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THE TWO PEOPLES OF GOD
IN 2 THESSALONIANS 1:10

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The distinction between Israel and the church has widely been regarded as one of the central tenants of dispensationalism by both friend and foe. Ryrie contended that this distinction is "probably the most basic theological test of whether or not a person is a dispensationalist, and it is undoubtedly the most practical and conclusive. The one who fails to distinguish Israel and the church consistently will inevitably not hold to dispensational distinctions; and the one who does will."[1] Amillennialist Oswald T. Allis agreed, noting that this distinction is what necessitates the dispensational assertion of a literal Jewish state during the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth.

> Literal interpretation has always been a marked feature of Premillennialism; in Dispensationalism it has been carried to an extreme. We have seen that this literalism found its most thoroughgoing expression in the claim that Israel must mean Israel, and that the Church was a mystery, unknown to the prophets and first made known to the apostle Paul. Now if the principle of interpretation is adopted that Israel always means Israel, that it does not mean the Church, then it follows of necessity that practically all of our information regarding the millennium will concern a Jewish or Israelitish age.[2]

Interestingly, while rejecting the essentialist[3] description of Ryrie, Blaising conceded, "Among contemporary dispensationalists a

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[1] Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism*, rev. and expanded ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 39.

[2] Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church; An Examination of the Claim of Dispensationalists that the Christian Church is a Mystery Parenthesis which Interrupts the Fulfillment to Israel of the Kingdom Prophecies of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1945), 244.

[3] Darrell Bock divided the recent history of dispensationalism into three categories: "Scofieldian dispensationalism," which reflects the approach of the 1909 and 1917 editions of *The Scofield Reference Bible*; "Essentialist dispensationalism," which applies to those subscribing to the approach of later dispensationalists, particularly those who hold to Ryrie's *sine qua non* description of the fundamental elements of dispensationalism; and, "Progressive dispensationalism," which focuses on

general consensus exists that a distinction between Israel and the church is the essential distinguishing factor of dispensationalism. In spite of the fact that the other two (supporting) elements of Ryrie's triad seem less than tenable, at least in the way he stated them, this characteristic, according to many, seems to be truly representative."[4]

THE NEED AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

While there has been much discussion on all sides with regard to this issue, one of the neglected texts in the debate has been 2 Thessalonians 1:10: "when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed."[5] The question so often overlooked is whether or not Paul was referring to one group of believers using a parallel construction, or if he was referring to two separate groups of believers who would participate in the same event. In other words, are the phrases "ὅταν ἔλθη ἐνδοξασθῆναι ἐν τοῖς ἁγίος αὐτοῦ" and "θαυμασθῆναι ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύσασιν" an example of synonymous parallelism, or are the phrases contrastive in nature? If the phrases are contrastive in nature, then what is the identity of the individuals constituting the two groups? This article will attempt to show that Paul was making a distinction between Old Testament saints and church age saints in this verse. This distinction lends support for the transcendental distinction between Israel and the church that extends through the Day of the Lord.[6]

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the progress of revelation, so that each subsequent dispensation represents "progress" in the unified plan of God (Darrell L. Bock, "The Son of David and the Saints' Task: The Hermeneutics of Initial Fulfillment," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (October-December 1993): 440, n. 1.). The author of this article uses the term "Traditional" when describing the dispensationalism of Ryrie and his contemporaries, following the categories in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism: A Comparison of Traditional and Progressive Views*, gen. ed. Herbert W. Bateman IV (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), and as adopted in *Progressive Dispensationalism: An Analysis of the Movement and Defense of Traditional Dispensationalism*, gen. ed. Ron J. Bigalke Jr. (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005).

[4] Craig A. Blaising, "Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (July-September 1988): 273.

[5] Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the New American Standard Bible.

[6] For a more complete defense of the transcendental distinction between Israel and the church, see Bruce A. Baker, "Israel and the Church: The Transcendental

INTERPRETATION OF ῝ΑΓΙΟΣ AS ANGELS AND BELIEVERS

One of the most noted characteristics of this verse is the use of the uncommon ἐνδοξάζομαι[7] ("I glorify"). The Greek word appears only in 2 Thessalonians 1:10, 12 in the New Testament and is used infrequently in the Septuagint.[8] What commentators find interesting is the verbal parallel between 2 Thessalonians 1:10 and Psalm 89:7 (88:8).[9] The combination of ἐνδοξάζομαι and ἅγιος occur only in these two verses in Scripture. Consequently, there seems to be no significant disagreement among exegetes that Paul was alluding to this Old Testament text.

In the context of Psalm 89 (88), the βουλῇ ἁγίων of verse 7 (8) refers to an angelic council, which has led some to conclude that angelic beings are being referenced in 2 Thessalonians 1:10 also. For example, Feinberg concluded, "Passages like Matthew 25:31 and 2 Thessalonians 1:10 indicate that in His coming again to the earth the Lord Jesus Christ will be attended by a retinue made up of both angels and saints."[10] Such a reading has at least two arguments to commend it. First, it holds true to the authorial intent of Psalm 89 (88) (as expressed by its Greek translators) to which it alludes. Second, the context mentions angels who will appear with Christ at his appearing just three verses prior (1:7), where "the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels."

The problems associated with this interpretation, however, make this reading unlikely. First, while in the Septuagint and subsequent Jewish writings angels are often referenced as "the holy ones" (οἱ ἅγιοι), New Testament usage refers almost exclusively to men. Woodward noted:

Distinction Within the Dispensational Tradition," *Journal of Ministry and Theology* 8 (Fall 2004): 57-86.

[7] The actual form in the verse in question is the aorist passive infinitive ἐνδοξασθῆναι.

[8] This word is used a total of ten times in the Old Testament (Exod 14:4, 17, 18; 33:16; 2 Kgs 14:10; Ps 88:8; Isa 45:25; Ezek 28:22; 38:23; Hag 1:8) and once in the Apocrypha (Sir 38:6).

[9] ὁ θεὸς ἐνδοξαζόμενος ἐν βουλῇ ἁγίων μέγας . . . (A God greatly feared in the council of the holy ones).

[10] Charles Lee Feinberg, "Exegetical Studies in Zechariah," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 103 (January 1946): 166.

> OT writers characteristically apply the title to celestial beings rather than to men. To be sure, apart from two OT books—Daniel, where the title is used eschatologically seven times, and Ps. 34:9, where the term is employed cultically—the designation occurs 16 more times in eight books and without exception refers to celestial beings. . . . Surprisingly, however, NT writers characteristically—perhaps absolutely—apply the title *hoi hagioi* to men, not to celestial beings. Of 61 occurrences, only twice does it possibly refer to celestial beings (1 Thess 3:13; 2 Thess 1:10).[11]

It is interesting to note that, of the two possible New Testament exceptions noted by Woodward, both are from letters penned by Paul to the Thessalonians and both have strong allusions to Old Testament texts. As has been noted, 2 Thessalonians 1:10 alludes to Psalm 89:7 (88:8) while 1 Thessalonians 3:13 alludes to Zechariah 14:5.[12] Nevertheless, the fact that the vast majority of usages in the New Testament refers to men does not, in and of itself, determine Paul's employment of the term in this passage. For if the semantic range of οἱ ἅγιος is broad enough to include angels, then this might be the exception that breaks the rule.

Semantic Range of Ἅγιος

In order to determine the semantic range of ἅγιος, it is helpful to first examine the other possible exception to the standard New Testament usage of the word. First Thessalonians 3:13 has more to recommend a reading consistent with an angelic host than does 2 Thessalonians 1:10. If one reads 1 Thessalonians 3:13 as "the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his angels," there are no problems with the immediate context. Furthermore, this reading echoes the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 25:31: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory." Evidence against such a reading includes the immediate context where Paul prayed that God

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[11] Stephen Woodward, "The Provenance Of The Term "Saints": A *Religionsgeschichtliche* Study," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 24 (June 1981): 107-08. Woodward provided a list of the Old Testament usage of the title: "Exod 15:11 LXX (MT 'majestic in holiness'); Deut 33:2; Ps 89:5, 7; Job 5:1; 15:15; Prov 9:10; 30:3; Hos 11:12; Zech 14:5; Dan 4:13, 17 23; 8:13 (twice). Psa. 16:3 and Deut 33:3 are textually corrupt and so obscure" (107, n. 2).

[12] 1 Thessalonians 3:13 reads: "at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints" (ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ μετὰ πάντοων τῶν ἁγίων αὐτοῦ). Zechariah 14:5 reads: "Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!" (καὶ ἥξει κύριος ὁ θεός μου καὶ πάντες οἱ ἅγιοι μετ' αὐτοῦ).

would establish his reader's hearts "unblamable in holiness" (ἀμέμπτους ἐν ἁγιωσύνῃ). Consequently, there is in the text a mention of believers being holy. Referring to believers who will be coming with Christ at the rapture,[13] it would be possible for the original readers to understand the term in this way. Thomas argued, "Since human beings are the objects of judgment and their holiness is what is in focus (cf. "blameless and holy"), it is entirely appropriate to identify 'the holy ones' as other Christian people joined with the Thessalonian Christians before the bema of God and Christ."[14] While this is certainly not conclusive evidence, it is a factor to be considered. It is also important to note that *The Didache*, a contemporary text, understood the οἱ ἅγιοι of Zechariah 14:5, to which 1 Thessalonians 3:13 alludes, to be resurrected believers as opposed to the angelic host.[15] Finally, in Matthew 25:31 Jesus did not use οἱ ἅγιοι (the holy ones) but οἱ ἄγγελοι (the angels).

One must suspect that if Paul were interested in communicating Christ's teaching that an angelic host would accompany him, Paul would have used the words of the Lord Jesus to eliminate any ambiguity.[16] It is possible, of course, that this type of ambiguity is exactly what Paul had in mind. If Paul were trying to describe the entire retinue that returns

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[13] It is the rapture of the church that appears to be in view in this verse. Paul spoke to the local believers of being ushered into the presence of God and implied some sort of judgment occurring at the time since he desired that they be found "blameless and holy" in his presence. Just a few paragraphs later Paul detailed the circumstances surrounding the return of Christ for His church. Therefore, it seems likely that Paul mentioned the need for holiness in this benediction as a way of laying the groundwork for how to live pleasing to God (1 Thess 4:1-12) and the importance for doing so in light of the rapture.

[14] Robert L. Thomas, "1 Thessalonians," in *Ephesians-Philemon* (The Expositor's Bible Commentary), ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 268.

[15] "And 'then shall appear the signs' of the truth. First the sign spread out in Heaven, then the sing of the sound of the trumpet, and thirdly the resurrection of the dead: but not of all the dead, but as it was said, 'The Lord shall come and all his saints with him.'" *The Didache*. 16.6-7 (Kirsopp Lake, LCL). This being said, it is possible that the author of *The Didache* based his understanding of Zechariah 14:5 on his understanding 1 Thessalonians 3:13.

[16] Even if one accepts Matthean priority, as this author does, it is still probable that Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians before the completion and circulation of Matthew's gospel. This being said, one does not have to subscribe to source criticism to recognize that the words of Jesus most certainly were circulating through the church in some sort of oral tradition.

with Jesus at the rapture without distinguishing the different groups that constitute His entourage, this would be an excellent term to employ. Morris argued for this option.

> It is clear from the New Testament that both angels and the departed saints will be associated with the Lord when he returns. There seems to be no reason at all why Paul should be intending to eliminate one of these classes at this point. It is best to understand the "holy ones" as all those beings who will make up his train, be they angels or the saints who have gone before.[17]

What makes this option possible is the broad semantic range of the term οἱ ἅγιοι. The standard Greek lexicon defined ἅγιος as "the quality possessed by things and persons that could approach a divinity." Whether used as an adjective or as a substantive it may refer to both "humans and transcendent beings."[18] Similarly, Louw and Nida defined ἅγιος as "pertaining to being dedicated or consecrated to the service of God—'devout, godly, dedicated.'"[19] Moulton and Milligan indicated that the adjective ἅγιος is "common as a title of the gods."[20]

According to *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, holiness is a "pre-ethical" term, both in the Old Testament in addition to the New Testament.[21] Consequently, while holiness includes an ethical component, the idea of holiness is not limited to moral behavior; instead, it should follow as a natural result of consecration to God. Such an understanding of holiness as "pre-ethical"

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[17] Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, rev. ed. (The New International Commentary on the New Testament), ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 112.

[18] It is worthy of note that this lexicon listed 1 Thessalonians 3:13 and 2 Thessalonians 1:10 under the heading "angels" but allowed "*believers, loyal followers, saints* of Christians as consecrated to God" as "also prob[able]" (Frederick William Danker, Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. "ἅγιος."

[19] Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1988-89), s.v. "ἅγιος."

[20] J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914-29), s.v. "ἅγιος."

[21] Horst Seebass, "ἅγιος," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, 4 vols., gen. ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-86), 2:224, 230.

is seen in the Old Testament understanding of clean and unclean, holy and profane. "This ethic is not the first stage of human morality, but the expression of the holiness of Yahweh in a world of both similar and different sacred practices. For example, sexual intercourse is in no way immoral. But compared with sacred practices, it is a profane act which therefore makes one impure for coming into contact with the holy."[22] While there is a change of emphasis in the New Testament, "A number of passages remain entirely within the framework of OT tradition."[23] In other cases "The sacred no longer belongs to things, places or rites, but to the manifestation of life produced by the Spirit."[24] Such an understanding is almost certainly too narrow since Matthew 27:52 uses "saints" to describe Old Testament believers coming to life. Furthermore, "In all these cases holy means belonging to God and authorized by God."[25]

Taking these definitions as a whole, it seems best to have a broad understanding of οἱ ἅγιοι as ones who have been set apart or consecrated by God to himself for His special purposes. Therefore, the lexical range of the ἅγιος is sufficient to support either reading in both 1 Thessalonians 3:13 and 2 Thessalonians 1:10. Therefore, the determining factor must be the presence or absence of contextual markers to indicate the referent to which the term applies.

Contextual Markers Associated with Ἅγιος

When one begins to work through occurrences of ἅγιος, it becomes immediately evident that the vast majority of usages include contextual markers which make evident the referent for the word. Indeed, it is striking how often the referent to the word is immediately evident from the surrounding context. This author searched the Greek New Testament[26] to identify the instances of ἅγιος that referred to a person,

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[22] Ibid., 224-25.

[23] Ibid., 228.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 229.

[26] This search was performed by *Accordance*, version 6.5. The search text was *The Greek New Testament* (Nestle-Aland, 27th Edition, second printing), eds. Kurt Aland et al., 4th rev. ed., electronic version 3.0 by The GRAMCORD Institute.

excluding the Holy Spirit.[27] The search sought the lexical form[28] ἅγιος where it was preceded by an article which agreed with it in gender, number, and case. The article had to be within three words of ἅγιος and there could not be any intervening use of the lexical form πνεῦμα. In order to exclude as many false results as possible, the search excluded instances where the lexical forms πνεῦμα and πόλις immediately preceded the article or were within three words following ἅγιος.[29] The search criteria produced ninety references. A manual search of the results produced twenty-three false results.[30] The outcome was sixty-seven verses employing a personal referent to ἅγιος.[31] When one begins to analyze this list, it is immediately evident how often the referent is indicated in the context of the verse alone. The vast majority of the references had a direct contextual marker associated with it. Such markers may be loosely categorized[32] for purposes of identification, geography, circumstance, and ambiguity.

Identification Marker
Fourteen references provided a direct name to the one who was called "holy." God the Father is petitioned with the cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true . . ." (Rev 6:10). Jesus of Nazareth is called "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; John 6:69) and "Thy holy servant Jesus"

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[27] In this case it was felt that ἅγιος was essentially part of his name and its use in this case was self-explanatory.

[28] In this case, "lexical form" is used in opposition to "inflected form." In this search engine, a lexical search finds every instance of the word, regardless of inflection.

[29] This author recognizes that this search might not have found every instance where ἅγιος was used to refer to a person or group of people. Nevertheless, he does feel that this search produced the vast majority of uses and is sufficient for illustrative purposes.

[30] For purposes of this article, a false result is a reference that does not include the use of ἅγιος with a personal referent.

[31] The corrected result list is as follows: Matthew 27:52; Mark 1:24; 8:38; Luke 1:35, 70; 4:34; 9:26; John 6:69; Acts 3:14, 21; 4:27, 30; 9:13, 32, 41; 26:10; Romans 12:13; 15:25, 26, 31; 16:2; 1 Corinthians 6:1, 2; 14:33; 16:1, 15; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 8:4; 9:1, 12; Ephesians 1:1, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:5, 18; 4:12; 6:18; Philippians 1:1; 4:22; Colossians 1:2, 4, 12, 26; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Philemon 5, 7; Hebrews 6:10; 13:24; 1 Peter 1:15; 3:5; 2 Peter 3:2; 1 John 2:20; Jude 3; Revelation 5:8; 6:10; 8:3, 4; 11:18; 13:7, 10; 14:12; 17:6; 18:20; 19:8; 22:11.

[32] These categories do not follow any standard nomenclature of which the author is aware. They are merely arbitrary labels used for purposes of illustration in this article.

(Acts 4:27, 30). The angel Gabriel told Mary: "the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The "holy angels" are named twice (Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26). Reference was made to "the holy prophets" three times individually (Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; 2 Pet 3:2), and once coupled with the "holy apostles" (Eph 3:5). Finally, Peter spoke of "the holy women" of former times (1 Pet 3:5).

Geographical Markers

Geographical markers are used nine times in the New Testament as pointers to the referent of ἅγιος. Thee markers are so self-evident that they could be listed as identification markers. They are listed separately, however, since they do not provide a direct name to the "holy ones," but rather point to their geographical location. The typical formula for such a marker is either "the saints in" or "the saints at" a particular location. Therefore, one reads concerning the "saints in Jerusalem" (Rom 15:26), "the saints . . . in Philippi" (Phil 1:1), "the saints at Jerusalem" (Acts 9:13), "at Lyddia" (Acts 9:32), "at Ephesus" (Eph 1:1), and "at Colossae" (Col 1:2). The subtle variations of this formula seem to make no difference in meaning. At times the geographical location is fairly broad, as in "all the saints who are throughout Achaia" (2 Cor 1:1). At other times the location is quite specific, as in "All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household" (Phil 4:22). The one final reference in this category is Romans 15:25, where Paul indicated that he was "going to Jerusalem serving the saints." In this case, the location does not follow the standard formula but is clear nevertheless. What is important to note in this category is that there is no ambiguity regarding the referent to οἱ ἅγιοι. The broad semantic domain of the phrase is narrowed by the immediate context.

Circumstantial Markers

Circumstantial markers are those indicators that point to the referent through the mention of situational evidence,[33] which means the author made mention of conditions or state of affairs that clearly indicate the

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[33] Since this category is so large, only a few examples will be discussed. The entire reference list for this category is as follows: Acts 3:14; 9:41; 26:10; Romans 12:13; 15:31; 16:2; 1 Corinthians 6:1; 14:33; 16:1, 15; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:1, 12; Ephesians 1:15, 18; 2:19; 3:18; 4:12; 6:18; Colossians 1:4, 26; Philemon 5, 7; Hebrews 6:10; 13:24; 1 Peter 1:15; 1 John 2:20; Jude 3; Revelation 5:8; 8:3, 4; 13:7, 10; 14:12; 17:6; 19: 8; 22:11.

identity the "holy one(s)." In some cases, the textual marker points to a historical circumstance for identification. In Acts 3:14, Jesus is referenced as "the Holy One" without an explicit mention of His name. Peter preached, "you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you." While there is no overt mention of His name, the context clearly indicates the trial of Jesus and the release of Barabbas. Paul also used an historical situation to identify the referent of "saints" in Acts 9:41 stating that he incarcerated "many of the saints in prison," clearly referencing his reign of terror as Saul of Tarsus. It should be noted that historical references might also reference the entire body of New Testament believers as a group (e.g. "faith once for all delivered to the saints," Jude 3).

Most references in this category refer to the church-age believers alive at the time. Paul mentioned the "churches of the saints" in 1 Corinthians 14:33, clearly indicating church-age believers as the referent.[34] He commended the Ephesian (Eph 1:15) and Colossian (Col 1:4) believers for their "love for all the saints." Philemon (7) was lauded "because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you." Paul also used the term whenever he discussed the collection for the poor believers in Jerusalem (Rom 15:31; 1 Cor 16:1; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1, 12).

One should note that occasionally the textual marker requires at least some theological preunderstanding for the marker to be recognized. For example, Revelation 19:8 refers to the fine linen given to the bride of the Lamb as "the righteous acts of the saints." A new believer approaching the text for the first time might find this reference inscrutable. Was John speaking of Old Testament believers, the church, or tribulation saints? When one understands, however, that the Lamb is Jesus Christ and the bride of Christ is the church, the referent becomes clear. Again, in each reference, there is no ambiguity regarding the referent to οἱ ἅγιοι. The immediate context provides sufficient information to make identification immediate.

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[34] Actually this reference could also be considered as having either a location marker or an identification marker, since the saints inhabit the church (location) and are known by their association with the church (identification). As one works through these references, it becomes evident that these admittedly arbitrary categories are not always clear.

Ambiguous Citations

While the vast majority of references have clearly marked referents, there are at least six references that are ambiguous with regard to the referent.[35] It is important to note what is, and is not, being said at this point. This author does not contend that the referent of ἅγιος is so obscure that it is beyond discovery; rather, it is his conclusion that the immediate context does not provide sufficient information to make such identification quickly and easily. It is interesting to note that each reference in this category shares a common characteristic—each references a future event.

