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Editor, JODT
701 W. Pipeline Road
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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: $20.00 per year
Foreign: $35.00 per year (includes Canada and Mexico)
All subscriptions payable in United States currency

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## Journal of Dispensational Theology

### Autumn 2017

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EDITORIAL

Martin Luther (and the other Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century) caused immeasurable transformation to the church by demanding reform. They declared the theology of the church in Western Europe was a deviation of biblical, apostolic teaching. The rallying call of the Reformers was *sola Scriptura*, which meant the Bible alone was their authority (in contrast to the pope, church councils, or tradition). The systematic teaching of premillennial pretribulationism is a consequence of the Protestant Reformation; however, in calling the church to live with Scripture alone as her authority, the Reformers did not attempt to transform their eschatology. The neglect to apply the principle of *sola Scriptura* consistently to all 66 books of the Bible continues to result in doctrinal misunderstanding.

The Reformers endured such incredible persecution under the Catholic Church that it was only natural for them to spiritualize Scripture and understand the pope to be the Antichrist. The Reformers abandoned the allegorical method of interpretation (characteristic of Roman Catholicism) in all areas but eschatology. The reason that many of the Reformers retained the amillennialism of Catholicism was due to the times in which they lived. They did embrace a grammatical-historical interpretation of the Scripture in regards to soteriology and ecclesiology. Since eschatology was not a major issue during the Reformation, the Reformers did not have the opportunity to apply their hermeneutic consistently, yet when that did occur, it lead to the revival of premillennialism (which originally was held extensively by the early church). As the church anticipates the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, believers can be thankful for the revival that ensued in reasserting the gospel of grace through faith in Christ alone, and how the interpretative revitalization led to the renewal of ancient premillennialism.

The *final article in Bruce Baker’s series* addresses socio-political engagement and the law. His explanation of continuity and discontinuity positions considers the perspectives of both Calvin and Luther. Baker explains how the continuity viewpoint affects understanding of the Mosaic Law because it is integrated with an understanding of the biblical covenants, and ultimately how these issues influence socio-political action. *Don Trest’s final article* in his series further clarifies how the Sonship declarations of Jesus are related to his messianic claims, and how this relates to the proclamation of the gospel. *Nicholas Claxton’s article* is the continuation of his series addressing the timing of the Day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians. The present article considers the primary exegetical details that are crucial for establishing that timing. *David Santos* provides readers with an exegetical and theological study of Spirit baptism, while also critiquing whether that experience occurs entirely at conversion or as secondary works of the Holy Spirit. Readers will benefit from the *fourteen book reviews* in their practical quality. We trust this current issue of the *Journal of Dispensational Theology* finds you rejoicing how the sovereign Lord uses “earthen vessels” to proclaim the “treasure” of the all-“surpassing greatness” of his power (2 Cor 4:7).

— Ron J. Bigalke, Ph.D.
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THE DANGERS OF KINGDOM ETHICS, PART III:
THEONOMY, PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM,
AND SOCIAL-POLITICAL ETHICS

Bruce A. Baker

The second part of this series evaluated inaugurated-kingdom political action, and demonstrated that only some type of continuity position with regards to the Old Testament law is consistent with an already/not yet understanding of the kingdom. Moreover, such a continuity position logically demands a theonomic understanding of government. Since the relationship of the law to the church is such a vast topic, this third (and final) article will consider socio-political engagement and the law.

SOCIO-POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND THE LAW

The Problem of the Law

One of the foundational issues in any study of biblical ethics (including socio-political ethics) involves the use of the Mosaic Law. Ryrie accurately described the fundamental problem.

The discussion of the end of the Mosaic law and the ramifications involved is one which usually bogs down in confusion. All interpreters of the Scripture are faced with the clear teaching that the death of Christ brought an end to the Mosaic law (Rom 10:4) while at the same time recognizing that some of the commandments of that law are restated clearly and without change in the epistles of the New Testament. Or to state the problem in the form of a question, it is this: How can the law be ended if portions of it are repeated after it supposedly ended?

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Not only is the law restated “clearly and without change” after its “end,” but there is also the issue of the law, at least as it is stated in the Decalogue, appearing prior to its enactment at Sinai. Kaiser noted, “All Ten Commandments had been part of the law of God previously written on hearts instead of stone, for all ten appear, in one way or another, in Genesis.”2 Additionally, the serious ramifications of the Old Testament’s witness concerning itself must be considered. After all, “The law of the LORd is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORd are trustworthy, making wise the simple” (Ps 19:7).3 This divine quality of the Old Testament cannot and should not be quickly dismissed in any discussion of ethics.

Few who take the Bible seriously would argue that the morality expressed in the Old Testament should be ignored.4 The problem that vexes commentators is what aspects of the law should be considered normative for ethical behavior in the church age, and what are limited to those directly under the law. The problem is as old as the church, as Jonathan Edwards observed, “There is perhaps no part of divinity attended with so much intricacy, and wherein orthodox divines do so much differ, as the stating of the precise agreement and difference between the two dispensations of Moses and of Christ.”5

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2 Walter C. Kaiser, Toward Old Testament Ethics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983) 82. “The first, Genesis 35:2: ‘Get rid of the foreign gods.’ The second, Genesis 31:39: Laban to Jacob: ‘But why did you steal my gods?’ The third, Genesis 24:3: ‘I want you to swear by the Lord.’ The forth, Genesis 2:3: ‘God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.’ The fifth, Genesis 27:41: ‘The days of mourning my father are near.’ The sixth, Genesis 4:9: ‘Where is your brother Abel?’ The seventh, Genesis 39:9: ‘How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?’ The eighth, Genesis 44:4–7: ‘Why have you stolen my silver cup?’ (RSV) The ninth, Genesis 39:17: ‘[Joseph] came to me to make sport of me . . . but . . . he ran . . . ’ The tenth, Genesis 12:18; 20:3: ‘You are as good as dead because of the woman you have taken; she is a married woman.’ Of course, not every one of these illustrations are equally clear, for the text does not pause to moralize on the narratives, but each would appear to add to the orders of creation already given in the first chapters of Genesis” (ibid.).

3 Unless otherwise stated, all Scripture references are taken from the New International Version.

4 Glen Stassen and David Gushee are notable exceptions.

This problem is compounded by the fact that there is an abundance of ethical material in the Old Testament delivered in a variety of forms. One may find narrative passages that illustrate what one is or is not to do, proverbs, songs, preaching, prophecies, allegories, civil laws, ceremonies, all in addition to direct moral teaching. Therefore, the issue of genre complicates the issue of authority. Nevertheless, Kaiser is quite correct in stating, “The heart of Old Testament ethics is to be placed squarely on the explicit commands found mainly in the Pentateuch, but also to a lesser degree in the Prophets and Wisdom Books.”

As one might expect, there is a variety of proposed solutions to the problem of the use of the Mosaic Law in ethics. Nevertheless, the solutions eventually reduce themselves into one of two approaches: 1) **Everything** in the Mosaic law remains in force for the New Testament believer except that which the New Testament specifically changes; or, 2) **Nothing** in the Mosaic law remains in force except that which the New Testament specifically repeats. These two understandings of the use of the Mosaic law can be described as stressing either continuity between the testaments or discontinuity. John Calvin championed the continuity position (option 1, while Martin Luther taught the discontinuity position (option 2). As might be expected, each position has modern adherents and modifications.

### Discontinuity Positions

Luther rejected any attempt to base Christian behavior upon Old Testament revelation that was not specifically repeated in the New Testament. There are at least three reasons for his understanding of the law. First, a major item for concern for Luther was the “tangible” nature of the Old Testament kingdom and the “spiritual” nature of the church. The distinction was pivotal to his understanding: “These are two kingdoms: the temporal, which governs with the sword and is visible; and the spiritual,

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8 Since this section is only for the purpose of drawing a distinction from the continuity positions, only an abbreviated treatment of this perspective will be given.

which governs solely with grace and with the forgiveness of sins.”¹⁰ Since the church was spiritual, the tangible nature of the law did not apply. Second, the law was given to the Jews, not to the church. “Here the law of Moses has its place. It is no longer binding on us because it was given only to the people of Israel.”¹¹ Third, Luther recognized the essential unity of the law. “Prove your case from the New Testament! The Old Testament has been set aside through Christ and is no longer binding. If it is binding, then you do not have Christ and you must observe the entire law.”¹²

Traditional dispensationalists consider Luther’s arguments to be valid. While they do not accept his view of the church in its entirety, they do maintain the physical/spiritual distinction he articulated.¹³ Likewise, they stress the covenant nature of the law as given to Israel and the essential unity of the law.

**Continuity Positions**

Those views that stress continuity between the testaments maintain that certain aspects of the Mosaic Law continue into the church age. While there are variations within this general category, almost no one accepts the entire law — as originally written and understood — as being in force today. This author is aware of no one in this category that would advocate

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¹⁰ Ibid. 164. “It is well to remember, too, that since God himself calls this kingdom a new kingdom, it must be a far more glorious kingdom than the old kingdom was or is. It was God’s will to make it a far better kingdom than the old one. Even if this new kingdom had no other glory, this alone would be enough to make it glorious beyond measure: that it is to be an everlasting kingdom that will not come to an end like the old, worldly kingdom” (Luther, “A New Preface to the Prophet Ezekiel,” in ibid. 289).


¹² Luther, “Questions on Monastic Vows,” 146.

¹³ For a more complete discussion of the differing natures of Israel and the church, see Bruce A. Baker, “Israel and the Church: The Transcendental Distinction within the Dispensational Tradition,” The Journal of Ministry and Theology 8 (Fall 2004).
a return to the system of sacrifices, for example. Nevertheless, while the whole law does not remain, certain aspects of it are binding upon the believer. Calvin argued:

Certain ignorant persons . . . rashly cast out the whole of Moses, and bid farewell to the two Tables of the Law. For they think it obviously alien to Christians to hold to a doctrine that contains the "dispensation of death." Banish this wicked thought from our minds! . . . But if no one can deny that a perfect pattern of righteousness stands forth in the law, either we need no rule to live rightly and justly, or it is forbidden to depart from the law. There are not many rules, but one everlasting and unchangeable rule to live by. For this reason we are not to refer solely to one age David's statement that the life of a righteous man is a continual meditation upon the law, for it is just as applicable to every age, even to the end of the world.\textsuperscript{14}

Calvin responded to those who would argue that keeping the law places one under a curse (Gal 3:10) by arguing that there is a difference between the moral requirements of the law — which remain — and the law's ability to impose judgment — which has been abrogated. Since Christ was made a curse for believers, their inability to keep the law has already been punished. Therefore, the moral requirements of the law are still in effect while the ability to judge has been removed.

What Paul says of the curse unquestionably applies not to the ordinance itself but solely to its force to bind the conscience. The law not only teaches but forthrightly enforces what it commands. If it be not obeyed — indeed, if one in any respect fail in his duty — the law unleashes the thunderbolt of its curse . . . . What does this mean? That we should not be borne down by an unending bondage, which would agonize our consciences with the fear of death. Meanwhile this always remains an unassailable fact: no part of the authority of the law is withdrawn without our having always to receive it with the same veneration and obedience.\textsuperscript{15}

This general position, as outlined by Calvin, has evolved into two separate, yet related, schools of thought: The more inclusive use of the law


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. 2.7.15.
as exemplified by Christian reconstructionists or theonomists, and the more moderate position of the more common non-theonomic reformed thought.

NON-THEONOMIC REFORMED\textsuperscript{16} UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW

\textbf{The Relationship between the Biblical Covenants}

“The Reformed view of the law is integrated with an understanding of the covenant.”\textsuperscript{17} When appealing to “the covenant” without further explanation, reformed theologians almost always are referring to the theological covenant of grace. Since dispensationalists do not usually recognize the covenant of grace as an organizing principle, there is little common ground here to be discussed. On the other hand, there is much to discuss in their understanding of the relationship between the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants. Their unique interpretation of these two covenants is due primarily to their understanding of the relationship between the concepts law and covenant.

The reformed position maintains that the word covenant “denotes a relationship that the Lord sovereignly and graciously establishes and maintains, whereas law denotes the order that is required for that relationship to be meaningful.”\textsuperscript{18} Thus, “biblical law, whatever its particular expression, can be properly understood only within a covenantal framework, which always means a context of divine grace.”\textsuperscript{19} For this reason, the covenant which established the gracious relationship — namely the Abrahamic covenant — and the covenant which established the order for maintaining that relationship — the Mosaic covenant — are actually very closely related although they seem different. The relationship of the two covenants is not that of A to A (complete continuity) nor A to B

\textsuperscript{16} The name for this position was taken from the chapter description for the reformed position of Willem VanGemeren in \textit{Five Views on Law and Gospel}, ed. Wayne G. Strickland (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

\textsuperscript{17} VanGemeren, “The Law is the Perfection of Righteousness in Jesus Christ: A Reformed Perspective,” in ibid. 46.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

(discontinuity) but rather $A^1$ to $A^2$ (modified continuity). Chamblin asserted, “The great event which provides the setting for the Sinaitic Covenant is itself an expression of the Abrahamic Covenant.” Douma explained,

God had bound Himself by oath to Abraham, promising to make his descendants numerous and to make them a blessing for all the nations of the earth. When He introduced Himself to Moses, God was thinking back to that covenant... This covenant, established long ago with the fathers, was being renewed here at Sinai.

Thus, since the Abrahamic covenant is an enduring covenant, the Mosaic is enduring as well.

In keeping with Ezekiel 36:27 — ”And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws” — those who take this position maintain that the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31–34 is actually “not a new law but a new and more personal administration of the old (Mosaic) law.” The statement “It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers” (Jer 31:32) is understood to mean that the form of the covenant is different, but not the substance. “The formal difference lies in the coming of Jesus Christ: his atonement, his present ministry, and the work of the Holy Spirit.” As a result,

Under the new covenant, the law can never again be read, interpreted, or applied apart from Jesus Christ. He modeled the perfection of the law and simplified it. The ceremonial laws, civil laws, and the penal code have been abrogated, and the moral law has received further clarification in the person and teaching of Jesus Christ.

The entire law has undergone a transformation because of the coming of Christ and the subsequent inauguration of the New covenant. There is some measure of discontinuity in the form and shape of the law, but not in its being or essence. It is not a different law from what was given

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid. 184.
25 Ibid. 37.
at Sinai, but rather a “newly administered and more deeply expounded” law than previously.

**Relationship of the Church to the Body Politic**

Up until this point in the discussion, reformed theologians would be nearly unanimous in their agreement. It is at this juncture, however, that there is a parting of the ways. Reformed theology has traditionally recognized three kinds of law within the Mosaic Law, as outlined by the Westminster Confession of Faith: the moral, the ceremonial, and the civil. The moral law is considered binding upon all people at all times; therefore, the moral law is binding upon the believer today. The ceremonial law is considered fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ, and is therefore no longer binding. Its function is as teacher only, pointing to Christ. But what of the civil law?

Kaiser calls the political use of the law an “unresolved issue” in the larger discussion of law and grace — a discussion that is rife with “traditional unanswered questions.” One might expect that the political use of the law has been unresolved in modern reformed thought, at least in part, because the issue was substantially ignored until the advent of dominion theology in the early 1970s. This neglect, however, is no longer possible.

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27 “Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament. To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging under any now, further than the general equity thereof may require” (Westminster Confession, Ch. 19, §3–4). These three uses of the law have traditionally been known as the usus politicus (external in applicability and civil, it prohibits and punishes), the usus pedagogues (informs and instructs the heart and the conscience, preaching damnation, accusing and pointing to Christ), and the usus normativus (showing what God requires) (Geoffrey H. Greenhough, “The Reformers’ Attitude to the Law of God,” Westminster Theological Journal 39 [Fall 1976]: 89).


29 Although old habits, it appears, die hard. In his essay on the relationship between law and grace from a non-theonomic reformed perspective, VanGemeren (“Law Is the Perfection”) never addressed the subject of the political use of the
Many contemporary reformed scholars maintain that the civil laws given to Israel are not binding upon society in general, but instead have been transferred to the ecclesiastical functions of the church. The body politic to whom the law was originally given was the nation of Israel. Since the coming of Christ, however, and the inauguration of the New Covenant, the church has supplanted Israel. Chamblin argued, “the NT counterpart to OT Israel, considered as ‘a body politic,’ is the Christian church, not the pluralistic society amidst which she stands.” As a result, “The counterpart to the Israelite courts is the Christian church meeting in judicial assembly by the authority of Christ and his apostles.” Therefore, lawsuits are no longer to be handled by civil courts, but are to be heard by the church instead (1 Cor 6:1–4). In the same way, the issue of incest in the Corinthian church was met with excommunication, the ecclesiastical equivalent of the death penalty. Thus, Chamblin concluded, “In some sense, the entirety of the law remains in force. . . . While the whole law is preserved, it is just as surely transformed and reshaped in the hands of Jesus and the apostles.”

**Evaluation: Exegetical Concerns**

One of the fundamental problems with this position is that it fails to account for the New Testament teaching concerning the foundational unity of the law. Moo observed, “Of Paul’s 119 uses of *nomos*, none occurs in the plural. . . . [T]his statistic should be regarded as significant: Paul discusses the law as a single entity rather than a series of commands.” Therefore, if the law is an indivisible unit, it follows that there is a certain “all or nothing” quality about it. This understanding of the law as a unit is supported by at least three New Testament texts.

Matthew 5:19 – Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called

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31 Ibid. 199.
32 Ibid. (this is Moore’s position as well, see fn. 90).
33 Ibid. 200.
least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Galatians 5:3 – Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law.

James 2:10 – For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

The major factor in each of these verses is the stress upon keeping the whole law. While it is true that the law consists of some commands more important than others, Jesus was clear that the weightier commands were to be kept without neglecting the lesser ones (Matt 23:23). One may not pick and choose which parts of the law to obey. In the Old Testament, the temptation evidently was to keep the ceremonial aspects of the law, while ignoring its moral requirements (see, e.g., 1 Sam 15:22–23; Ps 51:16–17; Isa 1:11–17; Jer 7:21–23; Mic 6:8). This approach to the law turns that temptation on its head. Here, the ceremonial and civil law is set aside while the moral law is retained. What is consistent in both these tendencies is the urge to dissect the law into component parts that may exist independently of the others.

Another weakness of this position is that it fails to adequately account for the responsibility that God has given civil government in the church age. The civil ruler is a minister of God to promote good and punish evil in society at large (Rom 13:1–7). But what principles is the civil government to use when determining such vague concepts as good, evil, and justice? Is the civil ruler to appeal to the law of God? According to this position, the civil use of the law has been transferred to the church; it is, therefore, binding upon believers, but not upon society as a whole. From where then does the secular government’s God-given authority derive? If one says the law as modeled by the church, then one has moved into incoherence, for there is no appreciable difference between saying “the secular government is to model the law as it is binding on the church” and “the law is binding upon the secular government.” If one says that government’s God-given authority is derived by some other means, then it must be shown exactly what those other means are. Is the responsibility that government has to God one of law? If so, which law? If not law, then how is one to understand it?

Perhaps this particular problem may be better understood if an actual case were examined. If incest is under the authority of the church — since the Mosaic Law has been transformed and transferred to the church and not the civil authority — why is this not true of other capital crimes
like murder, kidnapping, or rape? If a murderer is excommunicated and then repents, and is subsequently restored to the church, is that the end of the matter? Does this abrogate the civil government's claim on his life? If yes, then does the church have priority over the state as has been claimed in the past? If not, then does the civil law take precedence over the law of God? How can this be? Kline was correct when he stated that a reordering of the traditional reformed understanding with regard to civil law "has left us with standards whose proper legal interpretation is perplexed by ambiguities."35

**Cultural Accommodation?**

Third, while there is significant justification for the setting aside of the ceremonial law through the sacrifice of Christ, the paucity of evidence for the transference of civil law to the church is telling. The justification, therefore, seems to be not so much from clear Scriptural evidence, but rather a tendency to accommodate the democratic and pluralistic mood of contemporary North American society, especially in its insistence on the separation of church and state. The main redeeming feature of this approach's transference of the Old Testament law to the church appears to be that it does not offend our contemporary democratic ideals. Bahnsen's comment is telling.

I can still recall the initial embarrassment I felt when college and university instructors would point a critical finger at the political ethic of my Calvinist forefathers, say in Geneva or Puritan New England. As an "enlightened, modern, tolerant" thinker, I tried to find ways to explain the error of my Reformed predecessors…36

This type of embarrassment is certainly not new, particularly in the United States. It seems to have been a regular temptation to set forth a theology of government that served simply as an apology for the American political system. Mark Noll observed,

Like Europe, American protestants of all sorts did accommodate themselves to republican and democratic ideas. … The churches in

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Kingdom Ethics

1790 flourished in America by accepting as given the separation of church and state — a Lockean, contractual view of government. No thought for any kind of divine right of rule. No thought for even a kind of explicitly Christian orientation of government. But in what was considered to be a neutral libertarian or freedom-enhancing form of government, the churches went wild and actually did a lot of great work.37

This accommodation took perhaps its most radical form in the 1788 revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith.38 The first American Presbyterian Assembly (1787–89) rewrote (and essentially negated) Chapter XXIII, paragraph 3 on the powers of the civil magistrate so that it more closely aligned with democratic ideals of freedom of religion. The original paragraph read, in part, that the civil magistrate’s duties include:

to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administrated, and observed.39 For all the better effecting whereof, he has power to call synods, to be present at them and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God [Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) XXIII.3].40


38 Authored by approximately one hundred Puritan theologians, the Westminster Confession of Faith was adopted in 1646.


40 The last sentence is justified by the following passages: 2 Chronicles 19:8–11; 29; 30; and, Matthew 2:4-5. One should note that Westminster did not put forward a unique or even novel viewpoint on this subject. The Belgic Confession, as revised in the Synod of Dort, asserts, “And their office is, not only to have regard unto, and watch for the welfare of the civil state; but also that they protect the sacred ministry; and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship” (Article XXXVI: Of Magistrates).
The American revision of the confession, adopted the same year the United States Constitution was ratified, directly contradicts the original document. In the revised version, the civil magistrate may not interfere in the matter of faith. Yet, as nursing fathers, it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger. And, as Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in his Church, no law of any commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder, the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief. It is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the person and good name of all their people, in such an effectual manner as that no person be suffered, either upon pretence of religion or of infidelity, to offer any indignity, violence, abuse, or injury to any other person whatsoever: and to take order, that all religious and ecclesiastical assemblies be held without molestation or disturbance [Westminster Confession of Faith (American Revision of 1788) XXIII.3].

In fairness, it should be noted that not all consider this a cultural accommodation. Bahnsen, for example, felt that this was merely an attempt to clarify the original version’s understanding of church-state relations. He wrote, “Thus it is best to regard the 1788 rewriting of that section as a recasting of the earlier doctrine in language which would more clearly express the separation of church and state which was implicit all along (and explicitly asserted in the opening words of the section).”41 In contrast, Gary North complained that the American Presbyterians “gutted” the original statement and therefore, “moved forthrightly onto a long road that leads into culturally muddled theology.42

41 Greg L. Bahnsen, Theonomy in Christian Ethics, 3rd ed. (Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2002) 519. Nevertheless, this version “failed to include the important statement of the orthodox version to the effect that the magistrate must govern in accord with God’s law. Hence there was some gain, but a significant loss in the rewritten form of 23.3” (ibid. 520).

