Monday. In fact, Anderson realizes the dilemma and he has to do mathematical gymnastics to arrive at a Friday crucifixion. This makes one immediately suspect. Actually there is no good evidence for an A.D. 32 crucifixion date.40

While a good dispensational position would agree with Anderson’s conclusion that there are 173,880 days constituting the 69 weeks (when assuming 360 days/year) and that converting the “weeks” to literal 24-

40 Hoehner, “Chronological Aspects; Part VI,” 63-64.
hour days is the best way to calculate the parameters within this prophecy, such a position would have to disagree with his use of Nisan of 445 BC as the beginning and thus disagree with AD 32 as the endpoint. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that Friday, 3 April of AD 33 is a very good candidate for the date of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ,\(^{41}\) being well attested and almost conclusively verifiable for several different reasons that will not be fully delineated herein. Of course, if the basics of the dispensational construct as presented by Hoehner were correct, then this interpretation of the 69 “weeks” prophecy would also serve as an independent witness to AD 33 as the year of Christ’s crucifixion.

In modifying Anderson’s conclusions, Hoehner performed his calculation of the \textit{terminus ad quem} of Daniel’s 69 weeks in the following manner.

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\ldots \text{the terminus a quo occurred in Nisan, 444 B.C. Thus Nisan 1 in 444 B.C. was March 4, or more likely March 5 since the crescent of the new moon would have been first visible so late at night (ca. 10 P.M.) on March 4 and could easily have been missed. Using the prophetic year the calculation would be as follows. Multiplying the sixty-nine weeks by seven years for each week by 360 days gives a total of 173,880 days. The difference between 444 B.C. and A.D. 33 then is 476 solar years. By multiplying 476 by 365.24219879 or by 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 45.975 seconds, one comes to 173,855 days, 6 hours, 52 minutes, 44 seconds, or 173,855 days. This leaves only 25 days to be accounted for between 444 B.C. and A.D. 33. By adding the 25 days to March 5 (of 444 B.C.), one comes to March 30 (or A.D. 33) which was Nisan 10 in A.D. 33. This is the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.}\(^{42}\)
\]

Hoehner’s final calculations require subtle modification. Without any evidence that the month of Nisan in 444 BC occurred in the month of March, he assumed this to be fact, and it is this very premise upon which his calculations rely. Additionally, his selection of 1 Nisan for the day of Artaxerxes’ decree is arbitrary, especially considering that Scripture does not specify the day of the month nor is there any independent historical evidence supporting the selection of that day to the exclusion of any other


\(^{42}\) Hoehner, “Chronological Aspects; Part VI,” 64.
day in the month of Nisan. Hoehner’s work is unclear regarding the selection of this date and, as it is, the problem here is that good scientific evidence demonstrates that 1 Nisan of 444 BC could not have possibly been in the month of March.

The use of any scientifically accepted calendar converter\(^{43}\) that is based upon established mathematical astronomical algorithms\(^{44}\) will demonstrate that 5 March of 444 BC did not occur within the Jewish month of Nisan; rather, it occurred on the second of Adar, the month that precedes Nisan. Indeed, a thorough examination of the study of Horn and Wood, which was extensively referenced,\(^{45}\) also demonstrates conclusively that the month of Nisan could not have occurred in the month of March in 444 BC. To demonstrate this assertion, it must first be noted that when all of the papyri that Horn and Wood could (with relative certainty) assign a Julian date are compared, it is found that various Julian years ranging from 402 BC through 471 BC are represented, and the year of interest (444 BC) occurs in the middle of that range. The Hebrew dates are correlated with the Julian dates in their research. Therefore, the preceding 1 Nisan of any of those representative years can then be confirmed with certainty using calendar converter computing.\(^{46}\) Although the year 444 BC was not represented within the Elephantine papyri, those papyri do yield Julian dates for 1 Nisan ranging from 24 March through 24 April, between the years 402 BC and 471 BC.

\(^{43}\) John Walker, “Calendar Converter” [online] (Harvard Mathematics Department, 2000, accessed June 2013) available from http://www.math.harvard.edu/computing/javascript/Calendar/. The calendar converter, which is linked to and used by the Harvard Mathematics Department, is based upon accepted mathematical astronomical algorithms. The converter was used exclusively for this article to determine all Julian years, months, and days as they correspond to their respective Hebrew years, months, and days.


\(^{45}\) Horn and Wood, “Fifth-Century Jewish Calendar.”

\(^{46}\) Walker, “Calendar Converter” [online].
### Table 1: Important Elephantine Papyri Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elephantine Papyrus</th>
<th>Hebrew Month of Papyrus</th>
<th>Julian Date of Papyrus (BC)</th>
<th>Preceding 1 Nisan(^a) (BC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aram. Papyrus 5</td>
<td>Elul 18</td>
<td>13 September 471</td>
<td>1 April 471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aram. Papyrus 6</td>
<td>Kislev 18</td>
<td>2 January 464</td>
<td>24 March 465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aram. Papyrus 13</td>
<td>Kislev 2</td>
<td>17 November 446</td>
<td>25 March 446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aram. Papyrus 14</td>
<td>Av 14</td>
<td>28 August 440</td>
<td>18 April 440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aram. Papyrus 25</td>
<td>Kislev 3</td>
<td>17 December 416</td>
<td>24 April 416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aram. Papyrus 28</td>
<td>Shebet 24</td>
<td>9 February 410</td>
<td>29 March 411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraeling 1</td>
<td>Sivan 20</td>
<td>7 July 451</td>
<td>20 April 451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraeling 2</td>
<td>Tammuz 18</td>
<td>11 July 449</td>
<td>27 March 449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraeling 3</td>
<td>Elul 7</td>
<td>15 September 437</td>
<td>14 April 437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraeling 4</td>
<td>Tishri 25</td>
<td>29 October 434</td>
<td>11 April 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraeling 5</td>
<td>Sivan 20</td>
<td>12 June 427</td>
<td>26 March 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraeling 6</td>
<td>Tammuz 8</td>
<td>12 July 420</td>
<td>7 April 420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraeling 9</td>
<td>Heshvan 24</td>
<td>26 November 404</td>
<td>10 April 404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraeling 10</td>
<td>Adar 20</td>
<td>8 March 402</td>
<td>29 March 403</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) reported in corresponding Julian dates

Hoehnner’s proposal that 1 Nisan occurred on 5 March in 444 BC would represent a date that is approximately 3 weeks earlier than the earliest 1 Nisan recorded by the Jews at Elephantine, throughout the approximate 70 years contiguous to 444 BC (as represented by the 14 papyri listed in Table 1). Therefore, even according to the Elephantine papyri, the idea that 1 Nisan occurred on 5 March in 444 BC is untenable. Moreover, in their book addressing the Babylonian chronology, Parker and Dubberstein corroborated the findings of the Elephantine papyri, and their work demonstrated that 4 March delineated the first day of Adar in 444 BC.\(^{48}\) Of course, a calendar converting program using astronomical algorithms yields the same result.\(^{49}\) If the assertions herein are correct, then Hoehnner’s legitimate methodology when applied to the true 1 Nisan of 444 BC (which would be 2 April of 444 BC) would demarcate the endpoint of Daniel’s prophecy approximately 3 weeks past the Passover of AD 33 (which occurred on 3 April, Julian calendar).

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\(^{47}\) Derived from Horn and Wood, “Fifth-Century Jewish Calendar.”


\(^{49}\) Walker, “Calendar Converter” [online].
At this point, it is sufficient to assert that in order for the dispensational position on this matter to endure, it is incumbent upon those who hold this position to provide a better calculation with an unambiguous endpoint. The remaining portion of this article will, therefore, present the simplest way to calculate the 173,880 days that span the prophetic year interpretation of the Danielic prophecy, which then allows for the proposal of a novel solution for the terminus ad quem of Daniel's 69th week.

First, it is necessary to demonstrate why the earliest day in the month of Nisan of 444 BC does not correspond to either the triumphal entry or the crucifixion. With relative certainty, it is now known that 1 Nisan of 444 BC corresponds to the Julian date of 2 April, and this conclusion is derived from researching Elephantine papyri and Babylonian chronology (moreover, any calendar converter based upon astronomical algorithms will also produce this same result). Therefore, to state the matter unambiguously, the earliest day of the month of Nisan in 444 BC would correlate with 2 April on the Julian calendar. At this point, converting to the Gregorian precise “to the decimal-point” solar year is confusing and introduces an unnecessary complication. Calculations must be performed within the confines of the Julian system, so it is better to find the Julian Day number for 2 April of 444 BC and work exclusively with Julian Days from that point onward. Once the Julian Day (which is given in the form of a number) is known, then 173,880 days can be added to that number, which will yield another Julian Day later in time. The latter Julian Day will then, by definition, correspond to an exact date on the Julian calendar that can with certainty be assigned as a potential terminus of the prophecy. Of course, in astronomy, a given Julian Day is defined as the contiguous count of days from 1 January 4713 BC (Greenwich Mean Noon) to any date of choice after that time.\(^{50}\) As long as the date of choice occurs after 4713 BC, the calculation is valid. Furthermore, this methodology is used as the standard technique by which astronomical calculations are performed in the modern professional practice of astronomy, and so this would be a very safe and proven system to use for the purposes of this research also. For the following calculations, all Julian Days were derived from the Harvard Mathematics Department online calendar converter.\(^{51}\)

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\(^{50}\) Bradt, *Astronomy Methods*, 89.

\(^{51}\) Walker, “Calendar Converter” [online].
which were also all crosschecked and verified using the NASA Eclipse Web Site.\textsuperscript{52}

The 2\textsuperscript{nd} of April 444 BC (1 Nisan of 444 BC) corresponds to Julian Day #1559344. Adding 173,880 days (again, this representing the total number of days in the 69 weeks, using “prophetic years” of 360 days/year, where one “week” equals 7 years) to this yields a Julian Day of #1733224. Using the Julian Day calculators previously cited, this Julian Day corresponds to a Julian date of 23 April of AD 33, which, of course, places the \textit{terminus} nearly 3 weeks after the proposed and increasingly accepted date of the crucifixion of Jesus on 3 April (14 Nisan) of AD 33. Consequently, the earliest possible date for a decree of Artaxerxes (given in the month of Nisan of 444 BC) does not correspond to the crucifixion of Christ (using the assumptions that have been outlined in this article to be consistent with the Hoehner dispensational perspective). The 173,880 days from a decree of Artaxerxes, on the earliest possible day that he could have given it in 444 BC (according to the testimony in Neh 2:1), does not correspond to the crucifixion of Christ and even exceeds it by 3 weeks. Of course, it gets very close, and it does even occur in the correct Julian month, but it is not exact. Consequently, there is either a minor imprecision in the prophecy that (even so) is yet still amazingly fulfilled, or there is another possible date for the endpoint of the prophecy that would preserve absolute precision.

The proposal of this article is that the endpoint of the prophecy is not meant to conclude on the exact day either of Christ’s crucifixion or his triumphal entry (which itself would be somewhat inexact), but rather, was meant to conclude on the day of his ascension. Certainly the prophecy does include Christ’s crucifixion, for it anticipates a time when the Messiah would be “cut off” (נכרי). However, though נכרי would certainly include Christ’s physical death, it does not have to be limited to it for the Hebrew could also imply (with a certain degree of mystery) both His resurrection and the final “cutting off” of his physical presence from earth at his ascension. If this be the case, then there would even be present within the prophecy an integral accommodation for Christ’s resurrection and subsequent ascension, yet without revealing all that detail prematurely. Certainly, the physical presence of Christ was not “cut off” from this earth until his final ascension to heaven forty days after the resurrection, and the use of the term “cut off” in the prophecy really should be expected to imply

the ultimate removal of the Messiah’s physical presence from among humanity. The idea of the complete removal of a person’s entire presence from the earth/land is certainly found in Psalm 37:9 (“evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for the LORD, they will inherit the land,” where evildoers are “cut off [יָשֶׁר]” and banished from the land) and Proverbs 2:22 which states the notion even more plainly (“the wicked will be cut off from the land”).

While for any normal man being “cut off” from the face of the earth would by definition be one and the same with his death, with respect to Christ the resurrection and subsequent ascension forty days later introduces a complication that this word cannot inherently fully address. Thus, in Christ’s unique case the word really cannot fully culminate at His physical death given that His resurrection placed Him back on the earth for forty more days. Of course, this does not detract from the fact that the word is certainly still predicated upon His physical death. It is just that, in order for the implications of this word to be fully realized, we should actually expect it to terminate at His ascension, which finally completes that “cutting off” of Christ from the face of the planet in the fullest sense of the word (as used in Psalm 37:9 and Proverbs 2:22). If this interpretation is valid, then it can easily be shown that the prophecy would line up exactly with the timing of Christ’s ascension.

