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The Master's Seminary Journal

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EDITORIAL

Almost a century ago, Robert Frost penned his now-famous poem, "The Road Less Traveled." The poem concludes: "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

I couldn't help but think of these well-known lines when The Master's Seminary gathered a few weeks ago to celebrate its 30th anniversary. Board members, faculty, students and guests gathered into a packed family center to commemorate the occasion, to reflect on the first three decades, and to give thanks for God's abundant blessings. The evening culminated in a farewell address by Dr. Richard Mayhue as he reflected on God's sovereign greatness in the history of TMS. For more than a quarter century, he gave leadership to the seminary, orchestrating its growth to over 400 students and 1,600 graduates who are ministering in 45 countries on six continents.

Like the traveler in Robert Frost's poem, the seminary was born in the midst of an onslaught of divergent influences. It stood at a crossroads. Pragmatism was rapidly infiltrating the world of seminary education. In an attempt to produce a contemporary pastoral model that would make churches grow quickly, seminaries were being lured down the path of expediency without fully assessing the deadly consequences of abandoning the timeless, scriptural prescriptions for the church.

With the NT blueprint for the church being rapidly replaced by models that had far more to do with marketing, demographics, and sociological influences than with God's truth in Scripture, the time was right for a new seminary to be born—a seminary committed to developing its curriculum around a biblically defensible theology of ministry. As noted nineteenth-century seminary professor Benjamin Warfield expressed: "A low view of the functions of ministry will naturally carry with it a low conception of the training necessary for it. . . . And a high view of the functions of ministry on evangelical lines inevitably produces a high conception of the training which is needed to prepare men for the exercise of these high functions."[1]

Choosing the road less traveled, TMS resolved to maintain a high view of the ministry and, in doing so, bound itself to three commitments. First, the seminary committed to provide an environment that fosters the building of godly character in the lives of the men. Understanding that Scripture clearly marks godly character as the cornerstone of every truly lasting ministry, the seminary led a renewed commitment to this biblical prerequisite by, among other things, incorporating discipleship

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[1] Benjamin B. Warfield, "Our Seminary Curriculum: What Ought It to Be?" *The Bible Student and Teacher* XI, no. 1 (July to December, 1909): 182.

groups into its curriculum. The administration, faculty, and staff were convinced that godly church leaders respond best to the sanctifying work of God's Spirit, who empowers the treasures of the Word, ignites the fires of spiritual passion, sharpens the eye of visionary leadership, and strengthens the hand of service. It all begins with godly character. Ministry cannot do without it.

Second, the seminary committed itself to expanding the depth and breadth of biblical knowledge in each student. Carl Henry has observed, "No Christian movement can impact society if its leaders are ignorant of or continually undermining the veracity and applicability of its charter documents."[2] Without a facility in the original languages, one is left to interpret the Bible subjectively, never certain of the accuracy of one's own conclusions or the reliability of a commentator's assertions. Without a linguistic facility in biblical Greek and Hebrew and a theological framework forged in the fires of exegesis and hammered out on the anvil of faithful study, the next generation of seminary trained pastors would be unable to provide their congregations with a secure anchor to weather "every wind of doctrine."

Third, the seminary committed itself to developing and enhancing the ministry skills of each student. The dictionary notes that "seminary" is derived from "seminal," which means "seed-plot." Understanding that the seminary is a garden, a protected place where plants are watered, tended, nurtured, and sometimes pruned, TMS put down its roots in the center of everyday ministry. Knowing that ministry preparation is "caught" as well as "taught," the seminary committed itself to teaching ministry skills in an environment of ministry. Like going to medical school at a hospital, the vibrancy of Grace Community Church provided an ideal location for maximizing the honing of ministry skills. Even the accrediting agency recognized it, remarking that, "The seminary has been very intentional in its development of an M.Div. program with few analogies in the U.S. . . . The model itself—combining church-based involvement, personal discipleship, and academic study—is worth applauding…. The seminary is on the cutting-edge of reform of seminary education in this regard."[3]

Thirty years after its founding, TMS' commitment to these three principles is stronger than ever. By God's grace, these principles will impact churches around the world for centuries and will reverberate in the lives of people for generations to come. On that inaugural day, August 28, 1986, thirty years ago, the first step was taken on the road less traveled. It has made, and continues to make, all the difference.

Sola Scriptura et soli Deo gloria.

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[2] Carl F. H. Henry, "The Renewal of Theological Education," *Vocatio* (Summer 1989), 4.

[3] Western Association of Schools and Colleges, February 1992 Report.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION IN REVELATION 20

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Revelation 20 is often seen as the most significant biblical passage in the debate over the timing and nature of the millennium. In verses 4–6, John describes individuals who "came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (v. 4) and calls this coming to life "the first resurrection" (v. 5). According to premillennialism, this passage provides compelling evidence for two physical resurrections separated by a thousand years—a resurrection of the righteous at the Second Coming (vv. 4–6) and a resurrection of the wicked after the millennial reign of Christ (vv. 11–15). In contrast, amillennialists argue that the first resurrection is not physical but spiritual, referring to either (a) the regeneration of the believer or (b) the believer's entrance into heaven at the point of death. But a careful evaluation of the amillennial arguments for these views demonstrates that the first resurrection cannot be spiritual in nature and therefore must refer to the first of two physical resurrections in Revelation 20, just as premillennialism teaches.

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Introduction

As noted in a previous article, Revelation 20 has long been considered the clearest and most convincing argument for the eschatology of premillennialism.[1] But in recent years, an increasing number of amillennial voices have insisted that Revelation 20 actually provides more compelling evidence for their own view. For example, Sam Storms cites Revelation 20 as "a strong and immovable support for the amillennial perspective;"[2] Kim Riddlebarger describes it as "the weak link in any form of premillennialism;"[3] and Dean Davis argues that "the amillennial approach gives us a

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[1] Matt Waymeyer, "The Binding of Satan in Revelation 20," *MSJ* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2015): 19.

[2] Sam Storms, *Kingdom Come: The Amillennial Alternative* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Mentor, 2013), 137.

[3] Kim Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism: Understanding the End Times*, expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), 235. According to Riddlebarger, Revelation 20 is "the most important biblical passage dealing with the subject of the millennium" (223).

remarkably clear, consistent, and exegetically natural interpretation of this notoriously challenging text."[4]

One of the most significant issues in Revelation 20 involves the nature of the "first resurrection" in verses 4–6.[5] This resurrection has been described as one of the most hotly disputed issues in all of Scripture[6] and "the focal point of the eschatological hostilities which divide premillennialists from amillennialists."[7] Because this resurrection is described as "first"—and because John depicts the rest of the dead coming to life after the thousand years (v. 5a)—premillennialists believe Revelation 20 foresees two physical resurrections separated by the millennial reign of Christ. These two resurrections are often considered not only a "major exegetical problem for amillennialism,"[8] but also "the linchpin of the premillennial position."[9]

In response, amillennialists reject this idea of two physical resurrections separated by a thousand years, insisting instead that the first resurrection is a *spiritual* resurrection that takes place throughout the present age. More specifically, amillennialists interpret the first resurrection as either (a) the regeneration of believers at the point of conversion or (b) the entrance of believers into life in heaven at the point of death. In doing so, amillennialists argue for a single, physical resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked when Jesus returns at the end of the age.