Perhaps the best way to understand the original statement concerning the civil magistrate is in light of the memorable Michael Servetus incident which occurred in Calvin's Geneva. Servetus was a radical reformer, who was deeply religious. Wishing to restore what he considered to be true Christianity, he rejected the accepted doctrine of the Trinity, predestination, and infant baptism. He also maintained that the millennial kingdom was soon to begin. At Calvin's insistence, he was arrested while passing through Geneva as he fled Roman Catholic authorities that had condemned him for heresy in Vienna. He was tried for heresy — specifically that he denied the Trinity and rejected baptism — by the civil authorities, found guilty as charged, and was burned at the stake in 1553. This seems to be the best exposition of the confession's charge to the civil magistrate: "to take order that . . . the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed . . . ."

Citizens of the United States, nurtured from their youth on the doctrine of the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bill of Rights, find this application of the confession disturbing. Nevertheless, the question is not whether or not this is in accordance with our American system of government, but is this, in effect, an accurate understanding of the church's biblical mandate?

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44 Kline ("Comments on an Old-New Error," 173) called the original statement in the confession "manifestly unbiblical by the mass of those who stand in that confessional tradition (as well as by virtually all other students of the Scriptures)." His main line of reasoning, however, was that this understanding does not fit the typology of Israel to Christ. Nevertheless, despite the lack of direct Scriptural statement, he maintained, "What we are talking about here is not something illusively subtle or profound, but big and plain and simple" (ibid. 175). G. I. Williamson agreed that the original confession is unbiblical at this point, and yet offered no exegetical evidence whatsoever to substantiate this assertion (The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes [Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1964] 245). What little evidence he did offer was entirely empirical. Pointing to the many ways that civil interference in the church has led to much suffering, he appealed to the Scottish Covenanters "who were called upon to suffer unto death from civil oppression" as an authority to reject civil entanglements in the church (p. 256). Lee Irns also attacked the original understanding of Westminster, but undermined one of the fundamental presuppositions (the continuity of the Mosaic covenant with that of the New covenant) of the non-theonomic reformed position in doing so ("The Reformed Theocrats: A Biblical Theological Response," in Christian Body Politic: 21st Century Reformed Christian
Conclusion

Aside from the standard disagreements that dispensationalists have with reformed theology (the blending of the biblical covenants, the centrality of the theological covenants, the supersessionist view of Israel and the church, among others), the non-theonomic understanding of the law should be rejected in particular. First, it fails to account for the fundamental unity of the law. Second, it fails to account for the basis and standard for law in civil government adequately. Third, this understanding of law is at odds with the logically consistent historical reformed theology in what appears to be a cultural accommodation. Historic reformed theology is nothing if not logically consistent. Changes in this theological system, particularly changes designed to be less offensive to society as a whole, are prone to produce inconsistency and incoherence, as this change has done.

THEONOMIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW

The Abiding Character of God

As one might expect, the theonomic position has much in common with the non-theonomic position stated previously, since both draw their family tree to the same pater familias. The primary difference between these positions is one of scope. In other words, the distinction between these two approaches is how far theonomy takes the foundational assumption. For both schools of thought, the primary methodological point is to assume believers in the church age still have an obligation to obey any Old Testament command unless that command is abrogated by the New Testament. Theonomists, in contrast to the more modern and more common reformed understanding, take this assumption to its natural inference.

While there are several men who could be considered prominent theonomists, this section will deal almost exclusively with the writings of Greg Bahnsen. In this author’s opinion, he is not only one of the most prolific authors and speakers, but also one of the most articulate and well-reasoned spokesmen for this movement.
To this methodological point we can add the substantive conclusion that the New Testament does not teach any radical change in God’s law regarding the standards of socio-political morality. God’s law as it touches upon the duty of civil magistrates has not been altered in any systematic or fundamental way in the New Testament. Consequently, we must recognize the continuing obligation of civil magistrates to obey and enforce the relevant laws of the Old Testament, including the penal sanctions specified by the just Judge of all the earth. As with the rest of God’s law, we must presume continuity of binding authority regarding the socio-political commandments revealed as standing law in the Old Testament.46

By stating that the “socio-political morality” of God’s law has not changed, theonomists are making a very simple, yet profound point. If it was in accordance with God’s will to consider homosexuality a capital crime in the Old Testament, then it is incumbent upon society today to view this crime in the same way. If witchcraft, idolatry, bestiality, incest, kidnapping (among others) were worthy of the death penalty in the Old Testament, then they are worthy of it today. After all, theonomists argue, the law of God was based upon his unchanging character. Since God has not changed, neither has his understanding of social morality and justice.

**Historic Continuity**

One of the constant emphases in the writings and sermons of theonomists is the continuity of this position with the historic reformed confessions and the writings of Calvin (among many others). In this assertion there is little debate.47 Kline observed, “At the same time it must be said that Chalcedon48 is not without roots in respectable ecclesiastical tradition. It is in fact a revival of certain teaching contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith — at least in the Confession’s original formulations.”49

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48 A reference to the Chalcedon Foundation, established in 1965, which is an organization devoted to research, publishing, and promoting Christian reconstruction in all areas of life.

49 Kline, “Comments on an Old-New Error,” 173. Kline added, however, “These particular elements in the Confession, long since rejected as manifestly unbiblical by the mass of those who stand in that confessional tradition (as well as by virtually all other students of the Scriptures), have been subjected to official
It was this ecclesiastical tradition that was the driving force behind Bahnsen's position. It was not his desire to go beyond what Westminster confessed, but rather "to uphold and defend the Confession's Reformed or Puritan position regarding the standard of Christian ethics. . . . [M]y intention was not to present something novel and creative, but to resurrect a golden heritage—to present a Biblical and consistent case for the Confessional viewpoint I had always known and loved." 50

Calvin maintained that, while the church and the civil authority held separate jurisdictions and powers, 51 the church and the Christian magistrate were to work in close cooperation with one another. "And as the magistrate ought by punishment and physical restraint to cleanse the church of offenses, so the minister of the Word in turn ought to help the magistrate in order that not so many may sin. Their functions ought to be so joined that each serves to help, not hinder the other." 52 The reason for this cooperation is found in their respective relationships to God's law. While the church is subject to the law of God, the Christian magistrate is subject to the church. "For the magistrate, if he is godly, will not want to exempt himself from the common subjection of God's children. It is by no means the least significant part of this for him to subject himself to the church, which judges according to God's Word." 53

The Divine Authority of Government

It is important to remember at this point, that the issue is not how the church should behave toward government that is not godly, but rather what is government's obligation towards God, who gives the magistrate his authority. Romans 13, after all, was most likely written during the reign of the infamous Nero. Yet despite his infidelity to his divinely ordained mandate, he was still responsible to God for the promotion of good and the punishing of evil. Nor will it do to appeal to a democratic ideal of freedom of religion or pluralistic notion of truth as an objection. Bahnsen correctly

50 Bahnsen, “Theonomic Thesis in Confessional and Historical Perspective” [online].
51 "The two conceptions are very different. The church does not assume what is proper to the magistrate; nor can the magistrate execute what is carried out by the church" (Calvin, Institutes, 4.11.3).
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid. 4.11.4.
observed, "obedience to the law of God is a 'must' for all men, saved or unsaved, before and after regeneration; it does not become a requirement simply after salvation."\textsuperscript{54} Those that rebel are merely storing up wrath against themselves for the day of God's wrath, "when his righteous judgment will be revealed" (Rom 2:5).

Therefore, one should not expect government to find ultimate standards of right and wrong, morality and immorality, justice and equality in such corrupt things as the will of an educated elite or even majority vote. "It stands to reason that God's objective and unchanging standards for civil government are found in the inerrable, in-scripturated Word of God, in those passages where it speaks about political ethics."\textsuperscript{55} The fact that the vast majority of these passages are found in the Old Testament concerning the nation of Israel is no problem to this viewpoint because of its fundamental assumption regarding the continuity of the testaments.

It should be noted that the divine authority of government not only prescribes what must be considered a crime (along with the appropriate punishment), but it also limits government's ability to prescribe behavior. As Bahnsen observed,

[L]est our states become lawless beasts (c.f. 2 Thess. 2:3; Rev. 13:16–17), there must be objective limits to legal coercion, a law above the civil law to which appeal can be made against injustice and oppression. This objective criterion is the revealed law of God in its prescriptions of civil penalties for misdeeds. God's law enables us to distinguish consistently and on principle sin from crime, personal morality from civil legality, social from political ethics, and areas where the state may properly legislate from areas where it must not interfere.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{54} Bahnsen, "Theonomic Thesis in Confessional and Historical Perspective" [online].


\textsuperscript{56} Ibid. 126. Bahnsen continued his discussion of this principle by providing examples where both politically conservative and liberal evangelicals have transgressed this principle. "Those with conservative leanings have tended to promote ethically commendable goals (sobriety regarding alcoholic beverages, restriction of smoking, intervention to curtail the geopolitical spread of Communism) by less than ethical means, calling upon the state to exercise its power of compulsion where no biblical warrant for it can be cogently adduced. Likewise, those with liberal leanings have tended to promote ethically commendable goals (racial integration, food or medical care for the poor, public education) by less than ethical means, calling upon the state to exercise its power
Evaluation

This position has answered two of the objections towards the non-theonomic position. First, theonomy has refused to accommodate the culture. Instead it maintains the logically consistent view of the reformers with regard to civil government. It, therefore, remains internally consistent and coherent. Second, it adequately accounts for the responsibility that God has given civil government in the church age when one assumes a continuity position with the law. Theonomists have a well-articulated view of government that answers the larger questions of authority, justice, and morality.

Unfortunately, it fails to address the more important issue of the unity of the law. As with all of reformed theology, it unnaturally divides the law into components that appear to be divisible. It is true that theonomists maintain the unity of the law better than non-theonomists, but it nevertheless asserts that one part of the law (the cultic or ceremonial aspects) may be annulled by the sacrifice of Christ, while the rest of the law remains binding.57

Another problem with reformed theology in general is its insistence that some of the covenants are essentially one without justification as to why the other covenants are excluded. Stated another way, what justification is there for linking the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and New covenants all the while excluding the Land and Davidic covenants from consideration? One would think that any discussion of the political ramifications of the Abrahamic-Mosaic-New covenant(s) would include the blessings that come from obedience (Land covenant). Likewise, some

57 Interestingly, progressive dispensationalism shares this problem, but in a different way. They should have no trouble with the cultic requirements of the law since they will be fulfilled in the future kingdom. Jerry M. Hullinger’s notion of clean and unclean in the temple explains why animal sacrifices will be required in the future kingdom and why they are not now (“The Divine Presence, Uncleanness, and Ezekiel’s Millennial Sacrifices,” Bibliotheca Sacra [October 2006]: 405-22). Nevertheless, progressive dispensationalism unnaturally divides the law by rejecting the governmental and civil portions of it. In both cases, the essential unity of the law is compromised.
explanation on Christ’s reign as fulfillment of the Davidic covenant with regard to supernatural gifts seems necessary, particularly when one considers theonomy from a postmillennial understanding of the kingdom. If the kingdom is indeed a physical entity, then one must account (in some way) for the signs of the kingdom. It is interesting to note that movement towards this understanding may indeed be happening. One of the surprising developments in this discussion is the growing rapprochement between reconstructionism and the charismatic movement.

Conclusion

While theonomy maintains a more consistently logical and coherent reformed theology than the one previously discussed, the main difficulty in reformed theology remains, namely, the linking of the biblical covenants into essentially one theological covenant. This one theological covenant then overrides the natural (and biblical) distinction between Israel and the church. Thus, while theonomists’ conclusions flow logically from their presuppositions, these fundamental assumptions must be rejected.

58 Kenneth L. Gentry asserted, “Christian Reconstructionism as a distinctive school of thought within the Reformed tradition is founded upon five basic theological premises: (1) Calvinistic soteriology; (2) covenantal theology; (3) postmillennial eschatology; (4) presuppositional apologetics; and (5) theonomic ethics: the cornerstone of Reconstruction thought” (“Preface to the Third Edition,” in Theonomy in Christian Ethics [Nacogdoches, TX: Covenant Media Press, 2002] xv). Yet, somewhat puzzlingly, he also contended, “A common error of some theonomy opponents is to assume that theonomy entails postmillennialism. The two theological constructs, however, are distinct; in no way do they stand or fall together. Postmillennialism is concerned with ‘what will be’; theonomy focuses on ‘what should be.’ Many theonomists are amillennialists; few postmillennialists are theonomists” (ibid. n. 2). This attempt to distinguish between “reconstructionism” — where the goal is to “reconstruct” society on the basis of the Mosaic Law — and theonomy, which is the exegetical understanding of the Mosaic law being binding on society in general, appears, at least to this author, to generate distinction without a difference. For if the Old Testament law is binding upon society, then the individual believer is responsible to act as salt and light and attempt to implement that law, regardless of the chances of success. Thus it is difficult to see a consistent theonomy without a reconstructionist agenda.

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING SOCIO-POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

**Progressive Dispensationalism and Theonomy**

Assuming an inaugurated-kingdom that is a partial, but nevertheless physical manifestation of the future consummated kingdom carries with it logical conclusions that might not be immediately evident. One necessary conclusion is a theonomistic view of socio-political action. Both the emerging consensus and reconstructionism assume the presence of the literal, physical kingdom of God in the present. While the future expectations of many within these movements may differ substantially, it is the understanding of the present that informs contemporary obligations. If the present manifestation of the kingdom is linked to *either the future manifestation or the past manifestation of the kingdom*, an adoption of Old Testament governmental sanctions in one form or another must be adopted.

If the present is linked to the past, as in the continuity position of theonomy, then the righteous requirements of the law are still binding upon secular government because of the unified nature of the law. If the present kingdom is linked with the future kingdom, as in progressive dispensationalism and the emerging evangelical perspective, the same requirements are in place since the governmental sanctions of the future kingdom are based upon the Old Testament kingdom. These governmental sanctions are only in place if it is the call of the church to engage in socio-political action. This is, of course, exactly what is being demanded. While proponents of this viewpoint go to great lengths to limit socio-political action to actions within the church as a model for society, their calls for the involvement in electoral politics, engagement of economic injustice, and the rationale that the church is to seek kingdom righteousness speak to a larger role that has been traditionally held.

**The Missing Element**

One disturbing aspect of this entire discussion is the lack of a straightforward biblical command for political action by the church. There have been no exegetical arguments concerning the context of a particular passage, no discussion of the subtleties of vocabulary, no debate regarding historical setting. This is because there is simply a lack of instruction in the New Testament with regard to the church’s engagement in — with a view to change — the political and social structures of this world.
There is plenty of opportunity for such instruction. Paul wrote Romans 13 during the reign of Nero. While the franchise was far from universal, one must assume that at least some of Paul's readers had the right to vote. Why did he not instruct them in this matter? When Paul had the opportunity to confront a societal wrong (slavery) when he returned Onesimus to Philemon, why did he not plead with Philemon to release Onesimus as an example to the world of kingdom justice? When the risen Lord spoke to the church in Smyrna regarding their suffering (Rev 2:8-11), why did He point to the crown of life as their only hope? Why did He not mention his current kingship and how their suffering would set an example that would effect societal change? One realizes that this is an argument from silence, but in this particular case, the silence is deafening! If one is going to state an action as a mandate upon the universal church, so that failure to fulfill the mandate is sinful rebellion (for what else is disobedience to the commands of God?), then one would hope for specific commands to be followed, not the stringing together of theological concepts.

Concluding Remarks

Finally it should be said that this author is all too aware of the shortcomings of this study. The arguments of the emerging evangelical consensus in general and progressive dispensationalism in particular, at least on this topic, are, in this author's opinion at least, far from clear. If there is evidence that should have been included in this study but has been overlooked, it is hoped that, in a spirit of loving correction, those who hold to an alternative position will produce it, so that all may achieve a better understanding of this topic. For this author echoes the words of Basil ("Letter VIII"): "If any one has a better interpretation to give, and can consistently with true religion amend what I say, let him speak and let him amend, and the Lord will reward him for me. There is no jealousy in my heart. I have not approached this investigation of these passages for strife and vain glory. I have done so to help my brothers..." 60

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THE DISTINCTIVE SONSHIP SOTERIOLOGY OF JESUS
IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL, PART IV

Don Trest

The writer of the Gospel of John placed the hermeneutic key in the text that governed the writing of the Gospel and John's unique perspective concerning the Person of Jesus. He shared these principles with the audience of the Fourth Gospel, so that his readers would know how to read and interpret the story of Jesus. John (or some other eyewitness author of the Fourth Gospel) informed his readers that he was the principle source for his gospel and that he personally vouchedsafed the truthfulness and accuracy of what he wrote in the Fourth Gospel.

HERMENEUTIC KEYS AND CHRONOLOGICAL MARKERS
IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The Indispensable Eyewitness Hermeneutic of the Fourth Gospel

The author testified that he personally witnessed the death and resurrection of Jesus. When “one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water” (John 19:34) the author gave testimony to the historical veracity of what he wrote. The author stated, “He who saw it has born witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe” (v. 35).¹

The “disciple, whom Jesus loved,” (13:23) was among the disciples who witnessed the Last Supper and heard the words of Jesus spoken to the disciples. He was the one “reclining at the table at Jesus' side” (v. 23). It was Peter who “motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking” (13:24) when Jesus announced to the disciples, “Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me” (v. 21). “So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, 'Lord, who is it?'” (v. 25).

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the English Standard Version.
The author further identified himself as “the other disciple, who was known to the high priest (18:16)” and had been given access into the courtyard of the high priest where Jesus was interviewed. He spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door” (v. 16) to get Peter into the courtyard. The author was apparently a disciple of Jesus, a friend of Peter, an acquaintance of the high priest, and well known by the staff of the high priest. He personally witnessed the death and resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem. The author professed intimate Jerusalem connections that uniquely qualified him among the disciples to write the account of the ministry of Jesus to the leadership of Israel in Jerusalem. It is likely that John, the brother of James, was the eyewitness author of the Fourth Gospel.

As Jesus hung upon the cross, "Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby" (19:26). It was to this beloved disciple that Jesus committed the care of his mother. "And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home” (v. 27). The disciple, although unnamed, was well known by the apostolic company and especially loved and trusted by the Lord. This disciple is the likely author of the Fourth Gospel who was entrusted by Jesus with both the care of His mother and the story of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.

**The “After This” (Μετὰ Ταῦτα) Hermeneutic Device**

John employed an “after this (μετὰ ταῦτα)” chronological marker (John 2:12; 3:22; 5:1, 14; 6:1; 7:1; 13:7; 21:1) to note the passage of time and to signal that he had purposely passed over content in the life of Jesus. C. K. Barrett noted that this is “John’s usual expression for denoting the lapse of an undefined period.”2 The “after this (μετὰ ταῦτα)” marker shows that John knew more than he told his audience and had intentionally passed over events in the telling of his story of Jesus. As an eyewitness to the events in the messianic ministry of Jesus from the earliest days (1:35-39), John would have been familiar with the events of the Synoptic story of Jesus. He chose not to include the Synoptic material in his Gospel, but supplemented the Synoptic story with content that served his purpose (20:30-31).

The use of the “after this” (μετὰ ταῦτα) hermeneutic device in the text of the Fourth Gospel is intended to show that the stories placed in the Fourth Gospel are in correct chronological sequence, but that content known to the author had been intentionally omitted by him. These

materials would have included conversations, events, miracles, parables, and teachings of Jesus already preserved in the three Synoptic Gospels. In this way, John augmented the Synoptic story with further testimony to Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31). “Indeed, John deepens the reader’s understanding of the significance of Jesus’ life and work by focusing on a small number of pivotal items such as the identity of Jesus, the necessity of faith, and the universal scope of Christ’s redemptive work.”

The Chronological Placement of John 5

“After this [μετὰ ταῦτα] there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” Köstenberger argued against John 5 not being in chronological order.

John 5 places Jesus back in Jerusalem, a fact that has given rise to Rudolf Bultmann’s famous displacement theory, which changes the order of chapters 5 and 6, resulting in what Bultmann considers a smoother transition. However, this “solution” is both unnecessary and completely unsupported by the available manuscript evidence.

. . . it is only a prevenient belief in source criticism that legitimates rearranging the Johannine narrative.

The John 5 trip to Jerusalem probably preceded the arrest of John the Baptist and should be placed in the first stage in the ministry of Jesus. However, it is possible that John 5 followed the arrest of the Baptist and belongs to the second stage. If it occurred in the second stage, the John 5 visit to Jerusalem is the only historical content in the Fourth Gospel taken from the second stage – between the arrests of John the Baptist and the death of John the Baptist. Either way, the Jerusalem visit recounted in John 5 properly belongs with the John 1—5 sequence of events that show the response to the initial messianic claim presented to the leadership in Jerusalem.

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3 Andreas J. Köstenberger, A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters: The Word, the Christ, the Son of God (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009) 39.

4 Ibid. 206.
The Chronological Placement of John 6

“After this [μετὰ ταῦτα] Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias” (John 6:1). The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand “is the one miracle, apart from the resurrection that is recorded in all four Gospels.” The John 6 feeding of the five thousand came after the death of John the Baptist (Matt 14:12-21; Mark 6:29-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15) as reported by the Synoptic writers and belongs to the third stage.

The “after this (μετὰ ταῦτα)” chronological marker places the material recorded in John 6 after an unspecified passage of time. David Thomas argued, “this does not mean, after the charge of blasphemy against Christ and His defense, as recorded in the preceding chapter [John 5]; but after the death of John the Baptist . . . as recorded by Matthew.” A. Plummer surmised, “The chronology is doubtless correct . . . . Here it is in connection with the miracles at Bethesda and probably after the death of the Baptist: in S. Matthew it is in connection with the death of the Baptist: in S. Mark and S. Luke it is after the death of the Baptist, but in connection with the return of the Twelve.” Andrew T. Lincoln argued against the chronological displacement of John 6.

The abrupt change of setting from Jerusalem to crossing the Sea of Galilee has led many to suggest that this new episode would most naturally follow on from the end of chapter 4 and that the sequence of episodes in the narrative must have become disarranged in the course of transmission. On this basis some have transposed the chapter order for purposes of their analysis. There is, however, no actual textual evidence for a different order . . .

How much time elapsed and what other ministry activities may have occurred between the John 5 Jerusalem visit and the John 6 miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is not specified, but likely included the entire

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5 Morris, Gospel According to John, 300.
second period of ministry between the arrest of John the Baptist and his death that was the primary focus in the Synoptic Gospels.

**The Two Galilean Sign-Miracle Chronological Bookends**

John recorded two trips to Galilee. In the first trip Jesus performed “the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana of Galilee” (John 2:12) by changing the water into wine. In the second trip, “the second sign that Jesus did” (4:54) was the healing of the Capernaum official’s son. These two miracles form chronological bookends bracketing the first Passover appearance by Jesus in Jerusalem with the departure of the Lord into the Judean countryside, and the journey to Galilee through Samaria.