Acts 1:3 indicates that Christ remained on the earth for a period of forty days after his resurrection. The very day of his resurrection would have been the first day of this forty day period that He would have been “presenting Himself alive” to his apostles (Acts 1:2-3). If the day of his crucifixion were Friday, 3 April AD 33, resurrection day would have therefore been Sunday, 5 April of AD 33. If Sunday, 5 April AD 33 represents Day #1 of the count (corresponding to Julian Day #1733206), then Day #40 would occur on Thursday, 14 May AD 33 (Julian Day #1733245). Therefore, this study would propose that Thursday, 14 May of AD 33 corresponds to the day of Christ’s ascension. If Christ’s ascension does, in fact, fully complete the idea of being “cut off” as presented in Daniel 9:24-27, then Thursday, 14 May of AD 33 represents the exact endpoint of the 69 weeks—the terminus ad quem—at which point Christ was finally “cut off” from the earth in accordance with Daniel 9:26 (“after the [seven and] sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off”).

Consequently, at this point, it is advised to work backwards. If Julian Day #1733245 (Julian date of Thursday, 14 May AD 33) is the final day (terminus ad quem) of the 173,880 day (69 “week”) prophecy, then merely subtracting 173,880 days from that day would yield Julian Day #1559365. Using the Julian Day calculators previously cited, Julian Day
#1559365 equals Thursday, 23 April of 444 BC. If 1 Nisan of 444 BC corresponds to 2 April on the Julian Calendar (as previously demonstrated), then 23 April of 444 BC must correspond to 22 Nisan. Therefore, 22 Nisan (23 April) of 444 BC would then be the day that Artaxerxes gave the decree to Nehemiah to return and rebuild Jerusalem (Neh 2:1, 5), and this understanding would satisfy all criteria as specified in Nehemiah 2 (i.e. that the decree was given during the month of Nisan in Artaxerxes’ 20th year). Nehemiah only recorded that this decree occurred in the month of Nisan without providing the specific day of the month. Using the calculations herein, that day would probably be on or very close to 22 Nisan of 444 BC (i.e. 23 April of 444 BC, which would then be the terminus a quo of Daniel’s 69 week prophecy.

**Figure 4: The Terminus of the 69 Weeks of Daniel 9:24-27**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JD #1559365</th>
<th>69 “Weeks” (שבעים ימים) where</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>173,880 days</td>
<td>1 “week” = 7 years, and where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 year = 360 days, such that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 years x (360 days/year) x 69 =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>173,880 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Termius a quo = 23 April (22 Nisan) 444 BC • JD #1559365

Termius ad quem = 14 May (25 Iyar) AD 33• = JD #1733245

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a Artaxerxes I granted permission allowing Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and rebuild it (Neh 2:5, 8-9)

b Julian Day

c The ascension of Jesus Christ

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article proposes a better and more exact dispensational solution to the timing of the 69 “weeks” of Daniel 9:24-27 than any proposals that have been given previously. While Sir Robert Anderson’s conclusion missed the accurate calculations by an entire year, Hoehner’s solution made a few incorrect assumptions that could not be reconciled with the available data. Neither solution satisfactorily achieved a precise conclusion when given careful scrutiny. In contrast, the solution that this article proposes does appear to provide a better answer, with a greater and yet more simplified precision. Therefore, the solution presented herein would be more precise and thereby render this prophecy found in Daniel 9
that much more incredible. Additionally, this approach recognizes that the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27 not only predicts the crucifixion of the Messiah, but also accommodates his resurrection and ascension.

Consequently, it appears that it would be best to view the *terminus a quo* of Daniel’s 69 “week” prophecy as occurring on or within no more than a day or two of the 22nd of Nisan 444 BC (Thursday, 23 April), which would correspond to the issuance of the decree by Artaxerxes I to Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and rebuild it (Neh 2:5), and is thus consistent with the predicted beginning of the 70 weeks in Daniel 9:25 (which begins with “the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem”). If this be the case, then the *terminus ad quem* of the 69th week (in like manner) must certainly occur on or within no more than a day or two of Thursday, 14 May of AD 33 (according to the dispensational “prophetic-year” position), which would correspond to the timing of Christ’s ascension, some forty days after 14 Nisan of AD 33 (Friday, 3 April), the day of Christ’s crucifixion.
THE PROVERBS 31 WIFE:
What Determines Virtue?

Marcia Hornok

What makes a woman virtuous according to Proverbs 31:10-31? Should contemporary Christian women attempt to emulate what was deemed virtuous by ancient Hebrew standards? Proverbs 31, in general, presents an ideal worth pursuing, but also seems pragmatically unattainable, similar to achieving sinlessness. Another problem results from two differing manners in which interpreters understand the text. An evangelical feminist perspective regards this wife and mother as a successful career woman, while complementarians view her as a stay-at-home mom making things from the very beginning. Both approaches correctly insist that her success resides in fearing God, that is, keeping Him as the focus of everything (as verse 30 commends).

The purpose of this article is to examine both the feminist and complementarian approaches to demonstrate that the virtuous woman is both a homebody and a career woman, but at different stages of her life. The assertion herein is evident by outlining Proverbs 31:10–31 into three distinct periods to demonstrate that rather than portraying a wife’s daily responsibilities, it commends her lifelong pursuits, with her income earning endeavors relegated to the later years. From this perspective, one discovers that all women can achieve Proverbs 31 virtue by developing expertise in something throughout the period of their lifetimes.

OVERVIEW OF PROVERBS 31

The virtuous wife of Proverbs 31:10–31 is the climax that summarizes the book, “demonstrating the application in a life of Proverb truths.” Alexander claimed that the “qualities . . . suggested by the wife’s actions in the domestic sphere” (vv. 12–22) are the “same qualities . . . presented

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1 Myrna Alexander, Woman of Wisdom: Lessons for Living from the Book of Proverbs (Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 1992) 122.
throughout the book.\textsuperscript{2} With this in mind, a wise son (Lemuel, in context) was taught by his mother to look for a wise wife who aspired to such qualities. As an acrostic poem, “apparently it was intended to be memorized and this was a memory tool.”\textsuperscript{3}

A quick overview indicates that her hands/palms deserve seven mentions (vv. 13, 16, 19, 20, 31), while only one verse addresses her mouth/tongue (v. 26). With regard to her husband’s three references, he trusts her and she is good to him every day (vv. 11–12); he is a respected civic leader (v. 23); and, he praises her (vv. 28–29).

Her productivity seems exhausting. From wool and flax (v. 13), she spins thread, weaves fabric (v. 19), and makes her own and her family’s clothing (vv. 21–22), in addition to manufacturing extra for the poor (v. 20) and to sell to merchants (v. 24). She is diligent to provide food for her household (vv. 14–15) and grows some of it herself (v. 16). She stays healthy (v. 17) and is never idle (v. 27).

She arises before dawn (v. 15) and most commentaries say she stays awake late at night (v. 18); however, virtue does not support working long hours with too many things and without rest. A lamp burning at night indicated availability, perhaps to travelers needing a place to stay or to anyone in need. Patricia Gundry said, “The lamp was not lit so she could work far into the night . . . but so that she could give immediate attention to any needs that arose in the dark.”\textsuperscript{4}

Most of all, she fears the Lord (v. 30), knowing that her spiritual relationship with Him is more to be cultivated than physical beauty. “Appropriately here near the end of Proverbs, the book concludes the way it began, by referring to fearing the Lord (1:7).”\textsuperscript{5} Hawkins summarized it well by writing, “She is the ultimate role model after whom any woman in any era or culture can pattern her life if she desires to live according to the principles of wisdom and the fear of Yahweh.”\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid. 123

\textsuperscript{3} Jeanne Hendricks, \textit{A Woman For All Seasons} (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1977) 167.

\textsuperscript{4} Patricia Gundry, \textit{The Complete Woman} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) 101. Gundry’s view also has support from Hendricks: “In the ancient East, a lamp burned in the home of citizens of means to signify their availability” (\textit{Woman for All Seasons}, 181).


Therefore, the end of the passage has a triad of praises for her. Not only do her children call her blessed (v. 28), but she receives *verbal praise* from her husband for being, in his view, better than all other women (v. 29), *general praise* by the poet for fearing God (v. 30), and *public praise* "in the gates" for her works, literally the “fruit of her hands” (v. 31).

### LIBERATED FEMINIST VIEWS OF THE TEXT

A literal view of the passage portrays a godly woman who was focused upon her home and husband, and who helped those in need. She managed her household in organized and productive ways, delightfully working with her hands. However, those who advocate gender equality impose a different role upon the Proverbs 31 woman. One wrote, “In a single text, then, we find the ambiguity of the heritage bequeathed women by the Hebrew Bible. Even at its moments of high praise, the Bible reflects a man’s world. . . . This patriarchal view is simply not acceptable.”7 Another commented, “Many Loyalists cite . . . Proverbs 31:10–31 as evidence that the Bible encourages women to be equals in society. In this passage, the female protagonist appears to be the primary breadwinner in her home.”8 Other egalitarian authors assert, “The woman of Proverbs 31 is remarkably independent and aggressive in ways that many Christians think are thoroughly modern and suspiciously unbiblical. It is imperative to grasp that God’s vision of a woman is quite different from the views held currently in the Christian culture.”9

According to Hull, the virtuous woman “supported her family in a variety of ways . . . ran the family business . . . bought and sold real estate . . . played a number of roles in life: artisan, businesswoman, educator, advisor, devotional leader, and parent.” Hull stated that certain Old Testament women and “the woman in Proverbs 31 was a multi-career wife and mother . . . not locked into some artificial role, nor did the men in their lives limit them. They lived in a patriarchal society, but they operated in

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non-patriarchal ways, and the Bible text commends them for their actions!" A blogger wrote similar sentiments.

The wifely ideal of Proverbs 31 is hardly a workable model for the twenty-first century. Guys, are you seriously looking for someone who will gather the raw materials for your clothes and sew them for you? Manage your servants when you are away? Take care of your business affairs for you. . . ? Someone to provide you with ‘faithful instruction’? And to give you a good reputation when you hang out at the city gates?

Of course not. While these may have been desirable traits at a time when women were treated more like property than people, they are hardly fair, desirable, or even applicable in post-modern America. It is unfair to suggest to women that they must somehow uniformly comply with this ideal.

Finally, Bruce Waltke, a well-respected scholar of the Hebrew Scriptures, repeatedly emphasized this woman’s economic endeavors. “She emerges as an important contributor to the economy of the family and of the community. By her economic contributions she frees her husband to play a prominent public role.” He further stated, “The body of the poem defines [the] ‘good’ [she does] primarily in terms of her economic benefits.” His commentary on verses 14–15 links “her manufacture of textiles to her trade. Her weaving industry provides the economic foundation for her trade for exquisite food from far-off places.” The primary verses that are apparently used to support the career woman view—designating this wife in equal roles with her husband, or even making her superior to him in earning power—are verses 16, 18, and 24. The remainder of this article will concentrate upon those verses.

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13 Ibid. 522.
14 Ibid. 524.
EVALUATION OF PROVERBS 31:16, 18, 24

The King James Version correctly translated verse 16 literally as, “from the fruit of her hands [palm] she plants a vineyard.” When other English translations became popular during the end of the twentieth century, translators significantly (and incredulously) changed the emphasis from planning and planting a vineyard to buying and selling real estate! The Holman Christian Standard Bible, New American Standard Bible, New International Version, and New Living Translation translated “the fruit of her hands” as “her earnings.” The New King James Version stated, “from her profits.” Both the Holman Christian Standard and the New American Standard included footnotes (“by her own labor,” HCSB; “Lit the fruit of her palms,” NASB), but in this writer’s opinion, the text had been significantly altered.

Did the culture of working mothers and the rising popularity of the egalitarian viewpoint influence translators to portray the virtuous wife as a career woman? Just because she sold linen garments and provided sashes to the merchants in verse 24 does not mean she bought real estate in verse 16 and made money in verse 18, as this article will demonstrate. Nevertheless, many commentators insist that biblical virtue means having a career. Writing in the 1980s, Jill Briscoe stated:

Here in Proverbs 31 we find the model of a godly working woman, and that—from a passage of Scripture used in the past to point out the traditional domestic duties of the docile spouse. Our Queen of Hearts was a working woman, seemingly, coping with many of the challenges of our modern-day world . . . she managed to do it all, and finish up with children that adored her, a husband who praised her, servants that obeyed her, and traders that appreciated her. . . . She sold real estate,\(^{15}\) was in the wine business,\(^{16}\) and got involved in planting her vineyard with the money she made from her most profitable ventures. She was a woman who worked hard both in her home and out of it.\(^ {17}\)

Bilezikian’s commentary on verse 16 reads, “She has funds available so that she can deal in real estate and invest in productive

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\(^{15}\) Author’s note: no verse in the passage says she sold a field.