The purpose of this article is to reexamine this key passage in the millennial debate, with a focus on the amillennial interpretation of the first resurrection. After setting forth the premillennial argument from Revelation 20:4–6, this study will carefully evaluate the amillennial view that the first resurrection is spiritual in nature. It will then examine the two specific amillennial views on the identity of this spiritual resurrection. In the process, this article will demonstrate that the amillennial arguments for a spiritual resurrection in Revelation 20:4–6 fall short, and therefore that this passage provides compelling evidence for the eschatology of premillennialism.

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[4] Dean Davis, *The High King of Heaven: Discovering the Master Keys to the Great End Time Debate* (Enumclaw, WA: WinePress Publishing, 2014), 475. According to Davis, "Premillennial interpretations of Revelation 20 shatter the simplicity, vitiate the power, and becloud the glory of NT eschatology, thereby plunging Christ's Church into needless confusion and controversy. Meanwhile, the amillennial interpretation achieves the exact opposite: It wonderfully opens up the meaning of the text itself, further illumines the structure and message of the book as a whole, harmonizes perfectly with the rest of NT theology…and prepares, strengthens, and encourages Christ's pilgrim Church with a simple, powerful, and unspeakably majestic vision of the Consummation of all things at the end of the age" (501–2).

[5] Other key exegetical issues include the timing of Satan's binding in verses 1–3, the duration of the thousand years in verses 1–6, and the chronology of John's visions in Revelation 19–20. For a brief discussion of these issues, see Matt Waymeyer, "What About Revelation 20?," in *Christ's Prophetic Plans: A Futuristic Premillennial Primer*, eds. John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue (Chicago: Moody Publishers," 2012), 123–40. For an in-depth analysis of the binding of Satan, see Waymeyer, "The Binding of Satan in Revelation 20," 19–46.

[6] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 242.

[7] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 451.

[8] Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985), 1214.

[9] Millard J. Erickson, *A Basic Guide to Eschatology: Making Sense of the Millennium* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 97.

The Premillennial View of the First Resurrection

In Revelation 20:4–6, the apostle John continues his description of the thousand years, focusing on the resurrection and millennial reign of those who are martyred for their faith in Christ:

> Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years (Rev 20:4–6).

The most highly debated part of this passage concerns the meaning of the phrase "they came to life" (ἔζησαν) in verse 4[10] and the nature of the "first resurrection" (ἡ ἀνάστασις ἡ πρώτη) in verse 5.[11] According to premillennialism, this "first resurrection" is the first of two physical resurrections in Revelation 20, which are separated by a thousand years. The first is a resurrection of the righteous, the faithful believers who are martyred during the Tribulation (v. 4), whereas the second is a resurrection of the wicked, "the rest of the dead" who "did not come to life until the thousand years were completed" (v. 5). Those raised in the first resurrection reign with Christ for a thousand years (v. 4), and those raised in the second resurrection come before the throne of final judgment after the millennium (vv. 11–15). As premillennialist John Walvoord writes:

> The sharp contrast in the passage is between those who are raised at the beginning of the thousand years and those who are raised at the end. Both are physical resurrections, but those who are raised at the beginning of the Millennium, designated as the "first resurrection," are contrasted to those who "come to life" at

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[10] The common translation "they came to life" in verse 4 interprets ἔζησαν as an ingressive aorist. Hughes argues that the aorist tense of ζάω (ἔζησαν) is *constative* ("they lived") rather than *ingressive* ("they came to life") (James A. Hughes, "Revelation 20:4–6 and the Question of the Millennium," *WTJ* 35, no. 3 [Spring 1973]: 290–92), but his arguments were sufficiently refuted by Jack S. Deere ("Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4–6," *BSac* 135, no. 537 [Jan 1978]: 66–67). Most amillennialists now agree with Deere, including G. K. Beale who writes that "it is better to view it as ingressive on analogy with [Rev] 2:8 and 13:14, as well as Luke 15:32 and Rom. 14:9" (G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999], 1000).

[11] The first part of Rev 20:5 ("The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed") is parenthetical. Therefore, when John refers to the "first resurrection" in the next part of verse 5, he is pointing back to the coming to life described at the end of verse 4. This appears to be the general consensus on both sides of the millennial debate.

the end of the Millennium, who face judgment according to Revelation 20:11–15.[12]

As Robert Saucy explains, this contrast between the two physical resurrections has significant implications for the millennial debate:

> The mention of two resurrections separated by a period of a thousand years, along with the reference to the participants in the first resurrection as reigning with Christ, clearly points to a millennial period after the coming of Christ, when the first resurrection occurs.[13]

In this way, the physical nature of the "first resurrection" provides convincing support for the concept of a millennial kingdom between the present age and the eternal state and therefore presents a difficult problem for amillennialism.

The Premillennial Argument

The primary reason the "first resurrection" in Revelation 20 must refer to a physical resurrection concerns the terminology itself. The word "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) is used almost exclusively in the New Testament to refer to "the elimination of the condition of physical death through bodily resurrection."[14] The word is used 41 times in the New Testament, and in 38 out of its 39 uses outside of Revelation 20, it refers to a physical resurrection. The lone exception is its metaphorical use in Luke 2:34 where it cannot refer to bodily resurrection because physical death is absent from the immediate context.[15]

This alone does not prove that ἀνάστασις refers to a physical resurrection in Revelation 20—for it is possible that John is using this word in a unique way—but it does place a heavy burden of proof on those who say otherwise. Physical resurrection is clearly the concept that would have immediately arisen in the minds of John's

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[12] John F. Walvoord, "The Theological Significance of Revelation 20:1–6," in *Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*, eds. Stanley D. Toussaint and Charles H. Dyer (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 236.

[13] Robert L. Saucy, *Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1993), 276. The closest and most reasonable antecedent of "they" in the verb "they sat" (ἐκαθίσαν) in Rev 20:4 is "the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" from Rev 19:14, that is, the people of God who accompany Christ at His return (David J. MacLeod, "The Fourth 'Last Thing': The Millennial Kingdom of Christ (Rev. 20:4–6)," *BSac* 157, no. 625 [Jan 2000]: 55; Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1995], 414). But as Craig Blaising observes, "The identity of the occupants of these thrones is not crucial to resolving the millennial question" (Craig A. Blaising, "Premillennialism," in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, ed. Darrell L. Bock [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1999], 221).