### The Galilean Bookends

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Accordingly, Jesus performed only two miracles in Galilee on two separate visits to Galilee prior to the arrest of John the Baptist. Jesus turned water into wine on the first visit (2:1-12). He healed the Capernaum official’s son on the second visit (4:45-54). In the time between the two Galilean miracles, Jesus attended the Passover in Jerusalem (2:12—3:21) where He performed many “signs.” John reported that when Jesus “was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing” (2:23). “Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews” (3:1) confessed to Jesus, “we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him” (v. 2). When Jesus arrived in Galilee after the Passover visit to Jerusalem, “the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the feast. For they too had gone to the feast” (4:45).

Only two miracles in Galilee and many miracles in Jerusalem are reported by John in the first period in the public ministry of Jesus. In contrast to John, the Synoptic Gospels reported many miracles in the
ministry of Jesus in Galilee in the second period, but no miracles in Jerusalem. This supports the thesis that John 1—5 came prior to the arrest of John the Baptist and prior to the commencement of the Galilean ministry as reported in the Synoptic Gospels.

The Spirit of Truth Hermeneutic Key

In the Upper Room discourse reported by John, Jesus revealed to his disciples that “the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name ... will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26). Jesus promised them that He would send to them the “Spirit of truth” and that the Spirit would then “bear witness about me” (15:26) through the disciples. [The promise of v. 26 [ch. 15] has in view the Spirit’s role to the first generation of disciples, not to all subsequent Christians.]9

Jesus explained to the eleven disciples (Judas not present when these words were spoken), “you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning” (15:27). One purpose for the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was to enable the original eyewitness participants to the story of Jesus to pass on their stories to the church. Tenney explained, “Without the witness of the Spirit, the disciples’ witness would be powerless; without the disciples’ witness, the Spirit would be restricted in his means of expression.”10

Jesus further informed his disciples that they would be entrusted with “all the truth” through the “Spirit of truth” consequent to his death, resurrection, and return to the Father in heaven (16:13). Jesus said, “But if I go, I will send him [Holy Spirit] to you” (v. 7). He told the disciples, “It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you” (v. 7). Only after the resurrection did the disciples began to report with understanding the story of Jesus and comprehend more fully the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus. This revelatory process continued until John (the last of the apostolic band) had passed from the earthly scene. Morris explained the ministry of the Holy Spirit as foretold by Jesus.


The Spirit is to be the guide and teacher of the church. This does not mean that he will make new revelations; rather he will bring back to the disciples’ memory all the things that Jesus had told them. John has made it clear that the disciples did not grasp the significance of much that their Master taught them. It seems likely that they let slip some of the things they did not understand. Jesus is now saying that the Holy Spirit will supply their lack.\textsuperscript{11}

The author of the Fourth Gospel carefully documented the inability of the disciples to understand the story of Jesus prior to the death and resurrection. The Holy Spirit after the resurrection gradually revealed the meaning and significance of the things they heard and saw during their time with Jesus.

\textbf{His Disciples Remembered (John 2:22)}

When Jesus went to Jerusalem to present his initial messianic claim before the leadership of Israel, the Jews asked Jesus for a sign to authenticate his messianic claim. Jesus told them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (John 2:19). The Jews said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” (v. 18) Neither the Jews nor the disciples understood at that time that “he was speaking of his body” (v. 21) and his resurrection from the dead. The writer further explained, “When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken” (v. 22). Understanding of the death and resurrection was consequent to the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples.

\textbf{They Did Not Understand (John 8:27)}

In the John 8 discourse, Jesus said, “He who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him” (John 8:26). John noted, “They did not understand that he had been speaking to them about the Father” (v. 27). Jesus then explained, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me” (v. 28). John wrote from an after-the-resurrection perspective with the apostolic understanding given to him and the apostles by the Spirit of truth. The Johannine canon represents the final installment in the understanding promised to them by Jesus.

\textsuperscript{11} Morris, \textit{Gospel According to John}, 583.
When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you [apostles] into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you [apostles] the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you [apostles]. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you [apostles] (16:13-15).

They Did Not Understand What He Was Saying to Them (John 10:6)

Jesus talked to his disciples about sheep, shepherds, doors, and doorkeepers. He explained that when the shepherd “has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers” (John 10:4-5). John added an explanatory note: “This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them” (v. 6). Jesus further explained using figurative language: “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep” (v. 7). “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (v. 11). “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep” (vv. 14-15).

Jesus gave this puzzling eschatological analogy: “And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again” (vv. 16-17). Neither Jesus nor John explained the meaning of “other sheep that are not of this fold,” nor, is it explained what is meant by “there will be one flock.” Possibly, it is a reference to the inclusion of Gentile people groups in support of the whole-world emphasis of John in the Fourth Gospel.

Then They Remembered (John 12:16)

On the last journey of Jesus to Jerusalem the crowd “took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!’ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it” (John 12:13-14). John then explained, “His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him” (v. 16). After the resurrection and the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, they were able to associate many
of the events from the life and ministry of Jesus to the messianic Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Afterward You Will Understand (John 13:7)

When Peter exclaimed to Jesus, “Lord, do you wash my feet? (John 13:6)” Jesus responded, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand” (v. 7). Jesus explained to his disciples later in the evening, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth” (16:12). Jesus told them that the Holy Spirit would give them understanding and spiritual perspective concerning his Person and work. “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you” (v. 7).

They Did Not Understand the Scripture (John 20:9)

When Peter and “the other disciple” arrived at the tomb of Jesus on the morning of the resurrection, they “saw and believed” that Jesus had been raised, but did not fully understand the implications of the resurrection of Jesus. John explained, “for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead” (John 20:9). They saw the empty tomb, the “linen cloths,” and the “face cloth” and witnessed that the body of Jesus was no longer in the tomb. Not until the years following the resurrection did the apostolic band become fully aware of the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Gospel of John represents the final installment in the understanding given to the disciples by the Holy Spirit regarding the words and works of Jesus.

He Breathed on Them and Said to Them, “Receive the Holy Spirit”

After the resurrection, Jesus reaffirmed the apostolic commission to his disciples and their dependence upon the Holy Spirit to execute the terms of that commission. “Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you’” (John 20:21). He then ceremoniously “breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (vv. 21-22). Thomas was not present with the other disciples at the apostolic commissioning service. Eight days latter Jesus appeared to the disciples again, and this time Thomas was present.
Summary of the Hermeneutic Keys and Chronological Markers

After the resurrection, the apostles (as eyewitnesses) were thus enabled to understand, as well as report with understanding, the story of Jesus. Jesus publically declared, "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water''" (John 7:37-38). John followed with an explanatory note, "Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (v. 39).

THE TWO EYEWITNESS CHRONICLERS OF THE JESUS STORY

Jesus chose twelve disciples to accompany Him in His ministry to the people of Israel in the territories of Israel (Matt 4:18-23, 10:1-4; Mark 1:14-20, 3:13-19; Luke 5:1-11, 6:13-16) "whom he named apostles (Luke 6:13)." The Twelve were officially called to journey with Jesus upon commencement of Jesus’ ministry in the territories of Israel (Matt 4:12-25). Peter, James, and John served as administrative assistants (Luke 9:13-16, 22:8-13), Judas as the treasurer of the group (John 12:4-6), Matthew and others as possible chroniclers of the synoptic story of Jesus. Since Jesus commissioned the twelve disciples to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8), it is likely that they are the principle sources for the Four Gospels.

Significantly, in choosing a successor for Judas the disciples specified that the he be “one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22). Matthias qualified as one who could bear witness to the story of Jesus: “to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place” (v. 25). “Joseph called Barsabas, who was also called Justus” (v. 23) was another qualified candidate, but not the one chosen to replace Judas. Whether these two men were the only ones who accompanied Jesus or merely the ones thought most qualified is not known. Either way, the disciples understood that as His witnesses they were to give a true and accurate account of Jesus’ words and works from the earliest days in the public ministry of Jesus.

Luke confirmed the role of the Holy Spirit in enabling the disciples to represent Jesus as His witnesses. He wrote in Acts 1:8 that Jesus told his disciples forty days after His resurrection, “But you will receive power
when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth (v. 8). John was present on the Day of Pentecost, as was Matthew. They witnessed to the life and ministry of Jesus for many years by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Four Gospels represent the story of Jesus as the apostolic witness to Jesus that has gone with the Church “to the end of the earth.”

Mark and Luke represent independent corroborations of the apostolic testimony to the things Jesus said and did, particularly in the Synoptic documentation of the Messianic credentials in the territories of Israel. Luke identified the disciples as the authoritative source for the gospel he wrote: “those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the word [who] have delivered them to us” (Luke 1:2). Luke acknowledged dependence upon those “who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word” that had served with Jesus during His earthly ministry. “From the beginning” would have been from the earliest days of the Messianic ministry of Jesus. “Ministers of the word” implies that the twelve apostles were responsible for the content of the ministry and message of Jesus recorded in the Four Gospels.

Matthew: The Only Eyewitness Chronicler of the Synoptic Story of Jesus

Matthew was the only synoptic author to actually accompany Jesus in his ministry travels. Mark and Luke were not eyewitnesses to the things they reported in their Gospels, as was Matthew. Mark (too young at the time) and Luke (a Gentile converted after the resurrection) did not journey with Jesus and His disciples in Jesus’ ministry undertaken in the territories of Israel. Neither Mark nor Luke appeared in any of the listings of the twelve disciples (Matt 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:13-16). John, the other eyewitness Gospel writer, did not chronicle the ministry of Jesus undertaken in the territories of Israel, as did Matthew.

The call of Matthew is reported by all three Synoptic penmen as a separate event from the call of the other disciples (Matt 9:9-13; 10:1-4; Mark 2:13-17; 3:13-19; Luke 5:27-32; 6:13-16). This suggests that perhaps Matthew had a favored role among the twelve disciples. Matthew would later write the Gospel that goes by his name and was probably enlisted by Jesus with that task in mind. The reporting of the call of Matthew by each of the three Synoptic authors, including Matthew, and the similarity in which the story is recorded, suggests that the Synoptic authors relied upon the same authoritative source(s) for the story of Matthew. Since Matthew
was an eyewitness participant in his own calling, it is likely that Mark and Luke relied upon Matthew as a principle source for their gospels.

Matthew was uniquely qualified to chronicle the Messianic ministry of Jesus in the territories of Israel. He was a man of material means and status in the community, as evidenced by the dinner he hosted in his home for Jesus which was recorded by each of the three Synoptic penmen (Matt 9:9-10; Mark 2:13-14; Luke 5:27-29). Matthew (Levi) “made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them (Luke 5:29).” His duties as a prominent tax collector in Galilee gave him the necessary experience and skill to chronicle the Messianic ministry undertaken by Jesus in the territories of Israel. D. A. Carson summarized Matthean priority:

The earliest church fathers to mention this Gospel concur that the author was the apostle Matthew. Papias’s famous statement (cf. section 3) was interpreted to mean “Matthew composed the Logia [Gospel?] in the Hebrew [Aramaic?] dialect and every one interpreted them as he was able.” In other words the apostle first wrote his Gospel in Hebrew or Aramaic, and it was subsequently translated into Greek. Matthean priority was almost universally upheld; Mark was considered an abbreviation and therefore somewhat inferior. These factors—apostolic authorship (unlike Mark and Luke) and Matthean priority—along with the fact that Matthew preserves much of Jesus’ teaching not found elsewhere, combined to give this first Gospel enormous influence and prestige in the church. With few exceptions these perspectives dominated Gospel study till after the Reformation.12

As the only eyewitness Synoptic penman, Matthew selected the sermons, parables, teachings, prophesies, miracles, as well as aspects associated with the betrayal, trial, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus, that best represented his purpose of documenting the Messianic credentials of Jesus to his Jewish audience. Mark and Luke emphasized, like Matthew, the ministry of Jesus to the people of Israel in the territories of Israel, which began after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. Since Matthew, and not Mark or Luke, was the synoptic penman to actually witness these events, it is likely that Mark and Luke relied upon the gospel witness and research of Matthew for the synoptic materials they share in common with Matthew, “Markan priority” notwithstanding.

The Markan Priority Hypothesis

Steve Moyise contends that the establishment of Markan priority was a primary influence in the historical Jesus debate. “One of the major reasons for undertaking the quest for the historical Jesus is that the Gospels differ among themselves, and one of the most important ways of explaining this has been the hypothesis that Matthew and Luke used Mark as one of their sources.”

He concluded that this has “resulted in a negative verdict on the material unique to Matthew and Luke and on almost all of John. . . .”

The Markan priority hypothesis is an example of a theological-devotional-literary hermeneutic method based in a developmental (minimalist) theory of composition:

During the nineteenth century the traditional view—at least since Augustine—that Matthew was the earliest Gospel was replaced by the view that Mark was the earliest and was used by Matthew and Luke as one of their sources. The implications of this hypothesis (Markan priority) were enormous, for many of the texts used to support traditional Christian doctrines came from either Matthew (Jesus as founder of the Church) or John (Jesus as the incarnation of God). Influenced by the growing status of Darwinian evolution, the idea that the traditions about Jesus developed and expanded was persuasive.

Craig Bloomberg described the particular arrangement of Matthew’s Gospel as “sometimes chronological and sometimes thematic” and that Matthew gave a synopsis of the preaching, miracles, and other aspects of the ministry of Jesus, as the means of documenting the Messianic Ministry of Jesus to the people of Israel in the territories of Israel:

Matthew 4:17 introduces the largest of the three main divisions of the Gospel. Here Matthew begins to alternate large blocks of discourse and narrative. Each block combines accounts that are sometimes chronological and sometimes thematic in arrangement. Chapters 5–9 sum up the essence of Jesus’ preaching (chaps. 5–7)

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14 Ibid.
15 Ibid. 79.
and healing (chaps. 8–9) ministries. Chapters 10–12 focus on responses to the disciples (chap. 10) and to Jesus (chaps. 11–12). Matthew 13:1–16:20 highlights the growing polarization of that response, which triggers Jesus' teaching in parables (13:1–52) and mission to the Gentiles (13:53–16:20).

John J. Owen is an example of conservative scholarship predating much of the modern dissimilarity debate. He aptly described the relationship of the Gospel of Matthew to Mark, Luke, and John:

Matthew rehearses more fully than the other Evangelists the acts of Jesus, and also some of his discourses, as the Sermon on the Mount, and the parables and discourses relating to his coming to destroy Jerusalem and to judge the world. He groups incidents together with little or no regard to their chronological order. His style is simple and perspicuous. His eye is ever on the fulfillment in Christ of ancient prophecies. He dwells on the circumstances of the birth of Jesus, and the progressive establishment of the Messianic kingdom. He has not the graphic power of Mark, or the spiritual perceptions of John, but in the clearness, simplicity and fulness of details, he is perhaps superior to either, and equal to Luke, whose gospel may be regarded as complementary to Matthew's, the one being adapted particularly to the Jewish, the other to the Gentile mind.

The Relationship of Matthew to Mark

Matthew probably wrote his Gospel before Mark. “Matthew and his readers are likely in a Jewish Messianic community, where there is both appreciation for Jewish heritage, hopes, and distinctives, and criticism for Jewish blindness, failures, and opposition to the spread of the Gospel.” Since 606 of the 666 verses in Mark (not including the Mark 16:9-20 disputed passage) appear in full or in part in Matthew's Gospels, it is

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17 Ibid. 89.
18 John J. Owen, Commentary on Matthew and Mark (New York: Leavitt & Allen, 1864) xii.
likely that Mark relied upon the same authoritative eyewitness sources as Matthew, perhaps Matthew himself. It is unlikely that Matthew, the actual eyewitness to the events, depended upon Mark for the content he included in his Gospel of Matthew. It is not unreasonable to assume that Matthew, the only synoptic eyewitness, was the first of the three Synoptic Gospels to be written.

Mark was originally from Jerusalem and his family involved with the apostles in Jerusalem from the earliest days. Upon his release from prison in Jerusalem, Peter "went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying (Acts 12:12-13)." Peter referred to Mark as "Mark, my son [in the faith]" (1 Pet 5:13) showing a long-standing relationship of endearment. Mark accompanied Barnabas, whose mother was a cousin/sister\(^\text{21}\) to Barnabas (Col 4:10), and Paul early in the first missionary journey from Antioch. If Mark had written his Gospel prior to the missionary journey of Paul, Mark’s compact Gospel would have likely traveled with Paul and Barnabas as an authorized synopsis of the story of Jesus. When Mark, known as "John", quit Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey, he returned by way of Jerusalem instead of returning directly to Antioch (Acts 13:13). If written after leaving Paul and upon Mark’s return to Jerusalem, the Gospel of Mark may have traveled with those who later ventured into gospel ministry to the Gentiles.

Mark may have written his Gospel early in the apostolic period. If he did, the Gospel of Mark may have journeyed with "those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen [who] traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews (11:19)". Mark’s pristine chronology begins with a brief summary of the ministry of John the Baptist and ends with the resurrection of Jesus and the commission to "go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation (Mark 16:15)." His succinct presentation of the ministry of Jesus is well suited as an introductory guide to the ministry of Jesus, ideal for missionary work to the Jewish people, particularly to Jewish people in the diaspora, and, to a lesser extent, to outreach among the Gentile peoples.

The Relationship of Matthew to Luke

Luke wrote a Gospel account, but was not an eyewitness to the stories he reported. He addressed his Gospel to a man named Theophilus. The name

\(^{21}\) Owen, Commentary on Matthew and Mark, 416.
Theophilus is a Greek name suggesting that the original recipient of Luke’s Gospel was a Gentile and that the story of Jesus told by Luke was intended for a predominately gentile audience. Luke explained to Theophilus that his goal was “to write an orderly account (1:3)” of the information available to the Church at that time. Whereas, Matthew likely targeted a Hebrew audience, Luke aimed for the Gentile constituency in the Church. The comprehensive treatment by Luke implies that he wanted to include all materials relevant to his purpose. It does not mean that Luke included all the content available to him. He was comprehensive, but not necessarily exhaustive in his account of the story of Jesus.

Luke was a conscientious historian who based his story of Jesus in the testimony of credible witnesses and set down the hermeneutic principles that guided his rendition of the life and ministry of Jesus. Luke clearly identified the disciples as the authoritative source behind the Gospel he wrote: “those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the word (who) have delivered them to us (v. 2).” Luke acknowledged dependence upon the records (oral/written) of those “who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word” as those who had apparently served with Jesus during His earthly ministry. “From the beginning” would have been from the earliest days in the Messianic ministry of Jesus; in the case of the Synoptic story, from at least the time of the imprisonment of John the Baptist. “Ministers of the word” implies that the apostles were responsible for the preservation and publication of the content of the ministry and message of Jesus. Walter L. Leifeld observed that “witnesses are important to Luke... it is integral to Luke’s historical and theological purposes.”

I. Howard Marshall noted that Luke “justified his work by reference to the precedent of earlier, similar writings, to the trustworthy nature of his sources, and to his own qualifications to produce an orderly narrative based on careful research.” It is often assumed that Luke is referring to the attempts by others to write narratives of the life of Jesus, when it fact, Luke is likely referring to the sources and research of Matthew. Marshall contends that Luke “does not question their (sources) accuracy, for they, like he, had received the tradition handed down by eyewitnesses of the events.” In this, Luke is not sifting sources to separate fact from fiction, but sorting and organizing material contained in his source(s). It is not

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24 Ibid. 40.
whether Luke used Matthew and/or Mark as his primary source, but that Luke is condensing the bulk of material in his possession into an intelligible and manageable whole.

It is likely that the apostles sanctioned each of the three Synoptic Gospels and authorized their publications. Peter, according to Luke, argued apostolic jurisdiction over the story of Jesus in Acts 10:39-43:

And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

Peter also distinguished between the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem and the ministry of Jesus in the territories of Israel: “we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews [territories of Israel] and in Jerusalem.” Thus, Luke, as the author of Acts, duly noted the apostolic jurisdiction over the story of the two-dimensional ministry of Jesus.

Luke composed his Gospel, most likely, after the completion of the third missionary journey of Paul, while Paul was a prisoner for two years in Caesarea. Upon completion of the third missionary journey, Paul made a final trip to Jerusalem (Acts 19:21—23:22) and the temple. Paul was sent from Jerusalem to Caesarea where he spent at least two years as a prisoner in Caesarea (24:27). Luke probably researched and published his Gospel during this period. Being in proximity to Jerusalem, Luke would have had access to the apostolic witnesses who still resided in Jerusalem. The apostolic presence in Jerusalem continued until this time (17:17-26) and probably to within a few years of AD 70. Whereas Mark provided a condensed chronological synopsis of the ministry of Jesus, Luke made more of the apostolic testimony available to the church.

Moyise offered two explanations for the differences between the accounts of similar stories in Matthew and Luke:

First, Jesus would no doubt have repeated his teaching on a number of occasions, and might well have varied the wording. Second, even when we are dealing with the same incident, it is likely that Jesus said far more than the few words that each Gospel records. Thus rather than explain the differences as deliberate

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changes by Matthew or Luke to bolster their own theologies, it may
be that they have recorded a different selection of what was said.26

Matthew, Mark, and Luke apparently sifted through the oral and/or
written apostolic source materials available to them and selected and
adapted them for their Gospels. Keener theorized that, "The Gospels seem
to conform to the standards of length appropriate to the scrolls on which
they were written, which supports the likelihood that their authors
intended them to be published."27 This presupposes that the Synoptic
penmen knew much more than they told, especially Matthew who attended
the ministry of Jesus as an eyewitness participant, and that the Synoptic
penmen were intentionally succinct in their presentation of the individual
stories they included in their Gospels. "The type of similarity between the
Synoptics suggests literary dependence to most scholars. This may have
involved writers using the same written sources or drawing upon one or
both of the other Synoptics."28

**John: The Last Apostolic Eyewitness Testimony to the Story of Jesus**

The reminiscences of John represent the final installment in the authorized
disclosure given by the Spirit of God through the twelve disciples. Jesus
explained to the disciples, "I still have many things to say to you, but you
can not bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes...He will take of
mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said
that he will take of mine and declare it to you" (John 16:13-14). Jesus
revealed to the disciples that the Holy Spirit would give them perspective
and a fuller understanding of his Person and his work after the Holy Spirit
had come to them. The theological perspective given in the Fourth Gospel
represents the theology given to the apostles subsequent to the death,
burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, through the ministry of the
indwelling Holy Spirit. In the case of the Fourth Gospel, John was the
spokesperson for the apostolic band in the Sonship explanations he
provided in the text of the Fourth Gospel.

John acknowledged that there were a great number of stories from the
life and ministry of Jesus that he might have included in his Gospel.

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26 Moyise, *Jesus and Scripture*, 107–08.
28 J. Julius Scott Jr., "The Synoptic Gospels," in *Expositor’s Bible
Commentary*, 1:510–11.
“Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written” (21:25). “The Gospel closes with a reminder that the author has done no more than make a selection from the mass of material available. He has not written all he knows about Jesus. If all were to be written, he thinks the world itself could not contain the books to be written.”