\(^{16}\) Planting a vineyard does not mean she sold wine. Briscoe’s additions distort the text. Perhaps she did this to justify her choices; for instance, Briscoe stated that she “worked out of the home most of our twenty-five years of marriage. . . .” (Queen of Hearts [Old Tappan, NJ]: Revell, 1984] 140.

\(^{17}\) Ibid. 138-39.
ventures. ‘Fruit of her hands’ refers to her own earned income that she can invest.”

On verse 24, he stated, “She is a ‘working wife’ as she combines career and housekeeping. . . . Her home is the base for her business operations. In an economy of cottage industries, there were no shops, factories, offices, and hospitals in the modern sense of those terms. However, her professional activities take her occasionally away from her home.”

Waltke noted a parallel between verses 13 and 16 when he claimed they “feature the income her palms produce, supplementing her income from her surplus textile production to that from the vineyard she purchased from the earnings of her weaving.”

He also had her carefully considering a field and then buying it. “Her revenue to buy it derives from the fruit of her palms (see v. 13), a metonymy for the textiles she made with her palms (cf. v. 24).”

The “Fruit of Her Palms”

Despite the above, it is difficult to equate the fruit of her palms with earnings, income, or profit, as modern translations impose on the text. “Fruit” is produced not earned. Although the word prîy (םִיָּל) can be interpreted as results (e.g. in Prov 1:31, “fruit of his own way;” and, Prov 27:18 referring to fruit from a fig tree), when fruit is associated with a body part, such as “fruit of the womb,” “fruit of his mouth” (Prov 12:14; 13:2; 18:20), or “fruit of her palms/hands” (Prov 31:16, 31), it means what that body part apportions. The context itself interprets the “fruit of her hands” as synonymous with her works: “Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates” (Prov 10:31, KJV). To be consistent, verse 16 demonstrates that her planting a vineyard is from the “own work” of her hands, and not from her own earnings. Income is not mentioned indirectly until verse 24, and there it results from supplying garments to traders not from making clever real estate deals.

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18 Gilbert Bilezikian, Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says About a Woman’s Place in Church and Family, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989) 76.
19 Ibid. 77. Bilezikian must think she was ABOARD the merchant ships not LIKE them (see v. 14 comments).
20 Waltke, Book of Proverbs, 2:523.
21 Ibid. 2:525.
Buying a Field

One may legitimately inquire why it is that English versions state that she buys a field. Buzzell asserted, “out of her earnings from various investments (cf. ‘trading,’ v. 18, and ‘sells,’ v. 24) she plants a vineyard;”22 however, he correctly stated, “The wife’s considering and buying a field have caused some to question the validity of this poem because women, it is argued, were not permitted to do that in those days. However, in this wealthy household she apparently had money to invest.”23 Buzzell’s assertion that women were not permitted to buy land in ancient times causes one to wonder why the original King James translators gave the Hebrew word lāqach (לָֽקַחְ) the meaning of buy when it usually means take for oneself, get, or receive. Perhaps the reason is that it prevented one from thinking she stole the field. If the purpose of the text was to convey that the virtuous woman bought a field, then qānāh (קָנָה), as was used in Ruth 4:5, could have been used as opposed to lāqach.

Indeed, in the 965 times that לָֽקַחְ is used in the Old Testament, only in Proverbs 31:16 is it translated “buys.”24 Consequently, it appears that more study is needed to determine why this unfortunate translation occurred. The wise woman did not consider the field as to whether or not she should buy it for that would be reading modern culture into the text; rather, she considered how to take or conquer it, and use it for the best purposes. Perhaps she studied the soil, drainage, and sunlight it would receive before making her decision, and then she planted grapevines by means of the work of her own hands.

“Her Gain is Good” (V. 18)

Another verse that has been used to promote the Proverbs 31 woman as career oriented and having a textile industry is verse 18, which reads as follows: “She senses that her gain is good.” The Hebrew word tōwb (תָּוֶב) properly translated good has many meanings (some associated with prosperity), but it usually also means beneficial, pleasant, or valuable. The same word occurs in verse 12 for what she does for her husband every day: “She does him good and not evil.” As a consequence of the contrast to evil, the good she does cannot be assigned an economic meaning without

22 Buzzell, “Proverbs,” Bible Knowledge Commentary, 1:972.
23 Ibid.
misconstruing the text to make the “good wife” the primary wage earner in Solomon’s day.

The word cachar (ךכַּה) has been translated as gain, merchandise, profit, trading, and traffic. Although cachar (ךכַּה) can denote monetary gain, in the context of Proverbs 31, she is making garments for the poor and needy and being available (lamp burning at night), which implies the opposite of financial profit. She is giving not receiving. Proverbs 3:14 uses cachar (ךכַּה) to say that wisdom is more profitable than the profit of silver. Wisdom has no economic value, but it is more beneficial than the silver that does have economic profit. Similarly, the wise woman senses that her endeavors are good and have beneficial results, exclusive of monetary income. Such endeavors may include shopping and trading. Certainly, she needed to obtain the wool and flax by some means (v. 13); however, the emphasis of verse 18 is upon “tasting the good” of her involvements. She senses that her endeavors—whether bringing home raw materials or distributing finished products to the needy—are wise and good. Patricia Gundry wrote, “The Jerusalem Bible says: ‘she finds her labor well worth while.’ I get the combined impression that this woman does good work, is reliable, and that it pays.”

To summarize, she neither bought nor sold in verse 16; she probably did buy (barter, trade) in verse 18, and she did sell her own handmade goods in verse 24. “She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies belts to the tradesmen.” Although English translations and commentaries impose “earnings” into verse 16, and although income is implied in verse 24, the Hebrew words for earnings, hire, income, or wages are not found within Proverbs 31. Selling her goods in verse 24 would support the interpretation that the Proverbs 31 wife was a lifelong career woman with income, if it were not for how the passage is outlined.

A LIFETIME VIEW OF PROVERBS 31

Much of the confusion regarding the virtuous woman results from viewing the account of her activities as a list of daily chores. One tends to overlook the fact that the only thing the passage says she does “every day” is being good to her husband (v. 12). The other endeavors comprise her lifetime

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25 Gundry, Complete Woman, 102. While not agreeing with Gundry’s view of male-female equality in church leadership roles, this author does appreciate many of the practical insights that she articulated with regard to Proverbs 31. (One should note that Woman Be Free! [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977] was already published when she wrote Complete Woman).
pursuits as seen by dividing the passage into early years, middle years, and later years (a view developed by the late Martha Sloan Montgomery, a home Bible teacher in Dallas from 1952–92). Montyogn taught the following outline: three verses of introduction, five verses for each of the three stages of a woman’s life, and four concluding verses.

**Introduction to the Passage**

"An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels" (v. 10). Characteristic of Hebrew poetry, this summary statement is an introduction, not a dilemma. Like rare and precious gems, increasing in value with age, this woman’s abilities and character mature as she does. The introduction includes verses 11–12. "The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.” A virtuous wife focuses priority upon her husband. He trusts her with his assets, his needs, his secrets, his welfare, and he has no reason to look elsewhere for “spoils” (v. 11). By application, a virtuous wife should have a daily quest: the good she can accomplish daily for her husband (v. 12). Proverbs 12:4 describes a virtuous wife as being a crown to her husband. "But she who shames him is like rottenness in his bones." A good wife will make her husband feel like a king rather than a cripple. The vastness of the passage describes a woman’s life in three stages: early, middle, and later years, with each stage commenting upon what she wears.

**The Early Years**

Five verses describe her early years (vv. 13–17), and indicate that she is home centered. She manages a household, providing both winter clothing (from wool) and summer clothing (from flax) for her family (v. 13). She is conscientious to provide food for them (v. 14), and assigns tasks to her

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26 The passage stimulated a lengthy series titled “Every Wise Woman” in her home Bible study with women in Dallas. Martha’s husband, John C. Montgomery, a preeminent Christian psychiatrist, served on the Board of Trustees of the Dallas Theological Seminary for more than ten years during the late 1960s.


28 Literally, the Hebrew could be translated “corals,” and such value would be determined by how long a diver could hold his breath to find and detach pieces. Eugenie Clark reported brilliant red corals under the surface of the Red Sea (“The Strangest Sea,” *National Geographic* 148 [September 1975]: 338-43).
maidens early in the day (v. 15). In verse 16, she considers how best to use a field, decides upon a vineyard, and then plants it with her own hands. Certainly, she worked outside the home (i.e. in a vineyard, not an office). Her involvement in business came later in life. Verse 17 concludes this early stage of life by demonstrating what she wears: strength. The two aspects that she strengthens are her loins (the childbirth area) and her arms. Producing children and doing the physical labor involved in homemaking can usually characterize the early life of a married, young woman.

**The Middle Years**

The next five verses describe mid-life years (vv. 18–22), which are often a time for self-evaluation. Verse 18 might allude to this introspection as she senses her involvements are good. The expression "her lamp does not go out at night" depict availability, and the next verses continue that representation. As her hands are employed to spin and weave, so are they also engaged in outreach to the poor and needy (vv. 19–20). During the middle years, with children doing more for themselves, mothers can dedicate time for charity and volunteer work.

She spins, weaves, and makes clothing for her household (v. 21), herself (v. 22), and the poor and needy (v. 20). She provides warmth and security for her family, so they need not fear the winter cold or the challenges of life (v. 21). Verse 22 concludes the midlife stage with another reference to her clothing. "Fine linen and purple" (worn by priests and kings) allude to dignity and honor. In the early years, she developed physical strength, and in the middle years, she has strength of character. She deserves honor and displays such character well.

**The Later Years**

Finally, the later years are described in five verses (vv. 23–27). The concluding section, in addition to the introduction and conclusion, refers to her husband. Perhaps this stage of life, known as the time in which the children have grown and have begun their own home lives, allows a virtuous wife to be most husband-centered. He "is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land" (v. 23). In the times in which Proverbs was written, the city gates were a locale in which business was conducted. Older men, who were respected by the community, sat at the gates to judge local affairs (and these men were considered wise). One can assume this wife is now elderly, as is her husband, and she can share credit
for her husband’s good reputation. In her elder years, she also speaks with wisdom and kindness (v. 26). At this stage of life, the virtuous woman had the time and expertise for a merchandising business: a cottage industry. All her life she manufactured raw materials into useful products, and now those endeavors earn income for her (v. 24). Her garments were so desirable that merchants wanted to buy them (presumably for resale).

Once again, the third stage of life mentions what she wears: “Strength and honor are her clothing” (v. 25, KJV): strength from the early years, and honor from the middle years. The qualities mentioned in verse 25, which are matured by life, now fully characterize her. Consequently, she has a positive outlook with regard to aging in years: “she smiles at the future” (v. 25b). The woman of Proverbs 31 is still focused upon her home, and thus she acutely observes her household (v. 27) and does not succumb to idleness. Aging women must stay useful, resisting the urge to “let the younger generation do it.” (In her late 80s, Martha Montgomery still taught Bible studies in her retirement home.) Some older women are physically unable to do more than pray, but what an indispensable ministry that can be. “If we do not view ourselves as a disposable, as someone who is out of it when she is past a certain age, then we will not be.”

Finally, the last four verses comprise a closing statement. She received praise from her children (v. 28), her husband (v. 29), her works (v. 31), and by implication, the Lord (v. 30). Women should concentrate their efforts upon these four aspects: being a godly mother, wife, worker, and child of God. Verse 30 presents the beauty secret of a virtuous woman: she fears the LORD. As God’s ideal woman develops her relationship with Him, her sphere of influence and ministry broadens. As time increases the value of a rare jewel, so women become virtuous with age and experience as they pursue a lifelong goal of pleasing God.

**Her Lifelong Expertise**

The Proverbs 31 woman, unlike women today, had no access to department stores, factories, or Internet shopping. Over the years, she developed expertise at making garments. She pursued this skill in the early years (v. 13) and continued it in the middle years (v. 19). Indeed, all five verses of the middle years refer directly or indirectly to garment making. Subsequently, verse 24 demonstrates that merchants purchased from her. In time, her specialty was valued by others and earned her income. Prior to this, her handiwork benefitted the poor and needy (v. 20), her family (v.