[14] Blaising, "Premillennialism," 224.

[15] *BDAG*, 71–72; Frederick William Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 28; Deere, "Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4–6," 71; Blaising, "Premillennialism," 224; William J. Webb, "Revelation 20: Exegetical Considerations," *The Baptist Review of Theology* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 36; A. J. Gordon, "The First Resurrection," in *Premillennial Essays*, ed. Nathaniel West (Minneapolis: Bryant Baptist Publications, 1981), 82. In Luke 2:34, ἀνάστασις is used in its etymological sense of "rising" (MacLeod, "The Fourth 'Last Thing,'" 59).

original readers upon seeing the word ἀνάστασις, and therefore, if it refers to anything else in Revelation 20, this must be obvious from the immediate context.

In contrast, the immediate context confirms that John is indeed describing a physical resurrection. Because the apostle describes the subjects of this resurrection as those who were *martyred*—and follows this with the statement that "they came to life and reigned" (Rev 20:4)—this strongly implies that this new life is physical.[16] In other words, interpreting the first resurrection as a bodily resurrection fits the context in which John sees those who were killed in the physical realm coming back to life in the physical realm. As Alva J. McClain notes, "If the people involved were beheaded physically, and then lived again, common sense would suggest that they received back the same category of life that had been lost."[17] This confirms the standard meaning of ἀνάστασις in Revelation 20:5 as a physical resurrection.

In addition, since the physical resurrection of "the rest of the dead" in verse 5a is described with the word ἔζησαν ("they came to life"), and the identical form of the same verb ἔζησαν ("they came to life") is used to describe the resurrection of the saints at the end of verse 4, this resurrection must also be physical.[18] The issue here is not merely the repetition of the same form of the same verb, but also the way in which these two verbs are connected. When John writes, in effect, "Some of the dead ἔζησαν (v. 4b), but the rest of the dead did not ἔζησαν until later (v. 5a)," he makes it clear that the verb refers to the same act or experience in both uses. Therefore, whatever happened to one group also happened to the other—if one resurrection is physical, the other must be physical as well.[19]

These two physical resurrections—believers prior to the thousand years and unbelievers afterward—could hardly be stated more clearly:

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[16] Saucy, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 275.

[17] Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), 488. As Gordon explains, when Paul describes those who were made alive in Eph 2:4–7 as having previously been "dead in [their] trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1), one can "infer immediately and rightly that a spiritual revivification has taken place, because the condition on which the change took effect was spiritual. And so here [in Rev 20:4], the condition of literal death having been so unmistakably pointed out, the inference is immediate and inevitable that the quickening is a literal and corporeal quickening" ("The First Resurrection," 80).

[18] Harold W. Hoehner, "Evidence from Revelation 20," in *A Case for Premillennialism: A New Consensus*, eds. Donald K. Campbell and Jeffrey L. Townsend (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 254; Jeffrey L. Townsend, "Is the Present Age the Millennium?," *BSac* 140, no. 559 (July 1983): 219; MacLeod, "The Fourth 'Last Thing,'" 59; George Eldon Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1952), 148–49; C. Marvin Pate, "A Progressive Dispensationalist View of Revelation," in *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*, ed. C. Marvin Pate (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1998), 171. In addition, as Thomas notes, whenever the verb ζάω ("to live") is used in the context of bodily death in the New Testament, it always speaks of bodily resurrection (e.g., John 11:25; Acts 1:3; 9:41) (*Revelation 8–22*, 417).

[19] As Ladd writes, "The same experience overtook both groups: one at the beginning, one at the end of the millennial period" (George Eldon Ladd, "Revelation 20 and the Millennium," *RevExp* 57, no. 2 [April 1960]: 169).

First Resurrection:	"they *came to life* [ἔζησαν] and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (Rev 20:4)
Second Resurrection:	"the rest of the dead did not *come to life* [ἔζησαν] until the thousand years were completed" (Rev 20:5a)

Subsequently, in a vision of events taking place after the thousand years, the apostle John describes the resurrection of the wicked unto judgment: "And the sea *gave up the dead* which were in it, and death and Hades *gave up the dead* which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds" (Rev 20:13; emphasis added). This is John's description of the rest of the dead coming to life after the thousand years, a clear reference to the second of two physical resurrections separated by the millennial reign of Christ. For this reason, the use of the word ἀνάστα-σις, in combination with these other clear indications in the immediate context, support the premillennial view that the first resurrection is physical in nature.

The Amillennial Objection

The most common objection to this view is that the Bible elsewhere teaches a single, general resurrection in which the righteous and the wicked will be raised at the same time (Dan 12:2; John 5:28–29; Acts 24:15).[20] As Kenneth Gentry explains:

> Why should we believe that the New Testament everywhere teaches a general, singular resurrection on the last day, only to discover later in the most difficult book of the Bible that there are actually two specific, distantly separated resurrections for different classes of people?[21]

According to amillennialists, because both the righteous and the wicked will be raised at the same time when Jesus returns, Revelation 20 cannot teach two physical resurrections separated by a thousand years. As amillennialist Kim Riddlebarger writes, "Scripture clearly teaches that the resurrection and judgment of the righteous and unrighteous will occur at the same time, thus eliminating the possibility of an earthly millennial age to dawn after the Lord's return."[22]

In response to this objection, Daniel 12:2, John 5:28–29, and Acts 24:15 do not actually preclude the possibility of two distinct resurrections separated by a period of time. In fact, all three passages speak of a resurrection of the righteous and a resurrection of the wicked—and always in that same order (the same as in Revelation

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[20] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1939), 715; Floyd Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1942), 121; Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 232.

[21] Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., "A Postmillennial Response to Craig A. Blaising," in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, 243. Gentry is postmillennial, but this objection is raised by amillennialists and postmillennialists alike.

[22] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 166.