Paul informed the Corinthian believers that "the saints will judge the world" (1 Cor 6:2). He indicated that they will be among these holy ones by stating that the world will be judged by "you" in the next sentence. There is an obvious marker indicating at least some of the participants in this judicial assemblage. What is unclear in the immediate context is whether or not the οἱ ἅγιοι is limited to church age believers or whether Old Testament saints will participate in this kingdom function. Similarly, Paul told the Colossian believers that the Father has "qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12). The extent of that inheritance (viz. whether or not this blessing is for Old Testament saints in addition to New Testament ones) is not mentioned in the immediate context. The same is true for John's use of the term in Revelation 11:18 and 18:20.

It is important to stress again that what is being discussed under this heading is whether or not there is a clear textual marker *in the immediate context* which narrows the scope of οἱ ἅγιοι sufficiently to identify the referent. Comparing these references across authors and time reveals considerable more detail regarding exactly who is being discussed. For example, while 1 Corinthians 6:2 does not provide sufficient information in the immediate context, further investigation proves enlightening. Daniel foretold how "the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One, and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom" (Dan 7:22). Taking possession evidently includes the re-establishment of the judges because God, through the prophet Isaiah, promised: "Then I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the

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[35] 1 Corinthians 6:2; Colossians 1:12; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 11:18; 18:20.

beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city" (Isa 1:26). Jesus elaborated on this promise, by explaining to His disciples that "in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt 19:28). Therefore, when one expands the scope of investigation beyond the immediate context, it becomes clear that οἱ ἅγιοι in 1 Corinthians 6:2 refers to both Old Testament and New Testament saints.

Contextual Markers in 2 Thessalonians 1:10

When one understands the broad semantic range of "holy ones" in the New Testament and the common use of contextual markers to narrow the referent, Morris' broader understanding of οἱ ἅγιοι to include both angels and departed saints in 1 Thessalonians 3:13 seems best because there are no clear contextual markers to indicate a more narrow referent and this broader understanding is consistent with the clear teaching of Jesus in Matthew 25:31. When one considers 2 Thessalonians 1:10, however, it becomes evident that there are markers in the immediate context that seem to make a similarly broad reading unlikely. The context of 2 Thessalonians 1:10 does include a mention of angels accompanying Christ at the *parousia* in verse 7. As has been noted previously, this is an element in favor of taking angels as the referent to τοῖς ἀγίος αὐτοῦ in 1:10. Such a factor is countered, however, by the parallel constructions Paul employed in verses 8 and 10.

In 1:8 the phrase "those who do not know God" (τοῖς μὴ εἰδόσιν θεόν) is parallel to the phrase "those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (τοῖς μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησου) with the two phrases being connected by καί. Similarly, in 1:10 the prepositional phrase "in His saints on that day" (ἐν τοῖς ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ) is parallel to "among all who have believed" (ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύσασιν). These two prepositional phrases in 1:10 are actually contained within two separate yet parallel infinitival purpose clauses. Consequently, there are two parallel constructions—one in verse 8 and one in verse 10—that are also parallel to one another. In other words, these parallel constructions indicate three separate relationships in the larger context. First, there is the relationship between the two descriptions of those who will suffer retribution in verse 8. Second, there

is the relationship between those who will be among the blessed in verse 10. Finally, there is the relationship between those who suffer retribution in verse 8 and those who will be blessed in verse 10. It is this last relationship that casts doubt upon taking οἱ ἅγιοι as angels because it is difficult to see how a parallel structure consisting of two groups of men could be in parallel to yet another parallel structure consisting of both men and angels.[36] In other words, if one were to take οἱ ἅγιοι in 1:10 to be angels, then it seems one would have to deny the obvious parallelism of the passage.

Conclusion regarding the Semantic Range of Ἅγιος

The reading which holds that there are two groups mentioned in 2 Thessalonians 1:10—one consisting of angels and the other of men—has at least three arguments to commend it. First, it holds true to the authorial intent of Psalm 89 (88) (as expressed by its Greek translators) to which it alludes. Second, the context mentions angels who will appear with Christ at his appearing just three verses prior (1:7), where "the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.[37] " Third, the semantic range of οἱ ἅγιοι is sufficient to support such a reading. Consequently, it has been shown that οἱ ἅγιοι often requires some contextual marker to indicate the proper referent. In the case of 2 Thessalonians 1:10, one such contextual marker seems to be the parallel structure of the passage. When this structure is considered, the reading advocating two groups consisting of men and angels seems unlikely.

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[36] If the only parallel relationship in the passage were in 1:10, then this association would have little impact upon limiting the referent since the relationship indicated by the parallel structure would be that both groups are attendant at the *parousia*. It is when one adds the other parallel relationships, however, that this position becomes more difficult to defend.

[37] Thomas contended that the use of ἀγγέλων in verse 1:7 argues against taking οἱ ἅγιοι as referring to angels due to the change in vocabulary. This argument is persuasive if one were taking "saints" to refer only to angels. This does not address, however, the possibility that οἱ ἅγιοι could be referring to the entire company of sanctified persons accompanying Christ at the *parousia* (Thomas, "1 Thessalonians," 315, n. 10). This option was not addressed by Thomas since he understood 1:10 as referring to the rapture of the church while continuing to hold to 1:8 as referring to the *parousia* (Ibid., 314). The primary difficulty with this position is that it ignores the parallelism between 1:8 and 1:10.

INTERPRETATION OF Ἅ ΓΙΟΣ AS CHURCH AGE BELIEVERS

While this author is not convinced that the parallelism in 1:10 requires (by itself) two human referents, this parallelism is the main justification for concluding that the infinitival purpose clauses in 1:10 have not only two human referents, but also that both of these human referents are indeed one and the same. Such an understanding of identical referents seems to be the view of the majority of commentators. Some merely assert the referents as identical without justification. Ryrie, for example, stated:

> Two very amazing statements are contained in verse 10. First, when He comes He will be glorified in (not by) His saints. . . . In other words, Paul is making the astounding claim that the glory of the Lord will be mirrored in believers (cf. John 17:1; Eph 2:7). . . . Second, Christ at His coming will be admired or breath-takingly wondered at in those who believe. Again, Christians are stated to be the ones who bring admiration to the Lord on the part of those who witness His return.[38]

Morris echoed similar sentiments, again without argumentation. "When this takes place, it will be in order that (the construction expresses purpose) he may be glorified in his saints (or "holy people," as *NIV* puts it). This, of course, refers to all believers, those set apart for the service of the Lord."[39] Calvin also simply assumed the referents as identical. "It is also to be observed, that after having made use of the term *saint*s, he adds, by way of explanation—*those that believe*, by which he intimates that there is no holiness in men without faith, but that all are profane."[40] Others, however, make it plain that the parallelism in

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[38] Charles Ryrie, *First and Second Thessalonians* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), 95-96. Interestingly, Ryrie's mentor, friend, and fellow dispensationalist, John Walvoord, left open the possibility of a broader referent for οἱ ἅγιοι. "When He comes back He will be accompanied by the saints. The event will be such a tremendous spectacle that it will impel worship and admiration on the part of all who believe. . . . This will be true not only of the church, which is with Christ as his bride, but it will be true of all others who might be comprehended in the term *saints*." John F. Walvoord, *The Thessalonian Epistles* (Findlay, OH: Dunham, 1955), 110.

[39] Morris, *Thessalonians*, 206.

[40] John Calvin, *Commentaries on The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to The Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, trans. John Pringle (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), 319. Calvin's understanding of the passage should come as no surprise as it seems to be merely an outworking of his theology.

1:10 is the main justification for adopting the single referent position. F. F. Bruce, for example, wrote, "While the ἅγιοι here might be the angels of v 7, the parallelism between this ἐνδοξασθῆναι clause and the following θαυμασθῆναι clause strongly suggests the identity of the ἅγιοι and the πιστεύσαντες."[41] Bruce then continued his argument with a quick review of how believers are called "holy ones" throughout the New Testament.

Ellicott, while not specifically mentioning the parallelism, contrasted the context of 2 Thessalonians 1:10 with 1 Thessalonians 3:13, noting, "the ἅγιοι do not here appear to refer to the Holy angels, but, as the tacit contrasts and limitations of the context suggest, to the risen and glorified company of believers; contrast I Thess. iii. 13, where πάντες, and the absence of all notice of the unholy, suggest the more inclusive reference."[42] Similarly Best maintained, "Though in Ps. 88 the reference is to angels it is almost certainly here to believers because of the parallelism of the two phrases and because the earlier contrast of persecutors and persecuted now demands a reference to the latter."[43] Likewise Green argued for angels in 1 Thessalonians 3:13 but found the parallelism in 2 Thessalonians 1:10 persuasive. He wrote, "The 'saints' in 1 Thessalonians 3.13 are the angels who will accompany the Lord in his coming . . . , but here the reference is rather to the believers . . . , as the parallelism with the second part of the verse implies (those who have believed)."[44] While this view seems possible initially, further investigation shows that it has at least two unstated, yet related problems associated with it. First, as Wanamaker demonstrated, "The repeated use of synonymous parallelism in vv. 7b–10 is not typical of Paul's normal epistolary style."[45] Best also noticed this unusual aspect of the passage.

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[41] F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Word Biblical Commentary) (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 152.

[42] Charles John Ellicott, *Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, (Classic Commentary Library) (London: Parker, Son and Boum, 1862; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 102.

[43] Ernest Best, *A Commentary on the First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 265.

[44] Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (The Pillar New Testament Commentary), ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 294.

[45] Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (The New International Greek Testament Commentary), eds. I. Howard Marshall and W. Ward Gasque (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 232.

"Various suggestions have been made about the origin of vv. 6–10 in view of their rhythmic structure, especially the number of parallelisms reminiscent of Semitic poetry."[46] The question that this information raises is simply this: How does one know that this is synonymous parallelism? The parallel structure of the passage is difficult to deny. However, the presence of parallelism does not automatically make the parallelism synonymous. The second problem is related to the first. What exactly is meant when one uses the phrase synonymous parallelism? What level of correspondence is necessary for this title to fit? Is there really such a thing as synonymous parallelism?

Excursus on Synonymous Parallelism

At this point some might wonder at the wisdom of questioning the existence of such an obvious feature of biblical literature. Nevertheless, this aspect of grammatical structure seems to be one of the most obvious features of poetic lines. It therefore seems best to begin this discussion with Alter's comment concerning the self-evident nature of Hebrew poetry.

> The incorrigible naïveté of common sense might lead one to suppose that the rudiments of an answer would be self-evident, but in fact there is no aspect of biblical literature that has elicited more contradictory, convoluted, and at times quite fantastical views, from late antiquity to the latest scholarly publications. To many it might have seemed that after Robert Lowth's *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum* (1753) semantic parallelism between the two (or sometimes three) components of a line was firmly established as the chief organizing principle of the system; but questions have been raised about the actual prevalence of such parallelism, about how it is to be conceived if it is really there, and about whether it might not be an entirely secondary feature of biblical poetry.[47]

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[46] Best, *Thessalonians*, 266-67. Both Best and Wanamaker contended that this atypical use of parallelism indicates that this section consists of a preformed unit that was inserted by Paul. Best argues that Paul himself was the author (Best, *Thessalonians*, 267). Wanamaker, in contrast, did not comment on the authorship, but insistd that this was in fact pre-formed material (Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 232).

[47] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 3. Alter demonstrated the wide differences of opinion concerning parallelism in the Bible. "The dismaying range of discussion on this topic is vividly illustrated by two extremes. At one end of the spectrum, an Orientalist in the 1930s, Paul Kraus, set out to show that the entire Hebrew Bible, once properly accented, could be demonstrated to have been written in verse (a project in which he had been anticipated three decades earlier by the

Suzuki postulated that there are three fundamental problems with the concept of synonymous parallelism that can be seen through a taxonomical analysis of the semantic structure of Hebrew poetry. These problems are "ambiguity, tautology in investigational methodology, and lack of explanatory value."[48] Each of these problems will be investigated sequentially.

Ambiguity
If semantic parallelism is really a component of biblical poetry (and this author holds that it is), then how should it be defined? Yoder's understanding seems to represent the standard view.

> As one reads this poetry he will notice that sometimes the thought of the second line is in agreement with that of the first line. . . . This is known as synonymous parallelism. If, however, the thought of the second line is in contrast with that of the first, it is known as antithetic parallelism. . . . When the thought of the second line does not agree with the thought of the first line nor is in contrast with it but builds it up or completes it, the arrangement is called synthetic parallelism.[49]

While this explanation has the virtue of being succinct, it leaves many questions unanswered. Murphy's expansion upon this definition is helpful since it addressed the issue of differences in the supposedly synonymous lines.

> [Parallelism] refers to the grouping of lines or half lines in such a way that the full thought of the writer is presented. There are various degrees of association between the two (sometimes three) units. Even when the lines seem to repeat

German Old Testament scholar Eduard Sievers). When he discovered two-thirds of the way through his analysis that the texts no longer bore out his thesis, he took his own life. At the other end of the spectrum, an ambitious recent study, James L. Kugle's *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, after a splendid first chapter full of incisive comments on what happens in semantic parallelism, comes perilously close to concluding that there is no poetry in the Bible, only a 'continuum' from loosely parallelistic structures in what we think of as the prose sections to a more 'heightened rhetoric' of parallelistic devices in what we misleadingly label verse" (Alter, *Biblical Poetry*, 4).

[48] Jo Suzuki, "Synonymous Fallacy in Hebrew Poetic Studies," 10. Paper presented at the Far West Regional meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Bernadino, CA, 15 April 1988.

[49] Sanford Calvin Yoder, *Poetry of the Old Testament* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1948), 10.

one another (often termed synonymous parallelism), they are not quite synonymous. The relationship can be one of intensification or sharper focusing. Thus, if A, then more so B. . . . In the case of antithetic parallelism, a certain opposition is evident, even though the same general idea is expressed.[50]

The problem raised by Murphy's definition is the ambiguity of the phrase "not quite synonymous." Suzuki indicated, "the only true synonymous parallelism will be word-for-word repetition. If some semantic differences are allowed, then an unanswerable question will arise: 'How synonymous do the lines have to be in order to qualify for synonymous parallelism?'"[51] Therefore, O'Connor wrote, "Parallelism cannot cover the field of Hebrew poetry unless it is not only left undefined, but allowed to cover so many phenomena that it is undefinable."[52] This fundamental ambiguity makes any definition of the term "synonymous parallelism" practically meaningless. As a result, O'Connor concluded that the term simply cannot be defined.[53] Such lack of an adequate definition raises another problem. Most parallelism is concerned primarily with the ideas of the paired lines, and not with the words themselves.

> The reason that no adequate nomenclature has been developed for parallelism is because of a fundamental error committed by Lowth in innocence and perpetuated unthinkingly since. In almost all cases in which parallelism is defined, scholars define it in relation to non-verbal realities. . . .This would be suitable in the description of non-verbal poems; there are none. A poem is made up of words; to describe a construct of words, terminology which refers to words must be used."[54]

Therefore, the working model upon which the standard understanding of synonymous parallelism is based does not exist.

Consequently, there is an equivocation within the popular understanding of synonymous parallelism. The standard definitions refer to paired syntactical lines and parallel ideas. In practice, however, the individual words are the primary focus, which means what has been

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[50] Roland Edmund Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 6.

[51] Suzuki, "Synonymous Fallacy," 10-11.

[52] Michael Patrick O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 51.

[53] Ibid., 50.

[54] Ibid., 51.

referenced as "synonymous" has changed. Moreover, while the definition spoke of syntax and ideas, the praxis is concerned with making the paired words synonymous. Suzuki correctly noted, "There is no empirical evidence to support the conclusion that the Hebrew poet was obligated to use semantically equivalent words in syntactically parallel elements."[55] In other words, while lines of poems may be paired with regard to structure, there is no necessary equivalence between the words of the paired lines. A particular word does not automatically become parallel in meaning with the corresponding word in the parallel clause.

Tautology in Investigational Methodology

The problem of tautology results from the one immediately previous. Without an adequate definition of synonymous parallelism, one lacks an objective means of identifying when it is employed, which leads to the following circular argument:

> Premise: synonymous parallelism is where the meaning of the subsequent lines repeats the meaning of the first line.

> Premise: this text is an example of synonymous parallelism.

> QED (Latin, "that which was to be demonstrated"): the meaning of the subsequent lines in this text repeats the meaning of the first line.

The circularity of this argument is seen in the second premise.[56] In order to define a text "synonymous parallelism," one must assume the conclusion, namely that the subsequent lines of the text repeat the meaning of the first line. Suzuki indicated how this circularity manifests in practice: "When one classifies a certain text as synonymous parallelism, he does so because 'both lines mean the same thing.' But when he analyzes the semantic content of the same text, he will treat it as a mere repetition, because 'it is a synonymous parallelism.'"[57]

It is certainly an overstatement to suggest that all commentators who appeal to synonymous parallelism base their entire exegesis upon

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[55] Suzuki, "Synonymous Fallacy," 4.

[56] Restating the argument so that the current second premise is the conclusion and the current conclusion the second premise makes little difference on the circularity of this argument.

[57] Suzuki, "Synonymous Fallacy," 11.

such narrow circularity. It is nevertheless unfortunate that some do. Notice, for example, how Bruce assumed the parallelism from which he made his conclusions: "While the ἅγιοι here might be the angels of v 7, the parallelism between this ἐνδοξασθῆναι clause and the following θαυμασθῆναι clause strongly suggests the identity of the ἅγιοι and the πιστεύσαντες."[58] Similarly, Hiebert opined, "The parallelism with *believed* in the following clause makes it clear that 'his saints' (*tois hagiois autou*), 'his holy ones,' are redeemed men, not angels."[59] Best also argued similarily.

> Though in Ps. 88 the reference is to angels, it is almost certainly here to believers because of the parallelism of the two phrases and because the earlier contrast of persecutors and persecuted now demands a reference to the latter; saints ('holy ones') has both meanings . . . ; the parallelism also excludes any idea that Paul has Jewish and Gentile Christians in mind in the two clauses. . . .[60]

What makes this example noteworthy is the reliance upon synonymous parallelism as the primary interpretive grid, despite the (apparently unnoticed) circularity of the arguments.

Lack of Explanatory Value

As might be expected, the lack of explanatory value results from the previous two problems. Since there is a lack of an adequate definition (and therefore a corresponding lack of understanding of what constitutes synonymous parallelism), and since the application of this poetic device rests on a tautology, then it should come as no surprise that the actual employment of this classification obscures the potential subtleties in a given text. As Suzuki points out,

> The term "synonymous" has an inherent tendency to focus one's attention on similarities without taking differences in[to] consideration. Thus, in practice, a list of synonymous parallelisms is created on the basis of similarities only. As soon as one perceives a similarity between two lines, no matter what degree of similarity (or difference) it has, the text is labeled as synonymous.[61]

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[58] Bruce, *Thessalonians*, 152.

[59] D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Thessalonian Epistles: A Call to Readiness* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 293.

[60] Best, *Thessalonians*, 265.

[61] Suzuki, "Synonymous Fallacy," 11.

Thus, what often happens is that the potential subtleties that distinguish the two lines are ignored or are attributed to purely aesthetic concerns. This means that the complex semantic relationships that exist between parallel lines tend to be dismissed. Additionally, any evidence contrary to synonymy either remains unseen or is ignored.

Dependence upon Synonymous Parallelism

There is no denying that phrases, sentences, and even paragraphs can exhibit parallel structures. Grammatically similar word groups are an established feature of biblical literature. These similar constructions should not be ignored. Indeed, this author considers the structural parallelism of 2 Thessalonians 1 to be key to its interpretation. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that structural parallelism is not the same as semantic parallelism. In other words, while phrases may have similar structures, the actual words used have different semantic values. Therefore, reliance upon synonymous parallelism as an interpretive device seems unwise. The lack of definition, the inherent tautology in the investigative method, and the obscuring of the subtle differences between the lines makes dependence upon this poetic convention ill-advised.

Grammatical Evidence against Ἅγιος as Church Age Believers

One of the most overlooked aspects of 2 Thessalonians 1:10 is the repetition of the article in the second phrase of the parallel constructions. This repeated article can be found in 2 Thessalonians 1:6-7, 8 and 10 (emphasis added).

> . . . ἀνταποδοῦναι *τοῖς* θλίβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλῖψιν καὶ ὑμῖν *τοῖς* θλιβομένοις ἄνεσιν μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν (1:6-7)

> . . . *τοῖς* μὴ εἰδόσιν θεὸν καὶ *τοῖς* μὴ ὑπακούουσιν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ (1:8)

> . . . ἐν *τοῖς* ἁγίοις αὐτοῦ καὶ θαυμασθῆναι ἐν πᾶσιν *τοῖς* πιστεύσασιν . . . (1:10)

When one considers the use of the article with the conjunction καί, the most familiar discussion involves the absence of the second article. Granville Sharp's famous rule states:

> When the copulative καὶ connects two nouns of the same case, [viz. nouns (either substantive or adjective, or participles) of personal description, respecting office, dignity, affinity, or connexion, and attributes, properties, or qualities, good or ill], if the article ὁ, or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle.[62]

What is less familiar is any discussion dealing with a repeated article in the same construction. Sharp's rule does not address this issue in any way. An investigation into the subject, however, indicates substantial evidence that the repeated article is used to distinguish between different persons.

Review of Literature

A review of common Greek reference works demonstrates that while some do not comment on a repeated article following καί,[63] in those that do comment there is near universal understanding that the repeated article differentiates between two different groups or persons. For example, Blass and Debrunner stated: "With two or more substantives connected by καί the article can be carried over from the first to the others especially if the gender and number are the same, but also occasionally when the gender is different. . . . On the other hand, there are cases where the repetition of the article with the same gender or

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[62] Granville Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament: Containing many New Proofs of the Divinity of Christ, from Passages which are wrongly Translated in the Common English Version*, 1st American ed. from the 3rd London ed. (Philadelphia: Hopkins, 1807), 3. After stating this rule, Sharp explained and expanded the parameters of this rule. According to Sharp, the construction *article-substantive-καί-substantive* must meet four requirements in order for both substantives to point to the same referent. The substantives must (1) be personal, (2) be singular, (3) be common (not proper) and, (4) agree in gender and case. For a more complete discussion see Bruce A. Baker, "Granville Sharp's Rule," *The Journal of Ministry and Theology* 1 (Fall 1997).