**Issues in the Authorship of the Fourth Gospel**

The early church generally advocated Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel. “The early Fathers did not hesitate to acknowledge the Johannine authorship of the Gospel, and from the time of Irenaeus there was almost unanimous agreement about this.” Although some New Testament scholars in the modern era have challenged the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, James Montgomery Boice noted a trend in modern New Testament scholarship toward reaffirming the apostle John as the author of the Fourth Gospel. He stated in 2005, “There has been a remarkable change in the scholarly climate surrounding John’s Gospel, with the result that it is becoming increasingly inadequate to deny the Johannine authorship.” It is not unreasonable that the Fourth Gospel constitutes the written record of one of the disciples who was an eyewitness to the things of which he wrote and enabled by the Spirit to write the Fourth Gospel. That eyewitness was probably John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James.

The date of composition of the Fourth Gospel is related to authorship issues. If John the apostle wrote the Fourth Gospel, it could not have been written much past AD 100, due to the age of John. James Montgomery Boice cited recent archeological and manuscript discoveries that support an early date for the composition of the Gospel of John. He maintained that a papyrus fragment of John 18:31-34, 37, 38 and dated

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AD125 demonstrates that the Gospel of John was in circulation much sooner than the critics had previously asserted:

(It) was originally found in Egypt as part of the wrapping of a mummy and is now part of the papyrus collection at the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England and thus shows that John's Gospel had been written early enough to have had a copy pass to Egypt to be used there and then to be discarded by the year A.D. 125. This is conclusive evidence for a fairly early dating of the Gospel.\(^{33}\)

An early date for the Fourth Gospel places the composition of the gospel within the alleged lifetime of the Apostle John. A second century composition date would place the Fourth Gospel outside of the Apostolic Period and the product of theologians living in the post-apostolic period.

**The Amanuensis Hypothesis**

The question remains as to whether the disciple himself, under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, wrote the Gospel in the form in which it appears today, or whether someone who had access to the testimony of John and knew John well, wrote it down on his behalf. It is not unreasonable to assume that John had written down his recollections of Jesus over a period of years and that from these notes the story as told in the Fourth Gospel was organized into one volume by a helper. According to the amanuensis hypothesis, a disciple and close associate of John wrote the Fourth Gospel using notes and/or recollections authorized by John and were preserved by a "Johannine community."

**Summary of the Role of the Two Eyewitness Gospel Chroniclers**

There is no clear textual evidence to support an editorial process in which someone other than John organized the material written by John. Non-Johannine theories are based principally in a need to account for a supposed late date of composition for the Fourth Gospel. What is more likely is that John picked the stories from his memory that best communicated the message he intended to convey and wrote them down in accord with the "Spirit of truth" hermeneutic described by John in the Fourth Gospel. His soteriological presentation represents the

understanding given to the original disciples after the resurrection of Jesus through enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

The role of Matthew in preserving the synoptic version of the ministry of Jesus should not be underestimated, nor the reliance of Mark and Luke upon the apostolic sources (oral and/or written) employed by Matthew. Whereas Matthew documented the messianic credentials for the next generation in Israel and beyond, Mark provided a condensed chronological synopsis of the ministry of Jesus to travel with the church as it spread from Jerusalem. Luke, in his account, purposed to preserve more of the extant stories of Jesus. Luke stated that he received his story of Jesus from “those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us” (Luke 1:2). Luke gave an authorized account of the story of Jesus based in the testimony of those who had been eyewitnesses.

CONCLUSION

The apparent dissimilarity between the Jesus in the Fourth Gospel and the Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels is due, in part, to the Sonship soteriology promoted in the Fourth Gospel. John emphasized the Sonship declarations of Jesus given exclusively in Jerusalem during the first and third periods in his public ministry; these pronouncements tended to further substantiate his messianic claim before Israel’s leadership in Jerusalem. The Synoptic penmen, on the other hand, primarily documented the presentation of his messianic credentials before Israel’s people in the territories of Israel (Galilee, Judea, Decapolis, Perea, Phoenicia) in the second and third periods. The singular Sonship soteriology represented in the Fourth Gospel is the soteriological perspective supplied to John and the disciples by the promised Spirit of truth consequent to the resurrection of Jesus.

The Fourth Gospel’s whole-world soteriology is based in the Sonship declarations given to Israel’s leadership as reported exclusively by John. The Sonship assertion of Jesus is the foundation for the messianic claim of Jesus to Israel and the soteriological underpinning for the gospel for the church. As the messianic claim of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel was based in his assertion of Sonship, so Sonship is the soteriological center in the gospel proclaimed to the world in the church age. Believing in the Son as presented in the writings of John constitutes the content and essence of saving faith.
THE TIMING OF THE DAY OF THE LORD
IN 1 THESSALONIANS 5, PART II

Nicholas James Claxton

A compelling case can be made for a pretribulational rapture, if 1 Thessalonians 5 references the entire tribulation and if believers are promised deliverance from the wrath of that period. The focus of this present article is to consider the context of 1 Thessalonians 5, in addition to the key exegetical evidences indicating the timing of the Day of the Lord in that pericope.

THE CONTEXT OF 1 THESSALONIANS 5

Part one of this series analyzed the broader context of the Day of the Lord theme. Now, it is needful to analyze the narrower context of 1 Thessalonians itself. Both contexts are of key importance in establishing the timing of the Day of the Lord in 1 Thessalonians 5.

Occasion and Setting of the Epistle

The Apostle Paul founded the church of Thessalonica on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1–9). Many were converted to Christ, but persecution ensued as a result (vv. 5–9). Paul and Silas were unexpectedly forced to flee the city by night (v. 10).

Luke recorded Paul’s ministry in the Thessalonian synagogue as lasting “three Sabbaths” (v. 2). The temporal description is unclear as to whether it refers to the total time that Paul was in Thessalonica or simply to the time he spent preaching in the synagogue. In either case, Paul was deeply concerned with regard to the spiritual welfare of the church he had so abruptly departed.

Commentators generally date 1 Thessalonians at approximately AD 50 during Paul’s stay in Corinth. Throughout the epistle, Paul expressed

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gratefulness for the Thessalonians’ faith (1:1–10; 2:13—3:13), defended his ministry against false accusations (2:1–12), challenged his readers to walk righteously (4:1–12; 5:12–28), and encouraged them with the hope of Christ’s return (4:13—5:11).

**Development of Argument through the Epistle**

Recent interpreters of 1 Thessalonians often rely heavily on Greco-Roman rhetorical studies to understand the epistle’s argument. Perhaps the most extensive use of such studies was employed by Wanamaker’s commentary.² Wanamaker classified 1:2–10 in the epistle as the *exordium*, which is “intended to elicit the sympathy of the audience . . . through praise, and to set out the main themes of the letter.”³

In a provocative study, Hodges used this *exordium* as a basis for outlining the epistle.⁴ He focused specifically on 1:9–10, “For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.” He outlined accordingly:

How you turned to God from idols (2:1—3:13)
To serve the living and true God (4:1–12)
And to wait for His Son from heaven (4:13—5:11).

Kennedy observed the chronology in chapters two and three: “The general arrangement, as expected in a narration, is chronological, moving from Paul’s first ministry in Thessalonica (2:9) to his departure for Athens (2:17) to his present circumstances (3:6).”⁵ In this section, “the Apostle considers his relationship to the Thessalonians from the point of initially evangelizing them (2:1–16) to the present.”⁶

Sometimes, it is missed, however, that the succeeding chapters also follow a chronology that corresponds with Hodges’ proposed outline.

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³ Ibid. 49.


While Paul outlined the conversion and early spiritual progress of the Thessalonians in chapters 2 and 3, he exhorted them to “excel still more” in their walk with God (4:1). Paul’s prayer at the end of chapter 3 transitions into the practical appeals of chapter 4.\(^7\) There is a shift, then, from a narration of past events to a succession of encouragements for present living. In following Paul’s exhortations, the Thessalonians would effectively “serve a living and true God.”

The Thessalonians’ conversion was to motivate not only faithfulness in present circumstances, but also eager waiting for Christ’s future return. They were to “comfort one another” with the realization that Christ would one day return for all the dead and living in Christ (4:13–18). At the same time, they were to be “alert and sober” in light of the coming Day of the Lord that would overtake the children of darkness (5:1–11). It is possible, then, to expand on Hodges’ outline by adding chronological markers.

I. The Past — “You turned to God from idols” (2:1—3:13)
II. The Present — “To serve a living and true God” (4:1–12)
III. The Future — “To wait for His Son from heaven” (4:13—5:11)

Certainly, the outline is not perfect. Nevertheless, the general chronological pattern in the book is striking. If Hodges’ outline of the book has any merit (and there seems to be compelling indications that it does), does it provide any guidance concerning the church’s relationship to the Day of the Lord? To answer this question, it is needful to analyze 1:10 in further detail.

**The “Wrath to Come” in Paul’s Argument**

Paul declared that, as a result of his ministry with the Thessalonians, they “turned to God from idols” (1:9). The verb ἐπεστρέψατε (“turned”) is connected with the telic infinitives (or infinitives of purpose) δουλεύειν (“to serve,” v. 9) and ἀναμένειν (“to wait,” v. 10). The Thessalonians were converted so that they could 1) “serve a living and true God,” and 2) “wait for His Son from heaven.”

\(^7\) Wanamaker classified 3:11–13 as the *transitus* that introduces “the subject of the second main part of the letter (4:1—5:22)” (*The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 50).
The term ἀναμένω ("wait") carries the idea of remaining "in a place and/or state, with expectancy concerning a future event." In this case, the "future event" is the coming of the Son. Paul described the Lord's coming with the prepositional phrase ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν (literally, "from the heavens"), thereby indicating source.

Paul further designated the Son with the relative clause ὃν ἐγείρεν ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν ("whom He raised from the dead"). Green observed, "The expectation concerning the coming of Jesus would have been impossible without the resurrection from the dead. The past is linked intimately with the future in God's saving history, while the hope of the Thessalonians lives between these two poles." Later in the epistle, Paul would connect the hope of the rapture with the fact that "Jesus died and rose again" (4:14). In 1 Corinthians, he would describe Christ as "the first fruits of those who are asleep" (15:20). Hence, Christ's own rising from the dead provides assurance of both a resurrection for dead believers and a translation for living believers.

This risen Jesus is the One "who rescues us from the wrath to come." The term τὸν ῥόδομενον is interpreted in the New American Standard Bible as a substantival participle ("[the one] who rescues"). Wallace observed, "The aspect of the present participle can be diminished if the particular context requires it." He concluded that the phrase in 1:10 should most likely be translated, "Jesus, our deliverer from the wrath that is coming," due to "the prepositional phrase [ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης] that refers to a future time."

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9 United Bible Societies and Nestle-Aland have the definite article τῶν in brackets.


12 Several witnesses read ἀπό rather than ἐκ. Daniel B. Wallace determined, based on both internal and external evidence, that ἀπό is likely the correct reading. Wallace contested that such a reading "fits quite naturally" with a pretribulational rapture ("A Textual Problem in 1 Thessalonians 1:10: Ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης vs. Ἀπό τῆς ὀργῆς," Bibliotheca Sacra 147 [October 1990]: 478–79). He nonetheless cautioned, "A textual variant in one verse that involves the
To what does τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης refer? Is this a reference to eternal wrath in hell or to the Day of the Lord wrath on earth? Fee was clearly convinced of the former. He asserted, “It is of interest that the word ‘wrath’ is used exclusively in the New Testament to refer to God’s final judgment on the wicked, and thus is never used regarding believers, whose present lot is ‘tribulation/suffering.’” Fee then took pretribulationalism to task in his footnote: “Failing to distinguish between these two words, ὀργή (wrath) and θλίψις (tribulation, affliction, suffering), the former having always and only to do with God’s judgment on the wicked and the latter with present trials (of believers themselves), was one of the great failings of historic Dispensationalism, where these two terms were at times rather cavalierly interchanged in the presentation of the system.”

There are a number of difficulties with Fee’s assessment. First, ὀργή is not used “exclusively” of “God’s final judgment on the wicked.” The New Testament portrays wrath as presently abiding on the unbeliever, though certainly culminating in eternal punishment (John 3:36; Rom 1:18). Additionally, John used ὀργή in Revelation 6:17 in reference to earthly judgment in the tribulation. Second, while the term θλίψις frequently interchange of prepositions is, of course, an inadequate foundation on which to build a doctrine” (ibid.).


15 Ibid. n. 89.

16 Revelation 6:17 is part of the description of the sixth seal judgment. John recorded unbelievers crying out, “The great day of their [God’s and the Lamb’s] wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” There is considerable dispute concerning the timing of this judgment. Even pretribulationist Richard L. Mayhue concluded, “the sixth seal is part of DOL and occurs at the end of the Tribulation” (Mayhue, “The Prophet’s Watchword: Day of the Lord,” Grace Theological Journal 6 (Fall 1985): 239). Regardless of where one places the sixth seal, this passage renders Fee’s conclusion erroneous. Even if the sixth seal judgment immediately precedes Christ’s return, it still constitutes earthly wrath, not eternal punishment. The only possible solution for Fee is to interpret ἔχειν (“has come”) as a futuristic aorist, indicating “God’s Day of the Lord wrath is impending. It is about to happen;
Day of the Lord
debors with the “present trials” of believers, it does not always bear this usage. Paul declared, “There will be tribulation (θλῖψις) and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek” (Rom 2:9). Additionally, the fact that believers are said to experience “tribulation” does not necessarily imply that they will encounter the tribulation period.

The pretribulationalist does not “cavalierly” equate “tribulation” with “wrath.” The argument of the epistle itself specifically points to a time of wrath (the Day of the Lord) on earth (5:1–11). If the exordium (and particularly vv. 9–10) provides the theme for the rest of the epistle, it is far more likely that Day of the Lord eschatological judgment is in view rather than eternal damnation. First Thessalonians 5:1–11 logically expounds upon the “wrath to come” in 1:10.

First Thessalonians 1:10 does not definitively establish the timing of the rapture, for it still does not identify when the Day of the Lord begins. Nevertheless, this passage, which arranges Paul’s argument in 4:13—5:11, hints, at the very least, to a pre-Day of the Lord rapture. The fact that believers are instructed to “wait for His Son from heaven” indicates that

it has not yet occurred” (Marvin J. Rosenthal, The Prewrath Rapture of the Church [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990] 166). Rosenthal claimed he “consulted forty commentaries on the book of Revelation. Not one suggested that the sixth seal was retroactive and encompassed the events of the first five seals. Attempts to suggest otherwise are new in origin and vainly attempt to resolve this glaring problem for pretribulational rapturism” (ibid. 167). There is tremendous irony that Rosenthal would attack anything “new in origin” when the subtitle of his own book is “A New Understanding of the Rapture, the Tribulation, and the Second Coming.” Even so, the issue for Rosenthal is not whether the aorist of Revelation 6 retroactively refers to the first five seals (though there may be significant indications that it does), but whether the tense indicates an event that is about to transpire. Wallace noted that the aorist “in the indicative, usually indicates past time with reference to the time of speaking. . . . There are exceptions to this general principle, of course, but they are due to intrusions from other linguistic feature vying for control” (Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, 555). Brooks and Winbery observed that there was some “question about the legitimacy” of both the dramatic aorist and the futuristic aorist (James A. Brooks and Carlton L. Winbery, Syntax of New Testament Greek [Washington: University Press, 1979] 93–94). Furthermore, even if Rosenthal were correct, Fee would still need to demonstrate that the futuristic aorist of Revelation 6 restricts the wrath to the final judgment only, not to any of the other earthly judgments described in Revelation. These considerations make it altogether unlikely that the New Testament uses ὀργή exclusively in the sense of the final judgment of the wicked.
the Son’s coming is the means by which believers are rescued from Day of the Lord wrath. The rescue, therefore, must precede the wrath.

**KEY EXEGETICAL EVIDENCES INDICATING THE TIMING OF THE DAY OF THE LORD IN 1 THESSALONIANS 5**

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13—5:11, Paul expounded upon the idea of “wait[ing] for [God’s] Son from heaven . . . who rescues us from the wrath to come” (1:10). In 4:13–18, he explained the means of rescue: the rapture of the church. In 5:1–11, he explained the nature of the “wrath to come:” Day of the Lord judgment. Paul’s argument laid out evidence indicating not only the timing of the coming wrath, but also the timing of the promised rescue. The present section will analyze such evidence.

**The Contrast Between 4:13–18 and 5:1–11**

**An Overview of 4:13–18**

Paul’s discussion in this section was designed to encourage the Thessalonians concerning “those who are asleep” (v. 13). The verb κοιμάω is used both of physical sleep and as a euphemism for death.\(^{17}\) The latter is clearly in view here, for Paul would identify “those who are asleep” as “the dead in Christ” (v. 17). Apparently, the Thessalonians were uncertain of what would happen to their deceased loved ones at Christ’s coming.

Paul wrote so that these believers would not “grieve as do the rest who have no hope” (v. 13). The implication is that, as believers in Christ, the Thessalonians did have hope and, therefore, did not need to grieve as if they were unbelievers. Paul explained the reason: “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so will God bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus” (v. 14). The statement here is a first-class conditional clause that “assumes the reality of [the speaker’s] premise.”\(^{18}\) In this case, Paul had no uncertainty; both he and the Thessalonians were convinced

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that Jesus "died and rose again."¹⁹ Their confidence needed to assure them that God would bring deceased believers with Him at his coming.

To bolster such confidence, Paul offered them a saying "by the word of the Lord" (v. 15). The "word" was either a saying of Jesus Himself or a prophetic utterance carrying divine authority.²⁰ Paul clarified, "We who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep" (v. 15). Paul emphatically rejected (οὐ μὴ) in the idea that the living would not have any advantage over the deceased at Christ’s coming. In the order of events, the living would not "precede" the dead in their being gathered to Christ.²¹

Paul then gave further details: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the

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¹⁹ Young noted concerning conditional clauses, “In the speaker’s mind there is usually nothing conditional in the premise that is set forth to argue a point. The speaker is either convinced it is false and is trying to persuade listeners of its falsity, or the speaker is convinced it is true and using it as a basis for a conclusion” (ibid. 229).

²⁰ For further discussion on this issue, see Robert L. Thomas, “1 Thessalonians,” in Ephesians through Philemon (The Expositor’s Bible Commentary), ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 11:276–77.

²¹ Some pretribulational interpreters point to the first-person reference (ἡμεῖς) as evidence of imminence (e.g., Thomas, “1 Thessalonians,” 278). It is reasoned that Paul expected to be among the living at Christ’s return. This is certainly possible, but two cautions are in order. First, while Paul’s expectation of being alive at Christ’s return may hint at imminence, it does not prove any-moment imminence. Saying that Christ could come in one’s lifetime is not necessarily equivalent to saying that He could come at any moment. Second, while even non-pretribulational interpreters posit some hint of imminence here (James E. Frame, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians [The International Critical Commentary], eds. Samuel R. Driver, Alfred Plummer, and Charles A. Briggs [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1912] 172; Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 99; Green, The Letters to the Thessalonians, 222; Wanamaker, 171–72), some see indications in later epistles that Paul did not expect to be alive at the parousia. Bruce (p. 99) and Green (p. 222) both cited 2 Corinthians 4:14 as evidence that Paul’s expectation changed. Morris rejected any such expectation in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, noting, “The expression he uses may mean no more than ‘those Christians who will be alive at that day’” (Morris, First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 141; see also Fee, First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians, 175).
Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord” (vv. 16–17). Two issues in this passage are sometimes raised against pretribulationism. First, posttribulationists compare 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 with Matthew 24:31, noting similar language (clouds, trumpet, angels). The parallels are not altogether surprising; pretribulationists do not argue for such a radical discontinuity between the rapture and Christ’s physical appearance that there cannot possibly be similarities. Nevertheless, Feinberg examined some critical differences between 1 Thessalonians 4 and the Olivet Discourse.

In Matthew the Son of Man comes on the clouds, while in 1 Thessalonians 4 the ascending believers are in them. In Matthew the angels gather the elect; in 1 Thessalonians the Lord Himself (note the emphasis) gathers the believers. Thessalonians only speaks of the voice of the archangel. In the Olivet Discourse nothing is said about a resurrection, while in the latter text it is the central point. In the two passages the differences in what will take place prior to the appearance of Christ is striking. Moreover, the order of ascent is absent from Matthew in spite of the fact that it is the central point of the epistle.

The second issue is Paul’s use of ἀπάντησιν (“meet”). Moo cautiously suggested that this term might point to a posttribulational scheme. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament identified it as a “tech. term for a civic custom of antiquity whereby a public welcome was accorded by

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22 It is worth noting that the chronology of this text presents a significant difficulty for the partial rapture view. Paul explicitly stated that the living would not “precede” the deceased in the rapture (v. 15). He then laid out a clear chronology where the dead would rise “first,” followed by “we who are alive and remain” (vv. 16–17). If some deceased believers (those who died in an unwatchful condition) are not resurrected until after the millennium (as was taught by many early partial rapturists) then watchful living believers cannot possibly be raptured sooner based on this text.


a city to important visitors.”

In conjunction with this welcome, the citizens would generally accompany the visitor back to the city. Hence, in the posttribulational scenario, the saints accompany Christ back to earth immediately after the rapture. However, several commentators are uneasy about this connection. Even Moo admitted, “The word does not have to bear this technical meaning, nor is it certain that the return to the point of origin must be immediate.”

Paul said that the church would be “caught up” at the parousia (v. 17). The term ἀρπάζω (harpazo) carries the idea of “to grab or seize suddenly so as to remove or gain control, snatch/take away.” In three of its fourteen usages in the New Testament, it is translated in the New American Standard Bible as “take by force” (Matt 11:12; John 6:15; Acts 23:10). While the context in 1 Thessalonians 4 is far more positive, the saints will nonetheless be snatched suddenly from the earth in the rapture.

The result of this “snatching up” is that believers “shall always be with the Lord” (v. 17). For Paul, this encouraging thought should motivate Christians to “comfort one another with these words” (v. 18). While the term παρακαλέω is frequently used in the sense of “exhort” or “urge,” the context here reflects more the idea of causing “someone to be encouraged or consoled.” Due to the hope of the rapture, the Thessalonian believers could encourage each other concerning the departure of their loved ones.

Paul’s entire discussion concerning the parousia in 4:13–18 is noteworthy for it was intended as a source of comfort for the Thessalonians. As opposed to grieving as the unbelieving world around them (v. 13), they were to encourage one another (v. 18). This context does not necessarily establish pretribulationism; these words are still a source of encouragement to adherents of other rapture views. Nevertheless, the question must be asked, “How do the words of 4:13–18 relate to those of 5:1–11?” The following section will address this question.

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27 Wanamaker, Epistles to the Thessalonians, 175–76; Bruce, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 102–03; Morris, First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians, 146; Fee, First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians, 180.