20)[23]—and they neither state nor require that the two resurrections happen simultaneously. They simply do not specify one way or the other.[24] As Wayne Grudem explains:

> All of these verses, in the absence of Revelation 20:5–6, might or might not be speaking of a single future time of resurrection. But with the explicit teaching of Revelation 20:5–6 about two resurrections, these verses must be understood to refer to the future certainty of a resurrection for each type of person, without specifying that those resurrections will be separated in time.[25]

Even John 5:28–29, which speaks of "an hour" in which these two resurrections will occur, does not require that both resurrections take place at the same time. John frequently uses the word "hour" (ὥρα) in reference to an extended period of time (John 16:2), sometimes as long as the entire present age (John 4:21, 23; 1 John 2:18). In fact, this is how he uses the word "hour" just three verses earlier in John 5:25.[26] As Craig Blaising explains, "If the eschatological hour can be extended over two thousand years, it is not impossible that a thousand years might transpire between the resurrection of the just and the resurrection of the unjust."[27]

As most biblical interpreters recognize,[28] sometimes a given prophecy will predict two or more future events and present them in such a way that it appears they will occur simultaneously, and yet later revelation indicates a significant gap of time separating them.[29] Commonly referred to as "telescoping," "prophetic perspective," or "prophetic foreshortening," this phenomenon is often compared to seeing two

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[23] This is especially clear in John 5:29 where Jesus speaks of two different physical resurrections: "a resurrection of life" and "a resurrection of judgment." According to McClain, this passage lays an exegetical foundation for the two resurrections in Revelation 20 (*The Greatness of the Kingdom*, 489).

[24] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), 1119; Herman A. Hoyt, "A Dispensational Premillennial Response," in *The Meaning of the Millennium*, ed. Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 195.

[25] Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1120.

[26] Ibid., 1119.

[27] Craig A. Blaising, "A Premillennial Response to Robert B. Strimple," in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, 150.

[28] See Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2003), 200; Walter C. Kaiser and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1994), 143–44; Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2010), 210; William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1993), 304–5; Henry A. Virkler and Karelynne Gerber Ayayo, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 169–70; Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1985), 63–68; J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2001), 370–71; Kenneth L. Barker, "The Scope and Center of Old and New Testament Theology," in *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church: The Search for Definition*, eds. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1992), 324–25; George Eldon Ladd, *The Presence of the Future: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 64–65.

[29] See, for example, Isa 9:6–7; 40:1–5; 61:1–2 (cf. Luke 4:16–21); Jer 29:10–14; Zech 9:9–10; and Joel 2:28–32.

mountain peaks off in the distance—initially they appear to be right next to each other, but a closer look reveals that they are separated by a valley.[30]

Most amillennialists recognize this use of prophetic perspective.[31] As Kim Riddlebarger explains: "There are specific instances in the Scriptures when a prophet foretold what appears to be a single future event, but as history unfolded it became clear that the original prophecy referred to multiple events."[32] According to Riddlebarger, the mountain peak analogy is a fitting way to illustrate this dynamic:

> As I stand in the greater Los Angeles basin and look toward the mountains to the northeast, I see a single mountainous ridge on the horizon. Yet, if I were to drive directly toward the mountains, I would soon realize that what appeared to be a single ridge was actually a series of hills, valleys, and mountains separated by many miles. So it is with some Old Testament prophecies.[33]

For example, there is no clear evidence in the Old Testament alone that there would be two distinct comings of the Messiah separated by a significant period of time. But once later revelation in the New Testament arrived, it became clear that what the Old Testament writers seemed to depict as a single event must now be recognized as two events with a gap of time separating the two.[34] In the same way, when it comes to the future resurrection, what the earlier writers of Scripture seemed to depict as a single resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked (Dan 12:2; John 5:28–29; Acts 24:15) must now be recognized as involving two resurrections, a resurrection of the righteous and a resurrection of the wicked a thousand years later (Rev 20:1–15). In other words, while these other passages do not specify the timing of the two resurrections, in Revelation 20:5 this time element

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[30] Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 304; Kaiser and Silva, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 144; Virkler and Ayayo, *Hermeneutics*, 169–70. As J. Barton Payne observes, "Biblical prophecy may leap from one prominent peak in predictive topography to another, without notice of the valley between, which may involve no inconsiderable lapse in chronology" (*The Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* [Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980], 137).

[31] E.g., Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 71; Anthony Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 9, 12, 18, 21–22; Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 29; Donald Garlington, "Reigning with Christ: Revelation 20:1–6 and the Question of the Millennium," *Reformation & Revival* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1997): 60–61; cf. Davis, *The High King of Heaven*, 247–48.

[32] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 71.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 89. As a more specific example, the events prophesied in Isa 61:1–2 appear to take place at the same time, and yet later revelation in Luke 4:16–21 clarifies a gap of time between the first-century fulfillment of Isa 61:1–2a and the eschatological fulfillment of Isa 61:2b. Luke 4 does not reinterpret or distort the original meaning of Isa 61:1–2, but it does bring clarity to the timing of the events that were prophesied. Two additional examples can be found in Isa 9:6–7 and Zech 9:9–10. In Isa 9:6–7 alone, there is no clear evidence that a lengthy interval of time would separate the birth of Christ at His first coming (Isa 9:6a) from the reign of Christ at His second coming (Isa 9:6b–7), and yet later revelation clarifies the existence of this temporal gap between them. Likewise, the interval between the first coming in Zech 9:9 and the second coming in Zech 9:10 could not be perceived in that passage alone, and yet subsequent revelation clarified that what the prophet depicted as a single event must now be recognized as involving two.

is specified—one thousand years will separate these two physical resurrections. Recognizing this development in the progress of revelation is the only way to harmonize all of what Scripture teaches on the subject of the future resurrection.[35]

The Amillennial View of the First Resurrection

Amillennialists reject the idea of two physical resurrections separated by a thousand years, claiming instead that the "first resurrection" is a *spiritual* resurrection that takes place throughout the present age, to be followed by a physical resurrection at the end of this age. More specifically, amillennialists interpret the first resurrection as either (a) the regeneration of believers at the point of conversion or (b) the entrance of believers into life in heaven at the point of death. But before these two specific views can be evaluated, the amillennial argument for the spiritual nature of the first resurrection in general must be considered.

The Case for a Spiritual Resurrection

In making the case for the spiritual nature of the first resurrection, most amillennialists appeal to an argument first articulated by Meredith G. Kline in 1975[36] and subsequently adopted and developed by several leading proponents of amillennialism.[37] It now appears to be the primary argument for the spiritual nature of the first resurrection in Revelation 20, but most premillennialists have largely ignored it in their critiques of the amillennial view.[38]

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[35] An additional argument against the premillennial view comes from Sydney Page, who points out that Rev 20:4–6 contains no explicit mention of Christ's return, which "would be a surprising omission if the coming to life refers to the resurrection that occurs at that time" (Sydney H. T. Page, "Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," *JETS* 23, no. 1 [March 1980]: 36). But according to the premillennial view, the second coming is explicitly described in Rev 19:11–21, which takes place at the very beginning of the thousand years of Rev 20:1–6, so this objection carries no weight.

[36] Meredith G. Kline, "The First Resurrection," *WTJ* 37, no. 3 (Spring 1975): 366–75; and Meredith G. Kline, "The First Resurrection: A Reaffirmation," *WTJ* 39, no. 1 (Fall 1976): 110–19.