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21), and herself (v. 22), which leads one to ask if the essence of virtue means a woman should manufacture her own clothes. Applying the culture of Israel during the Solomonic kingdom era to today, one may conclude that a virtuous woman should develop an expertise that will benefit her family and people in need. She may become so skilled that eventually she also derives income from her proficiency. Patricia Gundry reiterates this point.

There is the pleasure one gets from a necessary, though nonpaying, job well done: pride in workmanship, you could say. But it's more than that, it's knowing that you have made a contribution to your family, church, neighborhood, country; that you are pulling your weight and doing your share. . . . There is a renewed interest now in cooking from scratch, baking bread, and quilting—all ways to regain some of that lost creative satisfaction women once received as part of their usual work at home.30

Traditional views of Proverbs 31 equate virtue with production. "Her disciplined, industrious lifestyle shows foresight, efficiency, and resourcefulness, all evidence of the application of wisdom in her life."31 While the statement is true, this article equates virtue with excellence in a useful field. The primary idea is that a virtuous woman devotes her time and effort to providing a commodity or service that benefits her family and others, which is the essence of Proverbs 31 virtue. Ruth is the only Bible woman called virtuous (Ruth 3:11), and she was proficient at caretaking, as evident in her assistance to her mother-in-law. Ruth’s faith in the Lord was evident in her devotion to Naomi; it not only benefitted Naomi and her deceased husband, but also the Bethlehem community. The lineage of King David began with Boaz and Ruth, and eventually, from the ancestry of King David would come Messiah, thus Ruth’s virtue affected the entire nation of Israel in addition to the world (all because she was caregiver to her mother-in-law).

CONCLUSION

Egalitarians desire the Proverbs 31 woman to be equal with her husband, so they portray her as an entrepreneur in the business world, earning income in the marketplace and by means of real estate investments. While she did have earned income, this is stated only in verse 24, where the

30 Ibid. 57.
Proverbs 31 woman sold her handmade garments to the traders in the mature years of her life. The poem is a depiction of a virtuous woman’s early, middle, and later years, rather than records of her daily activities. “This portrait looks at the finished product, not at a young woman entering marriage. It reflects the cumulative effect of a life lived wisely.”32 The lifelong journal of a woman who fears God is not a record of her daily activities. A day in her life would not be characterized by all this production; rather, by the time she and her husband are elderly (v. 23), her lifelong virtue and accomplishments, as detailed in verses 13-22, are praiseworthy. Therefore, the complementarian view correctly understands the Proverbs 31 woman as focused upon homelife, especially during her early and middle years, as Piper and Grudem stated.

Too many women rush headlong into a career outside the home, determined to waste no time or effort on housework or baby-sitting but rather seeking to achieve position and means by directing all talents and energies toward non-home professional pursuits. It is true that many “perfect jobs” may come and go during the childrearing years, but only one will absolutely never come along again—the job of rearing your own children and allowing them the increasingly rare opportunity to grow up at home.33

Many mothers consider being home with their children desirable but unrealistic, given today’s economy and the prevalence of single parenting. However, young women can creatively explore frugality, sales resistance, and improvisation; they must not allow peer pressure to influence them to seek what is deemed best for themselves rather than what is preeminent for their families. A mother can experiment with working from home, living in a multi-generational household, working an opposite shift from her husband, or finding a job where her children can be with her.

If the Proverbs 31 woman engaged in a career, it occurred later in her life (perhaps during the years that her children established homes of their own) for by then the aptitude that she enjoyed and developed throughout the years produced a valued commodity that others wanted to buy, which is the “fruit of her hands” that earned her income in addition to praise.

32 Ibid. 21.
With this in mind, Proverbs 31 is not an archaic poem with little relevance today. Every God fearing older woman should be known for her expertise in some aspect that not only provides personal fulfillment, but also is a value to others. She should have a prepared answer for the question, "What is your proficiency?" Today's godly woman may do her best work tending grandkids, knitting blankets, sending encouraging notes, cleaning the church building, ministering by means of music, or she may manage portfolios, manage a company, wait tables, or operate a cash register. Her value exceeds that of jewels because she is excellent at what she does, and it benefits others. She is a woman of virtue in the biblical sense.
APPENDIX
Suggested English Translation and Outline

Introduction (vv. 10-12)
10 – Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far beyond corals.
11 – The heart of her husband safely trusts in her, so that he shall have no need of spoils.
12 – She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Her Early Years (vv. 13-17)
13 – She seeks wool, and flax, and works willingly with her palms.
14 – She is like the merchants’ ships; she brings her food from afar.
15 – She rises also while it is yet night, and gives meat (“prey”) to her household, and assigns tasks to her maidens.
16 – She considers a field and appropriates it: with the fruit of her palms she plants a vineyard.
17 – She girds her loins with strength, and strengthens her arms.

Her Middle Years (vv. 18-22)
18 – She perceives that her trading is good. She is available even at night.
19 – She lays her hands to the spindle, and her palms hold the distaff.
20 – She stretches out her palms to the poor; yes, she reaches forth her hands to the needy.
21 – She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.
22 – She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

Her Later Years (vv. 23-28)
23 – Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land.
24 – She makes fine linen, and sells it; and delivers girdles unto the merchants.
25 – Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.
26 – She opens her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.
27 – She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.
Conclusion (vv. 30-31)
28 – Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:
29 – “Many daughters have done virtuously, but you excel them all.”
30 – Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.
31 – Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates.
GOD’S SOVEREIGN WORK:
An Exegetical-Theological Study of Romans 8:28-30

David Q. Santos

The book of Romans is unique among all the New Testament as it is the most thorough explanation of theology; in systematic fashion, it addresses anthropology, sin and salvation, condemnation, salvation by faith alone, redemption, adoption, sanctification, sanctification excepting law, freedom from sin, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, eternal security, Israelology, and practical theology. By means of brilliant rhetorical usage, Paul utilized his education to advance the Word of God, as a consequence of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8 is one of the most theologically diverse passages in all Scripture; it speaks powerfully with regard to pneumatology, soteriology, and personal eschatology. Romans 8 answers the difficulty raised at the end of chapter seven, wherein Paul realized that even he could not live the life he was called to live by himself. He was not capable of winning the war that was waging within him between his desire to live for Christ and the desire of his flesh. He asked who could save him from his body of sin. The answer is the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (8:1-11). He also explained the meaning of sonship to the believer who has been adopted into the family of God (8:12-17), and he also wrote concerning the reality of present sufferings in the life of the believer.

The present passage is a kind of summary of 8:1–27. It prepares for, and to some extent is similar to, the grand climax found in verses 37–39. It cannot be fully understood except in the light of verses 1–27. It draws a conclusion; in fact, a very comforting conclusion.¹

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COMMENTARY AND OUTLINE

Verses 28-30 must be read in light of the preceding verses, as is the case with the entire book of Romans (since each chapter further develops the previous, which is even true in verses 28-30). Each verse, phrase, clause, and word was carefully constructed to be impactful, and thus demonstrates God’s sovereign work in the world, the believer’s responsibility, and the Christian’s security in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:28-30 may be outlined as follows.

I. We know that to those who love God all things are working together for good (28a)

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good” (οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεόν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν). Romans 8:28 opens with a dependent clause: “and we know that.” The clause begins in the Greek text with the verb οἶδαμεν, which is the perfect active form of οἶδα and which is defined as “to have information about, know.” In Romans 8:28, it is translated as “we know” with the “we” being the implied subject of the verb based upon that verb’s morphology. One should notice that most translations place the connective conjunction δὲ as the first word and translate it as “and,” thus implying “an inference from what Paul had taught concerning afflictions.” Morris explained the debate regarding the introductory conjunction.

There are different views about the opening of this verse. Some favor “and,” seeing not a contrast with the preceding but a transition to a further thought of much the same kind (e.g., Murray). Others perceive a contrast between the groanings of the previous section and God’s

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working in this one (e.g., Godet). Either is possible, and many solve
the problem by leaving out the connective (e.g., JB).\textsuperscript{4}

The best approach would be to maintain the “and” of this passage, and
retain the sense of believers in Christ being transitioned from suffering to
glory. While this may seem insignificant to some, how this conjunction is
understood can have significant implications for the remainder of the verse
in addition to the subsequent verses. The “and” supports the view that this
passage is a transition from the groaning and suffering in the previous
passage to the glory that is given to those that love God; it is also a
progression of the ministries of the three persons of the Trinity. According
to verse 26, the Holy Spirit helps the “we” (i.e. believers). Verse 27 reveals
that Jesus, the one who “searches hearts” and “knows the mind of the
Spirit” intercedes for the saints. Verses 28-30 then focus upon the purpose
of God the Father.

The conjunction ὅτι translated “that” is a subordinating
conjunction that is commonly used after verbs that “denote mental or
sense perception, or the transmission of such perception, or an act of the
mind, to indicate the content of what is said, etc.”\textsuperscript{5} In this case, it denotes
the perception or understanding that believers possess regarding God’s
eternal purpose for their lives. The conjunction and dependent clause also
serve to connect the latter content with the former (further supporting the
transition from the ministries of the Son and the Spirit to the Father).

The phrase “those who love God” consists of two clauses. The first
is the dative clause τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν (those who love) followed by the
accusative clause τῶν θεῶν (the God). The dative clause consists of the
plural masculine article and the plural masculine participle of ἀγαπάω
(which is in the present active form). Using the participle of ἀγαπάω was a
unique way for Paul to describe believers. As Schreiner noted, “Paul does
not speak often of believers loving God (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9; 8:3; Eph. 6:24), and
here the phrase is merely another way of denoting those who are
believers.”\textsuperscript{6} The clause is in apposition with the phrase “called according to
His purpose,” which Paul used to further express who is receiving the
action of the verb (translated as “working together”). Morris affirmed this
usage when he wrote, “Those who love God are also those who have been
called according to his purpose.”\textsuperscript{7}

\begin{itemize}
  \item [4] Leon Morris, \textit{The Epistle to the Romans} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988)
  \item [330.]
  \item [5] Arndt et al., \textit{Greek-English Lexicon}, 731.
\end{itemize}
The phrase “those who love God” modifies the key verb συνεργεῖ which is the present active form of συνεργέω and has the meaning “work together.” Ἐν συνεργεί is only found five times in the New Testament (Mark 16:20; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 16:16; 2 Cor 6:1; Jas 2:22) and is found only twice in the Septuagint, both of which are in the apocryphal books (1 Esd 7:2; 1 Macc 12:1). The sense of the word often is that two individuals or groups work together (Mark 16:20; 1 Cor 16:16; 2 Cor 6:1), although it can also prove multiple actions or events working together (Rom 8:28; Jas 2:22). Based primarily upon the context of the passage, Romans 8:28 has the sense of multiple actions or events working together, which is confirmed by a thorough study of the entire clause πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἁγαθόν. Furthermore, it should be observed that the adjective πάντα and the prepositional phrase εἰς ἁγαθόν both modify the verb συνεργεῖ. Both modifiers are in the accusative case and there is no nominative noun to be found, thus making it difficult to decide what is the subject of the verb.

There is considerable debate with regard to the subject of the verb συνεργεῖ. Three basic solutions have been given. Some believe that the subject is the Spirit as, in their view, this passage continues to describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The second solution is to understand the adjective πάντα as the subject. The third interpretation argues that God is the subject. The position has already been adopted in this study that verses 28-30 transition from the previous text into a fuller description of the ministry of God the Father. Therefore, based upon context, the Holy Spirit is not the subject, which results in two other options. The continued debate between “God” as the subject and “all things” is made more difficult by a textual problem where ὁ θεός is added to some manuscripts. However, it is not possible to find enough support for this addition to include it. Schreiner explained, “the witnesses supporting this variant are both early and notable, they are not widespread enough to overturn the majority of the manuscript tradition, which omits ὁ θεός.”# Wallace provided a thorough and concise treatment of the subject.

God causes all things [πάντα] to work together for good to those who love God

Sometimes it is difficult to tell whether a particular sentence even has a direct object. In this instance, such doubt is due to textual uncertainty and the syntactical range of the verb. συνεργέω is one of the verbs that can be either transitive or intransitive. If ὁ θεός is original, the verb is transitive here (and πάντα is the acc. direct object). But since ὁ θεός is textually suspect, it is better to

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# Schreiner, Romans, 455.
read the text without it. This leaves two probable options: either "he works all things together for good" or "all things work together for good." In the first instance the subject is embedded in the verb and "God" is clearly implied (as in v 29). In the second instance, πάντα becomes the subject of an intransitive verb. In either case, "What is expressed is a truly biblical confidence in the sovereignty of God."