[63] For instance, see William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993) and Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

number is necessary or more appropriate."[64] Those occasions where the repeated article is "necessary or more appropriate" include Acts 26:30 (ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ ὁ ἡγεμών) since the phrase refers to "different persons."[65]

Robertson agreed, arguing that when the author desired to distinguish between two subjects, he repeated the article. In support of this view, Robertson listed eighteen references (including 2 Thess 1:8) and stated that the list "can be extended almost indefinitely."[66] Likewise Turner contended: "for practical purposes in class. Greek the repetition of the art. was not strictly necessary to ensure that the items be considered separately." Nevertheless, "the art. could have been repeated to avoid misunderstanding if separate individuals had been intended." Indeed, "Often the repetition, even with nouns of the same gender, does indeed indicate that two distinct subjects are involved."[67] Young declared, "When two nouns are separated by καί and each noun has its own article, the author intends a distinction between them. When the two nouns are separated by a καί and only the first has the article, the author intends of the reader to group the two nouns together in some fashion."[68]

In the interest of fairness, it should be noted that not everyone holds this view. This author has found that no one who discussed the construction in question disagreed with the conclusions presented. Nevertheless, Moule's general warning seems relevant: "It is sometimes claimed that an important theological issue is involved in the use or non-use of the article—e.g. with πνεῦμα; but each instance needs to be discussed on its own merits, and in some instances it is hard to avoid the impression that usages is arbitrary."[69] It seems best, therefore, to conduct a limited investigation to see if the majority opinion may be corroborated.

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[64] Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 144-45.

[65] Ibid., 145.

[66] A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 4th ed. (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 786-87.

[67] James H. Moulton, et al., *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1949-76), 3:181.

[68] Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 62.

[69] C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: University Press, 1959), 111-12.

Empirical Investigation

When a search was conducted which looked for the same grammatical construction as that in 2 Thessalonians 1:10,[70] only one instance was found: 2 Corinthians 5:8 (ἐκδημῆσαι ἐκ τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἐνδημῆσαι πρὸς τὸν κύριον—to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord). It is instructive to note that in this verse—also written by Paul—the same construction is used to discuss two different, yet related, situations. In the context it is clear that Paul considered the first event (being absent from the body) to be logically prior to the second (being at home with the Lord). The fact that these two events are linked is evident by the use of the conjunction καί.[71] Nevertheless, it is also true that each phrase is describing an unique situation. In other words, being absent from the body is not the same as being at home with the Lord. Many are the unfortunate souls that are absent from the body but also absent from the Lord. Therefore, it appears that the repetition of the second article distinguishes between two separate persons or events, at least in this particular construction.

The fact that Paul used this distinctive structure in another passage to differentiate between discrete events is informative, but certainly not conclusive. The question must be asked if Paul used a repeated second article to distinguish between entities in simpler and more numerous constructions. More specifically, what about the construction that Paul used in 2 Thessalonians 1:8? As has been noted previously, verse 10 has a parallel construction that corresponds to the parallel construction in verse 8. Therefore, one would expect both verses

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[70] The following search was conducted in *Accordance*: an infinitive followed by a preposition followed within two words by an article that agrees in case with the preposition. The article must be followed (within two words) by either an adjective, participle, or noun that agrees in gender, number and case with the preceding article. This phrase must be within two words of καί with no verb in between. Immediately following the καί there must be an infinitive (that agrees in tense and voice with the preceding infinitive) followed by a preposition—article combination that agree in case and are within two words of one another. The article must be followed by either an adjective, participle, or noun that is within two words of the article and agrees in gender, number, and case.

[71] This should, of course, be expected whenever καί is used. The purpose of the conjunction is to link together two phrases because of some commonality. Therefore, one should not expect two phrases joined by καί to share nothing in common whatsoever.

to speak of either one or two groups simultaneously. One would not expect to see verse 8 referring to only one group of people while verse 10 speaks of two. Therefore, another *Accordance* search was conducted to find the construction *article-participle-καί-article-participle* in the Pauline corpus.[72] The search produced two results: 1 Corinthians 3:8 and 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

In 1 Corinthians 3:8, one again discovers the repeated article distinguishing between two persons and two activities: the one who plants and the one who waters (ὁ φυτεύων δὲ καὶ ὁ ποτίζων). Once more a parallel construction in the Pauline corpus supports a reading of the repeated article as distinguishing between two groups.[73] When one expands the search parameters to include the whole of the New Testament, twelve results were returned: Matthew 21:9; Mark 1:32; 6:31; 11:9, 15; Luke 12:35; John 21:24; 1 Corinthians 3:8; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 12:12; and, Revelation 2:26; 4:8. An examination of these verses reveals that in six of these cases the repeated article is used to differentiate between two entities, two instances are examples of merismus, three refer to differing aspects of the same person, and one is in question (2 Thess 1:8).

References that Demonstrate a Distinction between Two Entities. Matthew 21:9 and Mark 11:9 both record two different crowds, one that went before Jesus and one that followed. Mark 1:32 speaks of two types of people seeking healing: those who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. First Corinthians 3:8 has already been discussed but fits into this category. Hebrews 12:12 uses the second article to

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[72] The actual search construction was as follows: an article followed (within two words) by a participle that agrees with the article in gender, number, and case, followed by καί, followed by an article-participle combination identical to that prior to the καί. The participles must agree with each other in gender, number, and case.

[73] It must be mentioned that a cursory reading of this text might cause some to reach a different conclusion, since Paul was clear that the one who plants and the one who waters "are one." The context, however, makes it clear that these are actually two different persons. In verse six, Paul wrote, "I planted, Apollos watered," indicating the identity of the two parties in the immediate discussion. Additionally, the use of the phrase "but each will receive his own reward" (ἕκαστος δὲ τὸν ἴδιον μισθὸν λήψεται) in verse eight indicates that Paul was referring to separate parties, not one individual. The NIV's "have one purpose," NEB's "work as a team with the same purpose," or NET Bible's "work as one," correctly capture the sense.

distinguish between "hands that are weak and knees that are feeble."[74] Finally, the repetition of the article in Luke 12:35 has the effect of distributing the force of the imperative ἔστωσαν into two commands: "Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps alight." These two commands rightly are assigned to the same person, but they are two separate actions that are distinct from one another.

References that Are an Example of Merismus. In two of the references—Mark 6:31 and 11:15—one finds the repeated article as part of a merism.[75] Mark 6:31 speaks of people "coming and going." The picture here is not of one discrete crowd coming while another was leaving. Instead, it is used to picture a large crowd milling about. Likewise in Mark 11:15 Jesus began to cast out those "who were buying and selling" in the temple. Once again, while these are two separate actions, both were probably being done by the same merchants. What is important to note in these two verses is that, while the merism makes no distinction between the person performing the actions, the actions are separate and distinguishable.

References that Refer to Differing Aspects of the Same Person. The three instances where this grammatical construction is being used to describe the same person have two aspects in common. First, all three were penned by the Apostle John: John 21:24; Revelation 2:26; 4:8. Second, *in each case there is a contextual marker to signify that each phrase refers to the same person.* In John 21:24, it is clear that "he who bears witness" and "he who wrote these things" are the same person because the text plainly states, "This is the disciple." Likewise, in Revelation 4:8 the context is equally clear: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come" (ὁ ἦν καὶ

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[74] The context of Hebrews 12:12 shows that the athletic imagery used here probably refers to the same person. It seems likely that the weak hands and feeble knees are pictures of total exhaustion. Still, what is important for this study is that the two items being separated are not one and the same. In other words, while these conditions may exist on just one person, hands are not knees and knees are not hands. The repetition of the article is used to separate unlike items.

[75] "A synecdoche is the substituting of a part of something for the whole or the whole for the part. . . . A merism is a form of synecdoche in which the totality or whole is substituted by two contrasting or opposite parts. When the psalmists wrote, 'You know when I sit and when I rise' (Ps. 139:2), he was not limiting the Lord's knowledge to times when he sat down and when he got up. Instead he was saying the Lord knew all his actions" (Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation* [Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1991], 151).

ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος). Once more, in Revelation 2:26, there is a textual marker identifying the ones in question. Unlike the previous two references, this contextual marker is several verses away. Nevertheless, the larger context makes it clear that Jesus is speaking immediately to the believers at the church in Thyatira and ultimately to the church at large in this age.

     Reference in Question. It is acknowledged that the test passages in this section have been limited to the exact construction of 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and that more investigation needs to be done with regard to the repetition of the article in two substantival phrases joined by καί. Nevertheless, it appears that the data examined points to the following conclusion: the default reading of the article-participle-καί-article-participle phrase should make a distinction between the referents of the participles unless it is clear that the phrase is a merism or there is some other obvious contextual reason to assign both participles to the same referent.

Grammatical Evidence or Synonymous Parallelism

Even though 1) the concept of synonymous parallelism is fraught with problems, and 2) the grammatical evidence for distinguishing the referents in parallel constructions with a repeated article is substantial, when the two approaches are compared, synonymous parallelism is usually (but not always) to be preferred. For example, I. Howard Marshall took an unusual hybrid position arguing for two distinct groups in 1:8 but only one group in 1:10. Referring to verse 8 he argued, "The Greek construction shows that two groups of people are being listed, but there is considerable uncertainty regarding the identify [sic] of the persons mentioned."[76] After listing several options, he finally concluded,

> Two groups should be distinguished. Paul refers, first, to the Gentiles, describing them in traditional Jewish terms as people who are ignorant of God, and he sees in this ignorance the cause of their attacks on Christians. Then, second, he includes the Jews who have some knowledge of God, but who have refused to believe and obey the good news of our Lord Jesus, i.e. the good news that Jesus is the one exalted by God as Lord.[77]

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     [76] I. Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* (New Century Bible Commentary) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 178.
     [77] Ibid.

While Marshall is to be commended for including the grammatical structure of 1:8 in his exegesis, inexplicably he failed to take the repetition of the article in 1:10 into account. "The passage makes it clear that the **saints** are those who **have believed** (the aorist is used of their initial act of faith, or perhaps it looks back from time of the Parousia to their earlier commitment to Jesus). No distinction between the two groups (e.g. between Jewish and Gentile believers) is intended."[78] Marshall provided no explanation for acknowledging the repeated article in verse 8 while discounting its significance in verse 10. One suspects that his interpretation of 1:10 could be based upon his *a priori* commitment to the concept of only one people of God.

Wanamaker took issue with Marshall's analysis, but did not address the central issue. For Marshall, there are actually two questions that must be answered. First, is there one group or two? Second, if there are indeed two groups, who are they? Wanamaker addressed the second question while ignoring the first. He argued against Marshall's designation of the two groups on exegetical grounds while he asserted, without argumentation, the priority of synonymous parallelism. He wrote, "'those not knowing God' and 'those not obeying the gospel of our Lord Jesus' form a synonymous parallelism."[79] Indeed, Wanamaker argued that verses 7-10 were not originally penned by Paul, but were actually a pre-formed unit that Paul had inserted into his argument. "The repeated use of synonymous parallelism in vv. 7b-10 is not typical of Paul's normal epistolary style. This evidence argues forcefully that the material in vv. 7b-10 existed prior to its inclusion in 2 Thessalonians 1, though it is not possible to determine in what form it originally existed or whether it originated with Paul."[80] Such an interpretation is flawed at several points. First, Wanamaker failed to address the grammatical issue that Marshall raised. Second, he assumed synonymous parallelism without argumentation or proof. Finally, he assumed a source document that is neither extant, necessary, nor alluded in the text. Again one must wonder if it is not *a priori* theological assumptions that influenced his exegesis rather than grammatical or contextual concerns.

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[78] Ibid., 181.
[79] Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 227.
[80] Ibid., 232.

Conclusion Regarding Church Age Believers

As has been stated, the view that both lines of the parallel structure in 2 Thessalonians 1:10 refers to church age believers has two significant problems. First, while some merely assume this view without offering any proof, those who offer proof almost exclusively rely on synonymous parallelism for justification of their position. What this section has attempted to demonstrate is that the conventional wisdom regarding synonymous parallelism is not validated under investigation. The lack of a definition for synonymous parallelism coupled with the innate tautology in the investigative method results in an obscuring of the subtle variations that exist between the two lines. Second, the view virtually ignores the grammatical significance of the repeated article in the second line. The grammars that address this construction seem to be unanimous in their understanding that the repetition of the article signifies two distinct subjects. A limited investigation of similarly constructed phrases in the New Testament has shown these grammars to be largely correct. Therefore, unless there is some grammatical or contextual evidence that has been overlooked, the one-group view regarding 2 Thessalonians 1:10 cannot be correct. Another solution must be found.

PROPOSED INTERPRETATION: TWO GROUPS

If grammatical considerations argue for two separate groups in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and 10, the question raised by Marshall is appropriate. To whom do these references refer? Marshall assigned the phrase "those who do not know God" in 1:8 to Gentiles. He identified that this is a standard Old Testament manner for referring to Gentiles, and noted Psalm 79:6 and Jeremiah 10:25 as examples. He also referred to 1 Thessalonians 4:5 as an example of Paul using this phrase in a similar fashion. The second phrase—"those who do not obey the gospel"— refers to Jews. He cited Isaiah 66:4, Acts 6:7, and Romans 10:16 as evidence. [81]

Wanamaker, however, was correct in stating that this interpretation has a "major problem."

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[81] Marshall, *Thessalonians*, 177-78.

For Paul the second phrase[82] applies equally to Gentiles and Jews, as Rom. 11:30–32 demonstrates. Moreover, the Jewish people are frequently described in the OT (cf. Je. 4:22; 9:3, 6; Ho. 5:4) as not knowing God. For this reason it is unwise to distinguish between allusion to Jews and Gentiles. Besides it is questionable whether the Thessalonians, who as Gentiles lacked in-depth knowledge of the OT, could have correctly interpreted such an allusion in the first place.[83]

In addition to Wanamaker's objections, the parallel constructions in verses 8 and 10 suggest that the two groups in each verse should parallel one another in some way. Therefore, if one assigns the two groups in verse 8 to Jews and Gentiles, then one assigns the phrase "holy people" in verse 10 to the Gentiles. The Gentiles are never referenced in such a manner in the rest of Scripture. A better solution is to interpret "those who do not know God" in verse 8 as those who have never heard of Jesus Christ and are in rebellion against God. Similarly, "his holy people" in verse 10 points to those who have never heard of Jesus Christ, but are in a right relationship with God. Those who "do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" in verse 8 and "all those who have believed" in verse 10 refer to those who have heard of Jesus Christ and their relationship to him. Such an interpretation has much in its favor.

First, as Wanamaker observed, Gentiles and Jews alike are described as "not knowing God" in the Old Testament. Therefore, this phrase would more naturally refer to all those who stand in rebellion against God and who have never heard of Jesus Christ, regardless of their racial identity. The parallel phrase would then complement this reading. Those who "do not obey the gospel" also stand in rebellion against God, but their crime is more specific. They have heard the good news and rejected it. Therefore, the distinguishing feature that separates these two groups is not race, but rather their opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel. Both groups stand condemned before God, but the nature of their condemnation is different. One group stands condemned because they reject God's revelation (both general and special) prior to his revealing Himself in his Son. The other group stands condemned because of their rejection of God's ultimate revelation: His special revelation in Jesus Christ.

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[82] Those who "do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."
[83] Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 227.

Second, this reading parallels Paul's discussion of the lost in Romans. He began his discussion by examining why those who have never heard are lost. Even though the invisible God has (in a sense) made himself visible, men have rejected what they know about God so that they are without excuse. "Although they knew God" (Rom 1:21), "they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God" (1:28). In Romans 2:1–29, Paul directed his attention to the Jews.[84] In this case, they possessed God's special revelation but did not obey him. Ultimately, the unbelieving Jews are condemned because they did not submit to God's righteousness that is found in Christ (10:3-4). Once again, the difference between the two groups is that one has had the opportunity to hear the good news and one has not.

Third, the division of the lost in 2 Thessalonians 1:8 is consistent with Jesus' explanation of the punishment of the lost. Luke 12:47–48 records Jesus as saying,

> And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes, but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

While it is true that 2 Thessalonians 1:8 provides no hint of a variation in punishment between the two groups, the mere fact that two separate groups will be punished suggests the distinction of which Jesus spoke.

Fourth, Paul specifically identified his readers as ones who have believed (vs. 10). Therefore, Paul provided a contextual identifier for at least one of the two groups in 1:10—"all those who have believed." It is important to remember that the Thessalonian believers were predominately Gentile but not exclusively so. Some of the Jews were also converted through Paul's ministry in the synagogue (Acts 17:4). Such a fact in and of itself precludes a racial distinction in identifying these two groups.

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[84] Although some hold that Romans 2:1-16 is actually an indictment of moral Gentiles (e.g., see Alva J. McClain, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Grace; The Lectures of Alva J. McClain*, ed. Herman A. Hoyt [Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1981], 69-70), this author maintains a Jewish audience throughout chapter two. For an excellent defense of this view, see Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (The New International Commentary on the New Testament), ed. Gordon D. Fee, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 125-26.

Fifth, this reading is in keeping with the context of 2 Thessalonians 1:5. Paul was stressing the correctness of God's judgment in respect to the persecution that the church was enduring. The judgment will result ultimately in these believers counted worthy for the kingdom of God. Wanamaker was most likely correct when he stated that the "Gentiles lacked in-depth knowledge of the OT."[85] Consequently, it does not take an in-depth knowledge of the Old Testament to be familiar with the Old Testament idea of the kingdom of God. The Old Testament concept consisted of a physical, earthly, worldwide kingdom with David's greater son as the supreme sovereign. What makes this significant is that any consideration of the kingdom of God must take into account both Old Testament and New Testament saints, since both will be participants. Recognizing the two groups in 1:8 and 10 fits nicely into this context.

Finally, this reading also benefits from what might be called an "argument from the impossibility of the contrary." For if one accepts the evidence that Paul's use of a repeated article indicates two distinct groups, then what other options are available? If the racial distinction option is rejected (and rightly so), then what other categories remain?

Objections to the Two Groups Interpretation

One might argue that the repetition of the article in the second phrase could point to a merism rather than a distinction between the referents. Therefore, Paul could have referred to the two extremes as a substitute for the whole. In verse eight, therefore, Paul could be speaking of all those in rebellion against him but using a literary device to describe that one group by the two chronological extremes—those in the Old Testament and those in the New Testament. In the same way, verse 10 would speak of the two chronological extremes of the one people of God—the Old Testament saints and the New Testament saints. At first consideration, this solution seems to be a useful solution for those whose theological pre-commitment is for only one people of God. Unfortunately, there are two problems with this reading.

First, the larger context makes such a reading unlikely. As has been mentioned previously, there are actually three parallel constructions in the immediate context, not just two. While the majority of this article

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[85] Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 227.

has focused upon verses eight and ten, there is also the parallel construction found in 1:6b-7 (emphasis added).

> . . . ἀνταποδοῦναι **τοῖς** θλίβουσιν ὑμᾶς θλῖψιν καὶ ὑμῖν **τοῖς** θλιβοένοις ἄνεσιν μεθ' ἡμῶν (1:6-7)[86]

The string of parallel constructions, along with the rhythmic structure of 1:6-10 has widely been recognized as a self-contained unit. Best observed, "Various suggestions have been made about the origin of vv. 6-10 in view of their rhythmic structure, especially the number of parallelisms reminiscent of Semitic poetry."[87] Since this section does indeed appear to be a unit, one would expect that corresponding parallel constructions would be similar in interpretation. In 2 Thessalonians 1:6b-7, the repeated article clearly distinguishes between two separate groups: those who trouble you and you who are troubled. One would anticipate the two following parallel constructions to handle the repeated article in the same way. In other words, it seems best to expect three clearly parallel constructions to mirror one another in some way or another. It would be unusual for the first construction to show a distinction between the groups and the second and third to be merisms. Such an interpretation would break the clear poetic structure.

Second, merisms tend to be obvious in nature, almost to the point of being idioms. One reads of "buying and selling," "coming and going," "the living and the dead," among others. The fact that they are merisms tends to be self-evident (a fact that may be easily demonstrated). It is doubtful that the average grade-schooler has ever heard of a merism, yet that does not stop them from accurately identifying them and interpreting them! However, the parallelism of 2 Thessalonians 1:8 and 10 are anything but plain. Consider the diversity of opinion recorded in this article alone. Based upon this lack of obviousness, it seems highly unlikely that 1:8 and 10 contain merisms. The most likely answer is that they are speaking of two differing groups.

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[86] "pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled."

[87] Best, *Thessalonians*, 266-67. Both Best and Wanamaker contended that this atypical use of parallelism indicates that this section consists of a preformed unit that was inserted by Paul, although Wanamaker, began the pre-formed unit in verse 7b (Wanamaker, *Thessalonians*, 232).

Implications of the Two Groups Interpretation

If the proposed reading is correct, then 2 Thessalonians 1:10 becomes an important text in the debate concerning whether there are one or two peoples of God. More specifically, it addresses whether Covenant, Progressive Dispensational, or Traditional Dispensational theology is correct in their view of Israel and the church. The proposed reading of 2 Thessalonians 1:10 argues for a distinction between Israel and the church during the present age, through the great tribulation, and into the millennial kingdom. While the effect of such a distinction upon covenant theology is relatively obvious, what is somewhat less clear is the effect this would have upon progressive dispensationalism.

Any discussion of the relationship of Israel to the church must include initially a definition of what is meant by "distinction."[88] The problem one encounters is that this "distinction" is often "stated in different ways by both friends and foes of dispensationalism.[89] While some of the explanations are relatively straightforward, some can be remarkably obscure.[90] Fortunately, Blaising's concept of the relationship of the church to Israel was reasonably clear.