[37] E.g., Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1002–7; Vern S. Poythress, *The Returning King: A Guide to the Book of Revelation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2000), 179–81; Dennis E. Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2001), 291–94; Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 244–49; Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 462–66.

[38] The most obvious exception is found in the immediate response to Kline's original article by J. Ramsey Michaels ("The First Resurrection: A Response," *WTJ* 39, no. 1 [Fall 1976]: 100–9). In subsequent years, however, most premillennialists have either ignored this argument altogether or addressed it only briefly. For example, Deere ("Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4–6," 72) and Blaising ("Premillennialism," 224) relegate their responses to a single footnote, and Hoehner ("Evidence from Revelation 20," 255) summarizes the responses of Michaels and Deere in a single paragraph. Most others don't even mention it.

The Amillennial Argument

As amillennialists observe, even though the word "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) almost always refers to physical resurrection elsewhere in the New Testament, it occurs only here in the Apocalypse, and Revelation 20:5–6 is the only place in Scripture where ἀνάστασις is modified by the ordinal "first" (πρῶτος).[39] Amillennialists consider the uniqueness of this expression "first resurrection"—rather than simply the use of "resurrection" itself—to be the decisive factor in determining the intended meaning of John's designation.[40]

According to amillennialists, by calling it the "first" resurrection, the apostle was not simply designating it the first in a series of resurrections of the *same kind*—he was indicating that this resurrection was of a *different quality* than the resurrection that follows. In other words, the modifier "first" indicates a qualitative difference between two resurrections rather than merely establishing a numerical sequence between two events.[41] According to this view, the qualitative difference is that the "first" resurrection is *spiritual* whereas the second resurrection is *physical*.

To justify this distinction, amillennialists point to the contrast between the first and second deaths in Revelation 20. The first death of believers is physical/temporal and therefore different in nature from the second death of unbelievers, which is spiritual/eternal (Rev 20:10, 14–15). As G. K. Beale reasons, "If there are thus two different kinds of deaths, it is plausible that the corresponding resurrections would also differ. The resurrection of believers is spiritual, whereas the resurrection of unbelievers is physical."[42] In this way, the passage is said to reflect the following chiastic arrangement:
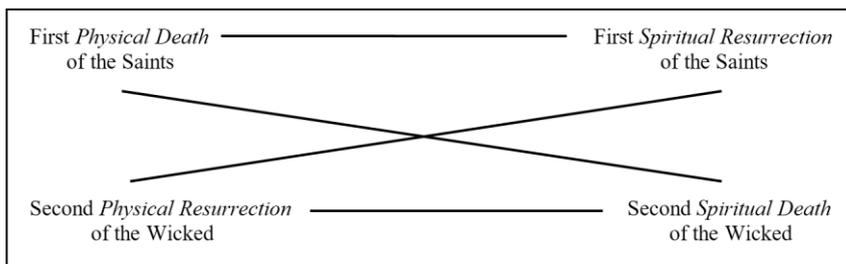
Figure 1. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1005.

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[39] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1004; Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 243–44; Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 462; Jonathan Menn, *Biblical Eschatology* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2013), 359–60.

[40] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 243–44; Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 462; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1004; R. Fowler White, "Death and the First Resurrection in Revelation 20: A Response to Meredith G. Kline," unpublished paper presented at ETS, 1992, 2, 19.

[41] Kline, "The First Resurrection," 366; Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 244–45; Beale, *The Book of Revelation,* 1002–15; Menn, *Biblical Eschatology*, 359–63. As Riddlebarger summarizes, "The terms do not indicate sequence but contrast" (*A Case for Amillennialism*, 245).

[42] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1005.

According to amillennialist Sam Storms, this double binary pattern reflects a beautiful irony in John's language: the believer dies physically but experiences spiritual resurrection, whereas the unbeliever is resurrected physically but experiences spiritual death.[43]

The key to understanding this expression "first resurrection" is said to be found in those New Testament passages which contain a similar antithesis between "first/old" and "second/new" (Rev 21:1; 1 Cor 15:22, 49–49; Heb 8:6–10:9). According to amillennialists, in these passages the modifier πρῶτος designates not that which is first in a sequence, but rather that which pertains to the present world order, in contrast to that which pertains to the world to come. In Revelation 21:1, for example, the modifier "first/old" refers to those pre-consummate and incomplete elements belonging to the present, sin-cursed creation order, whereas the modifier "second/new" refers to those consummate and complete elements belonging to the eternal state.[44] In Revelation 21:1, then, the adjective "first"

> does not merely mark the present world as first in a series of worlds and certainly not as first in a series of worlds of the same kind. On the contrary, it characterizes this world as different in kind from the "new" world. It signifies that the present world stands in contrast to the new world order of the consummation which will abide forever.[45]

This antithesis is said to be confirmed later in Revelation 21, where physical death in the present age in verse 4 is considered part of the "*first* things," and the "*second* death" in the lake of fire in verse 8 takes place in the age to come.[46]

According to amillennialists, then, whatever is "first" in the Book of Revelation pertains to the present world and whatever is "second" or "new" pertains to the world to come.[47] For this reason, because the *second* resurrection is physical and pertains to the eternal order of the age to come, the *first* resurrection must be spiritual and pertain to the temporary order of the present age.[48] Therefore, the first resurrection must refer to a spiritual resurrection which takes place during the present age rather than a physical resurrection in the age to come.[49]

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[43] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 465.

[44] Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 291; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1005–6.

[45] Kline, "The First Resurrection," 366–67. Later Kline writes, "To be called 'first' within that pattern is to be assigned a place in this present world with its transient order. That which is 'first' does not participate in the quality of consummate finality and permanence which is distinctive of the new kingdom order of the world to come" (369).

[46] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 245; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1006.

[47] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 463.

[48] Ibid., 464. In other words, the first resurrection of Rev 20:5 is "first" in the sense that it belongs "to the order of the present world which is passing away" (Garlington, "Reigning with Christ," 75).

[49] As Dennis Johnson writes, "The 'first resurrection' granted to deceased saints in Revelation 20:4–6, since it belongs to the present, preconsummation order, is not their reception of the bodies made like Christ's glorious body, fitted for immortal residence in the curse-free new earth (Phil. 3:21)" (*Triumph of the Lamb*, 291–92).