One may regard it as likely that those witnesses who added ὁ θεός to their manuscripts did so for the purpose of clarifying their view of what the subject was. Schreiner agreed with this suggestion and wrote, "the insertion of ὁ θεός by scribes is explicable since they presumably wanted to clarify that God was the agent by whom all things worked together for good. This last argument is not definitive, however, because ὁ θεός could have been dropped because it was deemed to be insufferably awkward to insert it on the heels of τὸν θεόν."

Based upon the context, grammar, and comparison to Pauline theology, this study concludes that God is the subject of the verb and maintains the two accusative modifiers as direct objects.

Πάντα is the accusative adjective that means "all things" since it is also in the neuter gender and has no object of its own; it is also one of the direct objects of συνεργεῖ. God is working all things εἰς ἀγαθόν for good. Wallace wrote,

It is difficult to pass over a verse such as this without noting two additional items: (1) the good that is accomplished is specifically for believers; and (2) that good is in connection with conformity to Christ through suffering (so vv 17–30). Thus to say (as is frequently done nowadays, even in non-Christian circles), "Everything will work together for the good," as if things work out by themselves and the good is human comfort, is hardly Pauline and hardly biblical.

Romans 8:28 began with the statement "and we know," which links this passage with the theme of the previous verses. Paul introduced the theme in verse 18 where he stated that the current sufferings cannot be compared to the glory that is to come. Believers must have knowledge that allows them to recognize that there will be tribulations in life and a future reward for enduring for Christ's name. Christians are to wait eagerly for

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10 Schreiner, Romans, 455.
11 Wallace, Greek Grammar, 180-81.
this future reality to become present. The knowledge is that God is working in the world and in the lives of believers and everything is working for good to the follower of Christ. Paul may have recollected Genesis 50:20 wherein Joseph said, “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”

II. God Works All Things for Good according to His Purpose to Those He Calls (28b)

“According to his purpose to those that are called” (τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὐσίοι). Paul introduced the theme of present suffering with a future of glorification. The glorification is to those who love God. Paul further developed the thought of who the beneficiaries are of God working all things together for good. First, it is those who love God (as explained in the previous section). Paul next described them as being those who are called. Paul transitioned to this expanded explanation with the preposition κατά which has the accusative noun πρόθεσιν and yields the translation “according to.” The accusative noun πρόθεσιν is the direct object of the verb συνέργει, which is translated with the preposition “according to the purpose.” There is a dative article at the beginning of this phrase and a dative participle οὐσίον (from the verb εἰμί which is translated “are”).


An important aspect of this phrase is the adjective κλητοῖς (“called”). The dative adjective κλητοῖς is related to the article and the participle by morphology and is used to identify the group who are “the called.” The word that Paul used for “called” is found ten times in the New Testament (Matt 24:14; Rom 1:1; 6, 7, 8:28; 1 Cor 1:1-2, 24; Jude 1; Rev 17:14). In all cases (except the occurrence in Matt 24), the word has the sense of an

urgent invitation or to be summoned and commissioned. Paul used it of his own calling as an apostle (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1) and of believers who were called to their position in the same manner Paul was called (Rom 1:6-7, 8:28; 1 Cor 1:2, 24). Paul used κλητός (an adjective) seven times, but if one expands the search to include uses of the word κλήσις (the noun form translated as called or calling), then a total of sixteen occurrences are found, nine of which are nouns (Rom 11:29; 1 Cor 1:26, 7:20; Eph 1:8, 4:1, 4; Phil 3:14; 2 Thess 1:11; 2 Tim 1:9). Many of the verses bring tremendous clarity to how Paul felt regarding the believer’s calling. An example of this can be seen in 2 Timothy 1:9 where Paul wrote, “who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.” The calling of the believer is not based upon works but according to God’s divine purpose. The calling relies upon grace of which Christ Jesus is the conduit who allows the Christian to partake in the calling. Furthermore, the calling has a responsibility to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling” (Eph 4:1) recognizing that the believer is now part of the family of God by adoption. In Ephesians 1:18, Paul prayed that the believers in Ephesus would recognize the “hope of His calling” and the promise of a rich inheritance as the children of God.

Furthermore, Paul declared (in the very text being examined in this work) the true depth of what it means to be called. In verse 30, Paul declared that those that are called are justified. Paul’s statement goes far beyond a simple invitation of the gospel message. The Word of God demonstrates that it is all who are called who are justified (declared righteous) in Christ Jesus. Morris wrote, “the idea of the divine call is very important for Paul. In the Gospels we sometimes read ‘many are called, but few chosen’, but Paul is not using the term ‘call’ in that sense. He means ‘effectual call’; he is speaking of those who have not only heard the call but have responded.”

It is not merely an invitation that human beings can reject, but it is a summons that overcomes human resistance and effectually persuades them to say yes to God. This definition of “calling” is evident from Rom. 8:30, for there Paul says that “those whom he called [ἐκάλεσεν]

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14 Paul used κλήσις 5 times in the genitive case, 2 times in the dative, and once in the accusative and nominative cases.
15 Morris, Epistle to the Romans, 331-32.
he also justified.” The text does not say that “some” of those called were justified. It fuses the called and justified together so that those who have experienced calling have also inevitably received the blessing of justification.16

All things are being worked together for good according to God’s purpose for those who are called; this truth proves that those who are called have been called for a specific purpose or plan. They are called by Christ to be used as they have been gifted. All things are being worked together for good according to God’s plan to those who are called. The sovereign purpose is for those that love God and are called of God. One should give special attention to Paul’s use of the word κλητοῖς in identifying who are the recipients of God’s purpose or plan. Hodge explained the significance of the word “called” (κλητοῖς). He wrote, “The word called . . . is never, in the epistles of the New Testament, applied to those who are the recipients of the mere external invitation of the gospel. It always means effectually called, i.e., it is always applied to those who are really brought to accept of the blessings to which they are invited."17

God is working all things together for good according to his purpose to those who are called. The phrase is important to clarify God’s sovereignty in “all things” and the comforting effect that knowledge has upon believers who are suffering. The reader of Romans, at this point, may be reminded of what Paul wrote in 5:3-5 with regard to suffering. The Christian should find joy in tribulation knowing that that suffering is being used by God as a refiner’s fire to accomplish perseverance, character, and finally hope (or expectation). What Paul wrote is not the mere “everything will work out in the end” type of statement that is offered freely in secular circles as a means of comforting one another. There is a tremendous principal in this passage and it is not that everything will be okay in the end or that with time “all wounds are healed.” The trite sayings lack any real potency. Paul declared that God is in control and those who love God are those who are called, and to them God is working all things for divine eternal purpose.

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16 Schreiner, Romans, 451.
17 Hodge, Epistle to the Romans, 441.
III-IV. God Foreknew the Called and Predestined Them to Be Conformed to Jesus’ Image (29a)

“For whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” (ὅτι οἶς προέγνω, καὶ προώρισεν συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκώνος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ). Verse 29 has two major phrases (29a, 29b), neither of which have a nominative verb acting as a subject. The first phrase contains two indicative verbs, while the second does not contain a primary verb of its own. Verse 29 opens with the conjunction ὅτι (which is translated here as “for” and thus indicates an intimate relationship with the preceding text and could just as well be translated “because”) and the relative pronoun οὗς (which is translated as “whom”).

Paul introduced the first primary verb προέγνω (from προγνώσκω), which has the basic meaning of “knowing in advance.”18 Chafer indicated, “This specific term means merely that God knows beforehand. It is used of Israel (Rom. 11:2) and of the Church (Rom. 8:29).”19 The morphology (aorist active) yields the subject, which must be provided in English by the translation “He foreknew.” Προγνώσκω is a verb used only five times in the New Testament (Acts 26:5; Rom 8:29, 11:2; 1 Pet 1:20; 2 Pet 3:17) but does not occur in the Septuagint, Philo, or the Dead Sea Scrolls. Προγνώσκω only appears twice in the Apostolic Fathers (viz. Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate 4.3.4;20 Parable 721). Some argue that this verb has stronger meaning than simply knowledge, referencing its Old Testament equivalent, which means “choosing in advance.”

Many scholars feel that we cannot take the verb in this place to refer to no more than knowledge. They point out that in the Old Testament the equivalent means something like “choose in advance” (as in Jer. 1:5; Amos 3:2). This must surely be borne in mind, but we must also remember that Paul’s next verb is predestined and we must be on our guard against making the two say the same thing.22

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18 Arndt et al., Greek-English Lexicon, 866.
21 Ibid. 450.
22 Morris, Epistle to the Romans, 332.
Προέγνω “is the first of a series of five verbs outlining what God has done in fulfillment of his saving purpose.”23 “Each verb differs in meaning from the others, yet each is related to and grows out of the one which it follows.”24 All of these verbs are found in the aorist tense even though they indicate the future for believers. “An author sometimes uses the aorist for the future to stress the certainty of the event. It involves a ‘rhetorical transfer’ of a future event as though it were past.”25 The series begins with foreknew and continues with predestined, called, justified, and glorified. The progression demonstrates the position and situation of the believer past, present, and future. The progression demonstrates how all things are being worked together for those who love God and are called.

The good realized is not due to fate, luck, or even the moral superiority of believers; it is to be ascribed to God’s good and sovereign will, which has from eternity past to eternity future secured and guaranteed the good for those whom he has chosen. This is the significance of “the golden chain” that charts the course from God’s foreknowledge of believers to their glorification. In each case God is the subject of the verbs, for it is he who foreknew, predestined, called, justified, and glorified. The good he has begun he will finish (Phil. 1:6; cf. 1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:24).26

The next primary verb is προώρισεν, which follows directly after προέγνω (separated only by the conjunction καί). Προώρισεν is from the verb προορίζω which is in the aorist active form, as are all the principal verbs in these verses. One should note the consistent use of the same morphology since the same implied subject (God) is also maintained throughout the entire passage, thus προώρισεν is translated as “He predestined.” Προώρισεν is another rare verb in the Bible and ancient literature; it is found only six times in Scripture (Acts 4:28; Rom 8:29-30; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11) and once in the Apostolic Fathers (Ignatius of Antioch, “To the Ephesians,” salutation).

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the church at Ephesus in Asia, blessed with greatness through the fullness of God the Father, predestined before the ages for lasting and unchangeable glory forever, united and elect through genuine suffering by the will of the

23 Ibid.
25 Wallace, Greek Grammar, 564.
26 Schreiner, Romans, 451.
Father and of Jesus Christ our God, a church most worthy of blessing: heartiest greetings in Jesus Christ and in blameless joy.\footnote{27} Ignatius understood predestination as occurring “before the ages” and related to the unchangeable glory that will be realized in the future by the believers of the church at Ephesus. He also related the hope of glory to suffering believers by means of the doctrine of predestination and the understanding that God sovereignly works all things together for the church. Paul described predestination as including adoption as sons by Jesus Christ, which is the will and pleasure of God the Father (Eph 1:5). God also predestines according to his purpose because He works all things according to his will (1:11). Robertson wrote that προορίζω means, “to appoint before hand” with an emphasis “for eternity.”\footnote{28} “The predestination follows, and is grounded on the foreknowledge. The foreknowledge therefore expresses the act of cognition or recognition, the fixing, so to speak, the mind upon, which involves the idea of selection.”\footnote{29}

Foreordination and Predestination. These words, almost complete synonyms, are used in the New Testament to declare the truth that God determines what shall be before it comes to pass. These words are more concerned with that to which men are divinely appointed than with the men themselves. God’s foreordination and predestination precede all history. As foreknowledge recognizes the certainty of future events, foreordination and predestination make these events sure. The two divine activities of foreseeing and foreordaining could not function separately. They do not occur in succession, but are dependent on each other and either one is impossible without the other.\footnote{30}

Paul wrote that those who were known beforehand and predestined are to be conformed. Conformed (συμμόρφως) is a unique adjective that is followed by a genitive phrase τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ. Συμμόρφως is the accusative adjective (from συμμόρφους), which means “having a similar form, nature, or style, similar in form τονος as or to something; like his Son in form or appearance.”\footnote{31} The adjective is modified by the genitive clause τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ thus demonstrating how those who love God are to be conformed. The clause begins with τῆς εἰκόνος, which is

\footnote{27} Holmes, \textit{Apostolic Fathers}, 137. Ignatius used the aorist active participle.
\footnote{29} Hodge, \textit{Epistle to the Romans}, 447.
\footnote{31} Arndt et al., \textit{Greek-English Lexicon}, 958.
translated as “the image.” “The image” is modified by the second genitive clause τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, in addition to the singular masculine “the son” and the personal pronoun αὐτοῦ, which yields the translation “the image of His son.” Philippians 3:20-21 provides some insight regarding the meaning of being conformed to the image of his son. The text reads, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” Paul wrote with regard to the anticipation of Christ’s return and that He would transform the current body of the believer to make it conform to the body of his own glory. The power for this transformation is that of Jesus who will make all things come into subjection to himself since He makes all things work together for good with this very glory in mind.