> One of the striking differences between progressive and earlier dispensationalists, is that progressives do not view the church as an anthropological category in the same class as terms like Israel, Gentile Nations, Jews, and Gentile people. The church is neither a separate race of humanity (in contrast to Jews and Gentiles) nor a competing nation (alongside Israel and Gentile nations) nor is it a group of angelic-like humans destined for the heavens in contrast to the rest of redeemed humanity on earth. . . .
>
> The prophetic promises envision Christ ruling forever over the nations of the redeemed. The church is not another "people-group" in that

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[88] Even Covenant Theologians see *some* differences between these two, even if they maintain an essential unity between both groups. "The representation given in the preceding proceeds on the assumption that the Church existed in the old dispensation as well as in the new, and was *essentially* the same in both, in spite of acknowledged institutional and administrative differences." Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th rev. and enlarged ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 571.

[89] Ryrie, *Dispensationalism,* 39.

[90] "For dispensationalism, the church is an independently valid historical entity even though it is not an ontologically distinct entity. Although I do not hold to the older *parenthetical* (the 'after-thought' view) identity to the church in dispensationalism, I also do no hold to a *parasitic* ('footnote') view of the church in God's redemptive plans" (Ramesh P. Richard, *The Population of Heaven* [Chicago: Moody, 1994], 141, n. 25).

picture. Those Jews and Gentiles who compose the church prior to Christ's coming join the redeemed Jews and Gentiles of earlier dispensations to share equally in resurrection glory. Those who during their dispensation had certain blessings only in promise or in an inaugurated form will all be brought to the same level of complete fulfillment when they are raised together from the dead. Redeemed Jews and Gentiles will share equally in the completed blessings of the Spirit.[91]

While Blaising was correct in stating that the church is not an anthropological category, his assertion that the church is not a "competing nation" is more problematic.[92] Furthermore, this definition at least has the virtue of being relatively clear. Under the Progressive Dispensational system, Israel was not the church in the Old Testament, although it was composed of believing Jews and Gentiles.[93] The church in this age is composed of believing Jews and Gentiles. During the millennial kingdom, the church of this present dispensation and the believing remnant of past dispensations are joined together in resurrection life as the one people of God.[94]

The Progressive Dispensational understanding is called into question by a two-group understanding of 2 Thessalonians 1:10. It would seem that Paul made a distinction between the church and Israel that extends at least through the millennial kingdom.[95] While the nature of

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[91] Craig A. Blaising, "The Extent and Varieties of Dispensationalism," in *Progressive Dispensationalism: An Up-To-Date Handbook of Contemporary Dispensational Thought* (Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint, 1993), 49-50.

[92] "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, *a holy nation*, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Pet 2:9, NIV).

[93] Actually Blaising classified all of God's people in the past dispensations as the "Remnant of Faith," defined as "Believing Jews and Gentiles (a remnant of Israel and the Gentile nations)." Interestingly, this is the same way that he defined the church: "Believing Jews and Gentiles (a remnant of Israel and the Gentile nations)" (ibid., 51). This statement seems to imply the Covenant viewpoint that Israel is the equivalent of the Old Testament church, in that the identifying factor of national Israel is a common faith. There is no Old Testament evidence for this view. Indeed, when the nation of Israel was redeemed from Egypt, the fact that the mixed multitude that accompanied them was identified as such shows that Gentile believers were not considered part of the nation (Exod 12:38). While these believers could enjoy the blessings that God bestowed upon national Israel, they remained distinct from it.

[94] Ibid., 51.

[95] This author understands the Day of the Lord to begin at the rapture and terminate at the end of the millennial kingdom.

that distinction is not explicitly stated, Paul nevertheless used a grammatical structure that was primarily used to distinguish between two different persons or groups. The evidence argues against the understanding of progression of Israel into the church.

CONCLUSION

The research of this article has attempted to demonstrate that Paul was referring to both Old Testament and New Testament saints in 2 Thessalonians 1:10, making a distinction between the two groups. The distinction is based upon a rejection of synonymous parallelism as an interpretive device and upon a correct grammatical understanding of the construction article-participle-καί-article participle. The author of this article recognizes that this one verse is not sufficient to end the debate surrounding the nature of the relationship between Israel and the church. Nevertheless it is hoped that the information presented here will be a positive contribution to that debate and that 2 Thessalonians 1:10 will be seriously considered in future discussions.

THE REVIVAL OF FUTURIST INTERPRETATION FOLLOWING THE REFORMATION

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Biblical eschatology can be divided into two categories: personal eschatology and general eschatology. Personal eschatology addresses the subjects of death, hell, and resurrection. General eschatology addresses the timing of events such as the tribulation and millennium. Whereas there is slight disagreement *among evangelicals* in regards to personal eschatology, there is significant disagreement among evangelicals in regards to general eschatology. The primary reason for such disagreements is the interpreter's usage or disregard of a consistent and literal interpretation of biblical prophecies. Of course, this is certainly true in regards to the timing of prophetic fulfillment and the meaning of the millennium.[1] Knowledge of the various theological systems of prophetic timing fulfillment provides understanding of the logic and tenets of the various views regarding the meaning of the millennium. If the basic characteristics of preterism, historicism, idealism, and futurism are understood, then it is not difficult to understand a particular position regarding the millennium. Furthermore, the views of prophetic timing are more foundational as to what one believes Scripture to teach concerning the millennium.

THE TIMING OF PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT

There are four possible views concerning the timing of prophetic events: preterism (past), historicism (present), idealism (timeless), and futurism (future). Preterism is the view that the majority of prophetic events have already been fulfilled. Historicism equates the current church age with the time of the tribulation; therefore, prophetic events are being fulfilled throughout the church age. Recognizing that approximately 300 prophecies were fulfilled literally in regards to the first coming of Christ, futurism believes that the remaining prophecies of the second coming

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[1] The interpretation of Revelation 20 should inform all readers that the duration of the millennium is one thousand years since the text utilizes χιλιάδες six times.

will also be fulfilled literally in an eschatological period. Idealism is the view that the Bible does not specify a time (chronology) for the fulfillment of prophetic events.

It is unfortunate that such significant disagreement exists among evangelicals in regards to general eschatology. However, the disagreements are not due to lack of clarity in Scripture, but they exist mainly because of either usage or disregard of a consistent and literal interpretation of Bible prophecy. The most natural interpretation of unfilled biblical prophecies leads to a pretribulational and premillennial expectation. Disagreements exist due to inconsistency in biblical interpretation (of course, this could be said about so many doctrines of the Bible). How one understands the timing of prophetic fulfillment also influences an understanding of the meaning of the millennium. The interpreter's understanding of prophetic fulfillment relates to an understanding of the meaning of the millennium, which is reason why all views concerning the timing of prophetic fulfillment could be consistent with postmillennialism, but not similarly with amillennialism and premillennialism. For the purposes of this article, the focus will be upon the historicist perspective of prophetic fulfillment in relation to the development of futurism following the Protestant Reformation.

THE THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM OF HISTORICISM

Historicism is the view that the timing of Bible prophecy occurs during the whole of the church age. Whereas preterism, historicism, and futurism all interpret general eschatology as unfolding certain historical events, historicists differ from the other two views by believing that prophetic books and texts of the Bible are entirely symbolic in form. Therefore, major Bible prophecies are interpreted in a non-literal fashion according to the belief in fulfillment during the entire course of church history. Historicists will agree with both preterists and futurists that Christ did bring judgment upon Israel in AD 70. Historicists and futurists will differ with preterists in believing that the coming of Christ in the Olivet Discourse and following the tribulation is future. Historicists will differ from futurists in believing that major Bible prophecies have been and are being fulfilled throughout the current church age. Historicism results in "the progressive and continuous fulfillment of prophecy, in

unbroken sequence, from Daniel's day and the time of John, on down to the second advent and the end of the age."[2]

The historicist interpretation of biblical prophecies certainly has been represented throughout the entirety of church history. Adventist scholar LeRoy Edwin Froom traced the view through such prominent church figures as Hippolytus (ca. 170-236) in early church history, Joachim of Fiore (ca. 1135-1202) and John Wycliffe (ca. 1329-84) in the Middle Ages, Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Knox (1817-92) during the Reformation, and Isaac Newton (1642-1727) and John Wesley (1703-91) of prior centuries, and into contemporary Christianity.[3] From the time of the Protestant Reformation to the twentieth century (approximately), virtually all Protestants held the historicist view. The majority of the nineteenth century cults, such as Jehovah's Witnesses (1884) and Mormonism (1829), and the *pseudo*-cult of Seventh-day Adventism[4] (1860), adopted the historicist interpretation.

Historicism equates the current church age with the tribulation period. Some historicists teach the tribulation began in AD 300 with the rise of the papacy as the Antichrist; therefore, the Catholic pope is the Antichrist. The seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments are regarded as fulfilled throughout various historical events in Europe. The seal judgments could include the rise of Islam, whereas the trumpet judgments could include Napoleon's campaigns across Europe. Since the major of judgments have already occurred in church history, it is not uncommon for historicists to anticipate the Battle of Armageddon shortly. For instance, the Branch Davidian leader David Koresh was a premillennial historicist. He was anticipating the Battle of Armageddon since he was the last of the seven angels of Revelation.[5]

The majority of historicists interpret the Olivet Discourse preteristically; however, the book of Revelation is interpreted

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[2] Leroy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, 4 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1950), 1:22-23.

[3] Ibid., 1:2.

[4] The Adventist doctrine of the "investigative judgment" is antithetical to the biblical Gospel. Christians have debated whether every Adventist denomination should be properly classified as a cult. Adventist denominations that affirm the "investigative judgment" are rightly classified as teaching cultic doctrine, but for the purpose of this article, the author is not engaging in the debate regarding the entire theological structure of Seventh-day Adventism.

[5] James D. Faubion, *The Shadows and Lights of Waco: Millennialism Today* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 59.

historicistically. William Hendrickson and Seventh-day Adventists are exceptions to historicists that do not interpret the Olivet Discourse preteristically. The only *group* of historicists today is the Seventh-day Adventists. Charles Hodge and Jonathan Edwards were postmillennial historicists. Martin Luther was an amillennial historicist.[6] William Miller and John Gill were premillennial historicists. Whereas preterists are only postmillennial or amillennial, the historicist view of prophetic timing fulfillment can accommodate all millennial views (pre-, post-, and a-). Every historicist predicts dates for the fulfillment of Bible prophecy since they believe current events fulfill the Olivet Discourse and prophetic books (such as Daniel and Revelation).

Historicism was dominant in the United States until the Civil War. Dispensational premillennialism became dominant after the American Civil War. One reason for this rise was the "Great Disappointment" of William Miller who utterly devastated historicism for centuries. The popularity of dispensationalism was due to the fact that these teachers were teaching accurately that the rapture was a timeless event and the tribulation was eschatological (i.e. any "date setting" was unbiblical). Dispensationalism was entirely anti-date setting. Unfortunately, many dispensationalists today resort to historicist interpretations when they cite Matthew 24:4-8 (for example) as being fulfilled today. These teachers do not understand that they have adopted an historicist interpretation which argues against a pretribulational rapture. Although the intricacies of their system allow them to embrace

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[6] John Calvin interpreted the Olivet Discourse historicistically, but whether he was clearly amillennial or postmillennial is still a matter of research. The influence of the Reformer's eschatology is evident in the Westminster Standards—the official teaching of all Presbyterian Churches—which is entirely historicist. The Antichrist is said to be the beast of Revelation in contrast to the preterist notion of first century Rome or futurist teaching of an eschatological individual. Interestingly, Covenant Theology is not found among the Protestant Reformers. Prior to the 1647 Westminster Confession of Faith, there were no references to Covenant Theology. The Westminster Confession is one of the first documents to mention a covenant of works and covenant of grace. Consequently, Covenant Theology was not fully systematized until Cocceius. Covenant Theology was introduced in America through the Puritan influence of the writings of Francis Turretin and Herman Witsius; it was communicated extensively in America with the writings of John Cotton and others. Covenant Theology, as a theological system today, is a combination of the theology of the Reformers, the writings of Cocceius, and the Westminster Confession (i.e. certainly not an exegesis of Scripture in all areas of doctrine and theology, especially ecclesiology and eschatology).

either of the three millennial views, historicists cannot believe in pretribulationism because they believe the tribulation has already commenced. Therefore, "dispensationalist" teachers who quote historical events as being fulfilled today are practicing historicist principles that undermine the teaching of a pretribulational rapture.[7]

The Rise of Futurism and Preterism

Historicists will generally attribute the rise of futurism and preterism, from an almost unanimous view among Protestants,[8] to the rise of Roman Catholic leaders during the Counter Reformation (beginning 1534). For instance, historicists understand the prophecies in Revelation of the Beast in Revelation 13 as an ecclesiastical system that is best represented by the Roman Catholic Church. Since the Reformers identified the Roman Catholic Church as the Beast of Revelation, historicists claim that it was critical for the Roman Catholic Counter Reformation to promulgate an eschatological system to alleviate the papacy of that ignominy. Regarding the Protestant interpretation of the Antichrist, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* is noteworthy.

> To the "reformers" particularly the Apocalypse was an inexhaustible quarry where to dig for invectives that they might hurl then against the Roman hierarchy. The seven hills of Rome, the scarlet robes of the cardinals, and the unfortunate abuses of the papal court made the application easy and tempting. Owing to the patient and strenuous research of scholars, the interpretation of the Apocalypse has been transferred to a field free from the *odium theologicum* ["theological hatred": due to differences in religious belief]. But then the meaning of the Seer is determined by the rules of common exegesis. Apart from the resurrection, the millennium, and the plagues preceding the final consummation, they see in his visions references to the leading events of his time. Their method of interpretation may be called historic as compared with the theological and political application of former ages. The key to the mysteries of the book they find in 17:8-14. For thus says the Seer: "Let here the mind that hath understanding give heed".[9]

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[7] Ron J. Bigalke Jr., "The Olivet Discourse: A Resolution of Time," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 9 (Spring 2003): 106-40.

[8] George E. Ladd commented, "This 'historical' type of interpretation with its application of the Antichrist to papal Rome so dominated Protestant study of prophetic truth for three centuries that it has frequently been called the 'Protestant' interpretation" (*The Blessed Hope* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], 32).

[9] C. van den Biesen, "Apocalypse," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* [online] (New Advent, accessed 31 July 2007) available from http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01594b.htm.

The alleged action of the Roman Catholic Church was a Jesuit effort to circulate an eschatological system of belief that would remove the stigma upon the Catholic Church. Francisco Ribera (1537-91) and Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613), sixteenth century Spanish Jesuits, would challenge the historicist view in an effort to confuse the Protestant prophetic interpretation.[10] Sometimes Roman Jesuit, Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), is added alongside Ribera as also contributing to the futurist view.[11] Francisco Ribera of Salmanca, Spain, is generally credited with the origin of the futurist view as a Catholic response to the historicism of the Reformers. Approximately 1590, he published a 500-page exposition of the Book of Revelation. The historicists objected strongly to futurism since it does not address the history of the church in prophetic analysis, which historicists believe produces a historical and prophetical vacuity. Historicists remain critical that major biblical prophecies will not find fulfillment until the final time of Daniel's Seventieth Week occurs. The futurism of Ribera placed the Antichrist in a distant future from the time of the Protestant Reformation. According to Ribera, the reign of Antichrist would not be until the last three and one-half years of Daniel's seventieth week.

Jesuit Interpretation and the Protestant Reformers

The Protestant Reformers never abandoned the amillennialism of the Catholic Church. It was through his use of the Scriptures, which the Reformers rightly claimed as their sole authority (*sola Scriptura*), which Ribera was able to use in order to demonstrate the truth of the futurist position. One accusation against futurism is that it was a Catholic effort. However, Martin Luther was also a Catholic when the Holy Spirit illumined his mind to embrace the biblical teaching of justification by faith alone in contrast to Romanism. In like manner, Ribera may have been another individual whose mind the Holy Spirit illumined within great spiritual darkness to understand the Word of God literally.

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[10] Francis D. Nichol, ed., "History of the Interpretation of Daniel," in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953-80), 4:42; James Durham, *A Commentarie Upon the Book of the Revelation* (Edinburgh: Christopher Higgins, 1658), 667.

[11] Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:486.

What needs to be understood is the fact that Ribera contradicted official Catholic dogma. He did present his interpretation in a pamphlet against the Reformers; rather, he composed a major commentary on the Book of Revelation. Indeed, it would be odd for Ribera to formulate a doctrine opposed to official Catholic doctrine. If it is said that Ribera wrote his commentary to convince the Reformers of the futurist system, it is not possible to imagine any Protestant taking seriously the interpretation of a Jesuit bishop. If it is said that he wrote to convince Catholics that the Pope was not the Antichrist, his literal interpretative method would have entirely opposed to the Catholic Church (which would be an argument in favor of the Reformers). It seems more natural to conclude that Ribera's futurism was the result of a literal interpretation of the Word of God, which, in turn, would lead to the conclusion that the Antichrist was an individual who would appear during a seven-year period just before the return of Christ.

Furthermore, any who opposed the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church (especially in Spain) would be identified as the worst type of heretic and would be murdered if the Spanish Inquisition captured them.[12] The Spanish Inquisition began in 1478 and continued well into the eighteenth century, which is during the time Ribera wrote his commentary. It would have taken great courage to publish his teachings, especially in Spain. Perhaps Ribera not only learned that the Reformers were wrong in proclaiming the Catholic Church as the Antichrist, but also the Roman Church was wrong in deliteralizing biblical prophecy. Whatever the explanation, Ribera reached his conclusions through a literal interpretation of Scripture. The accusation that Ribera originated the futurist view does not accurately consider the development of eschatological systems. Larry V. Crutchfield demonstrated meticulously the belief of the early church fathers in the return of the Lord and the establishment of His kingdom on earth.[13]

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[12] Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1858; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 6:533.

[13] Larry V. Crutchfield, "The Early Church Fathers and the Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part I," *The Conservative Theological Journal* 2 (March 1998): 19-31; idem, "The Early Church Fathers and the Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part II," *The Conservative Theological Journal* 2 (June 1998): 123-40; idem, "The Early Church Fathers and the Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part III," *The Conservative Theological Journal* 2 (September 1998): 247-69; idem, "The Early Church Fathers and the Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part IV," *The Conservative Theological Journal*

The position of the early fathers on the tribulation and its relation to the saints and Christ's return, is impossible to completely decipher. Many of them, especially in the first century, did indeed make explicit statements which indicated a belief in the imminent return of Christ. The doctrine of imminency is especially prominent in the writings of the apostolic fathers. It is on the basis of Christ's impending return (e.g., Didache) and on the strength of the literal fulfillment of past prophecy (e.g., Barnabas), that they exhorted the Christian to live a life of purity and faithfulness.

In addition to direct statements on imminency, in some fathers language decidedly associated with the rapture is also found. And still others maintained that the saints will escape the time of persecution under Antichrist in a manner reflective of Revelation 3:10. But due to the circumstances of that period of church history, there was no exact correlation between tribulationism as held by the early fathers and views commonly held today.[14]

Crutchfield mentioned first century fathers, such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Hermas, Barnabas, and second century fathers, such as Tertuallian and Cyprian as a few examples of those early church fathers holding to an imminent return of the Lord. Therefore, the early church held to a futurist, premillennial interpretation of prophecy in a primitive and non-systematized form.[15] A major change to prophetic interpretation

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2 (December 1998): 375-403; idem, "The Early Church Fathers and the Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part V," *The Conservative Theological Journal* 3 (April 1999): 26-52; idem, "The Early Church Fathers and the Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part VI," *The Conservative Theological Journal* 3 (August 1999): 182-97.

[14] Crutchfield, "Foundations of Dispensationalism: Part VI," 194.