This same distinction is also seen in the antithesis between the "first man" (Adam) and the "second man" (Jesus) in 1 Corinthians 15 and the "old/first covenant" vs. "new/second covenant" in Hebrews 8–10.[50] As Beale observes:

> The first Adam had a perishable body and brought death, whereas the last Adam had an imperishable and glorious body and brought eternal life. The first covenant was temporary and led to death (e.g., Heb. 8:13), while the second was eternal and led to life.[51]

Therefore, in none of these passages—Revelation 21, 1 Corinthians 15, or Hebrews 8–10—"does 'first' (πρῶτος) function as an ordinal in a counting of things that are *identical in kind*."[52] Amillennialists believe that this supports the view that the "first resurrection" of Revelation 20 must be different in kind from the second resurrection (which is physical) and therefore that it must be spiritual in nature.

The Premillennial Response

In response, there are five significant problems with this argument. The initial difficulty with this view of the "first resurrection" is that the operative term in this designation is not the adjective "first" but rather the noun "resurrection."[53] As previously noted, the noun ἀνάστασις is a well-attested technical term that almost always refers to bodily resurrection in the New Testament. In the very rare instances where this word means anything else, this is instantly clear from the immediate context (e.g., Luke 2:34). In addition, the chronological use of the adjective πρῶτος—in which it refers to the first in a sequence—is extremely common in the New Testament, and especially in the Apocalypse.[54] This, in combination with the clear contextual indicators of two physical resurrections in Revelation 20 (see discussion above), identifies the most obvious meaning of the "first resurrection" as *the first in a sequence of two bodily resurrections*. Put more simply, πρῶτος means "first" and ἀνάστασις means "resurrection."

This does not mean that the two physical resurrections in Revelation 20 are identical in kind—for the first is "a resurrection of *life*" (John 5:29a) while the second

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[50] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1007; Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 246.

[51] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1007. According to Riddlebarger, "If two major redemptive covenants—the Mosaic covenant and the new covenant—can be contrasted with the same terms, [*first*] and *new*, this certainly strengthens the case that John did the same thing in Revelation 20 and 21, contrasting two kinds of resurrection" (*A Case for Amillennialism*, 246).

[52] Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1007.

[53] Deere, "Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4–6," 72. As Blaising writes, "It seems incredible that Meredith Kline could devote two articles attempting to defend a traditional amillennial view of 'the first resurrection' by means of an argument on the word 'first,' completely ignoring the operative term 'resurrection'" ("Premillennialism," in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, 224).

[54] Steve Sullivan, "Premillennialism and an Exegesis of Revelation 20," 35; accessed on July 20, 2014, http://www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/Sullivan-PremillennialismAndA.pdf. The adjective πρῶτος is used in two basic ways in the New Testament: it can refer either to *that which is first in a sequence* or *that which is most prominent or important* (*BDAG*, 892–94; Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon*, 309). In all of its 19 uses in Revelation, πρῶτος appears to describe being first in a sequence.

is "a resurrection of *judgment*" (John 5:29b)—but it does mean that both are actual resurrections. This illustrates why the appeal to Revelation 21, 1 Corinthians 15, and Hebrews 8–10 actually undermines the case for a spiritual resurrection in Revelation 20. There is a qualitative distinction in Revelation 21 between the "first" heaven and earth and the "new" heaven and earth, *but both are physical creations*; there is a qualitative distinction in 1 Corinthians 15 between the "first man" (Adam) and the "second man" (Jesus), *but both are actual men*; and there is a qualitative distinction in Hebrews 8–10 between the "first" covenant and the "second" covenant, *but both are actual covenants*.[55] In contrast, the amillennialist emphasizes the qualitative distinction between the two resurrections in Revelation 20 in such a way that the "first resurrection" is *no longer an actual resurrection*, at least not in terms of what the word ἀνάστασις means in the New Testament.

Secondly, if the "first resurrection" does not consist of a physical resurrection, then Revelation 20 contains no explicit mention of the future resurrection as the consummation of the believer's hope.[56] As J. Ramsey Michaels argues:

> It would be strange indeed if a work emphasizing so strongly at the outset the resurrection of Jesus (1:5, 18), and with such a pervasive concern to offer consolation to Christians facing persecution and martyrdom, were to overlook the very heart of the church's eschatological expectation.[57]

Although some assert that the future resurrection of believers is described in Revelation 20:11–15, this passage describes only the resurrection of judgment which awaits unbelievers.[58]

The third difficulty with this argument relates to the perspicuity of Scripture. Simply stated, it is difficult to imagine that any interpreter would have ever taken this approach to the "first resurrection" prior to its discovery in the second half of the 20th century.[59] How could even the most diligent of Bible students be expected to connect

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[55] This qualitative distinction is indicated not by the terms "first/old" and "second/new" themselves but rather by the contexts in which they occur.

[56] Michaels, "The First Resurrection," 105.

[57] Ibid.

[58] That only unbelievers are in view in Rev 20:11–15 is clear for a number of reasons: (1) "The rest of the dead" in Rev 20:5—which refers to unbelievers as those who do not take part in the "first resurrection"—is the obvious antecedent of "the dead" in verse 12. (2) The resurrection of "the dead" in Rev 20:11–13 is the second resurrection implied in verse 5b, and this resurrection leads to the "second death" in verse 6a, of which believers are said to have no part (Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 431). (3) The only stated outcome of this judgment is the lake of fire (Rev 20:15). (4) "The Book of Life comes into the discussion only to show that the names of these dead are not written there" (Thomas, *Revelation 8–22*, 431). (5) This fits the broader context of Revelation 19–20, which sets forth God's ultimate victory over everything corrupted by sin—the beast, the false prophet, Satan, heaven and earth, and now His unbelieving human enemies. At the very least one would have to agree with the observation of Michaels that "in these verses there is no emphasis at all upon this future resurrection as positive object of Christian hope" (Michaels, "The First Resurrection," 105).

[59] Even though this argument was first articulated in 1975 by Meredith Kline, the chiastic relationship between the two deaths and two resurrections was identified in 1960 by Summers (Ray Summers, "Revelation 20: An Interpretation," *RevExp* 57, no. 2 [April 1960]: 182). Jonathan Menn appears to trace Kline's view/argument back to Alexander Fraser's *Key to the Prophecies of the Old and New Testaments*

all the dots necessary to arrive at this conclusion? Why would the apostle John use such obscure language, demanding such a convoluted interpretive process? How could John be sure his readers would identify this double binary pattern, much less think to consult these other three passages, to determine the meaning of the "first resurrection"? And why would the fact that "first" never modifies "resurrection" outside of Revelation 20 send his readers on this complicated interpretive journey in the first place?[60] Isn't it more likely that "first resurrection" simply means "first resurrection"? As Harold Hoehner observes, "The complexity of this view makes it suspect."[61]

Fourthly, the technical meaning ascribed to the adjective πρῶτος is highly questionable. Apart from the fact that this use of the adjective has gone almost completely unnoticed by the major lexicons,[62] it does not appear to be demanded by its use in 1 Corinthians 15, Hebrews 8–10, or Revelation 21. In each of these passages, the sequential use of πρῶτος—in reference to the first of two Adams, the first of two covenants, and the first of two heavens/earths—is sufficient to communicate the intended meaning of the biblical writers. Even though the first Adam, first covenant, and first creation all possess other qualities in addition to being first in a sequence—even some qualities common to all three—this does not mean that these additional qualities are inherent in the meaning of the adjective itself.[63] The amillennial argument uses a questionable meaning of the adjective "first" to reinterpret the well-attested meaning of "resurrection" and thereby ascribes to ἀνάστασις a meaning in Revelation 20 which it possesses nowhere else in the New Testament.[64]

Fifthly, and most importantly, even if the amillennial view of πρῶτος is granted for the sake of argument, an insurmountable problem arises because of the definitions

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which are Not Yet Accomplished in 1802 (Menn, *Biblical Eschatology*, 360–61), but a comparison shows that the similarities between Fraser and Kline have been exaggerated.