V. They Were Conformed So They Might Be the Firstborn of the Brethren (29c)

“So that they might be the firstborn among many brothers” (εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς). The next phrase begins with a unique construction: εἰς τὸ εἶναι. “Εἰς governing the Infinitive with τὸ most commonly expresses purpose. It is employed with special frequency by Paul.”32 The infinitive verb εἶναι is modified by the previous clause, thus demonstrating purpose for those who love God (i.e. that they might be conformed to the image of the Son). As they are conformed to the Son’s image, they become πρωτότοκον ἐν πολλοῖς ἀδελφοῖς the firstborn among many brothers. Christ is “first born” of all creation (Col 1:15); however, in Colossians, He is “first born from the dead” (1:18), the Eldest Brother in this family of God’s sons. . .”33 Jesus is the firstborn and all those who are conformed have become part of the family of God.

VI. The One that Was Predestined Was Called (30a)

“And whom He predestined, them He also called” (οὗς δὲ προώρισεν, τούτους καὶ ἐκάλεσεν). The conjunction δὲ is followed by the principal verb προώρισεν, which is again translated as predestined. The predestination is what God did in eternity past. In eternity past, the

33 Robertson, Word Pictures, 4:378.
believer was called (as revealed in this second clause τούτους καὶ ἔκάλεσεν). The conjunction καὶ is translated “also” and is followed by the next principal verb, ἔκάλεσεν. The verb ἔκάλεσεν is translated “called,” which is effectual, as described previously by the Apostle Paul.

**VII. The One that Was Called Was Justified (30b)**

“And those whom he called he also justified” (καὶ οὓς ἔκάλεσεν, τούτους καὶ ἔδικαίωσεν). Paul continued the progression by writing καὶ οὓς ἔκάλεσεν. By referencing “those whom He called,” this served to recall the previous principal verb. The next progression is that those God called He also justified. The same construction was used here as the second half of the previous phrase but a new verb was introduced into this “unbreakable chain” that began in eternity past. The verb translated He justified is ἔδικαίωσεν (from the word δικαιοῦω), which has the idea of being legally declared righteous. Those who are called are declared righteous because they have become children of God by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Hodge explained, “The justification here spoken of, is doubtless that of which the apostle has been speaking throughout the epistle, the regarding and treating sinners as just, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ.”

**VIII. The One that Was Justified Was Glorified (30c)**

“And those whom he justified he also glorified” (οὓς δὲ ἔδικαίωσεν, τούτους καὶ ἔδόξασεν (“and those whom He justified”) is now mentioned in relation to being “glorified.” Furthermore, the final clause and final verb are both introduced with the same construction. The clause τούτους καὶ ἔδόξασεν is translated “He also glorified.” The verb ἔδόξασεν is from the word δοξάζω and means glorify, praise, or honor; it is used in 53 different verses of the New Testament, 131 verses of the Septuagint in addition to numerous uses among the Apostolic Fathers, Philo, and many other Greek classics. Many of the biblical uses describe the action of humanity towards God, as in its first New Testament use found in Matthew 5:16, which says, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” In the example of Matthew, humanity glorified God for the works that his followers are accomplishing. By means of glorification, the believer will fully be conformed to the image of the Son. When the justified finally see Jesus they will be like Him. First

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34 Hodge, *Epistle to the Romans*, 450.
John 3:2 reads, “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.” Wallace explained that the “idea is that the very ones whom God predestined, called, and justified are also glorified. The compounding of pronouns thus has a dramatic effect: No one is lost between the eternal decree and the eternal.”35 He also added one more critical point: “The glorification of those who have been declared righteous is as good as done from Paul’s perspective.”36

Believers are called in accordance with a settled plan and purpose of God, for whom he calls he had previously predestined: and as all the several steps or stages of our salvation are included in this plan of the unchanging God, if we are predestinated and called, we shall be justified and glorified.37

CONCLUSION

Romans 8:28-30 is a stunning depiction of God’s sovereign work in election, salvation, and ultimately, glorification of the believer. The passage is both soteriological and eschatological. Romans 8:28-30 primarily addresses God’s calling to the elect, and the process of justifying them and glorifying them in the future. Verses 28-30 serve in a complementary relationship to the first 27 verses of Romans 8 (and, of course, to the final nine verses of the chapter). Romans 8:1-11 addressed the believer’s empowerment by the indwelling Holy Spirit to be free from sin. Verses 12-17 describe the sonship through adoption that allows the believer to enjoy in the inheritance with Christ. Verses 18-27 describe how the believer should understand present sufferings of the world. Verses 28-30 forge a relationship wherein believers understand their position in God, which is summarized in verse 39 to the effect that nothing can separate believers from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.

Paul explained that believers are foreknown and predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son. They are being conformed in this present day by the refiner’s fire of suffering. In the future, these same believers will be completed by the glorification done by God. The transition from suffering to glory proves that God has everything under subjection and is working all things together for the believer’s future glorification. “Between the start and finish of God’s plan are three steps: being called (cf.

35 Wallace, Greek Grammar, 330.
36 Ibid. 564.
37 Hodge, Epistle to the Romans, 445.
Rom. 1:6; 8:28), being **justified** (cf. 3:24, 28; 4:2; 5:1, 9), and being **glorified** (cf. 8:17; Col. 1:27, 3:4), and in the process not a single person is lost. God completes His plan without slippage.\(^{38}\) Believers can rejoice in the knowledge that if they love God and are called according to his purpose, they are secure in their salvation.

BOOK REVIEWS

*An Introduction to the New Covenant* edited by Christopher Cone. Hurst, TX: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2013. 375 pp., paper, $27.00.

Six theologians contributed to *An Introduction to the New Covenant*, which is an excellent and important entry into the debate concerning the extent and application of the New Covenant. Depending upon how the New Covenant is interpreted, there are as many as five views regarding the church’s relationship to the New Covenant (see pp. 83, 89, 101, 204).

- **Replacement** — The church is entirely fulfilling the New Covenant.
- **Partial** — The church is partially fulfilling the New Covenant, but complete fulfillment awaits the millennium.
- **Participation** — The church does not even partially fulfill the New Covenant, but does participate in its spiritual blessings now.
- **Two New Covenants** — God has made one New Covenant with Israel and another with the church.
- **No Relationship** — The New Covenant was made exclusively with Israel, and the church is not directly related to it and is experiencing no spiritual benefits from the New Covenant now.

*An Introduction to the New Covenant* defends the “no relationship” position, even though the majority of dispensationalists today affirm the participation view. The authors believe, however, that the participation view is inconsistent hermeneutically and theologically. The argument presented is resolute, well reasoned, and based upon much Scripture. Anyone interested in this subject should read *An Introduction to the New Covenant*.

The book is well organized and (for a book addressing relatively difficult theological issues) is easy to read. All the primary passages addressing the New Covenant are addressed in detail, in addition to the
hermeneutical foundation for each of the various positions. Chapters nine and ten make application to socio-political implications and the church’s role while awaiting the enactment of the New Covenant. The book lacks indexes or bibliographies, both of which would have been helpful. *Disclaimer: this reviewer contributed the first chapter to the work.*

— Gary E. Gilley
Southern View Chapel (Springfield, IL)

Zane Hodges has a different understanding with regard to the book of Romans. He believes the epistle does not address how unbelievers get to heaven; rather, it reveals how believers are spared from God's wrath in this world through faith and obedience. He delineated between justification and salvation, and between eternal destiny and eternal rewards. According to Hodges, those who are justified still need to be saved, that is, delivered from God's present wrath, and this deliverance is gained not merely by believing in Jesus, but also through obedience and calling upon the Lord in believing prayer.

The author has published commentaries on Hebrews, the Johannine Epistles, James, 2 Peter, and contributed to Dallas Seminary's The Bible Knowledge Commentary. He taught New Testament Greek and exegesis at Dallas Theological Seminary for 27 years until 1986. He also ministered at Victor Street Bible Chapel in East Dallas for 50 years. His Romans commentary is published posthumously as Hodges went to be with the Lord in 2008.

At the time of his death, the author had completed the commentary through Romans 14:15. Two of his disciples finished the work. Bob Wilkin completed the commentary and is credited as the editor of the work. John Niemelä (Ph.D., New Testament, Dallas Theological Seminary) added scholarly notes and proofed the manuscript. He also wrote the introduction. Initials are used to identify which author wrote a particular section or footnote.

Hodges' work on Romans appears to be the product of careful and extensive study of the Greek text. As an example, Hodges made the following text-critical comment on Romans 2:5, "A minor textual problem is significant for the clarification of this verse. The 'and' (kai) found in the suggested translation of v 5 is omitted by the modern critical editions of the Greek NT, just as it was also omitted in the edition of the Textus Receptus from which the KJV was translated. Hence it does not appear in the NKJV either. But a substantial majority of the surviving manuscripts of Romans, so far as they are known, read this kai and support its inclusion. Stylistically we probably have here a 'double' hendiadys, that is to say, three nouns are joined by 'and' and the two of them function like adjuncts. . . . Thus we could render this noun series as follows: the wrathfully manifested righteous judgment of God."
Hodges was also keenly attentive to grammatical issues. For example, his comment on the very next verse, Romans 2:6, states, “The Greek text of this verse begins with the relative pronoun hos, normally translated who. The grammatical structure here, at a formal level, is consistent with the common relative function of hos, but this pronoun was originally demonstrative in force (cf. Robertson, 695—96) and ‘unlike the English, includes in itself the demonstrative idea’ (Moulton and Milligan, 324). In Romans it is used as a virtual independent pronoun at 8:32, 14:2, 5; and esp. at 2:23. Stylistically it serves Paul well here as formally connected with the preceding Theou, while functioning as a word marking a new departure. It might almost be rendered ‘This One’ (i.e., God), but I opted for the more straightforward He (so JB; NIV = “God”).”

Despite the depth of study that went into this commentary, it is quite readable and accessible. The work is not an exegetical commentary as it does not make observations on every minute detail of the Greek text, nor is it devotional in nature. The work is best described as an expositional commentary, and the comments appear to be selective toward a practical application based upon a right understanding of the text.

In addition to Hodges’ notes, two features in this volume are worthy of mention. First, the outline reveals Hodges considerable ability to discern the structure of a biblical author’s argument or development of thought. While not too dissimilar from other outlines of Romans, Hodges’ outline is supported by his unique explanations, which make Paul’s arguments easy to understand. Second, the commentary includes Hodges’ own translation of Romans (this feature may be why Hodges spent so much time on the writing of this work). Moreover, it is noted in the introduction that Hodges spent several years of daily study on it, usually devoting four hours every weekday morning to it.

Regarding the translation, one example should suffice to give readers an idea of its uniqueness. Hodges rendered the Greek word katakrima in Romans 5:18 differently than most. Normally, the word is translated as condemnation: “through one man’s offense judgment came to all men resulting in condemnation.” Hodges translates it servitude to sin: “through one offense judgment came to all men to produce servitude to sin.” The same term occurs in Romans 8:1, which Hodges translated as follows: “Therefore, there is now no servitude to sin for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk in relation to the flesh but in relation to the Spirit.” Hodges’ translation leads to a significantly different understanding than one derives from the following: “There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”
The exposition that arose from Hodges’ unique understanding of Romans is evident from his understanding of the terms save and salvation (σώζω and σωτηρία). Most commentators on Romans understand the Greek terms soteriologically, that is, terms that describe deliverance from eternal condemnation in the lake of fire. Hodges, however, presented them as referring to temporal deliverance from God’s wrath in this life. The change in meaning of these key terms alters one’s understanding of the purpose of the book. In this sense, Romans—in its purpose—ceases to be an evangelistic tract meant for unbelieving ears and becomes an instruction manual for Christians showing them to have abundant fellowship with God.