[15] Ladd was incorrect when he stated the "futurist, premillennial interpretation" was "not of the pretribulation type" (*Blessed Hope*, 35). Millard J. Erickson attempted to be more truthful: "To be sure, the premillennialism of the church's first centuries may have included belief in a pretribulational rapture of the church . . . while there are in the writings of the early fathers seeds from which the doctrine of the pretribulational rapture could be developed. . . ." (*Contemporary Options in Eschatology: A Study of the Millennium* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977], 112, 131). If the church of the Middle Ages had not abandoned the futurist, premillennialism of the early church, one may only speculate what doctrinal developments may have "grown" from those "seeds" rather than allegoricism inhibiting germination. Posttribulationists will often refer to their view as "historic premillennialism." The term is not accurate though since the eschatological system of the early church is difficult to classify. The difficulty is the consequence of frequent contradictory perspectives of the early church without any conscientious regard for consistency. The early church was principally premillennial (Larry V. Crutchfield, "The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation in the Apostolic Fathers," in *When the Trumpet Sounds*, gen. eds. Thomas Ice and Timothy Demy [Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1995], 91-94, 101). John F. Walvoord

occurred in the second and third centuries with Origen. He utterly ignored the literal, normal meaning of Scripture. It was his method of spiritualizing and allegorizing that became unusually excessive throughout the church. Augustine of Hippo is best known as the father of amillennialism. Augustine dated the beginning of the millennium to the first coming of Christ and taught the kingdom of God was present on earth. He modified Origen's allegorical method by confining it solely to biblical prophecy. Following the teachings of Augustine, the church

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referred to the biblical understanding of the early church fathers "that the coming of the Lord could occur any hour" [*The Return of the Lord* (Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing, 1955), 80]). Rather than adhering to a contemporary form of posttribulationism, the term "imminent intratribulationism" is more accurate. (With the exception of Caius, there is no church father who opposed premillennialism until the advent of Origen's allegorical method of interpretation, which then dominated eschatological thought through the spiritualized [Gnostic] interpretation of Revelation 20 by Augustine, and as a consequence of the legalization of Christianity by Constantine.) In the midst of continual persecution, the early church believed the tribulation was presently upon them and anticipated the imminent return of Jesus Christ within this context. Although indeterminate, the climax of the tribulation would be the rapture of the church; the rapture was therefore an imminent event. The belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ by the early church fathers is a primary aspect of pretribulational thought. The absence of any systematic eschatology by the early church fathers is the consequence of the lack of consistency by them regarding the exact chronology of the premillennial return of Jesus Christ. Since the early church did believe in an imminent return of the Lord, it would seem that any references to them by posttribulationists must explain how they could believe in this doctrine of imminence, yet also thought they were experiencing the tribulation. It is understandable why the early church did not give systematic thought to eschatological doctrines. ("The church soon became involved in problems other than the study of prophecy, however, and church councils in the fourth century and in following centuries were concerned primarily with the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of sin, and various controversies. Paganism and ritualism engulfed the church after the fourth century, and it was not until the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century that Biblical doctrines began to be restored" [John F. Walvoord, *The Return of the Lord* (Grand Rapids: Dunham Publishing, 1955), 81]. The systematic teaching of premillennial pretribulationism is a consequence of the Protestant Reformation. Amillennial and postmillennial theologies essentially deny the principle of *Sola Scriptura* by not applying the Reformation hermeneutic consistently. [Due to their own historical context, the Protestant Reformers themselves cannot be *directly* accused of this deficiency.]) However, it is not clear why the majority of modern posttribulationists deny imminency. Although posttribulationists make frequent appeals to the church fathers for defense of their view, it is clear that there is a lack of continuity between the early church and posttribulationists today. The early church simply did not articulate a systematized form of eschatological doctrine.

developed a sense of triumphalism that remained the dominant view of prophecy until Joachim of Fiore (ca. 1135-1202). Joachim developed the day-year theory understanding the 1,260 days of Revelation as 1,260 years. He taught that Babylon was Rome, the Pope was the Antichrist, and the Age of the Spirit would begin in AD 1260. Joachim's historicism thrived during the Middle Ages (among those who did not merely allegorize prophetic truths) and into the period of the Reformation.[16]

Ribera's futurism and Alcazar's preterism was a product of the Counter Reformation since the majority of the Reformers still followed the historicist views of Joachim. Of course, Ribera and Alcazer interpreted differently, but they were united in their efforts to remove the stigma of Babylon upon Rome and argued any teaching that the Antichrist was Pope from contemporary history. In removing such stigmas, they would free Rome from the accusations raised by the historicism of the Protestant Reformers. *It is wrong though to attribute futurism and preterism to a Counter Reformation movement since both views were in existence, in some form, prior to their writings.* The futurism of Ribera is contended as being refined by the Jesuit theologian and shrewd controversialist, Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) of Italy. In the third book of his *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei Adversus Huius Temporis Haereticos* (1586–93; "Lectures Concerning the Controversies of the Christian Faith against the Heretics of This Time"), Bellarmine argued that the prophecies of the Antichrist in Daniel, Revelation, and throughout Pauline Epistles had no identification to the papacy. Bellarmine sought to demonstrate that the Antichrist was not the papacy; rather, it was a single man who would be revealed at the end times.[17]

Luis de Alcazar (1554-1613) advanced the preterist view of the Book of Revelation. He taught that Nero was the Antichrist and had already fulfilled the prophecies of Revelation 1—11 in the AD 70

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[16] David Larsen, "Joachim of Fiore: The Rebirth of Futurism," *Covenant Quarterly* 60 (2002): 1-15.

[17] Roberti Bellarmini, *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei Adversus Huius Temporis Haereticos*, 3 vols. (Ingolstadt: David Sartorius, 1593-93). See also, James Broderick, *Robert Bellarmine, Saint and Scholar* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1961); Giorgio de Santillana, *The Crime of Galileo* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), 74-109; and, William Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture, Against the Papists, Especially Bellarmine and Stapleton*, trans. and ed. William Fitzgerald (1588; reprint, Cambridge: University Press, 1849).

destruction of Jerusalem. He taught Revelation 12—19 was fulfilled by the fall of pagan Rome in AD 410. Revelation 20 was regarded as final judgment of the Antichrist and day of judgment. Revelation 21 was the current age wherein the New Jerusalem is the Roman Catholic Church.[18]

Both Ribera and Alcazar placed the Antichrist outside the Middle Ages and Protestant Reformation, which is the time that Protestant historicists identify the 1,260 year reign of Antichrist. With the exception of the kingdom of the cults, historicism has few advocates in contemporary times. Protestant historicists believe the reason for this is the outcome of Ribera's futurism and Alcazar's preterism. The result has been an easing of the pressure once felt by the papacy during the Reformation. However, the historicist claim that the idea of the Antichrist as an individual is a recent development by Catholic scholars during the Reformation is not true. McGinn demonstrated that the only view of the Antichrist in the early church was that of an individual.[19]

Protestant historicists believe that Daniel's seventieth week and the 2,300 year-day prophecy have a common beginning. The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 5:15) in 454 BC is the starting point for the 2,300 years and 490 years. Therefore, there are 1,810 year-days remaining after the end of the seventieth week. The entire prophecy of Daniel 9:24-27 is reinterpreted to fit the historicist scheme. Historicists radically reinterpret Daniel 9:24. According to Hebrews 9:26, the prophecy "to make an end of sin" is fulfilled. The forgiveness of the sins of the church is the fulfillment of "make atonement for iniquity." The prophecy "to bring in everlasting righteousness" means to bring in everlasting justification. "To seal up vision and prophecy" is the vision of the 2,300 year-days and the seal placed upon Daniel the prophet (i.e. 490 years are cut-off from the vision of the 2,300 years which means 1,810 years remain). The prophecy "to anoint the most holy" was fulfilled on Pentecost with the outpouring of the Spirit on the church. Historicists offer the same radical reinterpretation to Daniel 9:27. The confirming of the covenant "with the many for one week" was the seven years from AD 29 to 36. The covenant with Israel would we confirmed for the last of the week. During this time, no Gentiles could be accepted. The "middle of the week" was AD 33 when Jesus Christ "put a stop to

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[18] Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 2:507.

[19] Bernard McGinn, *Visions of the End: Apocalyptic Traditions in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 16-17.

sacrifice." His sacrifice would end on the cross in the "middle of the
week." The historicist view has to spiritualize these prophecies grossly in
order to find fulfillment with historical events. Froom blamed the futurist
Protestants (inspired by Jesuits in his view) for the abandonment the
historicist school.

> The inroad of the Futurist theory also served to divert attention and
> understanding from the relationship of the seventy weeks to the terminus of
> the 2300 years. If the seventieth week is separated from the sixty-nine weeks,
> then the inseparable relationship of the remaining 1810 years of the 2300 is
> hidden, and the divine harmony and understanding of the whole is ruptured.
> By fixing the eyes upon a transcendent future, one obscures the epochal events
> of the present. And when the 2300 days are conceived of as but literal time,
> any consideration of a nineteenth-century terminus is obviously puerile.
> Confusion of the Historical School of interpretation, and its final breakdown,
> is now definitely under way.[20]

Tanner wrote similar to Froom.

> Accordingly, towards the close of the century of the Reformation, two of her
> most learned doctors set themselves to the task, each endeavouring by
> different means to accomplish the same end, namely, that of diverting men's
> minds from perceiving the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Antichrist in the
> Papal system. The Jesuit Alcasar devoted himself to bring into prominence the
> *Preterist* method of interpretation . . . and thus endeavoured to show that the
> prophecies of Antichrist were fulfilled before the Popes ever ruled at Rome,
> and therefore could not apply to the Papacy. On the other hand the Jesuit
> Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the Papal Power
> by bringing out the *Futurist* system, which asserts that these prophecies refer
> properly not to the career of the Papacy, but to that of some future supernatural
> individual, who is yet to appear, and to continue in power for three and a half
> years. Thus, as Alford says, the Jesuit Ribera, about A.D. 1580, may be
> regarded as the Founder of the Futurist system in modern times.[21]

Froom perceived the development of the futurist view as a
counter Protestant position in the sixteenth century that is now the
majority among Protestants in the modern church. He credited Samuel R.
Maitland (1792-1866) as the first Protestant to accept Ribera's futurist
interpretation of the Antichrist.[22] Maitland, curate of Christ's Church in
Gloucester, first published *An Enquiry into the Grounds on which the*

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[20] Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 3:658.

[21] Joseph Tanner, *Daniel and the Revelation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), 16-17.

[22] Froom, *Prophetic Faith*, 3:541.

Prophetic Period of Daniel and St. John, Has Been Supposed to Consist of 1260 Years (1826), which was widely read and opposed the day-year theory. James Todd, professor of Hebrew at the University of Dublin, began teaching futurism and published several pamphlets and books. John Newman, a leading figure of the Oxford Tractarian Movement, published a pamphlet that endorsed futurism and eventually converted to Roman Catholicism.[23]

Froom's conspiracy theory falls to understand that Ribera did not originate the futurist view. Ribera revived a view that was widely held by many of the early church fathers. Since premillennial dispensationalism is based upon a futurist interpretation of Daniel and Revelation, Ribera's futurism revived premillennial teaching. However, it needs to be noted that the view was not entirely systematized in his time. Nevertheless, Froom related the development of futurism to another Jesuit priest, the Spaniard, Manuel de Lacunza (1731-1801). Lacunza wrote *La Venida del Mesías en Gloria y Magestad* ("The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty") pseudonymously as Juan Josafa [Rabbi] Ben-Ezra about 1791. The work was entirely premillennial and opposed to Roman Catholicism. Although Lacunza argued for a literal and premillennial second coming, he was not a pretribulationist. He held a peculiar view of a 45-day partial rapture. His book was discussed at the Albury Conference (with Edward Irving in attendance) at the home of Henry Drummond.[24]

Contrary to belief among some dispensationalists, Darby was not present at the Albury Conference. Darby was in attendance at the Powerscourt Conferences (1831-33) which held a lasting influence upon him since previously he held to a historicist premillennialism. The transition from the present church dispensation to the millennial kingdom in which Israel had prominence under Christ's rule was understood by interpreting the seventieth week as future. In regards to his eschatology, Darby was a strong member among the futurists. He believed that all of Revelation, except for the first three chapters, was to occur in the future. Due to his firm belief in a literal interpretation of all the Scriptures, Darby developed a precise design for eschatological events. Darby believed in a distinction between Israel and the church that

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[23] Ibid., 3:655-58.

[24] Harold H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren, 1825-1850* (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1967), 87.

extended even into eternity. He also taught that dispensations were economies of God. He taught that the current church age was a parenthesis between the sixty-ninth and seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy. By the year 1833, Darby had developed a complete systematization of premillennial dispensationalism.

The problem with Froom's conspiracy theory is that he believes premillennial dispensationalism is unbiblical if it bears any connections or similarities to the writings of two Jesuit priests. This author has no problem crediting Ribera with reviving futurism during the Protestant Reformation. God can use both believers and nonbelievers to accomplish His purposes. Furthermore, the real issue is not who developed the futurist view, but is it biblical.

CONCLUSION

Often historicism has thrived during momentous eras of the church (e.g. during persecution or revival). It is clear that classic historicism vigorously embraces the teaching that the Antichrist is an ecclesiastical system (viz. the Roman Catholic Church), and vehemently denies the biblical teaching that the Antichrist will be an individual. The Reformers endured such incredible persecution under the Catholic Church that it was only natural to spiritualize Scripture and understand the Pope to be the Antichrist. It is understandable why the Reformers came to their conclusions! The Reformers abandoned the allegorical method of interpretation (characteristic of Roman Catholicism) in all areas but eschatology. Amillennialism is the prophetic viewpoint of the Catholic Church, and a non-literal millennium was also the prophetic viewpoint of the Protestant Reformers. The reason that many of the Reformers retained the amillennialism of Catholicism was due to the time 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. Thankfully, human personalities will always reach an end, but the Word of God will abide forever, which means that historical theology is an important discipline, but the primary issue is *sola Scriptura* for determining biblical doctrines (unfortunately, the Reformers did not have the opportunity to apply this issue consistently, but the church today can continue their legacy in appreciation).

THE PROPER RELATIONSHIP OF OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW TESTAMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY TO "OBEY THE BIBLE" OR "OBEY GOD"

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In developing a proper Christian walk based upon the ethical teaching of Scripture, one must first address questions as to the identity of a "Christian" and the priority of biblical authority for the making of ethical decisions. According to this author, those who are truly Christian have "heard the word of truth, the gospel of . . . salvation . . . [and thereafter] were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph 1:13). Moreover, this author believes that the Scriptures—both Old and New Testaments—were written by prophets and apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim 3:16), so that their writings were without error. They thus possess, even in translation, preeminence in authority in deciding matters of faith and practice. As the apostle Paul stated, "Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, which you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written [i.e. Scripture]" (1 Cor 4:6).

If other positions or definitions of Christian identity or biblical authority would be assumed, it should be obvious that the outcome of ethical choices would be sometimes vastly different or even opposite. If a person, who does not have the indwelling Holy Spirit, is yet for some reason called a "Christian," his ethical choices may be called the same title by default. However, these choices were not made by a regenerated mind, emotions, and will. Therefore, these choices will always have a wrong motivational basis, a lack of any personal everlasting value, and an inability to please God.[1] Those ethics should not therefore be called, "Christian," though they may be in someway derived from the same Christian Scriptures.

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[1] Except, of course, for the *choice* to respond to the Spirit's illumination of his mind, emotions, and will to believe in the Gospel to be so saved and thus become a Christian.

Though attention in this article will not be taken further to develop the supreme authority of Scriptures in making ethical choices, such a position will be seen as foundational to the integration of all the other competing authorities that desire to influence those choices (e.g. "*tradition*, *reason*, and *experience*").[2] The author agrees with Richard Hays as to the addition of experience to the familiar threefold authority for theology. A hierarchy is produced when tradition itself is seen as a compilation of past reasoning and experiences declared trustworthy, and when Scripture itself is viewed as a divinely inspired compilation of tradition. Scripture's inspired tradition becomes an infallible judge to the real trustworthiness of other declared "traditions," which in turn aid in judging present experiences and in judging predictive reasoning about future experiences. The fallible human element in tradition, reason, and experience is what necessitates keeping Scripture superior to these others, though naturally consistent with and supported by them in some way.

However, even choosing the Scriptures as a final authority for ethical choices is itself an ethical choice; it is determined only after tradition, reason, and experience. A Christian is one who has begun to trust Christ to save him from his sins (i.e. personally admitted, wrong ethical choices). Since a Christian believes that Christ has entered his life spiritually, he must learn to recognize Christ's voice among the voices that claim to speak for Him (i.e. Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience). Comparing thoroughly the "information" from each of these "voices" will convince the Christian that Scripture is the only, *always reliable*, recognizable voice of His Savior (cf. Matt 5:18, 22:29; Luke 16:17, 31; John 5:46-47; 10:35; 14:26; 16:12-13).

Once Scripture is chosen as the prime basis for all ethical decision, some carefulness in understanding the relationship between the Old Testament and New Testament will be required. A testament is a covenant, and a covenant has ethical requirements placed upon its participants. The Christian will need to know the following: (1) what requirements if any of the Old Testament still apply directly; (2) what ones apply differently; and (3) what ones do not apply at all, having been replaced by requirements of the New Testament. Even in the New Testament, some material exists that is related to the responsibilities

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[2] Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 210.

disciples had as they walked with Christ before His passion, and some relates to specific situations of first century local churches. Therefore even in the New Testament there will be a need to discern proper application of ethical norms, which is the task of "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15) that produces a range of ethical paradigms among those that hold Scripture as the final authority.

SURVEY OF APPROACHES FOR BIBLICAL ETHICS

Though there is a much larger group of approaches to biblical ethics than surveyed here, these chosen for overview will give the reader a good start in having some concept for what others have developed. Each of the approaches employ the Scriptures as a primary authority for such matters. Norman Geisler, in *Options in Contemporary Christian Ethics*, divided into three groups of Absolutism, the views he understood as held by most Christians (i.e. what he called "evangelical"). He said that these views arise from the question of what to do when "two or more of [God's] absolutes come into unavoidable conflict."

> Basically, there are three answers to this question. First, unqualified absolutists affirm that all such conflicts are only apparent; they are not real. In short, no two absolute obligations ever come into unavoidable conflict. Second, conflicting absolutism (or the lesser-evil view) admits to real moral conflicts but claims that one is guilty no matter which way he goes. Third, graded absolutism (or the greater-good position) agrees with the lesser-evil view that real moral conflicts do sometimes occur, but maintains that one is personally guiltless if he does the greatest good in that situation.[3]

The premise that God's moral absolutes (i.e. biblical commands to His people) can truly come into "unavoidable conflict" was not developed enough in Geisler's work. Would not God's cause of such a conflict be an immoral thing in itself? The examples that Geisler provided to demonstrate such conflict may give an appearance of conflict, but none are specific examples of God commanding something exactly opposite to another of His commands. Even Geisler's first

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[3] Norman Geisler, *Options in Contemporary Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 67-68. Geisler listed Augustine, Kant, Hodge, and Murray in behalf of the Unqualified Absolutism view; Lutheran Tradition for the Conflicting Absolutism view; and, the Reformed Tradition along with himself for the Graded Absolutism view (ibid., 43, 103).

example of God's command for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac[4] would not literally be against God's command—"Thou shalt not kill," since kill has to be defined to exclude divinely commanded war, capital punishment, and sacrifice. Though he made a good start, Geisler did not develop the biblical observations that would support his view of graded absolutism. What are the weightier matters of the law (Matt 23:23)? And even though he identified that Jesus spoke of lesser and greater commandments (5:19), Geisler neglected to mention that Jesus warned His disciples in this same passage against any who break, or teach to break, any of the lesser commandments.[5] Such a warning must mean that no true conflict between absolutes can exist, but that all divine commands given to an individual are morally absolute and must be obeyed.

Greg Bahnsen thought the Mosaic Law especially delineates the divine commands that should be obeyed. In his *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, Bahnsen attempted to prove that the Old Testament law of God is binding upon believers today.

> New Testament believers are responsible to keep the Older Testamental law, for it has abiding validity until the world passes away. Because abiding validity applies to even the smallest points of God's law. Hence civil magistrates are obligated to enact and enforce the ethical stipulations of social character from the Older Testament.[6]

Bahnsen did specify some distinction within the Old Testament law regarding moral, civil, and ceremonial aspects. Concerning the ceremonial aspect, he wrote:

> The ceremonial observations no longer apply, but their meaning and intention have been eternally validated. The earlier sacrificial ritual was a foreshadowing pointing to Christ (Heb. 10:1), and no repetition of a mere shadow can amount to a substantial reality! That which is the foundation of the *new economy*, in which the outward performance of the ceremonial ritual is not observed, is the *obedience of Christ* (cf. Heb. 10:8f.). His obedience makes

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[4] Ibid., 84

[5] Ibid., 82. In the following sections, Geisler did begin the development of Scripture's "greatest" commandment of love for God, and mentioned with it the warning Jesus gave to not love family "more than" Him.

[6] Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1979), 490.

it no longer necessary for us to obey the ceremonial law in the way which the saints living in the period of *expectation* did.[7]

Bahnsen's argument requires some valid questioning. If indeed the ceremonial observations no longer apply in the same manner because they were allegedly fulfilled in Christ, questions still remain concerning moral and civil observations. Did not Christ fulfill those also? Should the New Testament believer obey those aspects in a different "way" than the Old Testament saint who obeyed those moral and civil requirements? In discussing specific examples of ceremonial Jewish law, Bahnsen said that the prohibitions regarding foods and clothing were part of a "legal system of national separation [that] has been disengaged."[8] Could not all those food regulations fall into the civil aspects of the law that Bahnsen believed were still binding today? If not, could not the disengaging of the "legal system of national separation" include all its civil aspects also?

In his *Principles of Conduct*, at least John Murray recognized that there had to be some kind of law from God even before the Mosaic Law. He developed much of his framework for New Testament obedience on the foundation of what he called "creation ordinances." "These creation ordinances," he said, "as we may call them, are the procreation of offspring, the replenishing of the earth, subduing of the same, dominion over the creatures, labour, the weekly Sabbath, and marriage."[9] His work was a good beginning in demonstrating the use of pre-Mosaic biblical data in aiding some understanding of God's will for man throughout all ages. However, Murray seemed mainly interested in reading the law of God expressed in the Ten Commandments given by Moses into the Genesis narratives. In his preface, he wrote, "The ten commandments, it will surely be admitted, furnish the core of the biblical ethic."[10] Murray admittedly saw ten commandment ordinances in the creation story where no explicit command exists. Concerning what he called "the ordinance of the Sabbath," Murray wrote, "In light of Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 20:11; 31:17 we must also suppose that the archetypal pattern provided by God's own action in the realm of his own working and resting would

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[7] Ibid., 209

[8] Ibid., n. 3.

[9] John Murray, *Principle of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), 27.

[10] Ibid., 7.

have regulated Adam's labour and rest in the realm of his activity."[11] Murray admits, however, this is supposition. Even his reference to Exodus 31:17 brought attention to the fact that God said that the Sabbath "*is* a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever." Could it not therefore be just for Israel specifically?