[60] The fact that a given adjective modifies a given noun only once in the entire New Testament should not lead the interpreter to expect a specialized meaning of the adjective-noun combination which ascribes an unprecedented meaning to the noun. But the amillennial approach does just that.

[61] Hoehner, "Evidence from Revelation 20," in *A Case for Premillennialism*, 255.

[62] *BDAG*, 892–94; Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon*, 309; G. Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 389–90; J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1995), 557; Wilhelm Michaelis, "πρῶτος," in *TDNT*, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1964), 6:865–68; Karl Heinz Bartels, "πρῶτος," in *NIDNTT*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1986), 1:664–67; Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 2:214. One possible exception is *EDNT*, which states that John's use of πρῶτος in Rev 21:1 refers to "what was and is transitory" (Hugolinus Langkammer, "πρῶτος," in *EDNT*, 3:189). It is not clear, however, whether Langkammer believes that the concept of transitoriness is communicated by the greater context of Rev 21:1, or by the word in and of itself.

[63] Put another way, the adjective πρῶτος can be used to describe several things which are first in a series without communicating other attributes which are also true of the nouns it modifies. To illustrate, if someone were to use the adjective "blue" to describe a chair, a table, and a cabinet, the fact that all three are also made of wood does not prove that the adjective "blue" is a technical term for something consisting of wood.

[64] Both amillennial views of the "first resurrection" require a meaning for ἀνάστασις which is unprecedented in the New Testament, a point to be discussed more fully when these views are considered below.

given to πρῶτος and ἀνάστασις. To review, in light of the perceived antithesis between "first/old" and "second/new," amillennialists insist that πρῶτος in Revelation 20 means "to belong to the present state of affairs which is passing away."[65] As the qualitative and polar opposite of "new,"[66] πρῶτος is said to describe that which is merely provisional, transient, and temporary, in contrast to what is consummate, final, and enduring.[67] In other words, whatever is "first" is antithetical to permanence[68] and will eventually be superseded and replaced by what is "new" when it passes away.[69] For this reason, amillennialists believe the adjective πρῶτος "is used to designate elements that belong…to the present, sin-cursed creation order, in contrast to the new heaven and new earth."[70] As the diametrical opposite of that which characterizes eternity and resurrection life,[71] "Whatever is *first* does not participate in the quality of finality and permanence which is distinctive of the age to come."[72]

The difficultly arises when the amillennialist takes this definition of πρῶτος and applies it to ἀνάστασις in Revelation 20 as a reference to a spiritual resurrection. For those amillennialists who believe that the "first resurrection" refers to *regeneration*,[73] the contradiction is obvious. In what way does the believer's regeneration belong to the present state of affairs which is passing away? How can the new life received at conversion be described as provisional, transient, and temporary, in contrast to what endures? How can the new birth be considered the qualitative and polar opposite of the future resurrection? Is the believer's regeneration antithetical to permanence? Will the new life received at conversion pass away and be replaced by his bodily resurrection? Can it really be said that the spiritual birth of believers belongs to the

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[65] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 462; also see Kline, "The First Resurrection," 366–67, 369–71; Garlington, "Reigning with Christ," 75.

[66] Kline, "The First Resurrection," 366, 368–70; Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 245.

[67] Kline, "The First Resurrection," 368; Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 463–64.

[68] Kline, "The First Resurrection," 370.

[69] Ibid., 366, 368; Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 245–46; Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 462. In explaining the antithesis between the two adjectives, Kline describes the first Adam in 1 Corinthians 15 as "earthy and physical" and the second Adam as "heavenly and spiritual" ("The First Resurrection," 368). Likewise, Riddlebarger explains, "Adam was from earth; Christ is from heaven. Adam stands at the head of the human race; Christ stands at the head of the redeemed. Death, sin, and weakness characterize Adam and his descendants, while Christ stands at the head of those raised from the dead" (*A Case for Amillennialism*, 246). Beale makes similar observations, applying them also to the antithesis between the "first/old" covenant and the "second/new" covenant in Hebrews 8–10: "The first Adam had a perishable, inglorious body and brought death, whereas the last Adam had an imperishable and glorious body and brought eternal life. The first covenant was temporary and led to death (e.g., Heb. 8:13), while the second was eternal and led to life" (*The Book of Revelation*, 1007).

[70] Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 291.

[71] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 246–47.

[72] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 463. As Kline writes, "That which is 'first' does not participate in the quality of consummate finality and permanence which is distinctive of the new kingdom order of the world to come" ("The First Resurrection," 369).

[73] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 240–49; Sam Hamstra Jr., "An Idealist View of Revelation," in *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*, 120–21; Page, "Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," 37–40; Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith*, 119–23; William E. Cox, *Amillennialism Today* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1966), 4–5. This view was held by postmillennialist Norman Shepherd ("Resurrections of Revelation 20," *WTJ* 37, no. 1 [Fall 1974]: 34–43).

present, sin-cursed creation and therefore that the spiritual life of regeneration does not participate in the age to come?[74] As Michaels observes:

> The point of the few New Testament passages that speak of Christians as already in some sense resurrected (e.g., Rom. 6:4, 11; Eph. 2:5f; Col. 3:1ff.) is that, to the extent that this resurrection is a present reality, the believer is set free from the transitory present world and ushered into the age to come.[75]

For amillennialists who believe the "first resurrection" refers to the believer being ushered into the presence of Christ at the point of death,[76] the dilemma is similar. In what sense does the believer's entrance into the blessings of heaven belong to the present state of affairs which is passing away? How can being ushered into the presence of Christ be described as transitory or diametrically opposed to the future resurrection?[77] How can a "resurrection to heavenly glories"[78]—including the blessings it brings to those who are resurrected—be considered part of the present, sin-cursed creation order?[79] As Michaels explains:

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[74] Most amillennialists would likely affirm that regeneration is the means by which believers *partake* of the age to come, even now in the present age. In contrast, they see the "first man" (1 Cor 15:47) and the "first covenant" (Heb 8–10) as that which leads to death (Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 246; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1007). This alone demonstrates the inconsistency of the amillennial position, at least for those who see the "first resurrection" as regeneration.