Hodges’ new understanding on Romans does not remove all soteriological value from Paul’s epistle; rather, it resets this theological treasure into a new setting from which readers can discern previously unseen aspects. Niemelä, who wrote the introduction, stated, “As the commentary argues, Rom 1:16—17 speaks of a temporal salvation, one that makes God’s power available to believers in order to deliver them from temporal wrath. True, this presentation of deliverance builds on the foundation of Christ’s work on the cross, and how the atonement resolved man’s sin and death problem. But most treatments of Romans fail to distinguish the theme of Romans (temporal deliverance) from the foundation for the theme (everlasting life).”

According to Neimelä, the book of Romans was written by Paul (scribed by Tertius), from Corinth, in the winter of AD 56-57, to Jewish and Gentile Christians living in Rome. The Christians worshiped in fifteen different assemblies, one being called a house church. Most, or all, of the other assemblies are called tenement churches by Niemelä, which would denote very small assemblies that met in rooms measuring approximately 10 feet by 10 feet. By far the most significant characteristic of the audience, according to the commentator, is that they were already believers, a fact that leads him to conclude that Romans is a book addressing issues concerning believers.

Hodges’ theology has a certain reputation, in addition to the fact that he provided a unique understanding of Romans, which may influence some to avoid Romans: Deliverance from Wrath. To ignore Hodges’ work would be a mistake because it is important to be conversant with the various approaches to Romans, and Hodges’ understanding represents a new and not completely unfounded perspective. Furthermore, the commentary also contains much that is edifying and beneficial, no matter what one’s theological viewpoint might be. Even if one disagrees with Hodges’ conclusions, the reading of his commentary will challenge the
reader to examine the book closely, and that (in itself) has great value. As a consequence of its appropriate depth and readability, adult Bible study teachers will find Hodges’ work helpful; preachers and exegetes will also find it to be useful because of its technical precision and unique viewpoint.

— Jason D. Shepherd
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Bateman's structured approach is evident from the outset, and results in a very readable, clear, and concise accumulation of data, facts, and insightful study information for anyone who is dedicated to a literal, contextual, and historically accurate depiction of Scripture. In his preface, Bateman acknowledged the contributions of many of the best-known commentators on the Bible and particularly the book of Hebrews. The effort expended in researching these texts and compiling the information into clear readable charts represents an enormous task. The result is a book, which, as Bateman asserted, "will benefit pastors, teachers, students and anyone wanting to study as well as teach the Book of Hebrews."

When evaluating a book of charts the first thing which comes to light is the ease of differentiating between subjects and the clarity of the presentation of information. Bateman's work is excellent in both aspects. Five notable features exist throughout the book. First, the title headings of each section are dark format (black background) and differ from subheadings in form and format. The lettering is brilliant white print, which yields immediate recognition of the subject of the main sections, and this is a great feature since the user is quickly directed to understanding major topics with no confusion. Moreover, for the elder user of this information, who might face deterioration of eyesight, such is minimized with this feature. As would be expected, the font size for primary topic headings is larger than the subheading font size. All body text seems to be the same font style and size.

Second, as may be deduced, the subheadings are in less dark background (grey in color) yet with the same brilliant white text. One slight discrepancy was noted on chart 100 (pp. 191-92). While the subheadings are all formatted in a lighter grey background, chart 100 has the fully black background (which, of course, is not a reason to reject the work, but an apparent "defect" which missed editing).

A third feature of the technical layout is the type spacing. There is little to no crowding of copy in the body of charts, which is of no little consequence. Often the volume of information tends to become an “eye chart” of sorts making reading difficult. Additionally, some users of this book may wish to perform a quick scan of primary information prior to researching further. Being able to obtain an overview easily is an excellent feature for those with time-impacted lives. For instance, if one is seeking a particular subject for research, the main points are quickly ascertained by
simply scanning the pages. Data is easily comprehended due to the amount of “white space” included with the copy. The impact of this device is that some pages have only a few fragments of information, which is probably due to the volume of information related to a particular subject. Trying to cram too much information on one page is avoided, which may lead to a subject having multiple pages, but the overall effect is clarity and ease of gathering information, and this is indeed a good feature even though several pages of information may be required for a complete assessment of the data available.

Fourth, chart 25 departs from these characteristics only slightly. Although there is some crowding of information and the symbols are somewhat small, the information is logically arranged so as to minimize these detracting features. Chart 25, however, does provide a wide variety of information that is fundamental to developing subject matter for the teacher (viz. Sunday school teacher) who is compiling information for presentation to, for example, an adult Bible Study class. With a little discrimination, the careful user can find much useful data for development of lesson plans and outlines. Conversely, this data would be difficult to use in PowerPoint type presentations due to the “eye chart” characterization when too much data is attempted for one slide. The user would be advised to select only portions of the data for visual presentation in this case.

Fifth, this reviewer would have liked to find alphabetical listing of names, topics, etc. somewhere in the book (i.e. front or back cover). A search for the name Melchizedek yielded several charts where the name is mentioned, but there possibly are more that could have been found. The point is that valuable time would be saved through a complete (exhaustive) list for user consultation, pointing him/her to all locations where desired information can be found (definitely not a reason to dismiss the value of the book). Indeed, often the discipline required to “mine” the treasures in books such as this can be time well exhausted. Finding other related bits and pieces of interest can frequently result from such exercises. Nonetheless, an index (as indicated) could be helpful.

As stated in the leading paragraphs of this review, Charts on the Book of Hebrews is a notably well thoughtout and produced work. Bateman’s work is strongly endorsed for anyone who wishes to do thorough study for development of lessons and sermons to the glory of God. As believers, everything should be done well, and this book will aid greatly in accomplishing that goal.

— Terry Holsinger
Tyndale Theological Seminary (Hurst, TX)

There are two things in The Evolution of Adam in which theological conservatives can agree: (1) Adam was not a hominid that God entered into a covenant relationship with; and (2) evolution cannot be grafted onto evangelical Christian faith (truly, it is no exaggeration to assert that these are the only two agreeable declarations). One can also admire the author’s honesty. Enns is an evolutionist, with all that that entails (billions of years, development of single-cell life forms into complex ones, natural selection, the common ancestry of humans and primates), but he is a Christian one. He made no attempt to reconcile the Bible and evolution, or to assert that a conservative reading of the Bible is wrong and the doctrine of evolution is right; however, in certain fields of study, the arguments in this book must be addressed.

Peter Enns (not to be confused with Paul Enns, author of The Moody Handbook of Theology) is a former senior fellow of biblical studies at The BioLogos Foundation, an organization that “explores, promotes, and celebrates the integration of science and Christian faith.” He holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University, and has taught at both Fuller Seminary and Westminster Seminary.

Christians who reject the Bible’s account of humanity’s origins, in the early chapters of Genesis, have always encountered a problem: the Apostle Paul. In Paul’s account of Adam in Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15, and 1 Timothy 2, Adam is presented as the first man, by whom sin and death entered into the world. Enns even said that Paul “presents Adam as the first human and responsible for the problem of universal sin and death that Jesus came to eradicate.” He recognized why “the question of a historical Adam is understandably so important for many Christians and why digressing from a historical Adam can generate great concern” (p. 119).

Adam was “a proto-Israel figure, not the first human” (p. 119), according to Enns. The story of Adam “is about failure to fear God and attain wise maturity” (p. 142); it is not a story “of the origin of humanity in general but of Israel in particular.” How did Enns reconcile his understanding with Paul’s view of Adam? He did not think this was necessary. Paul merely referenced “the Adam story” to prove a point. Humanity’s need for a savior “does not require a historical Adam.” Paul’s “use of the Adam story serves a vital theological purpose in explaining to his ancient readers the significance for all humanity of Christ’s death and
resurrection” (p. xix). “Paul’s understanding of Adam as the cause [of death and sin] reflects his time and place” (p. 124). Paul’s analogy between Adam and Christ “does not mean that we are required to consider them as character of equal historical standing.” The “presence of a historical Adam in Paul’s thinking reflects his cultural setting” (p. 127). Paul’s reading of the Old Testament is “creative;” he “invests Adam with capital he does not have either in the Genesis story, the Old Testament as a whole, or the interpretations of his contemporary Jews.”

Enns wholeheartedly accepts evolution, thus it is only natural that he thinks that the “early chapters of Genesis are not a literal or scientific description of historical events” (p. 56), “the Old Testament is not aimed at simply providing objective historical information, and certainly not scientific information” (p. xviii), and that “the Old Testament as a whole is fundamentally a postexilic document” (p. 32).

Enns has a greater problem than Paul: Paul’s Christ. In Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-9, the Lord Jesus expressed belief in the creation of Adam and Eve in Genesis. Needless to say, this reviewer does not recommend anything in this book regarding Adam, human origins, the book of Genesis, the date of the Old Testament, Paul’s use of the Old Testament, hermeneutics, the fossil record, or soteriology. However, interaction with the book is essential for anyone focused upon the biblical creation account, Paul’s use of Adam in Romans and 1 Corinthians, or the creation/evolution debate. All others can dismiss it as a failed attempt to redefine and clarify what the Apostle Paul said.

— Laurence M. Vance
Vance Publications (Orlando, FL)

Bruce Proctor originally wrote A Definition and Critique of Postmodernism as his doctoral dissertation for Louisiana Baptist University. Proctor’s work has three main parts. The first part surveys postmodernism definitions, relates theological worldviews to postmodernism, and outlines historical ideologies considered relevant (pp. 15-66). The worldviews connected to postmodernism are deism, pantheism, panentheism, polytheism, finite godism, atheism, materialism, and secularism. The historical ideologies addressed range from allegoricalism (i.e. the hermeneutic), the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and relativism to fascism, secular humanism, modernism, Darwinism, and New Ageism. Existentialism and pragmatism, which some may think should be included in the ideologies list, are mentioned under relativism (pp. 54-56).

The second part examined the Emerging Church movement’s tenets, marks, practices, and associations (pp. 67-101). Part three explains Romans 1:18-32 and relates it to postmodernism (pp. 102-32). The author concluded that postmodern thinking is “very likely a form of God’s judgment on Western nations” for rejecting Him (pp. 138-39). The Enlightenment is asserted (but not established with supporting arguments) as probably causing contemporary postmodern ideology (p. 138).

The author’s purpose for writing is “to show how postmodern trends of human thought have drifted away from and unrelentingly reject divine truth in favor of culturally constructed meanings or ‘truth’ claims and thus foster the invention of imaginative reality rooted in subjective speculation” (p. xi). Proctor stated his intention for the Romans passage more simply: “It is the writer’s hope that this work will clearly show that the teaching of Romans 1:18-32, supported by other related biblical passages, is a stern condemnation of postmodern ideology” (p. xiii).

Proctor indicated that his dissertation “passed with flying colors” (p. x), which is not surprising, since it has a good deal of information regarding postmodernism’s tenets and demonstrates the author’s knowledge with regard to a variety of theological and historical topics. Moreover, it also has considerable research. Material from a variety of authors is integrated into the work. There are 368 endnotes, and most are quote citations. The one single author most relied upon for help was Norman Geisler.
A main disadvantage of the book, however, is that the flow of thought is difficult to follow sometimes, even with repeated reading. There are also no summaries or charts to add needed clarity. The most serious of content is two interpretations of the Romans passage. A specific positive of the Emerging Church section is lists of marks of Emerging proponents that are practical and clever (pp. 78-79, 82). One example is: “You believe doctrine gets in the way of an interactive relationship with Jesus” (p. 79, quoting Kevin DeYoung and Ted Kluck). A highlight of the Romans section to this reviewer is a discussion on the depravity of pagan culture under Romans 1:28-32 (pp. 122-29), which is a vivid testimony to the truth of the Romans’ passage. Looking at the negatives, the flow is difficult to follow because connections between ideas are unclear or seem illogical. A short illustration of a puzzling flow is this group of statements regarding public schools:

Pluralism demands that all values are being taught as equal and tolerable. Relativism, on the other hand, demands that the absence of absolutes is logical. However, whatever is logical must be subjective in order for it not to be absolute (p. 130).

Interpretations of Romans 1:25 and 1:28-32 may raise some concern. Romans 1:25 is explained as “clearly descriptive” of “three wicked spirits” ruling the postmodern world: these spirits are ideologies, named as the spirits of secularism, relativism, and pluralism (pp. 115-16). Some may consider this interpretation fanciful. Romans 1:28-32 seems to be wrongly understood (or is imprecisely worded), as God’s eternal abandonment. The author stated that God has assigned the wicked to “permanent spiritual blindness” and “man had come to the point of no return” (pp. 119, 132).