29 Bauer, et al., Greek-English Lexicon, 134.

30 Louw and Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, 1:305.
The Presence of Περὶ Δέ

Paul began 5:1–11 with the expression περὶ δέ. The term περὶ is a preposition translated numerous ways in the New Testament, such as “about,” “for,” “of,” “concerning,” and “in regard to” (to name but a few). The term δέ is a mild adversative, a conjunction commonly translated either “and” or “but.” Posttribulationist Moo seized on the fact that, on many occasions, δέ indicates no contrast at all. However, both the preposition and the conjunction must be considered together. Only their combined usage is determinative in this context.

The expression περὶ δέ repeatedly indicates a shift in subject matter throughout Pauline literature. The subject introduced by περὶ δέ is often related to the previous discussion, but there is nonetheless a noticeable change. For instance, in 1 Corinthians 6:12–20, Paul addressed the subject of sexual immorality. Then, in 7:1, he wrote, “Now concerning [περὶ δέ] the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.” Certainly, the discussion in chapter 7 relates to 6:12–20, for Paul further elaborated, “But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband” (7:2). Nevertheless, Paul shifted from discussing sexual immorality to discussing the issues of marriage and singleness.

Paul also used περὶ δέ in 7:25, “Now concerning [περὶ δέ] virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.” Again, there is a clear connection to the preceding discussion; Paul had encouraged each believer “to remain in that condition in which he was called” (7:20). The same argument was then applied to “virgins.” Even so, there is once again a clear change in the topic of discussion.

Following his discussion on virgins, Paul then took a more radical shift in his argument, “Now concerning [περὶ δέ] things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies” (8:1). There is a greater interrelatedness between the previous discussions than there is between chapter 7 and chapter 8. In this case, the change in subject matter is clearer.

Paul used περὶ δέ two other times in 1 Corinthians (12:1; 16:1), both indicating a clear shift in topic. In 12:1, he shifted from discussing the Lord’s Supper to discussing spiritual gifts. In 16:1, he shifted from discussing the resurrection to discussing the “collection for the saints.”

The expression περὶ δὲ also occurs two other times in 1 Thessalonians besides 5:1 (4:9; 4:13). In the case of 1 Corinthians, περὶ δὲ generally preceded Paul’s answers to particular written questions raised by the Corinthians. Black suggested, “Perhaps Paul’s use of the phrase here and in 4:13; 5:1 indicates that he is similarly answering written questions. It is just as likely, however, that his information came from Timothy’s verbal report.”32

First Thessalonians 4:3 introduces the subject matter of sexual immorality. In 4:9, however, Paul wrote, “Now as [περὶ δὲ] to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another.” Once again, περὶ δὲ indicates a distinct shift in subject matter.

First Thessalonians 4:13, then, shifts the subject matter once again, “But [δὲ] we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about [περὶ] those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as those who have no hope.” In 4:11–12, Paul challenged the believers to “work with your hands” so that they could “behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.” First Thessalonians 4:13 signals a more encouraging note concerning the fate of deceased believers.

First Thessalonians 5:1, then, shifts from this encouraging note: “Now as [περὶ δὲ] to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.” The expression τῶν χρόνων καὶ τῶν καιρῶν (“the times and the epochs”) is a phrase generally dealing with end-time events (Acts 1:7). In this section, Paul would deal with the “sudden destruction” (KJV) destined for the children of darkness (vv. 3, 5). While both 4:13–18 and 5:1–11 deal with eschatological matters, even many non-pretribulational commentators see some type of contrast between the two discussions.33

Moo noted, however, that, if there is a contrast between 4:13–18 and 5:1–11, “one must determine the nature of that contrast.”\(^{34}\) Moo suggested, “Rather than distinguishing two separate events, Paul may be contrasting the effect of the same events on two different groups—believers and unbelievers.”\(^{35}\) Wanamaker advocated a similar approach, “Although 4:13–18 involves the salvation to be brought about at the parousia, few scholars seem to have noticed that 5:1–10 views the subject from the perspective of impending judgment and the possible threat that this might pose to Christians.”\(^{36}\) Several other commentators see the same type of contrast: how the same event (a single posttributional *parousia*) affects both unbelievers and believers.\(^{37}\) Such a perspective, however, fails to recognize the argumentation developed throughout the epistle. First Thessalonians 4:13—5:11 expounds upon Paul’s instruction in 1:10 (“to wait for His Son from heaven . . . who rescues us from the wrath to come”). Chronologically, 1:10 presents a scenario in which the Son comes *prior to* the wrath. Already it has been demonstrated that 1 Thessalonians generally follows a chronological pattern. If 4:13–18 expounds upon the *parousia*, it is likely that 5:1–11 expounds upon the wrath.\(^{38}\) The rapture will rescue the believer from Day of the Lord wrath.

The chronological development of the epistle makes it likely that περὶ δὲ in 5:1 indicates a “contrast . . . not between attitudes of surprise and expectation, but between no escape and escape.”\(^{39}\) Paul continued the eschatological theme from 4:13–18 in 5:1–11. However, the overall progression of 1 Thessalonians strongly indicates that two different, successive, and closely related events are in view.

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\(^{34}\) Moo, “A Case for the Posttribulation Rapture Position,” 183.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.

\(^{36}\) Wanamaker, *Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 177–78.


The Unexpected Arrival of the Day of the Lord

The preceding discussion has established a strong likelihood that the rapture (4:13–18) precedes the Day of the Lord (5:1–11). However, the precise beginning of the Day of the Lord has not been established. One could still adopt a midtribulational perspective if the Day begins at the midpoint of Daniel’s seventieth week. Likewise, one could still adopt a prewrath perspective if the Day begins at the three-quarter mark of the tribulation. The preceding discussion does not even exclude posttribulationism, provided that the Day begins at the very end of the tribulation.

The following discussion will identify several exegetical factors indicating that the Day of the Lord will arrive suddenly and unexpectedly. These factors point to a Day of the Lord that commences conterminously with Daniel’s seventieth week. Consequently, these factors also point to a rapture that occurs prior to the seventieth week (a pretribulational rapture).

Its Coming as a Thief in the Night

The Thessalonian believers had “no need of anything to be written” to them (v. 1). Paul gave the reason: “For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night” (v. 2). The Thessalonians had likely speculated as to exactly when the Day would begin. Paul responded that they already knew “full well” that the Day would come unannounced.

Paul’s description of the Day of the Lord coming as a “thief” (κλέπτης) is mirrored in five other New Testament passages (Matt 24:43; Luke 12:39; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15). Gundry asserted that all these references are posttributional.40 For Gundry, the significance of the illustration is that “the wicked, being in darkness, will fail to perceive the significance of tribulational events. Consequently, the day will catch them unprepared.”41 Hence, the Day’s coming as a thief does not mean that it cannot be preceded by other judgments in the tribulation. Only a survey of the aforementioned passages can validate or invalidate Gundry’s claims.

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40 Gundry, Church and the Tribulation, 108. Gundry seemed uncertain of whether 2 Peter 3 references “the close of the tribulation” or the “close of the millennium” (p. 31).

41 Ibid. 109.
Matthew 24:43. In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus warned, "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming" (Matt 24:42). Then, Jesus used the illustration of the thief: "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into" (v. 43). Just as the thief comes at an unexpected time, so "the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will" (v. 44).

Pretribulational interpreters often take Matthew 24:42–44 as a reference to Christ’s visible appearance at the second coming. Walvoord wrote, "Just as one cannot know when a thief may come, so the servants of God who live in the great tribulation should expect Christ to come (cf. 1 Th 5:2)."42 In a similar vein, Toussaint said, "The signs [of the tribulation] will give a general warning, but they will not be so specific as to designate the day or hour. Therefore, when the signs appear, they [the people on earth during the tribulation] are to watch."43

However, interpreting Matthew 24:42–44 as a reference to the visible descent of Christ to earth presents some difficulties. The Olivet Discourse itself identified Christ’s appearing as occurring “immediately after the tribulation of those days” (v. 29). There are definite signs listed in both the Olivet Discourse and Revelation that precede the second coming; it seems difficult to correlate Christ’s appearance at the second coming with the unexpected, unannounced coming of a thief.

Furthermore, while it may not be possible to decipher the "hour" of Christ’s appearing, it will nonetheless be possible to decipher the “day” once the tribulation begins (Matt 24:36). The tribulation is Daniel’s seventieth week, a period of time lasting seven years or 2,520 days. This means that Christ will come 2,520 days after the Antichrist signs his treaty with Israel or 1,260 days after he breaks said treaty (Dan 9:27).44

Furthermore, it is worth noting that, in Matthew 24:36, Jesus used the aforementioned expression περὶ δὲ. Hence, there is a clear demarcation between Matthew 24:4–35 and 24:36—25:46. Blaising divided the Olivet Discourse accordingly:

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The first part (Matt. 24:4–35; Mark 13:5–31; Luke 21:8–33) consists of a narrative of events leading up to the sign of the Son of Man coming on the clouds. This is followed by a conclusion or teaching point, the parable of the budding tree(s). The second part (Matt. 24:36—25:46; Mark 13:32–37; Luke 21:34:36) asserts that it is not known when that day will come, and this is followed by exhortations to be ready.45

Blaising, then, equated the “coming” (or parousia) of 24:36 (and, by extension, 24:42–44) with an extended Day of the Lord pattern.46 He asserted, “The day of the Lord is the day of His coming, and in biblical parlance, the coming of the Lord and the day of His coming are often interchangeable, as most would agree.”47 This pattern begins in 24:4–14, which discusses the “beginning of birth pangs” (v. 8). The mention of “the abomination of desolation” (an event that takes place in the middle of Daniel’s seventieth week; see Dan 9:27) in 24:15 indicates that the preceding verses refer to events in the first half of the tribulation. Blaising concluded, “The parable of the budding tree(s) [24:32–33] then places the appearing of Christ at the end of a greatly intensifying process, one that will have people in a state of terror and alarm, and one that will have led to a point of imminent expectation.”48

Blaising’s equation of 24:36 and 24:42–44 with the entire Day of the Lord pattern (one that encompasses all Daniel’s seventieth week) effectively resolves the difficulty that both pretribulationists and posttribulationists often encounter in Matthew 24. His view is also substantiated by several contextual markers, including the use of περὶ δὲ, the parable of the fig tree, and the presence of labor pains.

Waterman cited the aforementioned phrase ἐν λόγῳ κυρίου (“by the word of the Lord”) in 1 Thessalonians 4:15 as evidence that Paul got his teaching on the Day of the Lord directly from Jesus Himself.49 He then

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46 Ibid. 141.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid. Note that Blaising contrasted the “imminent expectation” of Christ’s visible descent (one that is “sign-based and sign-induced”) with the “signless” imminence described in the second half of the Olivet Discourse.

noted a “striking resemblance” between Paul’s teaching in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 24:43.\textsuperscript{50} Paul’s illustration of the thief in the night was likely borrowed from Jesus Himself. In both the Olivet Discourse and 1 Thessalonians 5, the analogy is used in regard to the Day of the Lord; it stands to reason, then, that both references concern a sudden and unexpected commencement of Daniel’s seventieth week.


**Second Peter 3:10.** Premillennialists generally take one of two views on this passage. Some see this as a reference to Christ’s physical return at the end of the tribulation (and perhaps including all the tribulation judgments that precede it).\textsuperscript{52} Others see this as a reference to the “event that immediately precedes eternity future.”\textsuperscript{53} The mention of “new heavens and a new earth” (v. 13) seems to parallel Revelation 21:1, making the second option more likely.

How does 2 Peter 3:10 use the illustration of the thief? Revelation 20:9 provides some insight: “And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.” The fire that consumes the unbelieving armies will come suddenly and unexpectedly. Even these unbelievers during the millennium will have experienced Christ’s reign of peace and blessing. The unexpected judgment of Revelation 20:9 provides a parallel to the beginning of the tribulation (characterized by an appearance of “peace and safety” according to 1 Thess 5:3).

**Revelation 3:3.** Jesus warned the church at Sardis, “So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid. 110. Many of Waterman’s other parallels erroneously equate Christ’s coming at the end of the tribulation with the rapture. See previous for discussion concerning the differences between the two events.


wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.” Not all interpreters see a reference to Christ’s future coming here. Note the remarks of Ladd.

[In the present context, the warning is far more suitable to some historical visitation [than to the second coming] when the Lord will bring upon a lethargic church an unexpected experience which will mean a divine judgment. This interpretation is supported by the fact that this visitation is posited upon the failure of the church to repent—a condition which is not primarily related to the Lord’s return.]

However, even if Revelation 3:3 represents a general eschatological event, it is far from clear that the event is posttributional as Gundry claimed. Thomas interpreted the theme of the messages to the seven churches as “the imminence of the hour of trial as an incentive for the book’s recipients to make their calling and election sure so they can escape this coming dreaded period.” There is nothing contextually that demands posttribulationism in Revelation 3:3. In fact, the unexpected nature of Christ’s coming upon the Sardis church, in conjunction with the other aforementioned uses of the thief analogy, argue strongly against Gundry’s view.

Revelation 16:15. Of all the passages Gundry cited, only this one is clearly found in context of the tribulation’s end. In the sixth bowl judgment, Christ warned, “Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.” However, the reference here is not definitively posttributional. Thomas noted that the warning here is parenthetical and relates back to the general theme of chapters 2—3. In light of the horrendous judgments of the tribulation, John’s readers needed to be certain that they were the “overcomers” who would escape the Day of the Lord. Once again, the thief analogy indicates a sudden and unexpected coming.

56 Ibid.
Summary. There are strong indications that the thief analogy applies to a sudden and unexpected destruction in line with the commencement of either the tribulation or the eternal state (in the case of 2 Pet 3:9). Paul’s use of the analogy is likely informed by Jesus’ teaching in the Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:42–44). The thief analogy is not irrefutable proof that the Day of the Lord encompasses all Daniel’s seventieth week. However, the other usages of the illustration certainly point in this direction.

The Cry of “Peace and Safety!”

Paul asserted that the Day of the Lord would come “while they are saying, ‘Peace and safety!’” (1 Thess 5:3). Note Paul’s use of the third-person plural verb λέγωσιν (“they are saying”). This is in contrast to the second-person plural pronoun ἡμεῖς (“you”) in chapter 4. Paul did not include himself or his believing readers among those who would cry, “Peace and safety!” when the Day of the Lord begins. Fee asserted that Paul’s “immediate concern is that the day of the Lord does not pose a threat to them.”

The term εἰρήνη (“peace”) indicates “a state of concord, peace, harmony.” Ἀσφάλεια (“security”) is found only three times in the New Testament. In this context, it indicates “a state of safety and security, implying a complete lack of danger.” Moulton and Milligan cited this term’s use in secular literature in reference to a “written security.” Showers equated this term with the Antichrist’s seven-year covenant with Israel at the beginning of Daniel’s seventieth week (Dan 9:27). Whether Ἀσφάλεια specifically references the Antichrist’s peace agreement, the events surrounding this covenant would certainly give the unbelieving world a false hope of peace and safety.

There is difficulty in imaging the appearance of peace and safety at any other time besides the very beginning of the seventieth week. Even the first half of the tribulation will involve “wars and rumors of wars” in which “nation will rise against nation” (Matt 24:6–7). Peace is taken from the

57 Thomas, “1 Thessalonians,” 282.
58 Fee, First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians, 188.
59 Bauer, et al., Greek-English Lexicon, 287.
60 Louw and Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, 1:238.
earth with the opening of the second seal in Revelation (6:3–4). The calamity, war, and distress will only escalate, not subside, after the first half of the week.

Even so, non-pretribulationists have taken issue with those who place the “peace and safety” at the beginning of Daniel’s seventieth week. First, an examination of prewrath and posttribulational perspectives on “peace and safety” is in order. Then, two apparent problems with the pretribulational view will be analyzed.

Prewrath View of “Peace and Safety.” Prewrath adherents place the rapture after the tribulation’s midpoint, but prior to the outpouring of God’s wrath. They place this outpouring (the Day of the Lord) roughly three-quarters of the way through the tribulation. Rosenthal described the conditions that, according to prewrath advocates, will bring about the appearance of peace and safety.

At the middle of the seventieth week the Antichrist will make his capital the city of Jerusalem (Dan. 11:42–45). He will seek to become a world ruler, ruthlessly destroying men and nations as he moves to consolidate his power. His greatest fury will be unleashed against the Jewish nation. For that reason, this period of time is called “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” It will be a time of such severity that except those days were shortened, no flesh (in context, Jewish) would live. But for the elect’s sake, those days will be shortened. At that moment cosmic disturbance will signal the approach of the Day of the Lord. Jews being persecuted by the Antichrist will view this as divine intervention on their behalf in the nick of time. They will proclaim “peace and safety,” but their cry will be premature—an expression of short-lived duration: “For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them” (1 Thess 5:3).

The novelty and ingenuity of Rosenthal’s view cannot be doubted. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the cry of “Peace and safety!” will come from the Jewish people exclusively. First Thessalonians 5 contrasts the “sons of light” with the sons of “darkness” (vv. 4–5). The third-person plural of verse 3 refers to the children of darkness universally, not those in the Jewish nation specifically.

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63 It seems that most midtribulationists place the Day of the Lord at the end of the tribulation, as posttribulationists do. See previous discussion concerning the various views of the Day of the Lord.

Furthermore, Rosenthal’s assertion that Jews will cry “Peace and safety!” because of a “cosmic disturbance” indicating “the approach of the Day of the Lord” is difficult to establish exegetically. The cosmic disturbances in the sixth seal judgment (which prewrath advocates believe is the precursor to the Day of the Lord) are nowhere said to provoke the cry of “Peace and safety!” In fact, in the Revelation account, earth’s inhabitants are said to call “to the mountains and to the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb’” (6:16). This is a nearly universal response of unbelievers (“every slave and free man”) at that time (v. 15).

Posttribulational View of “Peace and Safety.” Gundry suggested, “The very form of the statement [in 1 Thess 5:3] suggests that peace and safety will not be the actual condition of the world preceding the day of the Lord, but the expressed wish and/or expectation of men, which God will answer with a blow of judgment.”65 He cited several Old Testament texts (Jer 6:14; 8:11; Ezek 13:10) to establish such a precedent. He then proposed, “Perhaps just before Armageddon there will be a lull, a seeming end of world upheavals, which will excite men’s hopes for the peace which has so long eluded them (as suggested by the three-and-a-half days’ merriment in Rev. 11:7–11).”66

In regard to a possible “lull,” it is difficult to see any abatement of the tribulation judgments in the biblical text. Ryrie observed, “The last judgments of each of the series in Revelation reveals: killing of martyrs (6:9), a meteor shower (6:13), earthquakes (6:14), torment like the sting of a scorpion (9:10), one-third of the population killed (9:18), people gnawing their tongues because of pain (16:10), armies converging on Armageddon (16:14), and widespread destruction (16:20, 21).”67 Ryrie also noted, “[A]ccording to posttribulationists some, if not all, of these judgments will occur toward the end of the tribulation.”68

As for Gundry’s first assertion, it is problematic to relegate the cry of "Peace and safety!" to merely an expectation or wish. The passage depicts sudden destruction coming as a thief in the night (vv. 2–3). This indicates that, at bare minimum, there must be, at least, the appearance of peace and safety. The peace and safety may not even be genuine; it must,
however, be legitimately perceived in order for the world to be caught off-guard by the coming destruction. Furthermore, the posttribulational scheme begs this question: why will armies gather at Armageddon for war if they have expectations of peace and safety?

*Perceived Problems with the Pretribulational View.* Gundry asserted, “If peace and safety must exist as actualities when the day of the Lord begins, that day could not begin and the rapture could not occur at the present time. For the current condition of the world is neither peaceful nor safe.” There are some significant flaws in Gundry’s reasoning. For one, pretribulationists do not demand peace and safety to ‘exist as actualities.” Rather there must be the *appearance* of peace and safety, causing the world to be caught off-guard by the Day of the Lord. Also, the “current condition of the world” is far more peaceful and safe than the world at the end of the tribulation where Gundry places the Day of the Lord.

Rosenthal offered a chronological problem with the pretribulational view, “If the peace and safety is placed inside the seventieth week, the Day of the Lord cannot begin at the beginning of the seventieth week. . . . [A]ccording to Paul, the Day of the Lord follows the cry of peace and safety. If the call of peace and safety is placed before the seventieth week, then a prophesied event must precede the seventieth week, and the pretribulational pillar of imminence once again crumbles.” While Rosenthal’s claim may, at first glance, seem devastating for pretribulationism, a careful analysis reveals otherwise.

First, it is a common misconception that pretribulationism is wholly dependent upon the doctrine of imminence. Feinberg noted, “[A]ny-moment imminency could be wrong and pretribulationism could still be right. The minimum requirement for the truth of pretribulationism is simply that the rapture of the church must *precede* the Tribulation.” There are compelling defenses of the pretribulational rapture that involve little or no reliance upon imminence. Even the findings of this study are not contingent upon imminence.

Rosenthal is correct that the peace and safety likely precede the Day of the Lord (perhaps in anticipation of the Antichrist’s treaty with

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69 Gundry, *Church and the Tribulation*, 92.

70 Feinberg, “Response,” in *Three Views on the Rapture*, 152.

Israel). However, he is not correct that this order of events damages pretribulationism or even the doctrine of imminence. Rosenthal’s entire argument is contingent upon one erroneous assertion: in order for pretribulationism to be true, the rapture must be coterminous with the beginning of the Day of the Lord.

The peace and safety precede the Day of the Lord, not the rapture; it may even be possible to posit a gap between the rapture and the tribulation. The Bible nowhere indicates how much time elapses between the two events. However, there is likely some type of gap between the rapture and Daniel’s seventieth week, albeit a brief one. A gap would allow for conditions of peace and safety to develop prior to the tribulation starting.

Summary. The cry of “Peace and safety!” indicates that the Day of the Lord begins simultaneously with Daniel’s seventieth week. Only at this time (and no other) will earth-dwellers perceive any semblance of peace and safety. Prewrath and posttribulational views fail to provide compelling evidence that any other time of the tribulation will involve such a perception. Finally, the presence of peace and safety hints at the possibility of a gap between the rapture and the Day of the Lord in order for such conditions to develop.

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72 Stanton cited similar gaps between Calvary and Pentecost and between the end of the tribulation and the start of the millennial kingdom (Gerald B. Stanton, “A Review of The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church,” Bibliotheca Sacra 148 [January 1991]: 100).

73 Thomas seemed to oppose the idea of a gap, noting, “Were either the rapture or the day of the Lord to precede the other, one or the other would cease to be an imminent prospect to which the ‘thief in the night’ and related expressions (1:10; 4:15, 17) are inappropriate” (Thomas, “1 Thessalonians,” 281). However, the Day’s coming as a thief simply signifies that it is sudden and unexpected. The analogy does not demand that the Day of the Lord be imminent from the present standpoint, but that it will be unexpected when it comes.
TWO CLASSES OF CHRISTIANS IN THE
PENTECOSTAL VIEW OF SPIRIT BAPTISM

David Q. Santos

First Corinthians 12:12–13 (NKJV) — 12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

The aim of this article is to provide an exegetical and theological study of Spirit baptism, and also to critique Guy P. Duffield and Nathaniel M. Van Cleave's Foundations of Pentecostal Theology.¹ The book of 1 Corinthians is a corrective letter to a divided church. In this epistle, Paul sought to correct error that had arisen in the church. Key to his effort was to bring unity to the believers there. He was not seeking an ecumenical “anything goes” unity for the sake of getting along; rather, he wanted those followers to be united on the important things of the faith.