In his *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics*, Robert McQuilkin provided commendable work in demonstrating the importance of understanding that the Scripture uses the term law in a variety of ways. He concluded his discussion of some of those varieties by noting:

> Because law is used in many different ways and often with several meanings overlapping, it is important to be sure from the context what meaning was intended by the author. Otherwise we shall be applying a teaching concerning the law that does not actually apply. For example, if we speak of being free from the law and use this to refer to the moral law of God when in fact Scripture is referring to the condemnation resulting from the law (Rom. 8:1-2) or the Old Testament system of sacrifices, we are making a great error.[12]

McQuilkin also included a helpful discussion concerning legalism to help answer the following questions: "How is it possible to misuse the law?" and "How can the law be used illegally or unlawfully?"[13] Moreover, he utilized the illustration of mankind's first sin, and provided a necessary outline of what he recognized as the "four roots of sin and the virtues that stand opposite to each: lust, covetousness, pride, and unbelief."[14] From this section through the conclusion of his work, McQuilkin also referenced the Ten Commandments as the foundation for applications to current ethical issues, incorporating also any relevant New Testament material. Similar to Murray, he desired to uphold the Sabbath commandment as universal in its application for today. However his refutation of the relevant New Testament commands against a Sabbath requirement (e.g. Rom 14:5 and Col. 2:16, and his providing of the historical development of the Lord's Day Sabbath is unconvincing proof for it). Although he identified his position as a "nonconflicting absolutist" in the introduction of his work,[15] McQuilkin faltered his

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[11] Ibid., 32.
[12] Robert McQuilkin, *An Introduction to Biblical Ethics* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1989), 50.
[13] Ibid., 67ff.
[14] Ibid., 106ff.
[15] Ibid., 13.

conclusion concerning capital punishment. He stated, "Capital punishment cannot be inherently immoral because God commanded it. On the other hand, God himself did not insist on it, neither for the first murderer, Cain, nor for the most prominent, David. Therefore, it cannot be wrong to show mercy."[16] For God to command something He does not insist for obedience, seems similar to propositions that allege conflict between absolutes, or that some commands are not absolute.

In his *Biblical Christian Ethics*, David Clyde Jones attempted to redeem "casuistry, which is properly 'the careful, devout effort to discover by reflection and discussion, the right course of action in typical circumstances."[17]

> Apparent conflicts between what God forbids and what he requires provoke a twofold analysis to determine what God actually commands and whether the circumstances alter a particular case.
>
> Analysis of how the commandments apply in typical cases begins with careful consideration of the commandments themselves. Absolutes in the sense of objective, universal, exceptionless moral norms can only be formulated by attending carefully to the whole teaching of Scripture in a given area. Many of the dilemmas posed in the evangelical literature on moral conflicts are readily resolvable on this basic principle.[18]

Whether Jones was successful in demonstrating convincing resolutions on the issues he addressed concerning killing, lying and divorce/remarriage under certain cases is dependent upon each reader to determine. However, he was correct to appeal to the whole of Scripture, and to careful analysis of specific commands as one of the main tasks of every biblical ethicist.

A RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE FOR BIBLICAL ETHICS

All biblical ethicists recognize and accept Jesus' statements: "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt 22:37-40). The

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[16] Ibid., 367.

[17] David Clyde Jones, *Biblical Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 138.

[18] Ibid., 140.

Apostle Paul echoed this when at the end of his inspired ethical revelation of a believer's relationship to human government he said, "love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom 13:10). In the context of that epistle, Paul noted specifically that the last half of the Ten Commandments generally represents God's societal law.

All biblical ethicists would also agree that the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the law completely (cf. Matt 5:17; Rom 10:4). The Lord truly loved God His Father with all His heart, and His neighbor as Himself. The fulfillment of the law by Christ is not only His love but also His righteousness. All evangelical ethicists accept that this righteousness of Christ (i.e. the fulfillment of God's law) is imputed to the believer by grace through faith (cf. Rom 4:9-12). Being in Christ, the believer experiences the fulfillment of the righteousness of the law (8:4) and the outpouring of the love of God by the Holy Spirit (5:8). "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Anyone who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ is not truly saved, but accursed (1 Cor 16:22).

From this position of fulfillment, the believer's relationship to any commandment of Scripture, whether in the Old Testament or New Testament, is now interpreted through a living, abiding relationship of love with His Savior. He must "keep" His Lord's commandments if he truly loves Him (John 14:15, 21; 15:10). This is what Paul meant when he said that believers are not "under the law" of the Old Testament (Gal 5:14, 18), but yet is "under the law of Christ" (1 Cor 9:21). How does a believer recognize the commandments that are part of this new law of Christ? What relationship does Christ want his followers to have with commands found in Old Testament law? Are only the commands of Christ recorded by His apostles in the New Testament of final authority for the believer?

Prior to His ascension, Jesus gave what is called the great commission: "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19). Included with this commandment are the commands of going into the entire world, preaching the gospel to everyone (Mark 16:15), and the tasks of baptizing disciples and "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20). It has to be significant that Jesus used "observe" (Gk. τηρεῖν) here instead of "obey" (Gk. ὑπακούω) to emphasize that not all the commands, which He gave to His disciples while He was with them, will have a direct one-to-one relationship with every believer. However, they will all need to be observed, and used to help determine His will in current situations. For instance, few would

retain for believers today commands given to the disciples during their commission to go only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 10:5ff), especially since some of these are specifically superseded by Christ later (cf. Luke 22:36; Matt 28:19ff). However, those commands now fulfill a secondary function in determining God's will for today. In addition to the decrees of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:18-29) and the Apostle Paul's teaching in passages such as Romans 1:16 and Romans 9—11, the Gospel of Matthew itself demonstrates a priority of Gospel ministry "to the Jew first."

There are, however, many commands that the disciples were given during Christ's earthly ministry (recorded in the Gospels) that have not been superseded. These will need to be "observed" as having the same direct application that commands have which were given later by Christ's Spirit to his disciples (recorded in the epistles). The Acts 15 council in Jerusalem also gives some idea on how to utilize other Old Testament commands in current ethical decision-making. The letter mentioned in that passage was written under apostolic authority as a result of that council; it affirmed that no one had been previously commanded by the apostles to teach the new Gentile believers to observe the Mosaic Law (15:24). They were, however, providing a short list of "necessary things" (15:28-29) taken from the Old Testament law that became "decrees to keep" (16:4) by these new Gentile churches. It appears that these Old Testament commands become apostolic commands through the Holy Spirit's guidance (15:28). The same can be said of other Old Testament commands quoted or used as support by the apostles in their epistles (cf. Rom 12:20; 13:9; 1 Cor 14:34; 2 Cor 6:17; Eph 6:2; Heb 3:7ff; 12:5ff; Jas 2:8).

However, these Old Testament quotes are not primary in comparison with the multitude of new commands given by the apostles in the New Testament to be the final authority for believers who dwell under this new dispensation inaugurated at Pentecost (Acts 2). These new commandments are the commandments of Christ that the Apostle John said would characterize the obedience of the true child of God (1 John 2:3-4; 3:22-24; 5:2-3). These are the commandments given through the Apostles (cf. 1 Cor 14:37; 1 Thess 4:2; 2 Pet 3:2). It is true that these are commands supported by the truth of the Old Testament, which is something that is also clearly seen by the declaration in 2 Timothy 3:16 ("All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness").

However, even these New Testament commands present some questions to the issue of ethical decision-making. Are there "weightier" commands among them? Are there commands in the New Testament that have been abrogated by time and culture or something else? How can ethical decisions be made concerning issues where there is no specific command in the New Testament? Though the scope of this article is primarily the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament in obeying God, and though that has been addressed already, there are a few observations to answer these questions using New Testament commands supported by Old Testament material.

There are indeed "weightier" commands in the New Testament, as there were in the Old Testament. Paul hinted to this when he called disciples to obey the command to "bear one another's burden" to "fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2). Therefore, the New Testament has a similar hierarchy of commandments as the Old Testament. The commandment of the Gospel is today's greatest commandment for mankind for man's eternal destiny is secured by obedience to it (Acts 16:31; 17:30; Rom 16:26). However, for the believer there is a focus of obedience that must be subordinate to three other overarching commands.

- Do all to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31)
- Let all things be done unto edification (14:26)
- Become all things to all men that by all means some might be saved (1 Cor 9:22; 11:1)[19]

By these three commands (because of their use of the universal pronoun) it can be readily seen that any ethical decision made must have as its tripartite goal the exaltation of God, the edification of the believer, and the evangelism of the lost. Subordinate to these main three can be added other universally stated commands, some of which may have a more limited application or refer to a limited audience.

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[19] Some may argue with the last command listed, perhaps thinking 1 Corinthians 9:22 was applicable only to the Apostle Paul, and to therefore, relate his evangelistic style to his general command of imitating him (11:1) would be unfair. However, the great commission includes the task of teaching to observe the great commission itself, and so the relationship of these two passages seems more than justified. Furthermore, the preceding context to 11:1 gives the Corinthian believers instruction as to how they were to conduct themselves before an unbeliever so as not to hinder the conscious of the unbeliever from being open to salvation (10:27-33).

- Let all things be done decently and in order (1 Cor 14:40)
- Do all things without complaining or disputing (Phil 2:14)
- Wives be subject to their husband (Eph 5:24)
- Children obey your parents in all things (Col 3:20)
- Bondservants obey in all things your masters (3:22)
- In everything give thanks (1 Thess 5:18)
- Test all things (5:21)
- Be watchful in all things (2 Tim 4:5)
- Demonstrate a pattern of good works in all life (Tit 2:7)
- Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake (1 Pet 2:13)

From the prior listing of commands, it is noticed that occasions may arise where personal ethical decisions may have to be made where obedience to a lower authority is challenged by obedience to a higher one (e.g. when what the lower authority is commanding will violate a specific command in the New Testament). The believer can still, however, demonstrate his submission to that authority by appealing to an alternative that will not violate God's defined will, but yet fulfill that authority's intentions if possible (cf. Dan 1). He also demonstrates his submission by accepting willingly any penalty administered by the human authority that he has disobeyed because of his obedience to God (1 Pet 2:19ff).

All commands in the New Testament must be examined specifically to determine if they also have universal application to all believers. Those given to individuals or groups in historical sections of the New Testament would only have a secondary application, much like the commands of the Old Testament. They can be used as case histories or precedents that will help a believer judge his own situation. For example, just because Jesus commanded the rich young ruler to sell all, this does not transfer as a command to every disciple (Luke 18:22). Nor was Paul's command to the Corinthians to take offerings for Jerusalem on the first day of each week before he arrived, an obligation for church offerings today (1 Cor 16:2). However, though greetings undertake various forms in different cultures, the commanded Christian greeting of a kiss must be transcultural because it is mentioned five times (Rom 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26; 1 Pet 5:14). In addition to studying direct New Testament commands written in the imperative, a

believer must also recognize his Lord's command in the New Testament use of words of obligation such as ὀφείλω (e.g. Rom 15:1) or words of necessity such as δεῖ (e.g. 1 Tim 3:2). Furthermore, lists of sins also serve as clear prohibitions (e.g. Mark 7:20ff; Rom 1:21ff; 1 Cor 6:9ff; Gal 5:19ff; 2 Tim 3:1ff).

What has been stated does not mean that the New Testament should be viewed as an exhaustive rulebook (or an exhausting one either). It is readily noticed that most New Testament commands are general in nature. The Lord must therefore want His disciples to discover specific applications to these commands another way. The Lord must want the believer's relationship to be with Him more directly. Here is where the whole of Scripture must be seen as a type of spiritual "radio" that must be prayerfully tuned (cf. 1 Cor 2:12-16); it is then that the Lord's voice can be individually "heard," and His specific command for the individual's unique case can be discovered and obeyed. Usage of the "case" studies of the Old Testament law and New Testament historical commands, in addition to biblical examples of divine approval or disapproval, can help the believer discern what the Lord has said. Though what he "hears" through this kind of Scriptural meditation truly does become an obligation for his faith, it cannot become man-made commandment to place upon others. Such an understanding of personal ethical decision-making is explained in Romans 14, wherein discussion is focused upon how to deal with a "disputable matter" (14:1) that produces different ethical responses. According to Romans 14, this would imply any matter that is not specifically commanded in the Scripture for the New Testament believer. Paul provided two examples: first the eater and non-eater of meats; and, second, the special day observer and the non-observer. Both on each side of both issues endeavor to please the Lord in their individual choice (14:6), based upon their individual faith (14:22). However, there is no divine command to give concerning either of these matters; otherwise, Paul would have provided one. The weak brother seems to feel more divine restrictions placed upon him than the strong brother does. Both are commanded to pursue peace with each other and the mutual edification of one another (14:19).

Other disputable matters normally occupy large portions of Christian books (e.g. divorce and remarriage, contraception, euthanasia, capital punishment, war, homosexuality, etc). Some of these subjects have New Testament commands directly associated with aspects of them

or they appear in listing of sins in Scripture. However, almost all of these subjects have ethical aspects that are not defined by a specific New Testament command. For those aspects, each individual believer is required to "tune" into the whole of Scripture. He must "fine-tune" by going from any general New Testament commands through any related Old Testament historical example until he or she "hears" for himself or herself what their Lord is instructing them.

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

There is clear teaching concerning the abrogation of the Mosaic Law as a rulebook for the New Testament believer's obedience (1 Tim 1:9; Heb 7:12; 8:13). Neither is the New Testament to be used as a rulebook for sanctification. "Having begun in the Spirit are you now being made perfect by the flesh?" (Gal 3:3). Being in Christ, each believer has by Christ's imputed righteousness already fulfilled the whole law. He now has the love, which is the fulfilling of the law, shed abroad in his heart. Now he is called to "work out this salvation" (Phil 2:12). He does this by demonstrating his love for his Lord by obedience to His commands. These commands are given in mostly general form in the New Testament Scriptures. The specific applications for these commands in addition to the things his Lord wants him to do in areas not commanded are discovered for himself alone by prayerful meditation of the whole of Scripture. He can also discover His Lord's specific leading through the divine authorities given to him, which are found in his family, church, civil government, or employment so long as they do not counter any obvious commandment of Scripture.

BOOK REVIEWS

An Emergent Manifesto of Hope edited by Doug Pagitt and Tony Jones. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 320 pp., paper, $16.99.

An Emergent Manifesto is one of the latest and most important documents from the emergent movement. Edited by two key leaders in the movement, it contains twenty-five chapters, each written by a different emergent author. The diversity of the movement is evident from the background and ministries of these authors who each wrote in his area of expertise. Topics were covered vary widely, with everything from theology to social justice. The entirety of emergent thought may be found somewhere in the book, but if there is one central theme it is the kingdom of God. Emergent has taken a decidedly liberal postmillennial position concerning the kingdom of God: the kingdom is on earth now but will progressively become more like the kingdom of heaven as it is advanced through betterment of the world. As social injustice, disease, poverty, racism, war and ecological concerns are improved, then the kingdom of God will more and more come to earth. In one way or the other this concept of the kingdom is addressed in almost every article. Both the weaknesses of the emergent conversation and its strengths are evident in this volume. Its great weakness continues to be its theological unorthodoxy which is virtually a return to old liberalism. At issue is the following:

- Its concept of the kingdom (e.g. pp. 80-81)
- Its lack of concern for spiritual conversion—the true Gospel (pp. 35-37, 49, 100)
- Egalitarianism (pp. 42, 175-88)
- Rejection of original sin/sin nature (p. 43)
- Inclusivism (pp. 44, 49-50, 190-98)
- Rejection of *sola fide* (pp. 82, 159, 194-95)
- Rejection of *sola scriptura* (pp. 154-56)
- Inability to understand God due to subjectivity (p. 156)
- Orthoparadoxy (chapter 17)

While all of these aberrant views, and many more, are found in *An Emergent Manifesto*, what the reader will not find is a presentation of the true Gospel and any emphasis upon biblical theology. Dan Kimball's

chapter, "Humble Theology," attempted an approach in this direction by recognizing at least some essential beliefs (pp. 216, 222), but he did not go far enough and stood virtually alone among the other authors. One exception is Rodolpho Carrasco's chapter, "A Pound of Social Justice," which was the best essay in the book. Carrasco's article represented the best of emergent: its interest in social justice. His chapter presented a reasoned, well-thought need for God's people to be involved with the needy. Carrasco even wrote of reaching people "with the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and His atoning death on the cross" (p. 250), a concept totally misplaced with the rest of the book. With this balance upon activism for the needy and evangelism of the lost—followed by discipleship—this reviewer would concur since this is exactly the balance of Scripture. Unfortunately this balance is not representative of the emergent movement.

Some of the newest elements of emergent—a movement that continues to emerge—is evident in this volume. For example, McLaren has become tired of postmodernity conversations and wants to move the objective to postcolonialism (pp. 142, 148-49). Postcolonialism was most fully clarified in the last chapter by American Indian Randy Woodley, "Restoring Honor in the Land," in which he advocated some form of restitution to First Nations people because of past colonialism. Barry Taylor saw such a blurring of the lines between emergent Christianity and other religions that he doubted the future of Christianity as a stand-alone religion (p. 165-69). He advocated that Christians "go with the flow" (p. 169). Samir Selmanovic, in the most troubling chapter in the volume, "The Sweet Problem of Inclusiveness: *Finding Our God in the Other,*" would agree. Chapter seventeen by Dwight J. Friesen gave the uncertainty of emergent thought a name (he called it orthoparadoxy), and expressed living with contradiction to maximize relationships. A final new buzz term is the "Shalom of God" (p. 298ff), meaning "shalom is the very DNA of God." Woodley attempted to envelop the whole Christian life and theology around the concept of shalom (p. 299). *An Emergent Manifesto of Hope* is on the cutting edge of where the emergent church is headed. Read to understand what emergent is attempting to do with the faith, but be forewarned because it is a frightening endeavor.

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Christ and Culture Revisited by D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 255 pp., cloth, $24.00.

More than fifty years ago, H. Richard Niebuhr wrote *Christ and Culture* which became the definitive work on how Christians were to interact with their culture. Niebuhr offered five options, illustrating each with individual leaders from church history, and, where possible, from Scripture. D. A. Carson decided to revisit Niebuhr's conclusions with less than a sanguine evaluation. To Carson, one of Niebuhr's categories is unbiblical while each of the other four can be found, to some degree, in Scripture (pp. 60, 200, 206). To formulate thoughts upon any one of Niebuhr's possibilities, to the exclusion of the other three biblical alternatives, would be pure reductionism, something Carson carefully wanted to avoid (pp. 82, 145, 225-26). Carson meandered in his examination by seeking definitions of culture (pp. 1-2, 68-85), postmodernism (pp. 87-94), secularization (p. 116), authentic Christianity (p. 121), and interacting with key cultural leaders such as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Kuyper, in addition to a number of philosophers (p. 99ff). He challenged thoughts and common misconceptions about modernism (pp. 10, 108), Jesus (pp. 19, 39), foundation for belief (pp. 106-12), democracy (pp. 138-39), servant leadership (p. 168), and separation of church and state (pp. 174-94). With the completion of the work, the reader has not received a neaten formula but a wide range of approaches that correspond, at least, within the scope of Scripture. Carson wrote (p. 224):

> What this potted survey ought to tell us is that none of the powerfully advanced theories commonly put forward to explain the relationships between Christ and culture or to implement an improved dynamic is very compelling as a total explanation or an unambiguous mandate. . . . Above all, we must grasp that even the most intellectually robust theory of how things work, or ought to work, falters in practice within a generation or two, because human beings falter.

The best effort of Carson was when he demonstrated that while the Scriptures repeatedly call upon believers to "do good, to show mercy, to care for the poor, to be concerned with matters of justice," these are not the responsibilities given to the church as an institution. Instead, the New Testament reveals, "the initial leaders, the apostles, were careful to carve out for themselves the primacy of teaching the Word of God and prayers

(Acts 6:2)." Later, "when the distinctive duties of pastors/elders/bishops are canvassed the priority of the ministry of the Word and prayer is paramount" (p. 151). It is certainly the obligation of individual Christians to bless the society in which they live, but the mandate to the church, as such, lies in the Word of God and discipleship (pp. 151-52). The balanced Christian will both fulfill the role as good citizen of this earth and as good citizen of the kingdom of God. Carson then demonstrated this dual citizenship through illustrations drawn from the Evangelical Awakening, Abraham Kuyper, and a couple of unnamed contemporary churches (pp. 152-54). While much of the remainder of the book is informative, this reviewer would rather that Carson exhausted more effort exploring these biblical instructions and examples.

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The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies edited by J. W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. 920 pp., paper, $55.00.

Rogerson (emeritus professor of biblical studies, University of Sheffield) and Lieu (professor of New Testament studies, King's College London) have edited an authoritative and advanced analysis of original research into a remarkably diverse and technical discipline. It is important to understand that the work is not encyclopedic, but was designed as a handbook to guide scholars and students in a survey of contemporary biblical studies. Forty-five leading contributors analyzed and reviewed current thought and work in the discipline of biblical studies, and provided critical examination of the development and progression of biblical discussions. *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* is an invaluable reference for scholars and students in communicating historical, linguistic, literary, and philosophical proficiency.

There are, however, some noteworthy elements. Although the publisher referred to "an outstanding international team," the majority of the contributors may be located in England. Of course, with a multiple contributor work, some articles will be better than others. One of the better articles was that of Stanley E. Porter, who provided an excellent discussion of the intimate relationship between the language and translation of the New Testament, in addition to an extensive and multifaceted bibliography. However, the article addressing "apocalyptic

genre" was extremely deficient with one reason being that the contributor failed to interact with contemporary research and scholarship (e.g. a mere seven bibliographical works were provided, ranging in dates from 1955 to 1989; similarly, the article on textual transmission ended the bibliography in 1998).