The tone of the book is passionate. Language, such as “disgusting,” “sacrilege,” “shameful,” and “with selfish motives,” is used regarding the Emerging Church (pp. 79, 93, 97). Postmodernists are said to “espouse stupidity by their extreme relativistic thinking” (p. 108). Occasionally, comments are sarcastic (pp. 95, 101, 112-13, 138). Overall, the book does convey its intended messages that postmodernism is un biblical, evident in the Emerging Church, and condemned in Romans 1. With the caveats mentioned, those interested in an academic work on the subject of postmodernism may find the scope interesting and the research useful.

— Patricia Serak
Child Evangelism Fellowship (Brookfield, WI)

G. M. Matheny is a graduate of Pacific Coast Bible College and a missionary to Romania. The author undertook an ambitious task to identify the items in the subtitle: the location of the Israelite sea crossing, the route they followed through the wilderness, and the location of Mount Sinai. Additionally, he argued that Israel did not wander in the Sinai but rather in the eastern desert of Egypt.

First, the positive features found within this volume will be mentioned. Although the author did not attempt to prove it, he assumed the early date for the Exodus, which he designates as a rounded figure of 1450 BC (p. xix). His dating agrees with a number of conservative scholars, among them, Eugene H. Merrill (*Kingdom of Priests: A History of Old Testament Israel*) and John J. Bimson (*Redating the Exodus and Conquest*). Furthermore, the author estimates a day’s journey at roughly fifteen miles, a figure just a little short of that estimated by conservative scholars. However, the distance of a day’s journey does vary according to a number of variables, and Matheny’s estimate is close to the range of variables noted by other scholars. For instance, James K. Hoffmeier in his book *Ancient Israel in Sinai: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* designated a day’s journey within the range of sixteen to twenty-three miles. Finally, Matheny’s discussion of the Sea of Reeds as a body of water deep enough to drown the Egyptians (pp. 148-57) is commendable. Commendable, too, is his assertion that the biblical sources should be considered above other sources (pp. xviii, xxvii).

All this being said, however, the book possesses several considerable weaknesses. Primary among them appears to be an attempt to write a scholarly work without following scholarly procedures and without due respect for contemporary scholars whether they agree or disagree with the author. The organization and orientation of the book indicates that the author failed to follow acceptable guidelines, such as, the Turabian *Manual for Writers*, a handbook required by most seminaries and Bible colleges. Additionally, the arguments do not seem to follow a clear logical pattern, and the documentation is scant, incomplete, and poorly arranged. As for its argument, the book reads like the itinerary of a tour with a few side trips inserted, rather than an academic attempt to make a serious point. Disregarding place locations and directions of travel discussed by contemporary scholars, the book offers an entirely new theory of the Exodus that actually leaves Israel in Egypt after crossing the
Red Sea. The author noted that ancient writers believed that the Nile flowed "into the sea known in the Hebrew as the Yam Suph, given as ‘Red Sea’ in the English" (p. 155), the context indicating that he apparently accepts this idea. Instead of the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula, Israel traveled south through the Eastern desert of Egypt to stop at Mount Gharib, the book's alleged site of Mount Sinai. However, the book offers mostly ancient sources and sources from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century to substantiate this theory and fails to engage any modern scholarship, favorable or unfavorable. Although the author claimed to have read modern commentaries, he cited none of them.

Documentation, on the other hand, provides little assistance to the serious student. The purpose of documentation is not only to record the source of ideas expressed and/or quoted, but also to allow the reader to follow up on the ideas to acquire more information, and to verify the source and accuracy of the ideas referenced. In this book, documentation is minimal in the sense that all the author provides for each work is the author's name and the title. The reader will find no place of publication or name of a publishing company. Only a few contain the date of publication, and none provide page numbers for any direct quotations (much less paraphrases). Finally, those originally written in another language fail to name the translator in all but a few cases.

Furthermore, the author failed to give page numbers for direct quotations of any length. For example, on page 150-51, he offered a seven-line quotation from the Greek historian Herodotus. The endnote merely indicates the quotation came from The History of Herodotus, II. In the Penguin Classics edition of Herodotus, Book II is 71 pages long. A reader should not have to read that many pages to confirm the accuracy of a single quotation, regardless of the edition of Herodotus one might use. As an aside, Aubrey de Sélencourt translated the Penguin Classics edition. The author of the Exodus provides no way of determining whether or not this was the translation he used.

Another note concerning documentation: in a book of this length, the reader would expect extensive documentation, especially since the author has chosen to challenge all other views on the subject. Instead, the book has a total of only 188 references for seventeen chapters. By comparison, Hoffmeier's book on Israel in Sinai has 180 endnotes in the chapter on the geography of the Exodus and 221 in the chapter on the location of the Red Sea (and these are two of eleven chapters).

The author of the Exodus reflects not only ignorance of modern methods of research and documentation, but he used no sources after 1923 and most of the sources he did use are ancient sources, some familiar
(Herodotus, Josephus, Philo) and some rather obscure (Diodorus and John, Bishop of Nikiu). Concerning modern sources, he expressed disdain, especially toward those who might disagree with him. For example, he noted, "It sounds like it would be easy getting permission from others to quote their books, but if they believe differently than you do about the Exodus, well, 'Have fun!'" (p. xxviii, emphasis original). In fact, for scholarly research, permission to quote is usually not required. Instead, to quote sources in a scholarly work requires only that the writer quote accurately and honestly and provide a complete bibliographic reference that gives proper credit to the source and allows the reader to check the accuracy of the quotation. A cursory survey of any contemporary scholarly work will confirm this assertion.

Furthermore, the *Exodus* contains comprehensive statements regarding modern scholars with no documentation nor identification of these "errant" writers (e.g. the quotation from page xxviii already noted). Additionally, according to this book, some scholars claim Mount Sinai was an active volcano (pp. 355, 357). Others believe the Red Sea was parted by a tsunami (p. 147). Of the tsunami story, the book stated, "And we are told these things by a whole chorus of experts who want us to know they have proven all this by 'scientific' means" (p. 148). Who are the scholars who constitute this "whole chorus of experts"? The reader is not told the names of any, and this reviewer is aware of none.

Matheny used only works in the public domain (p. xxviii), and apparently only those that agreed with him, the author offers a lopsided treatment of the Exodus story. Hoffmeier, on the other hand, provided a balanced treatment with citations from ancient sources and contemporary sources. Additionally, he actually cited by name and work some of the scholars with whom he disagreed (p. 48, notes 2, 3).

Finally, the author criticized archaeologists for quoting religious texts and legends of ancient civilizations while ignoring texts about personages of the Bible (p. 155). At the same time, he referred extensively to the *Legends of the Jews*, edited by Louis Ginsberg (see endnotes on p. 145), not to mention references to the myth of Horus and the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* (p. 152). Page 145 shows six of thirteen endnotes referring to Ginsberg's work in just one chapter. Moreover, in one chapter the book details a great deal about Egyptian myths to indicate how closely they parallel biblical events (pp. 179-82). Granted ancient writings may shed light on biblical events, and many scholars refer to them for this reason; however, one cannot have it both ways (i.e. one cannot refer to these myths when they support his view and reject them outright when they do not, or reject the similar use of ancient writings by others).
In conclusion, this reviewer would not recommend this book for anyone looking for a serious scholarly treatment of the Exodus and related subjects. The book takes a position that conflicts with all known scholarship, conservative in addition to liberal, but does not treat that scholarship with courtesy and respect, nor does the author set forth his argument in an acceptable scholarly manner. The author used only resources with which he agreed and appeared to disdain those with which he disagreed. The reader would benefit more from the works of James K. Hoffmeier, Eugene H. Merrill, and John D. Currid (Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament) to name a few because those men exhibit thorough scholarship and courteous respect for fellow scholars, as well as extensive dialogue on the significant subjects addressed in Exodus.

— Kenneth R. Cooper
Biblical Faith Ministries (Fort Worth, TX)
Expository Listening: A Handbook for Hearing and Doing God’s Word

The vast majority of books written to address biblical preaching are intended to influence preachers, and only a relative few target the listeners. Ramey’s short work is one of those few (see also, Jay Adam’s Be Careful How You Listen and Joel Beeke’s A Family at Church). Ramey contended that the condition of the soul is more important than the effectiveness of the sower when it comes to preaching. If so, God’s people should desire to be accomplished hearers of the Word. Ramey’s little volume will aid in that process.

Expository preaching is when “the preacher explains what the original author was saying to the original audience he was writing to and then shows how this original meaning applies to his present–day audience” (p. 55). However, in a postmodern age saturated with media that dulls one’s ears and minds, this task is challenging at best (see p. 42). If the hearer is to be transformed by the Word preached, he/she must be seriously proactive in doing that which is necessary to listen well. Toward this end, Ramey provided many practical guidelines (summarized on pp. 111-15). The listener also must understand the seriousness and gravity of preaching (pp. 105-06) and use discernment (pp. 73-83) to avoid deception. The author’s exegesis of James 1:19-25 was the best feature of the book, in this reviewer’s opinion (pp. 88-101).

Nevertheless, the author may have been too polemical in his use of Puritan teaching. For instance, Ramey claimed that both believers and unbelievers will be judged by every sermon ever heard and should be motivated by “that fearful day when you will be judged based on how receptive and responsive you were to what you heard” (p. 105). While there is truth in such statements, surely the greater motivation should be the believer’s desire to know Christ, in addition to understanding the Lord’s provisions for the church and his will for his people so that believers might worship Him in truth. Also troubling were comments concerning the believer’s salvation being determined by how one listens to the Word: “Where you end up may well be decided by what you do with what you have been taught in this book” (p. 106). While it is certain that Ramey believes otherwise, he made no clear distinction, at this point, from a natural man hearing the gospel and a believer listening to an exposition of Scripture. Some clarity at this point is needed. Overall, Expository Listening is a helpful book to encourage and give direction to listening to the
proclamation of God’s Word; it could serve well as a source for a short Bible study on how to listen to a sermon.

— Gary E. Gilley
Southern View Chapel (Springfield, IL)

David Hesselgrave, professor emeritus of missions at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School provided the following endorsement: “When it comes to ways of thinking and communicating, people live in decidedly different worlds. People of our Western world, for example, tend to think and speak propositionally and conceptually and give priority to linear, sequential reasoning and analysis. People in much of the non-Western world, on the other hand, tend to think pictorially, giving preference to stories, parables, aphorisms, and concrete relationships. Good Soil [by ABWE] strategy represents the best of both worlds! Gil Thomas has effectively communicated that Good Soil strategy in his easy-to-read narrative.” Hesselgrave has written various academic volumes addressing church planting and mission trends, thus for him to endorse a story type of book, is worthy of closer examination. Thankfully, this reviewer did just that and is glad he did.

Books concerning evangelism are many. Thomas’ work is different because of the genre and the content. Regarding the genre, it is a story, and nearly everyone loves stories and this one will resonate with anyone who has wondered if their approach to sharing the gospel is the best way. Gil Thomas is a veteran missionary who was part of the team that developed the Good Soil Evangelism and Discipleship (GSED) materials in use by ABWE.

In the story, one meets a couple who were discouraged because their evangelism was producing no fruit and were seriously considering leaving the field in Germany. What follows is an accounting of a field retreat that they expected to be their last one with team partners. During the retreat, the missionaries explored the parable of the soils (Matt 13 // Mark 4 // Luke 8). What was derived from their analysis of the different verbs used in the biblical accounts is the basis for a threefold approach to evangelism (understand, embrace, retain) based upon the type of soil (the unbeliever’s heart). Thomas believes in a kind of “tilling evangelism” for those hearts that are stone, which leads to a discussion of the importance of understanding the unbelievers worldview and contextualizing the gospel message as Paul did on Mars Hill and in Lystra.

Finally, Thomas presented a tool called “Peeling the Onion” that can be used to understand how to have a conversation in order to ascertain the unbelievers core values so they can be discussed in light of the Scriptures.
“Go slow in evangelism to be able to go faster in church planting” is a major theme (i.e. take time in the “tilling of the heart” to be certain the unbeliever understands the gospel message). Thomas understands the gospel to involve the whole Bible: God, man, sin, death, Christ, cross, faith in Jesus Christ, and eternal life (i.e. the gospel is far more than a few verses).

As to how the story ended and whether the discouraged couple persisted in their work, one will have to read the book for the answers. Not everyone will agree with everything written in this book and that is true of this reviewer. However, one should be able to thoroughly enjoy both the story and the learning (there are exercises throughout the book that encourage the reader to interact with the content). If one is seeking to have his/her own approach to evangelism refreshed or lead a small group study to better understand biblical evangelism, *Gaining Ground with Good Soil* is worthy of consideration.

— Clark Macaulay  
Biblical Ministries Worldwide (Lawrenceville, GA)
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