He spent many chapters defining their error and pointing them to love for one another and maintaining a pure faith and fellowship based upon what they have been taught (4:6). In chapter twelve, verses twelve and thirteen are an appeal to unity by using the analogy of a single body that has many parts, which is a picture that Paul used in other books as well (cf. Rom 12:3-6). The other theme used here is that of there being no classes among Christians (Gal 3:28; Col 3:11). In Galatians and Colossians it is clear that being a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free man, even man or woman is not relevant to one’s position in the body of Christ.

The first epistle to the church of Corinth brings in a unique aspect to the unity of having no classes; it is explained here that each believer is baptized by the Spirit as a function that brings the believer into the body of Christ. As each one enters into the body of Christ, being part of the church,


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they are unified with every other believer as part of that new creation. As one examines all the Scriptural references to the phenomena of being baptized by the Spirit, it becomes apparent that the New Testament uses the same grammatical construction consistently regardless of how the various phrases were translated.

There are some that then attempt to make a distinction between being baptized by the Spirit and with the Spirit. In that view being baptized by the Spirit takes place at the point of salvation but being baptized with the Spirit is a secondary work that follows sometime after salvation and is based upon the believer meeting certain conditions. Merrill F. Unger, noted dispensational theologian, said of this doctrine, "No instance in the Gospels or the Acts, when seen in proper dispensational perspective, is at variance with this truth. That there is no ground in all the Word of God for the error of the baptism with the Holy Spirit being considered a "second experience" after regeneration, becomes patent." Unger's forceful statement stands in contrast to the teaching that is presently under examination.

In contrast to the "with" the spirit position as presented in Pentecostal theology, others, including this author see the works of regeneration, indwelling, baptism, and sealing as sovereign works of God that all take place at the moment of salvation without any condition except that of saving faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who lived, died on a cross, and was resurrected and will return to gather his bride in the future. This view would add that the Spirit’s ministry of filling is a work that places responsibility upon the believer to continue to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18).

A forced interpretation that distinguishes between being baptized by or with the Spirit inadvertently creates a division between believers. This division among believers would be those that have been baptized with the Spirit and those that have not. Those believers that have not yet attained to being baptized with the Spirit would be seen as a separate division or class among believers. This is exactly opposite of what 1

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3 Clifford Rapp, Jr., “Ephesians 5:18: Holy Spirit or Human Spirit?,” Chafer Theological Seminary Journal 2 (Spring1996). Rapp directed attention to at least four interpretations of the use of “spirit” in this passage. He concluded by stating, "There are a number of questions that we may ask about how to translate 'by the Spirit' in Ephesians 5:18. Yet when we consider all the issues, the evidence brings us to the position represented in every translation of the English Bible: we should capitalize the 'S' to denote the Holy Spirit. It has always been the will of the Lord that Church saints 'be filled by means of the Holy Spirit.'"
Corinthians 12:12-13 is teaching. A secondary conclusion that comes from this misunderstanding of Spirit baptism is that a believer can lose their salvation and regain it by being rebaptized.

**ALL BELIEVERS ARE BAPTIZED BY THE SPIRIT INTO THE BODY OF CHRIST**

The foundational passage here is 1 Corinthians 12:13, which describes the means by which a new believer is placed into the body of Christ. Unger wrote, “There are, moreover, approximately 150 passages which state the truth that the believer is ‘in Christ,’ and everyone has reference to the baptism with the Holy Spirit, for that operation alone can put one ‘in Christ.’” Unger uses the term “with” and “by” the Spirit interchangeably or without distinction as he points to the function of being *in* Christ being *by* the Spirit. The phrase “for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” is the key to the entire study. Here the Greek preposition ἐν (en) is translated “by.” Unger’s main contribution to this study was to note the many passages that describe the believer as being “in Christ” and the consistent Scriptural teaching that the Holy Spirit is necessary for the operation (or process) of being placed into the body of Christ.

Pentecostal theologians recognize that there is a gap between their theology of Spirit baptism and others. Pentecostal theologians Duffield and Van Cleave indicated as follows:

Much confusion has arisen over this verse [1 Cor 12:12-13] because some have taught that it is referring to the Baptism with the Spirit which the one hundred and twenty received on the Day of Pentecost. Thus, it is claimed that all receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit when they are saved. There is a vital difference between the Holy Spirit baptizing believers into the Body of Christ, an operation of the Holy Spirit, and being Baptized with the Holy Ghost which is an operation of Jesus.

As can be seen here, Duffield and Van Cleave assert there is a difference between the initial act of the Holy Spirit which baptizes the believer into the body of Christ and a later baptism *with* the Holy Spirit. They point to passages such as Mark 1:8 to contrast with 1 Corinthians 12:13. For example, they wrote, “The baptism spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12:13 is conducted by the Holy Spirit, and has to do with the believer’s position in

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4 Unger, “Baptism with the Holy Spirit,” 234.
Christ; while the baptism spoken of by John in Mark 1:8 is conducted by Jesus Christ, and has to do with power for service.”

Duffield and Van Cleave thus argue that Mark 1:8 is describing a different Spirit baptism than 1 Corinthians 12:13. Mark 1:8 says, “I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” The phrase “but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” is “αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ” (autos de baptisei humas en pneumati hagio). The key observation is the Greek preposition ἐν (en), which is used in Mark 1:8 and is the same preposition used in 1 Corinthians 12:13. While ἐν (en) can be translated “with” that would be a secondary use. Regardless of that, the consistent use of the same preposition, at least, demonstrates that Mark 1:8 is predicting the same Spirit baptism as is found in 1 Corinthians 12:13. Difficulty arises when making the case that these are separate events, as the major point of the Pentecostal argument is based upon a differentiation of by and with that does not exist in the Greek text.

One should note that Duffield and Van Cleave are very critical of those that do not accept the language they use in differentiating by and with. They stated, “This great experience must be called by its right name. Others, no doubt, have had the same experience in former days, who have failed to call it by its scriptural name. As a result, they have failed to pass the truth on to others. To say that these other names mean the same thing is to confuse God’s blessings, purposes, and provisions for His own.”

Perhaps more exegesis should be employed before making such polemic statements. Duffield and Van Cleave point to several other passages to make the same point.

The scriptural name for the Holy Spirit coming upon the lives of Christian men and women is “The Baptism with the Holy Ghost.” Notice the explicit language of the following scriptures: “... he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire ...” (Mt. 3:11); “I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost” (Mk. 1:8); “For John truly baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:5).

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6 Ibid.


8 Duffield and Van Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, 305.

9 Ibid. 305.
Duffield and Van Cleave’s argument is that there is explicit language stating that this baptism is the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The trouble with this statement is that Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, and Acts 1:5 all use the same preposition as 1 Corinthians 12:13 to describe this Spirit baptism. Exegetically it is clear that (whether it is translated by or with) these passages are all referencing the same thing. A further study of Acts 1:5 reveals that this passage is quoted in Acts 11:16. This is the account of Peter going to a house in Joppa to preach the gospel. When he told them about the gospel of Jesus Christ, they were saved and the Spirit fell upon them. Peter observed that the same thing which they observed at Pentecost was happening to these new believers.

Peter called the event in Acts 2 “the beginning.” Acts 11:17 states “Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (KJV). The beginning, or Pentecost, is when the Holy Spirit would begin to universally regenerate, indwell, seal, and baptize all believers into the body of Christ. Prior to Pentecost, all passages that spoke of the new ministries of the Holy Spirit were prophetically pointing to a, then, future event. This is especially true of being baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ.

John 7:38-39 is one of the passages that predicts the Holy Spirit’s universal ministry; it states, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” Jesus predicted the Holy Spirit in John 7, which also states that the Spirit would be given when He was glorified. John 17:1 demonstrates that Jesus was glorified following his death, and one could argue following his resurrection and receiving a body that could be touched. One author summarized this glorification by writing as follows:

Jesus then prayed, Glorify Your Son (cf. 17:5). This request for glorification included sustaining Jesus in suffering, accepting His sacrifice, resurrecting Him, and restoring Him to His pristine glory. The purpose of the request was that the Father would be glorified by the Son, that God’s wisdom, power, and love might be known through Jesus. Believers too are to glorify God (v. 10); in fact, this is
the chief end of man (Rom. 11:36; 16:27; 1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; cf. Westminster Larger Catechism, Question 1).\textsuperscript{10}

The Pentecostal view then argues that there are conditions to being baptized with the Spirit. This furthers the argument of this critique that having a separate secondary Spirit baptism would also require the belief that there are at least two classes of Christians. Duffield and Van Cleave stated, “What is necessary before one can receive this marvelous experience? Are there some necessary preliminary steps which must be taken? The Scriptures indicate the following conditions which must be met:"

1. Repentance from sin.
2. A definite experience of salvation.
3. Water Baptism.
4. A deep conviction of need.
5. A measure of consecration.\textsuperscript{11}

While the list presented is certainly a profitable list for any believer to obtain, it would be difficult to demonstrate from Scripture that these are required to be baptized by (or even with) the Spirit. In fact, there are no exhortations commanding a believer to be Spirit baptized. Nor is there a command to be regenerate, sealed, or indwelt. There is only the command in Ephesians 5:18 to be filled by the Spirit. So for the Pentecostal view to include a list of requirements that must be met for Spirit baptisms is troublesome and unbiblical, with the exception of the requirement of salvation for Spirit baptism being a gift for believers. The discussion by Duffield and Van Cleave on the necessity of water baptism is interesting. They wrote,

Again, attention is called to Peter’s words to those on the Day of Pentecost who cried, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent . . . and be baptized . . .” (Acts 2:37, 38). The order seems to be: Repentance, Regeneration, Water Baptism, and then the Baptism with the Holy Ghost. . . . No one who is knowingly and

\footnotesize{

\textsuperscript{11} Duffield and Van Cleave, Foundations of Pentecostal Theology, 313–14.
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willingly disobedient to any of God’s commands can have faith to receive the Fullness of the Spirit. Faith always follows obedience.\footnote{Ibid. 313.}

The final phrase of this paragraph is interesting: “Faith always follows obedience.” One must ask if this is really the gospel at this point. The preaching of the gospel is primarily one of exhorting a sinner to belief in Jesus Christ. After salvation, obedience is required but it is indwelling by the Spirit that will then move the believing one to a changed life. Romans states of the gospel: “for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.” There is no intention to neglect the importance of repentance here; only to demonstrate that the gospel is preached in a manner that salvation is by faith alone in Jesus Christ. However, as the Pentecostal view teaches the loss of the Holy Spirit, and thus the loss of salvation, leads to a message that demands obedience in order to maintain one’s status as a believer. These doctrines develop through the teaching and the theological argument that Spirit baptism is a secondary work. However, there is no passage of Scripture that can be used to demonstrate that there are conditions on maintaining the Holy Spirit as an indwelling presence. The presence of the Holy Spirit is proof of salvation (Rom 8:11) and that indwelling is eternal (John 14:16-17).

Another point that is taught as a requirement for Spirit baptism is “a deep conviction of need.” The believer has to really strongly and truly want Spirit baptism.

There must be a real hunger and thirst for more of God before one will receive the Baptism with the Spirit. God does not give such gracious gifts except as they are sincerely desired and deeply appreciated. “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Mt. 5:6). “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink . . . (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive . . .)” (Jn. 7:37–39). “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God . . .” (Ps. 42:1, 2).\footnote{Ibid. 314.}

Duffield and Van Cleave stack three unrelated verses together to argue for the requirement of “deep conviction” as a prerequisite to Spirit baptism. The second verse records a predictive statement of the coming of the Holy Spirit.
This study has already looked at that passage so will only add that the requirement that is actually in John 7:37-39 is believing. There is no other requirement mentioned. Matthew 5:6 is from the Sermon on the Mount, which is describing spiritual truths of the kingdom age; so it is a good principal but not describing Spirit baptism. Psalm 42 is a beautiful psalm that speaks of loving and desiring God but is still unrelated to being baptized by or with the Holy Spirit. Duffield and Van Cleave then turn to the instruction of how to receive the Holy Spirit. They begin by stating, "There are, however, certain general principles which can be observed and which serve as a guide to the sincere seeking soul. The following basic truths will provide some help in this area."\(^\text{14}\) They give two primary points as to receiving the Holy Spirit:

1. **By faith.**
2. **By a full yieldedness of the entire being, in order that the Holy Spirit might have His own way.**\(^\text{15}\)

One might be obliged to agree with the first statement: receive the Holy Spirit by faith. The problem comes in the application of the general statement. The argument is stated in the following fashion, “Everything we receive from the Lord is done so by faith: ‘for he that cometh to God must believe’ (Heb. 11:6). There is no other way. The Baptism with the Spirit is not primarily a matter of feelings, of signs or evidences. It is a matter of believing that God will send His Promise upon us — that Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit.”\(^\text{16}\) Notice how the argument uses the terms faith and belief interchangeably. This is being stated of believers that have already indicated that they have faith in Jesus Christ and believe the gospel message. Consequently, it seems best to exhort non-believers to faith and belief, and instruct Christians to walk with the Lord and in the sound doctrine that is found in Scripture.

Duffield and Van Cleave add that one of the conditions needed to be baptized with the Spirit is to be fully yielded to the Spirit. They stated, “This is often the most difficult condition to fulfill. After one realizes his need of the Baptism with the Spirit, and comes to the Lord for this Blessing, there is still the matter of the yieldedness of his various faculties to the control of the Spirit.”\(^\text{17}\) Being yielded or controlled is certainly a key characteristic of

\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Ibid. 314–16.

\(^{16}\) Ibid. 314–15.

\(^{17}\) Ibid. 316.
a mature follower of Christ. Paul, in Ephesians, told believers to be filled with the Spirit rather than being drunk with wine. As already indicated, this statement is an imperative which places responsibility of being filled with the Spirit on believers. This leads this author to ask if there is simply a confusion among Pentecostal teachers between Spirit baptism and being filled with the Spirit. This confusion of definition perhaps is demonstrated by the following quote from Duffield and Van Cleave: “Seekers should be taught that the Spirit is willing to fill them as soon as they open their hearts, yield their lives, and exercise faith.” Here it seems that the term “fill” is being used as a synonym for being baptized with the Spirit.

A BRIEF EXHORTATION ON THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The true biblical doctrines of the Holy Spirit indicate that all believers have the Holy Spirit. John Walvoord wrote, “Scriptures represent every Christian as possessing the Spirit. The fact of His indwelling is mentioned in many passages (John 7:37–39; Acts 11:17; Rom. 5:5; 8:9, 11; 1 Cor. 2:12; 6:19–20; 12:13; 2 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 3:2; 4:6; 1 John 3:24; 4:13).” The ministry of the Holy Spirit is seen as universal to all that believe in Jesus Christ. Romans 5:5 demonstrates this, stating, “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” Romans 8:11 adds, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.” The Holy Spirit dwells in all believers. No condition is demanded. "No exhortation to be baptized by the Spirit. It is significant that Christians are never exhorted to seek the baptism of the Spirit. While there is every exhortation to seek a proper adjustment to the Holy Spirit, this is never called by the term baptism." The Holy Spirit is a seal to all believers. There are three passages of Scripture that indicate a work of the Holy Spirit revealed under the symbol of “sealing” (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30). Second Corinthians 1:21-22 states, “For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in

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18 Ibid. 318.
20 Ibid. 140.
our hearts as a guarantee.” The term “sealed” is σφραγίζω (sphragizō) which means “guarantee,” “seal,” “seal up,” “mark,” or “certify.” “Sealed” is to designate and make something secure as a sign of authentication or ownership which is a ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, there is Spirit filling. Arnold Fruchtenbaum wrote “The first and by far the most important of the ministries of the Holy Spirit in relationship to spiritual growth is the ministry of Spirit-filling; to be filled with the Spirit.”

21 Walvoord added, “From the standpoint of practical value to the individual Christian, no field of doctrine relating to the Holy Spirit is more vital than the subject of the filling of the Spirit.”

22 Here is the one place where there are conditions on the ministry of the Holy Spirit. “Three conditions are specified for the filling of the Spirit.”

1. In 1 Thessalonians 5:19, the command is given, “Do not quench the Spirit.”

2. In Ephesians 4:30, another exhortation is found, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

3. In Galatians 5:16, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

While the Pentecostal view argues, “The Baptism with the Holy Ghost is a definite experience, subsequent to salvation, whereby the Third Person of the Godhead comes upon the believer to anoint and energize him for special service.”

24 Scripture does not bear out this conclusion. There seems to be a disconnect in Charismatic teaching regarding the issues of Spirit baptism and a confusion of the biblical doctrines of the Holy Spirit. It would be good to make an appeal to Scripture using sound hermeneutics and careful exegesis of key passages. One must be cautious to use passages that relate to the issue. All believers can rejoice in knowing that they have been baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ. If they have received the Holy Spirit, they have assurance of eternal life as they have been sealed for eternity. The power of the gospel has made them a new creation that will

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22 Walvoord, Holy Spirit, 189.

23 Ibid. 196.

have the Spirit of Christ in them for all eternity. They can now “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen” (2 Pet 3:18).
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Rod Dreher believes that the culture war which began with the sexual revolution in the 1960s, has ended in defeat for Christian conservatives (pp. 3, 79), and there is no hope of being reversed (p. 89). Ultimately, all faith among European and North American Christians will disappear (pp. 8, 12, 46, 202), and the only hope for them is a strategic withdrawal from the standard in America (p. 2). In search for a model of survival, Dreher turns to the sixth century monk St. Benedict. During a time of similar societal corruption, Benedict withdrew to a cave for three years, eventually emerging to found 12 monasteries (pp. 14-18) and create a Rule (The Benedictine Rule) which showed the monks (and now us, by extension) how to order one’s life to be receptive to God’s grace (pp. 15, 47, 50-54). It was this monastic system, best exemplified by Benedict, that kept the faith alive in Europe during the medieval period (pp. 4, 49, 236). If the faith is to survive in the West in our times, we must follow suit and “learn habits of the heart forgotten by believers in the West” (p. 4). Thus, the Benedict Option:

is a call to undertaking the long and patient work of reclaiming the real world from the artifice, alienation, and atomization of modern life. It is a way of seeing the world and of living in the world that undermines modernity’s big lie: that humans are nothing more than ghosts in a machine, and we are free to adjust its settings in any way we like” (p. 236).

Dreher traced the moral fall of modern society to five landmark events that rocked Western civilization. The first occurred in the fourteenth century with the loss of belief in the integral connection between God and Creation or, in philosophic terms, transcendent reality and material reality. The collapse of religious unity and religious authority in the Protestant Reformation took place the sixteenth century. The eighteenth-century Enlightenment displaced Christian religion with the cult of reason, privatized religious life, and inaugurated the age of democracy. The fourth was the Industrial Revolution (ca. 1760-1840) and
the growth of capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and finally the sexual revolution (1960-present) (p. 23).

One should note that one of these events is the Reformation which, according to Dreher, brought about the collapse of religious unity and religious authority. This is a common complaint of Roman Catholicism concerning the Reformation, which not only shows Dreher’s bias but also perplexes a reader as to why Reformed Christian leaders such as Albert Mohler and Russell Moore are supportive of the Benedict Option. Moreover, it should surprise no one that a book written by a former Roman Catholic (who now adheres to Eastern Orthodoxy) is favorable toward both systems and draws most of its examples and heroes from those traditions (pp. 48, 239). It is surprising, however, that those favorable toward the Reformation encourage others to read this book (note Russell Moore’s endorsement on the back cover).

Dreher rightly discerns that the influences of a secular society have seeped into the church. As a result, biblical doctrine and tradition have been usurped by a “social disease” coined by some as Moralistic Therapeutic Deism (MTD). The basic tenets of MTD are: a God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth; God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions; the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself; God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when He is needed to resolve a problem; and, good people go to heaven when they die (p. 10).

Because MTD now dominates the church, the author correctly believes that many young people are abandoning the church without even knowing what the church teaches (pp. 2, 9, 103-04). The Benedict Option is not a detailed, highly structured program. Dreher calls for experimentation, creativity, and variety in its application but some common features can be identified. Withdrawal by Christians (defined broadly to include almost any Christian tradition from Rome to Mormonism) from the main stream of society is encouraged to avoid corruption. Practicing a modern adaption of the Benedictine Rule including the Divine Office, contemplative prayer, and lectio divina (pp. 58-60, 151, 228) are also seen. The monastics believe that asceticism reins in the passions of the heart and trains the body and soul to put God above self (pp. 63-65); it breaks the power of bodily desires (pp. 114-15, 121, 228). Although there is no biblical support for this view, and Colossians 2:20-23 contradicts it, the Benedict Option relies on asceticism as foundational.
Withdrawal to communities of like-minded citizens who share the same values (pp. 83, 86, 93-99, 122) is another feature. Fighting for religious liberty is critical (pp. 84-86). The Benedict Option must be centered on the church, but this means practicing a new monasticism (p. 161), liturgical worship, and embracing the traditions of the past, especially those handed down by the monks (pp. 101-21). Working together with other faiths that share similar values, an ecumenism of the trenches (pp. 136-38), is also encouraged. Furthermore, it is espoused that Christians should withdraw from public education, as well as private education and most home school programs, and replace them with classical Christian education from elementary through university levels (pp. 144-75). Following withdrawal from the academic world to the trades, Dreher envisions tradesman and manufacturers who read Latin and "Great Books" (pp. 176-94) and hire Christians (pp. 188-89) but who have abandoned the academic and political world.

Dreher assures his readers that the Benedict Option is a movement led by God not one's mind (p. 140); this corresponds well with the monastic system which claims direct mystical revelation from God (called enlightenment) and minimizes thinking by replacing it with contemplation. The author is on the same page as he wrote, “What we think does not matter as much as what we do – and how faithfully we do it (p. 52).” Additionally, through following the Rule and ascetic practices, people train their hearts “to love and to desire the right things, the things that are real, without having to think about it. It is acquiring virtue as a habit” (p. 57).

Dreher has thoroughly accepted the whole monastic system and is attractively offering it to naïve Christians as a viable option through the example and teachings of Benedict. It is surprising that Dreher only briefly mentions the Amish who are already practicing many of the Benedict Options: withdrawal from society, canonizing tradition, developing their own educational system, shunning academia for the trades, church-centered living, practicing church discipline and some forms of asceticism, and acceptance of mysticism. However, Dreher wants his readers to return to Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions, and so chooses Benedict as his patron saint.

The Benedict Option is insightful concerning history and culture, offering some helpful suggestions, but is highly dangerous if directly applied. The author did not draw his conclusions from Scripture but from Benedictine monasticism. In addition, the false gospel message and doctrines, over which the Reformation was fought, are never addressed. The reader would be wise to consider these factors before delving too
deeply into the ideas of this book. The reviewer’s book *Out of Formation* presents a more clear understanding of monastic teachings adjusted for modern times.