The articles in this work are divided into seven parts. Part I ("On the Discipline") includes articles addressing the "History of the Discipline in the Last Seventy Years" (section 1) in the "Old Testament" (J. W. Rogerson) and "New Testament" (Robert Morgan). Section 2 addressed "The Impact of Other Disciplines upon Biblical Scholarship" in "Archaeology" (John R. Bartlett), "Ancient Near Eastern Studies: Mesopotamia" (W. G. Lambert), "Ancient Near Eastern Studies: Egypt" (Kenneth Kitchen), "Qumran Studies" (Philip Davies), "Study of the Graeco-Roman World" (Peter Richardson), and "Diaspora and Rabbinic Judaism" (Catherine Hezser). Part II addressed "Languages, Translation and Textual Transmission of the Bible" as applied to "Language and Translation of the Old Testament" (John Elwolde), "Language, Translation, Versions, and Text of the Apocrypha" (Michael A. Knibb), "Language and Translation of the New Testament" (Stanley E. Porter), "Ancient Versions and Textual Transmission of the Old Testament" (Gerard J. Norton), and "Textual Transmission and Versions of the New Testament" (J. N. Birdsall). Part III ("Historical and Social Study of the Bible") contains three sections ("Background and Context," "Institutions of the Old and New Testaments," and "Genres of the Old and New Testaments") with articles addressing the following: "General Problems of Studying the Text of the Bible in order to Reconstruct History and Social Background" (Keith W. Whitelam), "Israel to the End of the Persian Period: History, Social, Political, and Economic Background" (J. W. Rogerson), "Israel from the Rise of Hellenism to 70 CE (Lester L. Grabbe), "The Life and Teaching of Jesus and the Rise of Christianity" (Craig A. Evans), Priesthood, Temple(s), and Sacrifice" (Robert Hayward), "Law in the Old Testament" (Gordon Wenham), "Scribes and Synagogues" (Lester L. Grabbe), "Movements" (Judith M. Lieu), "Prophecy" (Deborah W. Rooke), "Apocalyptic" (Philip Davies), "Wisdom (Katharine J. Dell), "Novella" (Erich S. Gruen), "Gospels" (Richard A. Burridge), and "Letters" (Judith M. Lieu). Part IV addressed "The Composition of the Bible" as related to "The Growth of the Old Testament" (Reinhard G. Kratz), "The Growth of the Apocrypha" (Alison Salvesen), "The Growth of the New Testament" (John M.

Court), and "Authors, Books, and Readers in the Ancient World" (Alan Millard). Part V addressed "Methods in Biblical Scholarship," such as "Archaeology" (John R. Bartlett), "Textual Criticism" (Aire Van der Kooij), "Form, Source, and Redaction Criticism" (Johannes P. Floss), "Rhetorical and New Literary Criticism" (Margaret M. Mitchell), "Feminist Criticism and Related Aspects" (Marie-Theres Wacker), and Social, Political, and Ideological Criticism" (Christopher Rowland). Part VI addressed "The Interpretation of the Bible" as applied to "Old Testament Theology" (Walter Brueggemann), "New Testament Theology" (James D. G. Dunn), "Biblical Theology" (Bernd Janowski), "The Bible in Ethics" (Eryl W. Davies), and "Jewish Interpretation of the Bible" (Jonathan Magonet). Part VII addressed "The Authority of Bible" according to the "Canon" (Lee Martin McDonald), "Fundamentalism" (Harriet A. Harris), and "Historical Criticism and the Authority of the Bible" (J. W. Rogerson). Indexes of subjects, names, and references are also provided to assist research.

Ron J. Bigalke Jr., *author, lecturer, pastor*, **Eternal Ministries**

A Passion for God: The Spiritual Journey of A. W. Tozer by Lyle W. Dorsett. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2008. 224 pp., paper, $14.99.

Readers who prefer biographies of spiritual heroes without flaws may not favor this most recent biography of A. W. Tozer. Dorsett depicted Tozer as a man of God but one with more than his share of flaws. Tozer's passion for God and his intolerance of superficial spirituality are legendary. Some of his books, such as *The Knowledge of the Holy* and *The Pursuit of God,* are Christian classics which have had profound influence upon generations of serious believers. In his lifetime, Tozer was a preacher greatly desired for calling his hearers to a deeper commitment to God. He was especially effective with high school and college age young people who heard a fresh and authentic voice in Tozer's message. However, there were at least three troubling elements in Tozer's life. *First*, his involvement with the Christian and Missionary Alliance was far more active than most realize. The Alliance was founded upon a "Four-fold Gospel": Christ as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and coming King (pp. 74-78). At least two of these elements could present doctrinal problems to many of Tozer's followers. Christ as Sanctifier meant the Holiness movement's understanding of a second

work of grace complete with baptism by the Holy Spirit which supposedly brought the believer into a higher level of Christian life. Christ as Healer meant physical healing was seen as a provision of the atonement. While Tozer apparently did not conduct healing services, he believed in them and participated with others who conducted such services.

Secondly, Tozer's endorsement and love for Catholic mystics is problematic. While not agreeing with all their theology, Tozer truly believed that mystics such as Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Abelard, Frederick Faber, Jeanne Guyon, Meister Eckhart, and Thomas Merton knew something about intimacy with God that the evangelical world had missed. Much of Tozer's methodology for seeking God was not formulated by Scripture but by the mystics. Even his natural tendency to remain aloof from people was justified by Thomas á Kempis' form of Christianity, not the Bible (p. 183). *Thirdly*, while Tozer sought, and apparently found, intimacy with God, he neither sought nor had intimacy with people. After church services, Tozer shunned conversation with adults and often escaped into the nursery. He refused to do counseling, pastoral, or hospital visits. Very few people were ever allowed to know him and this included his family. He rejected involvement with extended family, which was a source of pain for his immediate family. With the exception of his younger child and only daughter, his children felt estranged from their father. Tozer had time for God and preaching but little time for family. However, the greatest estrangement was from his wife Ada. Tozer seemed to lack closeness with Ada almost from the beginning of their marriage, and he did not seem to consider her feelings nor consult her even regarding important matters. A year after Tozer's death, Ada remarried and, when asked about her happiness, consistently replied: "I have never been happier in my life. Aiden (Tozer) loved Jesus Christ, but Leonard Odam loves me" (p. 160). One has to wonder how a man who sought such intimacy with God could shun intimacy with his own wife and children. Perhaps there will never be an answer to that question but it does leave a severe blemish on Tozer's legacy.

Gary E. Gilley, *senior pastor*, **Southern View Chapel**

Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics by William Lane Craig. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008. 416 pp., paper, $26.00.

Craig was for many years a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where he taught apologetics. This work is a product of those classes and, as such, is a weightier apologetic work than many would desire. For those ready for the task, however, *Reasonable Faith* offers a wealth of information. Craig defined apologetics as "a theological discipline that tries to answer the question, what rational defense can be given for the Christian faith?" By this definition, Craig certainly provided an able and rational defense for faith, man, God, creation, Scripture, and Christ. The work sketched the historical development and discussion concerning each of these topics in addition to recent arguments. For example, the "Jesus is either a liar, lunatic or Lord" argument was progressive two hundred years ago. Since 1835, argumentation focused upon legend (i.e. whether the events of the Gospels were myth or reality). Craig provided ample evidence for the reality of those events. Craig's exposure of the deficiency of all philosophical systems that reject God is thoroughly appreciated. Equally helpful for the postmodern age was his chapter five on historical knowledge. With consideration of Richard Rorty's mantra, "truth is what my peers will let me get away with saying," it is most helpful to read a well thought defense concerning the evidence of historical reliability. There are a couple areas of exception. *First*, Craig accepted the Big Bang theory of creation (pp. 101-18). Moreover, in the chapter addressing the historical reliability of the New Testament (which was actually written by Craig Blomberg), there is support for Q (p. 223) and the concept that the Gospel writers often gave the general idea of what Jesus said, not His exact words (p. 207). Realizing that both ideas are dominant in contemporary evangelical scholarship, this reviewer does not agree with either of these sentiments and believes they weaken the understanding of biblical inerrancy. With these exceptions, *A Reasonable Faith* is an excellent volume of evidential apologetics.

Gary E. Gilley, *senior pastor***, Southern View Chapel**

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism by Timothy Keller. New York: Dutton Adult, 2008. 320 pp., cloth, $24.95.

Timothy Keller has pastored Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan since 1989. Throughout his twenty years in New York, Keller has encountered many skeptics who vocalized sincere concerns regarding the Christian faith. *The Reason for God* describes Keller's approach to addressing the most vital questions of the current age, especially those of young people. The first half of the book addressed what Keller believes to be the seven principal objective doubts concerning Christianity: exclusivity, suffering, absolute truth claims, injustice, judgment and hell, science in opposition to Scripture, and literal interpretation of the Bible. The second half of the book is devoted to examining the arguments underlying Christian beliefs. Through use of personal conversations and careful reasoning, Keller not only provided helpful answers to good questions, he also demonstrated how to dialogue with those who have rejected biblical teachings. There is much to commend about *The Reason for God*. If the reader is looking for good responses to relativism, atheism, accusations about injustice perpetrated by the church, or unyielding apologetics on matters such as evidence for God and the fact of Jesus' resurrection, this volume is quite helpful. Keller's approach is gentle and clear. His answers will both encourage the heart of the believer and provide thoughtfulness for unbelievers. Keller's understanding of life is also appreciated. He wrote, "When we build our lives on anything but God, that thing—though a good thing—becomes an enslaving addition, something we have to have to be happy" (p. 78). Once more, "Building our lives on something besides God not only hurts us if we don't get the desire of our hearts, but also if we do" (p. 166). In addition to these fine statements, Keller provided numerous excellent quotes from other sources. Praise for *The Reason for God* by many evangelicals is both understandable and deserved.

  Although this reviewer desires to recommend this work to doubting Christians or interested skeptics, there are four major areas of concern unfortunately. ***First***, it is readily apparent that Keller's understanding of who is a genuine Christian is very broad (pp. x, 6, 41, 87, 116). His summary statement is: "I'll define Christianity as the body of believers who assent to these great ecumenical creeds (Apostolic, Nicene, Calcedonian)" (p. 116). Of course, this broadens the definition of a Christian to include Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and liberal

Protestants. He realized that these groups, in addition to conservative evangelicals, will not agree concerning doctrine absent from the creeds, such as how one is saved and the authority of Scripture (p. 117), but apparently he regarded these things as relatively unimportant. Furthermore, even though he claimed to believe in an evangelical Gospel, he nevertheless regarded those who would reject his understanding of the Gospel as true Christians. No place was this more evident than in his choice of individuals to emulate. He spoke of Christian monks, G. K. Chesterton, Anne Rice, Malcolm Muggeridge, and extensively of novelist Flannery O'Connor (pp. 230-39), who devoted much of her life (and subsequent estate) to Roman Catholicism. It remains a mystery as to how those in denial of *sola fide* can be taunted as excellent models for evangelical Christians.

     Second, a careful reading of *The Reason for God* reveals that Keller's arguments were largely philosophical, not biblical (i.e. little Scripture was employed to answer skeptics). Not all of his arguments lacked a biblical foundation, which would be largely an unfair accusation, but Keller seldom turned to Scripture for his responses, instead relying upon the reasoning of others, most notably and admittedly C. S. Lewis, who was referenced in virtually every chapter. In addition to Lewis, Keller referenced M. Scott Peck, G. K. Chesterton, Karl Barth, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Anne Rice, Soren Kierkegaard, Malcolm Muggeridge, Bono, and Flannery O'Connor. None of these individuals is a true evangelical and while he also mentioned Martin Luther, Jonathan Edwards, and John Stott, the majority of his material emerged from non-evangelical thinkers, which should alarm the mind of discerning readers. Rather than turn to God's Word (which is the biblical paradigm) to defend the faith, concepts were drawn from those who do not accept an authoritative view of Scripture. For example, Keller looked to Kierkegaard to solve the problem of sin (chapter 10), novelists such as Robert Lewis Stevenson, Victor Hugo, and O'Connor in dealing with religion and the gospel (chapter 11), Bonhoeffer and N. T. Wright to explain the (true?) story of the cross (chapter 12), and relied upon his concept of hell and judgment almost exclusively from C. S. Lewis (chapter 5). It is one thing to illustrate biblical truths by the thinking and stories of people; it is something altogether different to allow them to have the final word. Additionally, in a book dedicated to the believer's witness to skeptics, it sets a bad and unbiblical example. Are believers to argue from the point

of philosophy or from the authority of Scripture (since the latter is the model found in the Word)?

Third, Keller's biblical witness was both confusion and trendy. In a book centered upon apologetics, one would expect a clear and biblical Gospel message. *The Reason for God* does not provide such proclamation. The reader is confused by Keller's use of Roman Catholic role models, even though he promised to convey a Protestant message ultimately (p. 117). However, when he had opportunity for a Gospel invitation, he offered three steps (repentance, faith in Christ, and becoming part of the church) without any direct support from Scripture: "Repentance and faith must be done both individually and communally. We do them when we personally approach God in prayer, and also when we publicly identify with Christ by becoming part of the church" (p. 235). Later Keller added, "A person can be assured of belonging to Christ the very moment he or she makes that personal heart transaction with God, nevertheless, everything in the New Testament indicated that Christians should confirm and seal that personal commitment through public, communal action in baptism and becoming part of the church" (p. 236). While one could agree entirely that the Christian should be baptized and join the church, Keller's steps were far too similar to Catholicism's theology of salvation found only through the church. Moreover, there are additional concerns. Relying upon N. T. Wright and the "missional" understanding of Christianity, Keller infused a social dimension into his "gospel" definition. Keller's "gospel" was more than the good news that Christ came to provide reconciliation with God; it was also solving the world's problems of injustice, poverty, and healing the troubles of this earth. He quoted N. T. Wright—not Scripture—to support his view (p. 212).

> The message of the resurrection is that this world matters! That the injustices and pains of this present world must now be addressed with the news that healing, justice, and love have won. . . . If Easter means Jesus Christ is only raised in a spiritual sense—[then] it is only about me, and finding a new dimension in my personal life. But if Jesus Christ is truly risen from the dead, Christianity becomes good news for the whole world—news which warms our hearts precisely because it isn't just about warming hearts. Easter means that in a world where injustice, violence and degradation are endemic, God is not prepared to tolerate such things—and that we will work and plan, with all the energy of God, to implement victory of Jesus over them all.

Keller was clear later regarding his meaning: "The purpose of Jesus' coming is to put the whole world right, to renew and restore the creation, not to escape it. It is not just to bring personal forgiveness and peace, but also justice and *shalom* to the world. . . . The work of the Spirit of God is not only to save souls but also to care and cultivate the face of the earth, the material world" (p. 223). Scripture reveals nothing of such a "gospel" message. Nowhere in the New Testament will one find such a commission given to the people of God. However, a similar message may be identified in the Emergent church, N. T. Wright's New Perspective on Paul, and those reviving the old "social gospel" agenda.

Fourth and lastly, while Keller made some good arguments against atheistic evolution, he, unfortunately, is a strong proponent of theistic evolution (pp. 87-88, 92-95, 128-29), which diminishes the majority of the power of his creationist arguments. While *The Reason for God* provided some excellent answers for questions skeptics are presently asking, this work could be recommended solely to discerning believers as a consequence of the stated problems.

Gary E. Gilley, *senior pastor***, Southern View Chapel**

Jim and Casper Go to Church: Frank Conversation about Faith, Churches, and Well-Meaning Christians by Jim Henderson and Matt Casper. Ventura, CA: Barna Books, 2007. 208 pp., cloth, $17.00.

Jim Henderson, former pastor and co-founder of Off the Map, a ministry that helps Christians communicate with non-Christians, joined Matt Casper (a confirmed atheist) to visit and critique evangelical churches across America. Henderson wanted to communicate to church leaders what the unchurched perceive when they attend church, questions such as "What do first-timers see? How are they treated? What are the central messages they glean? How do they process the experiences? On what basis do they decide whether or not to return" (p. xi). For this purpose, Jim hired Casper to travel the country with him and to provide his observations of church services from an unbeliever's viewpoint. The concept is intriguing, if not doomed from the start. It is flawed because the Lord has already informed believers that the Gospel is foolish to the unbeliever (1 Cor 1:18-25). According to Scripture, when the church gathers it is for the purpose of the people of God coming together to worship, study, pray, partake of the Lord's Supper, fellowship, and then

disperse to be the light of the world in their communities. However, the fact is that many evangelical churches have abandoned the biblical paradigm and counterfeited new models of the church. Such churches are structuring their gatherings to attract the unbeliever and it is of utmost importance that they be aware of how unbelievers respond to their services. *Jim and Casper Go to Church* was written to provide this type of information.

For the research, Jim took Casper to mostly well-known megachurches scattered throughout the country. Renown churches such as Saddleback, the Dream Center, Imago, Mars Hill, Mosaic, Willow Creek, Lakewood, and the Potter's House were visited in addition to a couple of mid-sized churches and a house church. It should be observed that no conservative Bible-centered churches were visited. Average churches in America would have approximately 100 attendees with 90% being under 300, but this range of churches was not included (nor were churches of any size visited in which the teaching of the Word was central, or congregations that understand the biblical model for the church). All churches listed, with possibly one exception, were either seeker-sensitive or emergent. So what did Casper think of the churches he visited? Of the churches most successful at attracting "seekers"— Saddleback, Willow Creek, and Lakewood—he found their performances to be "slick" and "professional" but "contrived and soulless" (pp. 4, 16-16, 18, 32, 39-40, 54). He was also quick to proclaim phoniness in such churches (pp. 43-44, 55, 67, 93, 120, 136-42). He was repulsed by the "prosperity gospel" found in several places and even called Joel Osteen a "bottom-feeder" who is in ministry for the money (pp. 20-21, 123, 127-28, 138). Only in the smaller churches did Casper sense authenticity (e.g. p. 55). And while Casper may be right in his assessment there is one major problem with it: he apparently did not represent the average unbeliever. Megachurches are mega because they have been successful at attracting and retaining unbelievers (hopefully bringing at least some of these to Christ). The fact that Casper may not be attracted by the very things that are appealing to millions informs those who are interested in this book that it does not offer them much in the way of advice. Follow Casper's formula and one's church may be more genuine and authentic but it will be small (and people reading these type of books do not want small churches).

Casper made some good points: the message at most churches he visited was too vague (p. 46); it seems inconsistent to hire non-Christian

musicians to professionalize the performance (p. 56) and expend money into light shows, cameras, and fog machines; and, many pastors "cherry-pick" from the Bible rather than teach it in context (pp. 60, 141-42). As might be expected from an atheist, he did not understand the whole point: he thought the church overemphasizes the blood of Christ (p. 92), dislikes biblical teaching on the role of women in the church (p. 101), distains Christians making truth claims (pp. 110, 145, 166-67, 169), is ignorant of the teachings of Jesus even as he claims to love them (p. 154), is not interested in what Christians believe (he just wanted to know what they do) (pp. 6-7), and believed what Christians should do is make the world a better place to live, not try to save souls. Casper did leave his Christian reader with one profound question: "Is this what Jesus told you guys to do?" His question is one worth pondering with an open Bible.

Jim, on the other hand, is the Christian in this pair and yet he is certainly not the typical evangelical. Jim is clearly sympathetic to the emergent movement, and as a matter of fact, this whole book seems to have been written in disguised form to promote the emergent agenda. Jim claimed to be a Christian who is opened minded about his faith, to such a degree that he apparently could abandon it (p. xxviii); after all, "non-Christians are just like me, except they're not currently interested in Jesus to the same degree I am" (p. xxxv). His ministry teaches people that they "don't have to be a Christian to be a follower of Jesus" (p. 51), and the task of the church is to be missional rather than evangelistic. Henderson repeatedly emphasized the idea that "Jesus came to start a movement that would advance his mission of bringing reality, sanity, and love back to planet Earth" (p. 19). The mission of the church is to provide affordable housing, relieve world suffering, and make the world a better place (pp. 8, 18, 19, 62, 64, 83, 84, 93-95, 100, 164, 167-68). Jim quoted the following with approval: "I realized that 'get saved' evangelism was designed for suburban folk. It had little meaning in an urban context. . . . People in the city are not encumbered primarily with feelings of guilt. Their deepest feelings are of hopelessness" (p. 65).

Jim is not interested in eternal life. He is interested in what he called "bringing the kingdom of God to earth" (pp. 19, 65, 95, 157, 159, 167-68). In response to a question about eternal destiny being the core of Christianity, he wrote (p. 168):

> Not for Casper and not for me. My life with Christ is now. I want to make this world a better place. I want to see Jesus' prayer answered that his Kingdom would come on Earth as it is in heaven. I want to see kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ. I want the incarnate Jesus to express himself through me to the poor in spirit. I want to give a cup of cold water to a little child in Jesus' name. . . . Going to heaven is icing on the cake and I expect Jesus' first words to me upon arrival to simply be "Nice Try."

To Jim the kingdom of God looks more like "Habitat for Humanity or Alcoholics Anonymous" (p. xvi). What Jim missed is that, while all believers recognize their role in improving society, such is not the priority of the church. The church is to tell the world that those who trust in Christ the Lord are "rescued out of the domain of darkness, and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Col 1:13). The church is to proclaim the gospel of redemption, not just improve the planet. Jesus was quite clear that His kingdom was not of this world (John 19:36). Even more disturbing and indicative of Jim's emergent sympathy is his message of uncertainty (pp. 110, 145, 166-67, 169).

> There is a difference between certainty, and confidence or hope. As followers of Jesus, we put our faith in a set of beliefs that we choose to think of as real. We cannot prove any of them – that is why it is called faith. What bothers nonbelievers is when we assert that we "know" something, when they know that none of us can know anything until we die. I am very comfortable asserting my faith and my hope and my confidence that Jesus is God, but I will not say that I know he is God in the way I say I know there is gravity. I hope the story I have bet my life on is true, but neither Casper nor I will know for sure until both of us are dead.

How does one proclaim this kind of "gospel"? Jim is confused about the content of faith, but he is confident about uncertainty.

Jim and Casper Go to Church is virtually no value. Casper's observations, as an unbeliever, are purely the subjective opinions of one man who is totally removed from the mainstream within the masses. Jim's comments were not based in Scripture and did not represent biblical Christianity. The book is a thinly veiled attempt to promote the emergent church agenda, and did a poor work of doing even that.

Gary E. Gilley, *senior pastor***, Southern View Chapel**

***Mark* (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series)** by Ronald J. Kernaghan. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007. 351 pp., cloth, $20.00.