— Gary E. Gilley  
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Now Baker has offered a comprehensive study of the Ten Commandments, *The Decalogue: Living as the People of God*. While the Ten Commandments have had their influence on civil law and culture, particularly in Europe and America, they are primarily addressed to the people of God. In particular, they are addressed to Israel as the people of God. Baker, however, attempts to demonstrate not only their relevance to Israel, but their application to all the people of God in all eras of history.

He began with a study of the identity of the Decalogue, addressing such questions as: What is the Decalogue? What shape and form does it take? What is its origin and purpose? He devoted a separate chapter to each question. He further evaluated the data available from the viewpoints of the higher criticism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as well as those of more conservative contemporary scholars. He concluded, "The Decalogue is unique in being ascribed to God. Unlike the Book of the Covenant, Holiness Code, and Deuteronomic Laws – for which the role of Moses as mediator is stressed – the Decalogue is presented as the direct words of God" (p. 29). He added, "However we understand this, I believe there is good reason to accept the biblical tradition that the Decalogue originated in the time of Moses and played a key part in the formation of Israel as a nation, indeed as the people of God" (p. 29).

In discussing the purpose of the Decalogue, Baker took an expansive view, identifying three purposes given by various areas of
scholarship. These purposes seem to differ depending on whom the Decalogue addresses. Academic ideas range from addressing "all Israel" to addressing "all people everywhere." Baker noted that the Decalogue "outlines a vision for the life of Israel after its liberation from Egypt" (p. 36). He then concluded that the principles expressed in the Decalogue apply as an ethical basis to the people of God in both Testaments. While this may work if the reader exegetes the text properly and strictly applies the principles of the Decalogue, particularly since all but one of them are repeated in the church epistles, it does tend to blur the distinction between Israel and the church. Clearly, Baker does not take a dispensational approach to the subject.

Nevertheless, the book has considerable value to students of the Bible. Baker provides a detailed discussion of each commandment individually. He did place it in the context of covenant (not covenant theology) rather the literary form of ancient Near Eastern covenant patterns similar to those identified by George Mendenhall ("Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 [1954]: 50-76.) In this context, he explained the biblical and theological meaning of each of the commandments, demonstrating their significance for both the Israelite and the Christian readers. At the same time, he endeavors to magnify the God of the commandments never losing sight of his reality as opposed to the false, dead gods of the pagan culture surrounding Israel. Baker included a section which he called “Reflection” at the end of each discussion which examines how that commandment impacts the Christian community in the New Testament, as well as in today's world.

Readers will encounter two significant weaknesses in this book. The first is bibliographical support. The book includes an extensive bibliography providing evidence of the magnitude of the author's research. While this certainly commends Baker for his untiring attempt to document his findings, it unfortunately creates a difficulty for the reader. The bibliography is organized topically according to the titles of the various chapters of the book (this is a plus for students who want to pursue a particular commandment). The difficulty arises from the documentation in the text. Baker mixed footnotes with in-text notations. In both cases, he referred to an author's work by author's name, date, and page number(s). If the bibliography were one continuous alphabetical listing, this would not be an issue. However, all too often, the reader has to search under the various topics within the bibliography to find the reference Baker addressed in the text (this makes attempting to check the author's references a tedious task). A student seeking to further study the commandments would benefit more from a continuous listing of the
references or by a select bibliography at the end of each chapter.

The second weakness relates to the author's non-dispensational approach. In his discussion of the human elements of the commandments, Baker seems to blur the meaning of the "people of God." Israel is the people of God in Old Testament times. The church is the people of God in New Testament times and since. However, they are not both one people of God combined in any era/age/dispensation. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul reminded God's church to maintain this distinction. He said, "Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God" (10:32).

That said, Baker's study of the Decalogue is an insightful view of the historical, cultural, and theological settings of the commandments. There may be no other work on the commandments as extensive, exhaustive, and thorough in its attempt to examine and apply the Decalogue appropriately. The discerning reader will gain much to enlighten his understanding and impact his life and service for the Lord without confusing the recipients of or misapplying the principles of the Decalogue itself.

— Kenneth R. Cooper
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Since its first commentary release on the Epistle of James by Craig Blomberg and Mariam Kammell in 2008, the Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series has received high praise because of its facts, format, and function. The commentaries are directed toward pastors and teachers. While the Greek text and an English translation is included, adding value to the series, the presentation is done in such a way to be beneficial even to those who know little Greek.

The board behind the commentary series has chosen a format that includes elements which address literary context, an outline of the passage and where it falls within the overall outline of the book, a verse by verse explanation of the text, and a final summary of the theology found within the book. In these elements, readers will find two unique aspects that are extremely beneficial. First is a visual representation of the relationship of
the textual parts in a particular passage (this is meant to demonstrate how phrases may modify one another and impact the understanding of the text). The second unique component is the commentary itself. While most commentaries either choose to provide comments on a verse-by-verse basis or as a summary of particular passages, the Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament does both. Following the individual verse commentary is a section called “Theology in Application” that highlights the importance of the passage and its impact upon the Christian life.

While serving an individual purpose, each element works together to enlighten readers with a full understanding of the text, taking context into account at all levels. Readers are able to see the meaning of individual words and phrases, the significance of particular passages, and the role of entire texts in light of the literary, cultural, historical, and Scriptural contexts. The series is primarily edited by Clinton E. Arnold, dean and professor of New Testament language and literature at Talbot School of Theology. While Arnold serves as general editor, he works in conjunction with a number of associate and consulting editors. In all, twenty commentaries are planned; and, of those, eleven have already been released (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians & Philemon, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, James, and 1-3 John). The most recent release, John, by Edward W. Klink III offers an opportunity to critically analyze the worthiness of the series.

Klink brings forth his learning from the University of St. Andrews and his experience as both professor of New Testament at Talbot School of Theology and pastor of Hope Evangelical Free Church in Roscoe, Illinois to put together a commentary of grand portions. At 976 pages and weighing almost four pounds, the book is substantial. Even still, one can expect that the author does not exhaust every detail of the Gospel of John. However, Klink did well at covering much material and addressing the majority of difficult topics found within John’s gospel. In doing so, he was concise and to the point. Choosing to not waste words, Klink also does not waste readers’ time.

While one can appreciate the author’s concise use of words, some may find his writing style a bit laborious. Klink uses repeated phrases and words (note especially his use of the word pericope) as well as phrases that can be difficult to follow. In addition, while the author generally breaks down each chapter into manageable sections, there are instances in which he engages large portions of Scripture; it is not uncommon to find passages of forty or fifty verses addressed in one section (i.e. 4:1-42; 9:1-41; 11:1-57). Klink’s methodology is understandable in some instances because of
the extent of the topic being addressed (i.e. Jesus’ conversation with the Samaritan woman or the raising of Lazarus). While context is important and necessary in these instances, such large portions can be overwhelming. However, these are minimal issues in a valuable work.

The commentary is full of both depth and breadth. There are four areas in this work to be particularly appreciated: it is gospel-oriented; Christ-centered; practically applied; and, appropriately balanced. The work is, of course, a commentary on the Gospel of John. However, the author is intentional in directing readers toward the elaborateness of God’s gospel and the role that it plays in the Christian life, which can be seen in passages such as 8:12-59 where discussion is given concerning the significance of Jesus Christ as judge and the accusations that He made toward the Jews (pp. 426-27). The Gospel of John illuminates the life of Jesus for readers, yet again, the author took this to a deeper level. Klink clearly explains the significance of Christ’s life, death, resurrection, confrontations, and teachings and their impact on the most intricate aspects of one’s daily life. While the author seeks to simply explain the text and the theology behind it, he is not content with this alone. Klink recognizes that theology implies action. He brought forth the application of the text, not in predefined and exclusive ways, but in general terms so that the audience can see how theology does indeed impact one’s attitudes and activities. As an example, the author addressed several difficult topics throughout the book, such as joy in the Christian life in the midst of the most difficult and extreme circumstances (pp. 693, 727). There is a tendency for Christians to focus on one aspect while neglecting the opposite portion (this is often seen in the presentation of God’s love versus God’s judgment). Another example is the role of the Holy Spirit (p. 868). The author presents balanced, yet uncompromising, positions in order to avoid extremes.

The positive aspects serve the genre of the commentary very well because they fixate the reader upon God and the gospel with a correct view of Scripture. Thus, the author’s commentaries are rightly oriented and applied for readers. Edward Klink clearly has a high view of both God and his Word, even noting that Scripture itself offers an authoritative witness to Christ regardless of confirmation from the world’s standards (p. 837). Furthermore, he outlined an interpretation of Scripture that he calls “biblical reasoning” (p. 33), meant to elevate the text above man’s interpretation. As a result, the book is solid. The seventy-nine page introductory section includes an explanation of the author’s methodology. Many readers may be hesitant to read this amount of material, but one will learn much from what Klink has to say. One should note that the author advocates the doctrine of election (p. 347). He does not do this in an
overtly fanatical or insistent manner but merely as a presentation of a view. Furthermore, Klink draws believers’ attention to works in the Christian life. He noted, “there is an obligation placed upon us to bear fruit. This is in no way a work that merits salvation, but actually the reverse. It is a natural response to those who have already received it” (p. 659). These are the major areas of theology that will be concerning to some readers. Otherwise, the theology held by Klink is standard to those engaged in doctrine derived from the Bible alone. To confirm this, toward the end of the book, the author outlined basic points of John’s theology that conform to the teachings of Scripture.

There are no surprises in this commentary. Readers will find it helpful in exegeting and expounding upon the Gospel of John. The author has provided much information and thoroughly explained the text, making it an exceptional commentary on many levels.

— Robert Zink
Biblical Ministries Worldwide (Argentina)


Readers are blessed today with an abundance of preaching resources. Most offer practical suggestions with some theological weight but few develop a robust theology of preaching, and this is what sets apart Preaching in the New Testament. Lexically and exegetically driven, it provides a much-needed biblical foundation for preaching.

Jonathan Griffiths sought to answer two questions: “First, according to Scripture, is there actually such a thing as ‘preaching’ . . . and, if there is, how is it characterized and defined?” (pp. 2, 3). His work is divided into three parts: foundational matters, exegetical studies, and summary and conclusions.

Part one opens with a theology of Scripture in which Griffiths stated, “If preaching is a ministry of the word, its character must be shaped fundamentally by the nature of the word itself” (p. 9). God has spoken in his Word, and He speaks today exclusively through his Word (pp. 9-16). Thus, a faithful sermon is not a speech governed by an ancient text but a proclamation from God’s Word to God’s people at present.
Chapter two studies the words associated with New Testament preaching (\textit{katangellō}, \textit{kēryssō}, \textit{euangelizomai}), while chapter three looks at other ministries of the Word. After examining every instance of preaching or proclamation in the New Testament, Griffiths contends that preaching is distinct from teaching, admonishing, and encouraging. All believers minister the Word of God in some capacity, but only a select few are called to minister by preaching (p. 49).

Part two, chapters four through nine, helps characterize preaching through a series of large exegetical studies. For instance, chapter four focuses upon 2 Timothy 3-4. The entire epistle of 1 Corinthians is the subject of chapter 5, while Hebrews (as an early sermon) is examined in chapter nine. Griffiths provided the context in each of these chapters, broad-based observations on preaching, and concluded each with an eloquent summary.

Moreover, the author exercised great care in his lexical and exegetical studies. Of his two dozen observations, he said that God reveals his glory through the preaching of his Word (pp. 89-91), that God is the primary agent in the pulpit (p. 100), and that preaching is both a divine and human activity (p. 129). Part three condenses all observations into a useful conclusion. Griffiths made a compelling case that preaching is a distinct ministry of the Word, and being distinct, it has definition. Not everyone can be a preacher, and preaching is not three points with a nice poem; rather, preaching is the public and authoritative proclamation of God's Word by a commissioned church leader (p. 120).

The only disappointing aspect of this book is its lack of application. Griffiths contended the basis for preaching "is vitally important because our conclusion on that matter will determine whether we cling on to preaching in times when it falls out of favour in evangelical culture" (p. 4). He is surely correct, but after providing this basis, he said little of its importance. Many pastors are excellent public speakers, but few understand the basis for preaching or view themselves as heralds making a divine proclamation with power and authority. Thus, countless pulpits are filled with good thoughts, humor, and a few stories that have no value for presenting anyone "mature in Christ" (Col 1:28). Griffiths' work is more necessary than ever, but sadly, he brought the book to a close after unearthing exegetical gold.
Griffiths is scholarly, compelling, and most of all, biblical. If one wants to understand preaching, understand what it means to hold God’s Word in your hand prior to reading a stack of books on homiletics. For all who are tired of good books on preaching and would like a foundation, *Preaching in the New Testament* is the place to start.

— Shaun D. Lewis
Civil Servant Ministries (Springfield, IL)


Recent years have seen the establishment of biblical counseling as a discipline and function within the local church’s authority. Therefore, the flood of books on the topic is no surprise. Hoping to address a specific group, John and Janie Street have given us *The Biblical Counseling Guide for Women* through Harvest House Publishers.

The 17 chapters and 368 pages stand together to serve one purpose: “to assist Christian women who possess a high view of the sufficiency of God’s Word and its ability to adequately address the most serious personal struggles women will face” (loc. 149). Each chapter is designed to deal with a common issue that women experience, beginning with anger and going through topics such as depression, adultery, schizophrenia, and concluding with victims of abuse. In order to address the topics, the authors have constructed each chapter as a review of actual scenarios they have encountered in their counseling ministry. Filled with practical applications of Scripture, *The Biblical Counseling Guide for Women* has much to offer those who desire more education in order to confront the issues that women confront. The advantages of this book are many.

There are three major strengths in this book. First, the book is God-centered. The authors have highly exalted God’s word and God’s work in a person’s life throughout the book. These concepts are so important that the authors have explicitly stated that the insights conveyed in the book are for use with believers because God’s Word comes with faith and authority for them, while the unbeliever may see it merely as suggested principles (loc. 192). Secondly, the book is man-centered. John and Janie Street work from the foundation that mental health is generally the result of sin, and this
theme permeates throughout the book. As a result of this belief, they deal well not just with outward actions but inward motivations. Readers will see this as the authors use Scripture to show the root cause of issues such as anxiety (ch. 2), appearance (ch. 3), or chemical dependence (ch. 16).

Finally, it is world-centered. To those employing the methodologies of the world, this book will be confrontational by its biblical nature. The authors have challenged prevailing mindsets in the realm of counseling by using Scripture to define and explain diagnoses outlined in the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V). While many of their chapters contain the same headings one would find in the DSM-V, such as Borderline Personality Disorder or Schizophrenia, the authors point readers to the Bible to see the real causes behind them. However, they do not merely challenge the mindset found in the counseling realm but also the prevalent notions found within culture today such as rationalizing sin, misuse of hope (ch. 9), flexibility of morality (chapter 10), and the definition of guilt (ch. 10).

Christians typically use the terms man-centered or world-centered with negative connotations. However, because the authors have begun with a foundation that is God-centered, the other attributes add the great value of incorporating a biblical standard into the function of biblical counseling. Unfortunately, the book is underscored by four deficiencies as well. First, in certain ways the book is insufficient. While the goal is to address the most serious personal struggles that women encounter, several expected elements are missing, such as homosexuality (although transgenderism is included) or anything related to marriage and motherhood.

Secondly, the book is a bit puzzling in both the composition and content. The composition uses many pronouns, and at times, switches between second and third person making it difficult to follow what is being presented. Furthermore, throughout the book the authors seem to assume that humility will be present. Unfortunately, even among Christians, this is often not the case, especially when dealing with such personal issues. Therefore, a false sense of security is given when reading this book because it builds up expectations. It would be helpful if the authors demonstrated ways to address a lack of humility when it is encountered.

Third, the book is also very promotional, specifically for the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC) and of certified counseling in general. Whether or not one is in agreement with the doctrine and mission of ACBC, such constant promotion negates the value of other biblical organizations that exist. However, the issue is much more serious because they only affirm those who are certified, which offers little
hope to the pastor or elder who deals with these issues on a regular basis in their church. Moreover, it suggests they are inadequate because they may not be certified. While one recognizes that not everyone is gifted as a counselor and understands the need for training, neither should one say that only certification is acceptable.

Finally, the authors have chosen a method of presentation that draws upon actual experiences and sessions, which is appreciated because they are proven examples. However, in presenting the material this way, they do little teaching about various issues and ways to address them, leaving readers with few options if they encounter different situations. These deficiencies are apparent throughout the book. As one reads through each chapter, it becomes obvious that they will have a great impact on the information being presented and one’s ability to apply what is taught.

In many ways The Biblical Counseling Guide for Women is a great book and can be helpful for women as well as men. Biblically grounded individuals need not be dissuaded from reading the book. However, because of the noted shortcomings, it becomes difficult to recommend it without reservation. There are other books available that are more helpful. Do not use this book to begin a study of biblical counseling. Instead, this book might be good for those who have been through all the standard resources and are simply looking for more information.

— Robert Zink
Biblical Ministries Worldwide (Argentina)


Jeremy Pierre, associate professor of biblical counseling at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written a comprehensive, intense textbook designed to aid God’s people (pp. 9, 101, 105). The author stated early, "These pages are dedicated to showing how God designed people with dynamic hearts to experience the world fully only when connected to Christ" (p. 2). Faith is key in the process: "Faith is the means by which the gospel is received; thus, faith is at the center of heart transformation. . . . Faith is how God restores his design for the human heart so that people can commune with him and reflect his character . . . faith allows people to think
differently as they receive the knowledge of God from his Word” (p. 3). With this in mind, Pierre's goal is to give “a theological vision of how faith in Christ restores the dynamic human heart and a practical vision of how to help people join in the process” (p. 5). Pierre used the term "heart" as synonymous with soul, spirit, and mind which he believes all describe the same types of functions. The heart is, therefore, the inner person and relates to “the unity and totality of the inner life represented and expressed in the variety of intellectual and spiritual functions” (p. 15). The author sees (within the heart) the dynamic interplay between the cognitive (intellect), affective (emotions), and volitional (will, choices). The book is focused upon these three dimensions (pp. 12, 16-23, 31, 38-47, 60, 77-84, 103, 177).

There is much to be commended in *The Dynamic Heart*: it rightly states that theology is the standard by which people measure their experience rather than the inverse (pp. 5, 33). The work teaches that sin corrupts the dynamic function of the heart (pp. 55, 60). Idolatry is also correctly defined and applied (pp. 65-68). The role of faith is emphasized (pp. 71, 205), and it shows that the Christian’s old and new beliefs are constantly at war (pp. 78-80). The book also states that people who relate destructively to others are doing the same to God (p. 113); and, that humans are fallen, and thus, bad and broken (p. 133).

The final section is highly practical, providing excellent questions for use by counselors. The Holy Spirit’s role in counseling is paramount (pp. 207, 236). Sin functions much like weeds, stealing nutrients (pp. 227, 238). The book warns of the danger of self-focus (p. 235) and correctly states, “We desire what we pursue, and we pursue what we desire” (p. 238).

Despite these valuable insights, *The Dynamic Heart* leaves the reader with numerous questions. Pierre stated that God designed hearts for a singular purpose: worship (pp. 23, 55, 101). While worship of God surely takes priority this seems too narrow because it does not seem the heart is necessarily in sin when one engages in non-worshipful activities, such as work, play, or eating. Furthermore, it seems that worship is being defined too broadly. Pierre did correctly say, “The most important context of the heart’s reasons is God himself” (p. 109).

The author spoke of intuition as the pre-processing that compels human processing (p. 37). He defined intuition as “nothing different than people’s deeply held beliefs, desires, and commitments driving their response to everything around them.” The word “intuition” is not a biblical one and normally would not be assigned such a definition; it is
disconcerting to label Christian concepts with words that are easily confused with other ideas and are not found in Scripture.

While Pierre believes in the fallenness of humanity and the corruption of sin (pp. 55-60), there should be more discussion on total depravity. The heart is not neutral, as it is being corrupted by sin and strengthened by faith. The heart is totally depraved from the beginning of life. Viewing the heart as corrupt and fallen is not significantly emphasized. While it is true that, at regeneration, the human heart is given a new capacity for godliness, this needs to be better clarified. Similarly, while the author mentioned the battle between the flesh and the Spirit (pp. 78-81), this struggle is not well addressed. The New Testament, when dealing with the believer’s spiritual warfare, focuses on the flesh and the Spirit (Gal 5:16-23), yet this interplay is seldom mentioned in the book.

Pierre, while clearly demonstrating its flaws, gives more credence to psychological testing, such as the Meyers-Briggs, than is warranted (p. 96). His section on self-image and self-love (pp. 124-44) leaves the reader with numerous questions as to where he takes these concepts. Since both terms have their roots in modern psychobabble, careful usage is necessary. Pierre’s statement that some “people’s experience of gender does not perfectly match their given biological sex” is also confusing (p. 132).

The author’s short discussion of involuntary victimhood needs further development as to what he means (pp. 133-34). Pierre also accepts “already-not yet” eschatology (p. 38). His view that prayer reshapes desire (p. 220) and is a vital part of seeking the presence of God (p. 236) lacks biblical support, and no Scripture is used to support either idea. As is common today, Pierre uses the word “gospel” to describe broader categories than the good news definition found in the New Testament (p. 231). The idea that Jesus lived dying the whole way (p. 232) needs much more explanation. The author could probably clarify most of the issues already mentioned. The Dynamic Heart should be recommended as a textbook or manual for biblical counselors, and is best utilized by those who have already studied such material in depth.

— Gary E. Gilley

Southern View Chapel (Springfield, IL)
Commentaries serve a unique and functional role in the life of Bible students at every level. However, the availability of commentaries today makes the search for reliable and serious resources an intimidating task. Recent years have seen an increase in the publication of commentaries including Baker Books with their *Teach the Text Commentary Series*. Creators of the *Teach the Text Commentary Series* have sought to produce a group of commentaries that "is designed to provide a ready reference for teaching the biblical text, giving easy access to information that is needed to communicate a passage effectively" (p. ix). The first volume was released in 2013 with plans to publish a total of 34 volumes through January 2018. In September 2016, the publisher canceled the release of 13 additional volumes (covering both Old and New Testament books). They also decided to reduce the last 5 volumes (James, 1 & 2 Peter, and Jude; 2 Corinthians; Acts; Psalms, Volume 2; and Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther) by not including a hardcover or the full color layout and graphics the previous volumes have. The recent release offers an opportunity to become more acquainted with the *Teach the Text Commentary Series*, to review the specific volume on the epistles of James, Peter and Jude, and to be introduced to author Jim Samra.

While the quality and reliability of each volume is ultimately dependent upon the individual authors, there are some overall aspects of the series that are noteworthy. First, the layout of each division cooperates with the learning process. Each section contains five aspects: the major idea of the passage, key themes, understanding the text (which includes contextual considerations, structure, commentary on each verse, and insights into the text), considerations for teaching, and ways to illustrate the passage. Beyond verse-by-verse explanation, the editors have chosen to include aspects that convey a broader comprehension of the text (because of this layout, the commentary is accessible to all those desiring to study God's Word).

Covering the depth of the epistles written by James, Peter, and Jude is a commanding task that requires overarching knowledge regarding both the theology and backgrounds of the authors and all Scripture. Such an endeavor requires two things: careful examination of the context and communication. The author provides many cross-references within the commentary. First, he introduced the context of the immediate text, showing how the biblical writer demonstrated a stability of ideas, concepts, and teaching within his own writing. Secondly, Samra introduced
connections from all Scripture, demonstrating a reliable understanding of the continuity of Scripture and its effectiveness as its own interpreter. Additionally, the author has a understandable style of communication. Therefore, readers are not working through extensive vocabularies and intricate concepts in order to understand the ideas being presented. These two aspects make it an excellent commentary for lay leaders and anyone seeking a deeper knowledge of Scripture.

None of the epistles is studied at great length, as is obvious in a commentary containing only 299 verses divided between four New Testament books. Unfortunately, this conveys one of the greatest drawbacks of the book: a lack of depth. Generally speaking, most of the information provided by the author is confined to the most basic level. He relied heavily upon calling attention to the Greek words used in particular texts. However, even those are elementary, often failing to provoke profound thinking and application. The lack of depth combined with the consistent use of pop culture examples creates a commentary that generates a lack of timelessness. Since there are other commentaries that provide the same information without concepts that will die as culture changes, this commentary's value will not extend beyond a few years.

Reading through the commentary will not reveal any outright heresies; however, readers should note several points. The *Teach the Text Commentary Series* utilizes the New International Version translation. However, in this instance, the author uses a wide variety of translations when conveying the original meaning of the text. In Samra's commentaries on James and 1 Peter, readers will be confronted with the view that works is a demonstration of faith. In regards to this, the author exhausted several paragraphs explaining the difference between the assurance of salvation and eternal security in a portion of 2 Peter (p. 204-05). The author includes remorse, confession, and submission as part of the process of repentance (p. 55). He advocates a view that holds to both election and free will as complementary doctrines that support one another. Certainly there are varying understandings on each of these subjects. However, knowing the author’s views prior to reading allows one to recognize how those differences may impact the interpretation of varying verses.

Despite having authored several published books, this is the first commentary that Pastor Jim Samra has written and little is known regarding him. Married and a father of four, he currently serves as the senior pastor at Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. While holding a secular degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan, Pastor Samra has completed both his Master of Theology in New Testament and pastoral ministries at Dallas Theological Seminary and his
Doctor of Philosophy in New Testament from the University of Oxford. Since entering the pastorate, he has had three books published: *God Told Me, The Gift of the Church, and Being Conformed to Christ in Community* (which is a published version of his doctoral dissertation).

The *Teach the Text Commentary Series* offers some unique aspects that are not found in other commentaries. As a result, the series as a whole can offer guided help in the interpretation of Scripture for believers. However, this particular volume on the epistles of James, Peter, and Jude remains at an elementary level. Therefore, it is unlikely to be of substantial value to the intended audience: pastors (that does not render it impractical, but it may be more beneficial those who want a starting point for studying these particular texts). As a result, the book is better suited for a different primary audience or as a supplemental tool for pastors.

— Robert Zink
Biblical Ministries Worldwide (Argentina)


Timothy Keller’s popular book *The Reason for God* presented a case for belief in God and Christianity. Keller does not believe it began far enough back for the true skeptic, and thus, the reason for this present volume (p. 4). He wants to demonstrate to secular readers that Christianity is “sensible and desirable” (p. 216). More than that:

My aim from here on through the book is to do just that, and, I hope, to show that Christianity makes the greatest sense in every way—emotionally, culturally, and rationally. In the process, I hope to show readers that Christianity offers far greater and richer goods for understanding, facing, enjoying, and living life than they had previously imagined.

In order to accomplish this, Keller addressed the primary philosophical issues with which modern humans struggle. He devoted a chapter to each: the delusion that religion is waning; the myth that secularism is not based on faith; the problem of suffering and pain; the futile search for satisfaction and meaning; the emptiness of self-centered freedom; the question of identity; the need for hope, especially facing the
reality of death; the problems of morals; and, issues concerning justice and rights. Keller concluded *Making Sense of God* with a chapter presenting and updating the six standard and historical philosophical arguments for God, as well as a chapter on the self-revelation of God in Scripture.

*Making Sense of God* is a winsome, thoughtful, well-written philosophic apologetic for the existence of God and the truth of Christianity. However, it is not a biblical apologetic which recognizes that people do not reject God because of lack of evidence or well-reasoned arguments, but because they are depraved and predisposed to deny God his rightful place in the universe and their lives (Rom 1:18). As with all evidence-based apologetics, this book will mostly encourage the believer rather than convince the non-believer.

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


*Strength in the River* is written for Christians who are experiencing sorrow, pain, suffering, and trials from any number of sources. Especially in focus, as the first chapter indicates, are those who have endured pain for a long time and think it is never going to stop. For such people, Steve Swartz turns their attention to the lives of fourteen individuals found in Scripture who battled similar situations. At least one major biblical principle is drawn from the lives of each individual, the majority of which are very helpful. For example, the life of Jeremiah focuses on the sovereignty of God. James demonstrates that maturity in Christ, not solving the problem, should be the Christian’s primary concern. Jesus gives the perfect example of submissiveness while Abraham points to the integrity of God. Ruth demonstrates how godly character can be manifested even in the worst of circumstances. Paul is an example of how power can be found in weakness. David reveals how to plea to and praise the Lord through difficult times and how to use suffering for self-examination. Peter insists that believers can live lives of obedience in the midst of trials, and Elijah reminds one of God’s tender care when depressed. Of course, Job shows the reader that God is the source of lasting comfort. The only chapter that disappoints is
the one on Eve, which teaches how to forgive. Forgiveness, of course, is important; but there is not enough evidence from Scripture to use Eve as an example. Overall, Strength in the River is an excellent resource for those who are hurting. Going through each chapter slowly and reading the Scriptures provided (perhaps with a friend) would derive the best benefit. The book would also be an excellent tool for a small group Bible study and for biblical counselors.

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


John Nelson Darby (1800-82) needs no introduction to adherents of dispensationalism. Every opponent of dispensationalism claims that Darby invented the teachings of dispensationalism, premillennialism, and pretribulationism. Implied, of course, is that because they are recent developments, they are not found in the New Testament. Dispensationalism is, therefore, a false teaching, and dispensationalists are false teachers.

In Dispensationalism before Darby, William Watson destroys the myths that dispensationalism and premillennialism are of recent origin. Watson is professor of history at Colorado Christian University. He specializes in seventeenth and eighteenth-century English history. He holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in British history from the University of California, Riverside. As a graduate student, he participated in the compilation of the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue (ESTC).

Watson’s “primary motivation for beginning the research” (p. vii) that culminated in his book was a 2007 debate on “the ideas of dispensationalism and Christian Zionism” (ibid.) with his colleague, Johann Kim, a professor of New Testament studies. Kim declared, “these ideas were developed 150 years ago in the mind of John Nelson Darby” (ibid.).

Watson then spent “four years studying only primary sources before reading the historians and theologians” (ibid.). In doing so, he “used more than 350 primary sources, most of which have not been read (much less cited) for centuries” (p. viii). Watson apologizes to readers “for quoting
at length so many passages from the primary sources” (ibid.). He explains that his reason for doing so “is to satisfy any speculation that the passages have been taken out of context or that my own interpretations have been imposed on the sources” (ibid.). His conclusion is that “the ideas of philo-Semitism, premillennialism, and even pretribulationism were more prevalent before the nineteenth century than many have supposed” (ibid.). *Dispensationalism before Darby* is not a defense of dispensationalism and premillennialism but an “attempt to discover what was believed centuries ago” (ibid.).

The first chapter (“Concepts of Dispensations and a Millennium Prior to the Reformation”) serves as an introduction. Therein Watson expresses his intent to show that the ideas of dispensationalism and Christian Zionism (known at the time as Restorationism) existed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, “long before John Nelson Darby who is considered the father of modern dispensationalism and Theodore Herzl (the father of modern Zionism) articulated them” (p. 2). The extent of the teachings of dispensationalism and premillennialism earlier than the Reformation is not the focus of the book. Therefore, in the first chapter, Watson just briefly discussed how “the early church fathers overwhelmingly believed in the return of Christ to set up an earthly millennium” (p. 4). Clement and Origen were the great exceptions, followed by Eusebius and Jerome.

What can preterists, covenant theologians, amillennialists, postmillennialists, and other anti-dispensationalists possibly say in response to the historical record that Watson presents? As a consequence of the nature and volume of quotes from primary sources that Watson provided, they cannot say that he misquoted, distorted, ignored context, or invented the historical record. All they can say is that anyone who espoused dispensationalism or premillennialism earlier than Darby was mistaken. Here, of course, they are on no firmer ground then when they argued that Darby developed these things. Dispensationalists are forever in the debt of William Watson for his unique and outstanding resource; it belongs on the bookshelf of every dispensationalist (next to the classic works on dispensationalism and premillennialism by Ryrie and Walvoord).

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


What the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fourth Edition (DSM-4) called gender identity disorder, the DSM-5 now calls gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is not a synonym for terms such as transgender, transsexual, genderfluid, gender bending, transvestism or intersex. Instead it refers to “experiences of gender identity in which a person’s psychological and emotional sense of themselves does not match or align with their birth sex” (p. 19). The psychological world has no concern regarding those with gender dysphoria unless it causes significant stress. At that point, it is considered a condition needing treatment and is capitalized as Gender Dysphoria (pp. 19, 85-100).

Mark Yarhouse, has his Psy.D. from Wheaton College and is now a professor of psychology at Regent University. He represents the Christian psychological approach that, at best, could be described as integrationalist. Yarhouse’s views depend primarily on research and psychological analysis rather than Scripture, which is seldom referenced and never actually engaged throughout the book.
Yarhouse does not perceive gender identity issues, such as transgender, as sin issues (p. 25). He believes those manifesting gender dysphoria, including homosexuality, can be Christians (pp. 40, 54, 58, 81, 115), which is partly because most deny that people do not know what causes gender dysphoria or any of the related conditions (pp. 11, 61-83). In addition, Yarhouse does not think people choose to be gender dysphoric (pp. 61-65). For this reason, the author believes those with sexual identity conditions should be welcomed by Christians (pp. 43-44). Yarhouse criticizes the church for causing gender fluid people to feel rejected (pp. 54, 56, 126, 153) and offering them little understanding and ministry (p. 147). Perhaps Yarhouse’s main contribution to this subject is identifying four distinct lenses from which gender dysphoria can be viewed. The lens used will determine how one reacts to all gender identity issues (pp. 46-60, 122).

The integrity framework upholds the sacred integrity of maleness and femaleness (this would be the view affirmed by most conservative Christians, yet the author believes it shows no compassion and will be misunderstood by society, p. 153). The integrity framework is a formula for shame (p. 56), rejection and legalism (p. 142, 157-58), and perpetuates stereotypes (pp. 133-35). The author does not discuss guilt. The disability framework perceives gender dysphoria as most likely a brain disorder (as the DSM-4 did) that needs to be treated psychologically (pp. 48-50).

The diversity framework celebrates, honors, and reveres all form of gender dysphoria (this is obviously the direction western culture is headed). The author distinguishes between a strong form of the diversity view, which seeks to deconstruct society and force everyone into its way of thinking, and a weak form that simply wants gender dysphoric people to be accepted and welcomed. He believes that most in the culture adopt the weak form today (pp. 50-53, 155), but that could be debated. The integrated framework attempts to combine the best of the other three while eliminating the less desirable features. How this is actually done is highly subjective, but it is the lens Yarhouse prefers (pp. 53-57, 160-61).

The two concluding chapters address how Christians should respond to gender dysphoric issues. Chapter six addresses the individual who is told to work with gender dysphoric people by accepting them rather than trying to change them. In essence, any attempt to do otherwise can be reduced to stereotypical legalism (pp. 157-58). Chapter seven considers the Christian response on an institutional level, which the author admits is messy (p. 148). Yarhouse believes the traditional church focuses on behavior, belief, and belonging; however, the emphasis should be upon belonging, believing, and becoming (p. 147). In other words, gender
dysphoric people (however that is expressed) are to be accepted by the church and led to correct beliefs, which causes them to “become.” Since behavior has been eliminated from the equation, what they become remains undefined, which is especially true since gender dysphoric people are to be accepted but not changed (pp. 157-58).

Yarhouse presents a position on sexual gender identity issues that, while rejected historically by most cultures, is rapidly becoming the norm in society and is creeping into the church. He offers only three pages (pp. 120-22) presenting an alternative (more traditional) view. There he quoted a researcher who suggests that “psychiatry has essentially catered to individual preferences and cultural pressure.” He likens sex reassignment surgery to liposuction on anorexics. Anorexics have departed from a realistic view of their bodies, seeing themselves as overweight even as they starve themselves. Similarly gender-confused people have a distorted view of their sexuality and “more effort should be placed on prevention and management of gender dysphoria . . . [and treated as] a mental disorder when we fail to prevent it” (p. 121). Beyond these comments, Yarhouse offers little criticism of gender dysphoric conditions. He agrees that Scripture is a reliable guide, but so is culture (pp 29-30); it is obvious that, in his thinking, culture, psychology, and secular research have more precedence than Scripture. Perhaps this is so because, as the Barna group indicates, the traditional evangelical view on these matters is facing a rising tide of public opinion in the last ten years and is getting worse.

If the church continues to stand by the biblical teaching of sex and gender it will be seen as discriminatory and bigoted (pp 23-24). Most likely Barna is right, but God’s people have always been counter-cultural and must always side with God against culture. Understanding Gender Dysphoria provides a solid understanding of gender identity issues in society today and how they are viewed by the psychological community, and is helpful on this level. As a biblical guide to how God’s people should view and respond to gender dysphoria, it is of virtually no value.

— Gary E. Gilley
Southern View Chapel (Springfield, IL)
Candle Drippings: Musings from My Mind and Other Itinerant Places

Kenneth R. Cooper has built a delightful book around forty-nine selections for reflection and devotion which are ideally suited for the bedside table, morning coffee, or lunch. As Dr. Ken indicated on several occasions, his thinking process is suited to almost any occasion. The selections in this book cover the time span in Dr. Ken’s life from 1984 through 2000. Most are dated in the mid-late 1990’s. However, one devotional was reviewed and updated in 2014. Aside from that, the latest rendering is from 2000.

Almost half of these remarkable offerings are from Ken’s personal life. Many start with a special memory or build on an experience he had. They then develop a strong, biblically based thought to bring comfort, encouragement, or devotional strength to the reader. A number reflect a personally difficult point in his life like those believers all suffer from time to time. Others are oriented to the outdoors and are centered on his experiences with Boy Scouting in the vast reserves of Texas. These experiences and pointed spiritual applications will leave the reader with plenty to contemplate. Many will stick with the reader throughout the day, giving sustenance for those particular times in life when it is greatly needed.

Another feature of Candle Drippings is Dr. Ken’s reliance on references from well-known authors or personal friends. He refers to everything from Alice in Wonderland to Arnold Toynbee, C. S. Lewis to Snoopy, utilizing their writings and thoughts as applications appropriate for today’s heartaches and joys. Using Old and New Testament references is also a common feature of this book. The references are taken from the New American Standard Bible and are found in nearly all these articles.

Overall, Candle Drippings is highly recommended and would be a tremendous addition to anyone’s personal library. Available in paperback, it is affordable and well worth owning a copy. The book contains many personal references and thoughts upon which the reader may ponder, as well as ample space for notes which makes Candle Drippings a true keepsake.

— Terrell Holsinger
Tyndale Theological Seminary (Hurst, TX)

Biblical prophecy is often the subject of discussion and sometimes intense and contentious debate. Author Ron Rhodes seeks to reveal the basis for these debates, graciously explain various views, and defend his understanding which could be defined as a revised dispensational position. Rhodes’s writing style is readable, interesting, and informative. By covering such a huge subject, the book obviously cannot be comprehensive, yet it provides solid exegesis and excellent answers for the debates addressed. As a thorough overview and primer of eschatological issues, The Eight Great Debates is excellent.

The book is organized around the major end-time positions found within the evangelical community today. The “debates” are subdivided into twenty-seven short chapters, addressing particular issues related to that subject, plus a postscript reminding the reader that Christians should unite over essential doctrines, give liberty over the non-essentials, and be charitable in all things.

The eight debates that Rhodes identifies are: the best hermeneutical approach for interpreting prophecy; the distinction between Israel and the church; how “signs of the times” should be understood; the timing of the rapture; interpretation of the book of Revelation; who the antichrist is and who, or what, restrains him from coming; what the millennium is; and, whether Christians should set dates.

In each of the subjects covered, Rhodes presented the major positions, explained why he agrees or disagrees with them, and then stated his view. As previously mentioned, he holds to a revised dispensational theology (consistent with Ryrie, Pentecost, and Walvoord). Not every reader will agree with his conclusions, yet regardless of one’s eschatological position, this volume clarifies the debates and offers compelling support for dispensational eschatology.

— Gary E. Gilley  
Southern View Chapel (Springfield, IL)
Pagan Christianity? Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices

Frank Viola and George Barna believe that virtually everyone misunderstands the church because almost everything they do is drawn from pagan sources instead of the New Testament. Thus, the modern church has become an organization and an institution rather than a living organism. The solution is to return to the New Testament model, which describes the organic church that the authors define as “simply a church that is born out of spiritual life instead of constructed by human institutions and held together by religious programs. Organic churches are characterized by Spirit-led, open-participatory meetings, and nonhierarchical leadership. This is in stark contrast to a clergy-led, institution-driven church” (pp. xxiii, 240-41). The organic church has no human leadership, organization or formal teaching, meets in homes with no more than thirty-five people (pp. 43-44), and is the only authentic expression of the local church, according to Viola and Barna. Most chapters are structured around something the authors reject as unbiblical or pagan in origin, which should be eliminated from the church. The authors are against the following:

• Chapter 2 – church buildings, Christian funerals, and structures which promote the transcendent nature of God.
• Chapter 3 – an order of worship and human leadership, including preaching, communion services as normally practiced, and individualistic salvation.
• Chapter 4 – sermons. Paul preached, but not in the church meetings (p. 83). Believers should preach Christ, not information about Him (p. 100). Teaching comes through the sharing of every members’ experience, not through biblical instruction (pp. 100-03).
• Chapter 5 – pastors. Elders in the New Testament were not appointed, did not lead, and were never paid. All scriptural texts to the contrary are discounted.
• Chapter 6 – dressing for church.
• Chapter 7 – music ministers, or leaders, for they keep Christ from leading the singing.
• Chapter 8 – tithing which they see mainly as a necessity only because of paying clergy (pp. 182-85).
• Chapter 9 – modern practices of baptism and communion. The authors clearly believe in baptismal regeneration (pp. 188-89) and that the Lord’s supper was always a full meal (pp. 196-98).

• Chapter 10 – theological teaching, since New Testament training was of the spirit not the intellect (pp. 199-200, 209). God speaks through every member so biblical instruction is largely unnecessary (pp. 206, 219, 244).

• Chapter 11 – systematic theology, which is seen as mere “proof texting” (pp. 222, 229, 232). The authors believe the chapter and verse structure, as well as the order of the books in the modern canon, corrupt the understanding of the Bible (pp. 225-27). Strangely, they claim Paul wrote two thirds of the New Testament, which is not true, and support some of their ideas from an out-of-context proof text of Ezekiel 37.

• Chapters 12 and 13 – point the reader to the next steps if the premises of *Pagan Christianity* are accepted. Organic churches will be self-correcting and self-taught as people share their experiences rather than receive instruction. They will also be led directly by Christ without the need for human leadership.

*Pagan Christianity* is a difficult book with which to engage because the authors do not support their views through careful biblical analysis or exegesis (this would be expected from men who reject formal instruction and systematic theology). They provide insightful historical developments for many practices common in the church today, claiming that all those are of pagan origin and should be rejected. While this concept is the basis for the entire book (p. xxxiii), the authors repeatedly say that just because a practice has pagan roots does not mean it has to be abandoned for that reason alone (pp. 44, 46, 58, 75, 103, 143, 155). For example, at the end of most chapters (after renouncing a treasured practice), the authors often balance their comments. Little wonder it is that Viola and Barna can claim their views have never been credibly refuted or discounted because many of their ideas are like clay which can be shaped in any number of directions.

There are, however, at least four major features upon which the book is based. The first is pattern or practice. The underlining thesis is that the church must duplicate the practices of the New Testament church. If the early church did something, so must the church today. If the early church did not do something that is practiced today, then it must be of pagan
origin. Conversely, this means that the 21st century church must adhere to the scattered and inconsistent examples of the first church.

Second, while proof-texting is condemned by the authors, their understanding of New Testament teachings are dominated by one text: First Corinthians 14:26-31 (pp. 59, 75, 76, 78, 80, 82, 92, 99, 100, 166-68, 247-48, 263). Time and again this passage is referenced as to how the organic church functions. One short text should not have complete control over how the church meets. The New Testament epistles, which are devoted to church doctrine and practice, such as 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Ephesians, as well as the rest of 1 Corinthians, are not given a place in the book. In addition, 1 Corinthians 14 is contextually a rebuke or correction of how the church at Corinth functioned. Basing the church on one passage in the context of correction is problematic, to say the least. Of great interest is the fact that the authors never reference verse thirty-four which calls for women to keep silent in the church, which leaves a major deficiency in their understanding of the organic church and its “every member participatory meetings.”

Third, instruction, teaching, and preaching are minimized and ridiculed throughout the book. Every member participating, that is, sharing their experience with Christ replaces instruction, thus it would not take much thought to realize that the organic church would be a biblically illiterate church. Sharing of experiences is beneficial but does not produce theologically sound Christians.

Finally, since teaching is negated, the authors are convinced that Christians grow through mysticism. The Lord communicates directly to each Christian, in their spirit or heart but not their mind or reason (pp. 206-07). They wrote, “Those who train others in Christian work should be familiar with those spiritual realities that transcend intellect and emotion. Consequently, spiritual formation, spiritual understanding, and spiritual insight are vital ingredients in training for spiritual service” (p. 219).

Pagan Christianity is helpful as it provides historical information regarding many church practices. These practices should be evaluated, not just continued because of traditions or pragmatism, and Viola and Barna are correct in this observation. However, the book is deeply flawed because it is not developed on exegetical grounds; it rejects systematic theology and formal instruction, touts mysticism, and focuses the church around one New Testament corrective text while ignoring the vast material the Holy Spirit has given in the Scriptures.

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ERRATA

The “contents” page for the Journal of Dispensational Theology 21 (Spring 2017) shows Bruce A. Baker’s “The Dangers of Kingdom Ethics” as Part I, but the article inside is actually Part II. The cover reflected the “contents” page and so it stated, Part I, as well. There were also blank pages that affected the numbering of the “contents” page for the book reviews (with that information on p. 94 rather than p. 93). However, if readers will not designate numbers for the blank pages, all other page numbering for the reviews will be consistent.