Ronald J. Kernaghan is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), and assistant professor of Presbyterian ministries and pastoral theology at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California (back cover). Understanding Kernaghan's ministry may assist the reader in understanding the theological presuppositions concerning some of his comments and conclusions. Although there is some helpful information in this commentary, there is also much of which to be wary. On the positive side, Kernaghan has an engaging writing style and successfully balanced scholarly research with easy to read comments to which both theologian and Bible teachers might relate. On certain issues his insights were quite helpful. For example, he summarized the importance of the brief description of Jesus praying alone (1:35) with an excellent application: "Whether we pray about the things that are within our power to do reveals a great deal about us . . . we might even speak of prayer as a barometer of faith. In prayer we submit our will to God's. If we do not pray, it is quite possible that we are operating on our own agenda and have refused our proper role as stewards" (pp. 49-50). He also offered a valuable perspective regarding the loss of the fear of God in the culture (pp. 223-24), in which he concluded: "The question is not whether there is a place for fear in worship. The question is what place we give it" (p. 224). Another positive can be seen in how he employed the Greek language in such a manner as to not deter those who do not have training in it. However, his usage of the Greek was also a weakness. Since this is more of a devotional commentary than a technical one, the appeal to the original Greek is minimal and tends to focus on less important details. For example, Kernaghan gave significant emphasis to the Greek adverb *euthys* ("at once"), stating that it "is a very important element of the narrative structure of Mark" (p. 38). Whether his assertion was correct is of little importance. What was significant is that until his discussion of 13:1-37 there was scarcely any other mention of the Greek. Those desiring more assistance in this area will need to look elsewhere.

There are other weaknesses also. Throughout the book he inserted illustrative portions that supposedly correspond to the following section. However, many times those connections are either not made or so obscure that they cannot be identified. For instance, at the outset of

his discussion of 1:1-15 he began with the story of Martin Luther King Jr. and the 1963 march on Washington that culminated in his "I have a dream" speech. However, in the comments to follow, the only connection he made was seen in his statement, "The Gospel of Mark opens with an old and powerful dream" (p. 28). It simply does not; the Gospel opens with demand upon the reader's attention to understand that Jesus was indeed the long awaited Messiah (Christ) of Israel, and to heed the prophetic declarations concerning his forerunner, John the Baptist. Added to the various weaknesses, there were several troubling factors in Kernaghan's work. One of those was seen in what seems to be a left-leaning political agenda mixed with a tendency toward a social gospel. Examples can be seen in several of his illustrative portions, such as references to the liberal social and economic policies of Lyndon B. Johnson (p. 195), the possible need for the "people and institutions that benefited from slavery" (i.e. southern states) to pay reparations (p. 200), anti-war Christian peacemaking teams that went to Iraq prior to the war (p. 210), and at least one story that seemed to place all blame upon the Israeli government for the plight of a Palestinian Christian family who lost their home in Jerusalem (p. 229).

Another troubling aspect of this commentary was his interpretation of the Olivet Discourse. For instance, of Mark 13:14-20, Kernaghan stated, "Much of the description of the ensuing destruction points directly to events of local rather than global significance" (p. 257). Also included in this portion was the assertion that Daniel 12:1 is "apocalyptic rather than prophetic literature" (p. 258). His explanation demonstrated an obvious misunderstanding of prophetic Scripture. With the weightiness of the negatives that must be attributed to this commentary, one should consider whether investing in it would be profitable. Although there is good explanation in Kernaghan's work, it may be well worth the reader's time and money to look elsewhere for a commentary on Mark.

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The Papa Prayer: The Prayer You've Never Prayed (advance reading copy) by Larry Crabb. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007. 224 pp., paper/cloth, $14.99/$21.99.

Unfortunately, there is little positive to commend in *The Papa Prayer*; therefore, the commendations in this work will be brief. *The Papa Prayer* was defined through an acrostic.

> **P**: Present yourself to God without pretense. Be a real person in the relationship. Tell Him whatever is going on inside you that you can identify.

> **A**: Attend to how you're thinking of God. Again, no pretending. Ask yourself, "How am I experiencing God right now?" Is He a vending machine, a frowning father, a distant, cold force? Or is He your gloriously strong but intimate Papa?

> **P**: Purge yourself of anything blocking your relationship with God. Put into words whatever makes you uncomfortable or embarrassed when you're real in your relationship with Him. How are you thinking more about yourself and your satisfaction than about anyone else, including God and His pleasure?

> **A**: Approach God as the "first thing" in your life, as your most valuable treasure, the Person you most want to know. Admit that other people and things really do matter more to you right now, but you long to want God so much that every other good thing in your life becomes a "second-thing" desire.

There is nothing particularly alarming with Crabb's definition. In its simplest form *The Papa Prayer* is "relational prayer" (p. 10). Prayer should not just be a time of demands; it should be a time of relating to God. While Crabb was correct in this concept, he never developed (barely even mentioned) other aspects of prayer such as worship, thanksgiving, and confession. His emphasis was that believers should first relate to God before petitioning Him. As for the remainder of the work, it is extremely deficient. Stylistically, it is exceedingly redundant; the book could have been half the length and said as much. Most importantly the ideas presented were not in any way drawn from Scripture. Crabb's experience and imagination was the impetus for *The Papa Prayer*. What little Scripture Crabb employed was removed from context or distorted (e.g. pp. 29, 45-51, 111, 116, 119). Probably the most "creative" use of Scripture was imposing upon a command by Jesus given to John based on Revelation 1:16-17. "Then the risen Christ placed His right hand on John and spoke. 'Don't be afraid. I'm alive and

because I'm alive, you're alive. *Advance My kingdom until I return with great power to finish the job*'" (p. 118). The last statement is simply not there (maybe Crabb should review Rev 22:18-19). Crabb returned to his old psychology priorities (since he is a psychologist by training) on a number of occasions, and always with disastrous effects (pp. 72, 93, 103, 144-45, and all of chapter 16). The author also introduced his newer devotion to mysticism a number of times (pp. 123, 146, 149). As a matter of fact, in disguised form he promoted all three stages of classic mysticism: purgation, illumination, and union (pp. 146-49). Centering and contemplative prayer was also recommended (pp. 9, 22). Even a little visualization in the form of dancing with God (pp. 19, 107, 163) was evident.

The heart of the book, however, and its chief error, was the goal for *The Papa Prayer*. The prayer is a means by which one may (so called) hear the voice of God—not necessarily audibly but at least inwardly. "Prayer is more about us hearing God than about His hearing us. We're the audience" (p. 71). Crabb promised, "PAPA will speak to you [if you follow Crabb's formula]. He loves a good conversation with His children" (pp. 143-44). Crabb's promise is the attraction that will draw people to his prayer methodology and was the recurring theme throughout (pp. xiv-vi; 8, 9, 12. 13, 19, 71, 80, 85, 124, 143, 165). The reader must ask where in Scripture are such things taught. There were certainly rare occasions in Scripture when God spoke to someone while he was praying, but nowhere is one told that this is either normative or the purpose of prayer. Prayer in the Bible is speaking to God; it is the Scriptures that speak. The most bizarre example Crabb provided was of God waking him early in the morning through means of a clanging noise. "The Holy Spirit was telling me to get my tired body out of bed and write this chapter" (pp. 165-86). Crabb did not find *The Papa Prayer* in the Bible; it was drawn from experience, mysticism, and faulty theology. The only recommendation for Crabb's work is to avoid it and read something like D. A. Carson's *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers.*

Gary E. Gilley, *senior pastor***, Southern View Chapel**

***The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth that Could
Change Everything*** by Brian D. McLaren. Nashville: Thomas Nelson,
2007. 288 pp., paper/cloth, $14.99/$21.99.

McLaren's latest publication is an effort to promote the emergent church
movement. He really did not write anything in *The Secret Message of
Jesus* that is not in his previous volumes, although he did seem to soften
his rhetoric somewhat. For example, having received much criticism for
his previous statement that "clarity is overrated," he now said that he had
some things he wanted to say "clearly" about "what Jesus' message
really was" (p. 7). However, herein lies the problem. McLaren believes
that the church has never understood the real message of Jesus (cf.
appendix 1). Very early, the church "twisted" what Jesus (and Paul)
taught into a gospel of "justification by grace through faith, the free gift
of salvation, Christ being a substitutionary sacrifice for . . . sin" (p. 91).
According to MacLaren, this is not the gospel whatsoever; rather, it is
that "the kingdom of God is at hand" (p. 92). McLaren reasoned that
believers have long misunderstood the true gospel because Jesus'
message was not given in a straightforward manner but in a secret,
codified form. The parables (pp. 39-49) were the primary means of
expression that Jesus used to "conceal His deepest message" (p. 4). As a
result, only now is it possible to unearth the treasure that Jesus hid. The
secret message revealed a secret plan having to do with His kingdom.
The secret plan was not that the Lord came to redeem from sin and bring
God's righteousness, nor that He came to start a new religion. He "came
to start a political, social, religious, artistic, economic, intellectual and
spiritual revolution that would give birth to a new world" (p. 4).

The kingdom, in McLaren's understanding, is present in some
sense now yet needs to be further developed. The agenda of the church
as kingdom people is to assist God in helping "this world become a place
God is at home in, a place God takes pride and pleasure in, a place where
God's dreams become true" (p. 203). The world is not going to be
destroyed and recreated (or refashioned) by God; what will be destroyed
is the "dominating powers that ruin creation" (p. 190). McLaren was
certain that people from all religions—not just Christianity—populate
the kingdom. It is open to all except those who actively oppose it (pp.
163, 167). As a matter of fact it is possible that some Muslims, Buddhist,
and Hindus might "begin to 'take their places at the feast,' discovering
the secret message of Jesus in ways that many Christians have not" (p.

217). Of course, "there is always hope that we Christians will not be the last to rediscover the truth that could change everything" (p. 217).

What is the identity of the secret message of the kingdom? In a word, it is "missional." It is a kingdom focused upon injustice, poverty, education, integrity, the environment, hospitality, medical care, the healing of the earth, pollution, exploitation, greed, etc. (pp. 84-89, 111, 141, 222-25). In McLaren's view, this is the nature of the kingdom, not the redemption of souls. Despite ample evidence to the contrary, both in the past and present, the people who call themselves Christians have supposedly neglected these physical/earthly concerns to focus upon spiritual/heavenly matters. In McLaren's program the spiritual does not receive attention: the kingdom is about saving the planet (p. 128). McLaren believed that if enough people adopt Jesus' secret message the planet might just be rescued (p. 128) and even war will be no more (p. 160). With this perspective of the kingdom it should not be a surprise that Jesus did not come to be a redeemer but a model, that is, a model of love (p. 147, 153). McLaren's well-known imitators of this model are most instructive. They include: Martin Luther King (pp. 147, 154, 157-58, 169), St. Patrick, St Francis, Teresa of Avila, Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa, Gandhi, and Nelson Mandela (p. 78, 125, 169). Not a single one of these individuals would meet the biblical criteria of a true Christian but they constitute McLaren's roster of lead citizens in the kingdom of God. It should not surprise that McLaren listed Dallas Willard, N. T. Wright, Howard Snyder, and Tony Campolo among those who have influenced his thinking (p. 209). McLaren's hoped, "if enough of us see the kingdom [his version]—and seeing it, rethink our lives, and rethinking our lives, believe that the impossible is possible—everything could change" (p. 204). Such a statement is the essence of the gospel of the emergent movement: if enough people become missional the world will be a better place. What a sad substitute for the Gospel message as found in Scripture.

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Fundamentalism and American Culture, 2nd ed. by George M. Marsden. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. 468 pp., paper, $19.99.

Marsden has become the unofficial church historian to focus thoughts and attention upon Fundamentalism. This particular volume, which concerns itself with the origins and early days of the Fundamentalist movement, is one of Marsden's best efforts. While Marsden is not a Fundamentalist himself (and at times it is evident), for the most part he was fairly objective. He recognized that while the movement was a reaction to cultural changes and influenced by philosophical theories such as Scottish Common Sense Realism (pp. 14-16), it nevertheless developed primarily from a literal understanding of Scripture. Fundamentalism's roots were traced to Calvinism, the Holiness Movement, and Dispensationalism. As Fundamentalism became more formative, it was predominately premillennial with a dispensational persuasion. However, resolute Reformed Calvinists, such as J. Gresham Machen, would serve in a vital role (especially intellectually).

Theologically, Fundamentalism was largely a reaction to growing liberalism of the late 1800s and its social gospel. Marsden, unlike some, portrayed the liberals as the original aggressors and the Fundamentalists as those forced into the position of defending the faith. What separated the Fundamentalists from other evangelicals was the militancy with which Fundamentalists responded to liberals. The movement had its defining moment at the Scopes trials in 1925 in which Fundamentalism appeared ridiculous and anti-intellectual. Realizing that they had lost the position of superiority in public opinion, Fundamentalists retreated into their own subculture. They created separatist schools, Bible colleges and seminaries, churches, conferences, and denominations. Whether this was the best choice remains debatable, but the Fundamentalists of the 1920-30s believed they had no other option if they and their view of Scripture was to survive. Eighty years later it appears they were correct.

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The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody
by David W. Bebbington. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005. 288 pp., cloth, $25.00.

Bebbington's work is the third volume in the "A History of Evangelicalism" series, and outlined the exciting nineteenth century developments within Christianity. Bebbington provided four marks that identified evangelicals: their belief in the inspiration and final authority of the Bible, the centrality of the cross and the substitutionary death of Christ, conversion of the lost by faith alone, and activism—an urgency to spread the message of Christ throughout the world. As a result of these characteristics there was a remarkable unity among evangelicals. Even amidst the diversity of doctrinal opinion and philosophical differences, there was a commonality focused around the Gospel. Nevertheless, intramural battles were often volatile. For one thing, Western society was shifting from the "age of reason" (the Enlightenment) to Romanticism with its minimizing of reason and focusing on will, spirit, emotion, and imagination (pp. 148, 162-66). It was also the era in which Calvinism began to diminish and was rapidly replaced by Arminianism within many Christian groups (pp. 133-37). Additionally, there were numerous movements, each with its unique doctrinal emphasis. For example, there was the beginning of the Holiness movement, Keswicks, Pentecostalism, an increasing emphasis and interest in Roman Catholic practices and doctrines, and the renewed popularity of premillennialism (pp. 190-96).

The most troubling aspect of the times was the embryonic formation of liberalism. While liberal views were first presented in ways that seemed compatible with evangelicalism (p. 259), incompatibility was evident as the century continued. Under attack were such essential doctrines as the Fatherhood of God, the atonement, Hell, exclusivism, inspiration of Scripture, and the biblical account of creation (pp. 162-83). It would not be until the beginning of the next century that liberal thinking would come to fruition, but the foundation had been prepared during the late 1800s. On a more positive note, this was the age in which the great emphasis for missions began, and it was a time of great innovation as numerous organizations were founded to spread the Gospel. Methodologies were developed, many of which are still in use today. There was a great fervor for the Lord and evangelicals had much influence, yet it was a time of turbulence and change. Bebbington did a fine work in relating all these various dynamics. Any reader of this work

will have a better understanding of the heritage of evangelicalism and its current influence upon the church.

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Exploring the Gospel of Mark, by John Phillips. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004. 349 pp., cloth, $24.99.

Exploring the Gospel of Luke, by John Phillips. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005. 305 pp., cloth, $23.99.

Phillips' works provide a helpful commentary of two Gospels. His outlines were very useful and were always alliterated. He believed that Mark was the first Gospel written, as early as AD 50 (p. 9) and that Matthew used most of Mark for his Gospel account (p. 16). The first several pages of the Mark commentary presented a good amount of background information. The author correctly concluded that Mark depicted Jesus as a Servant and that the audience was primarily Roman. Phillips rarely addressed any kind of difficult passage such as the mention of Abiathar in Mark 2:25-26. He did, however, write that he preferred the longer ending of Mark (p. 346). Phillips speculated that (1) Luke was a ship's doctor based upon Luke's knowledge of seafaring vessels (as displayed in Acts) and that (2) Luke was a brother of Titus (p. 56). As with Matthew, Luke utilized the Gospel of Mark as one of his sources. The author understood that Luke 22:38 was not a "call to arms" by Jesus. Moreover, Phillips noted, what would be the benefit of just two swords. Indeed Jesus said, "It is enough" as if to indicate no more swords were necessary because there will not be a war. The outline of Luke by Phillips was outstanding, spanning forty-five pages! These two concisely written commentaries are very useful for pastors, Bible study teachers, and others.

Charles Ray, *dean of online studies***, Tyndale Seminary**

Exploring the Epistle of James, by John Phillips. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004. 203 pp., cloth, $20.99.

Exploring the Epistle of Jude, by John Phillips. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2004. 191 pp., cloth, $20.99.

Both of these commentaries satisfy the high expectations readers have come to admire in Phillips' work. They are clear and explain most passages well. The author believed the Epistle of James was written before the Jerusalem Council, sometime between AD 44-50, making it the first New Testament document (p. 10). It could be viewed as "an exposition on the Sermon on the Mount" (ibid). Phillips explained James 2:24 as follows: James was not saying works is the means of salvation but the proof of salvation (p. 90). An unusual statement was found on page 7. Phillips wrote, "His [James'] Christianity never did rise much above Judaism, even though it was Judaism at its best." The commentary on James ended with an appendix of Martin Luther's view of the Epistle. The Jude commentary was written in two major parts. The first contained the author's helpful and alliterative exposition. The second was an expansion of Jude's illustrations. It functions like one large appendix. It addressed seven topics, including the angels that sinned, the way of Cain, and the error of Balaam. These volumes are worth having in one's library.

Charles Ray, *dean of online studies***, Tyndale Seminary**

Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World by Robert E. Webber. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. 240 pp., paper, $21.99.

The thesis of Webber's book, which is well represented by the title, is "you can best think about the future of the faith after you have gone back to the classical tradition" (p. 7). Webber did not desire to reinvent the Christian faith, but merely wanted to "carry forward what the church has affirmed from its beginning" (p. 17). Six stages of church history were identified: the ancient (classical) (100-600), medieval (600-1500), Reformation (1500-1750), modern (1750-1980), and postmodern (1980-). The current postmodern era is, in a sense, a return to an ancient stage, which Webber regarded as the most pure form of Christianity. He

wrote, "It may be said broadly that the story of Christianity moves from a focus on mystery in the classical period, to institution in the medieval era, to individualism in the Reformation era, to reason in the modern era, and now, in the postmodern era, back to mystery" (p. 16). As is evident, Webber did not begin the stages of church history with the apostolic era of the first century. He did not dismiss this era, but called it "primitive Christianity" (p. 13), and regarded it as foundational (although this is a negative word to Webber and postmoderns) to the formation of the church. It was the "classical" period of the second to the seventh century that he devoted atttention for his "ancient" faith (not to the apostolic era).

Webber reasoned: the Apostles were indeed the foundation of the church and gave to the church first the oral, then the written, New Testament Scriptures which were inspired by God. however, it was the responsibility of the ancient church to summarize "the general doctrines of the faith in creedal form" (the "rule of faith") (p. 28). To ensure the accuracy and authority of the creeds, the early Church Fathers and councils were also inspired. "Any writing of a Father of the church, or any council or assembly of the church that stood in the apostolic tradition, was an extension of the principle of inspiration" (p. 177). Consequently, "a writing of Augustine or another Father of the church, or a creed or council that extended or expounded an idea in keeping with apostolic teaching enjoyed a kind of apostolic authority. Because the church was viewed as the one true interpreter of the faith, the authority of the church grew greater and greater. . . ." (p. 177). Therefore, the *solas* approach to the faith is in error, "Scripture, tradition, and authority are not three distinct subjects, but the . . . authority of apostolic interpretation" (p. 186). Since Scripture, tradition, and the church have equal authority, one is not surprised to find the final words in *Ancient-Future Faith* to be as follows: "The postmodern challenge to authority is best met, not by returning to *sola scriptura*, nor by the modern evangelical defense of the Bible, but by returning to the origins of authority in the Christian faith. The church possesses, interprets, guards, and hands down truth" (p. 201). Webber in essence called for a return to Catholicism's understanding of inspiration and authority, if not a complete return to Roman Catholicism.

An interesting feature, one found often in other writers within the emergent church movement, is the idea that there are three early creeds (Apostles, Nicene, and Chalcedon) containing virtually all the doctrine that the church can embrace with certainty. All other confessions and

statements of faith are to be held with tentativeness and even hesitancy (pp. 184, 193-95, 200). Of course, such a persuasion creates a tremendous problem, for the creeds dealt with only a narrow aspect of theology and did not address highly important issues including soteriology (as Webber admitted) (p. 193). Since the creeds did not make an authoritative statement on how one becomes a Christian, this would be one of those doctrines in which one cannot know with certainty. While this allowed for Webber's form of ecumenical Christianity, the exchange is the idea that Scripture cannot show with certainty the way to God. While this issue is the most serious concern with *Ancient-Future Faith*, there are other disturbing elements.

- A *Christus Victor* approach to the work of Christ which misunderstands Christ's purpose in coming, the present power of Satan, and justification (pp. 43, 50-53, 59-60).
- The highly ecumenical content (cf. especially chapter 10).
- The elevation of ancient Christian worship and practices above the teachings of the New Testament (pp. 104-06, 141-49, 151, 157-63).
- The promotion of Roman Catholic mystics, mysticism, and Richard Foster (pp. 121, 128, 131, 135-37).
- Lack of answer to the vital question that if only the church has the authority to interpret Scripture, which church now has that authority (see pp. 195-201)? It would seem that Webber was hoping that the postmodern church would so dismiss all doctrinal distinctives, except for the creeds, that there would be a massive reunification of the church. At that point, the united church would be in a position to formulate more universal creeds, which could be accepted with certainty by the Christian community. Under this scenario it is easy to see that it is the church that actually has authority, not the Scriptures.

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