[75] Michaels, "The First Resurrection," 104–5. As Michaels explains, "It is hard to deny that [the new birth] partakes of the very nature of consummation" (105).

[76] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 451, 462–65; Kline, "The First Resurrection," 366–75; Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 232–37; William Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors: An Interpretation of the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1967), 191–93; Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 291–94; Poythress, *The Returning King*, 182; Vern Sheridan Poythress, "Genre and Hermeneutics in Rev 20:1–6," *JETS* 36, no. 1 (March 1993): 41–54; Robert B. Strimple, "Amillennialism," in *Three Views on the Millennium and Beyond*, 127; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 991–1011; Davis, *The High King of Heaven*, 475–82.

[77] Beale responds to this argument by insisting that the inconsistency is resolved "by understanding that the intermediate state of the soul's resurrection is, indeed, an incomplete state, since these souls await the final, consummated physical resurrection in the new heavens and earth" (*The Book of Revelation*, 1007; also see Kline, "The First Resurrection," 371). But as demonstrated above, the amillennialist ascribes far more to the meaning of πρῶτος than simply "incomplete." The amillennial antithesis between "first/old" and "second/new" presents the two as polar opposites in which πρῶτος describes that which belongs to the order of this sin-cursed world, being transitory and destined to pass away when it is replaced by what is "new." So the inconsistency remains.

Kline seeks to resolve the tension in a similar way, noting that this resurrection "is still not the ultimate glory of the Christian" because it "stands on this side of the consummation" ("The First Resurrection," 371). But this too significantly dilutes the amillennial view of the antithesis between the two terms. According to amillennialists, "first" does not mean pre-consummative in the chronological sense of existing or taking place prior to the consummation. (If it did, the New Covenant itself could not be considered "new" since it was inaugurated and became operative prior to the consummation.) Amillennialists present πρῶτος not as a *chronological* modifier describing what exists (or takes place) during the present world, but as a *qualitative* modifier describing what *belongs* to the present world order. For this reason, Kline's appeal to the timing of the "first resurrection"—as that which "stands on this side of the consummation"—fails to offer any substantial response to the objection.

[78] Kline, "The First Resurrection," 371.

[79] One amillennialist who takes this view of the "first resurrection" defines it as "the deliverance of their souls from all that threatened them on earth" (Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 294), and another

the first resurrection *as resurrection* can hardly be described as temporary or transitory. It does not "pass away," like death or the sea or the old heaven and earth. The Christian who dies…begins to participate then and there in the blessings of the age to come. His death as death is indeed transitory, but his death *as resurrection*…belongs to the new age. Is that not the whole point in referring to it as a resurrection?[80]

For these five reasons, even though the amillennial argument is certainly sophisticated, it fails to provide any convincing evidence that the "first resurrection" in Revelation 20 is spiritual in nature.

Amillennial Views of the First Resurrection

Although amillennialists all agree that the first resurrection is spiritual in nature, they disagree regarding the specific kind of spiritual resurrection portrayed in Revelation 20. Some amillennialists interpret the first resurrection as the regeneration of believers at the point of conversion, while others view it as the entrance of believers into life in heaven at the point of death. Both of these amillennial views must be considered.

View 1: The Regeneration of the Believer

The first amillennial view is that the first resurrection of Revelation 20 refers to the regeneration of believers at the point of conversion.[81] This spiritual resurrection is said to take place throughout the current age as those who were previously dead in their sins are made alive in Christ and live to reign with Him in the present millennial

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describes it as an "extension" and "intensification" of the blessedness of regeneration (Garlington, "Reigning with Christ," 96). Again, how can this understanding of the first resurrection in Revelation 20 be reconciled with the amillennialist's definition of the modifier "first"?

[80] Michaels, "The First Resurrection," 104. As Michaels continues, "The strangeness of [Kline's] proposal becomes clear as soon as we press interpretation of 'first' so as to speak of the 'old' resurrection. The difficulty is not so much that Kline includes the intermediate state in the present passing order of existence, but that he does so while at the same time calling it a resurrection." Kline dismisses this objection as Kantian and Barthian rather than biblical, and he faults Michaels for denying "that there is a difference in kind between the 'resurrection' which the Christian experiences when he passes into the intermediate state at death...and the resurrection he experiences at the day of redemption of his body and glorification" ("A Reaffirmation," 114–15). But Kline's argument is not simply that the two resurrections are *different in kind*—something Michaels does not deny, despite Kline's claim to the contrary—but rather that they are *qualitatively antithetical to each other*. It is this qualitative antithesis, in which "first" belongs to this present world order and "new" belongs to the age to come, that presents such a problem for Kline's view. Kline's failure to address this dilemma leaves Michaels' objection unanswered.

[81] This view was held by Augustine and Calvin and has been defended more recently by Riddlebarger (*A Case for Amillennialism,* 240–49), Shepherd ("Resurrections of Revelation 20," 34–43), Hamstra ("An Idealist View of Revelation," 120–21), Page ("Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," 37–40), Hamilton (*The Basis of Millennial Faith*, 117–21), Cox (*Amillennialism Today*, 4–5), and White ("Death and the First Resurrection," 17–23).

kingdom.[82] As William Cox writes, "We believe entrance to the on-going millennium is gained solely through the new birth, and that John refers to this as the first resurrection."[83] This view is common among amillennialists. Riddlebarger identifies the first resurrection as "the believers' regeneration;"[84] Hamstra calls it "the first resurrection of regeneration;"[85] Hamilton refers to it as "the new birth of the believer;"[86] Page describes it as "initiation into the Christian life in the present age;"[87] and Shepherd simply labels it "conversion."[88]

To support this view, amillennialists note that the new birth is depicted throughout the New Testament as a rising from the dead in the spiritual realm (Mark 12:26–27; John 5:25–29; 11:25; Rom 6:4–6; 8:10–11; Eph 2:1–7; Col 2:12–13; 3:1; 1 John 3:14; 5:11–13).[89] Those regenerated by the Holy Spirit are described as having "passed out of death into life" (1 John 3:14), having been "made…alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:5). This abundant use of resurrection terminology in reference to the new birth is said to provide clear evidence that the first resurrection of Revelation 20 is spiritual regeneration.[90]

A second argument for the regeneration view is that the apostle John describes the first resurrection as "souls" coming to life (Rev 20:4). As Floyd Hamilton writes:

> The deliberate choice of the word "soul," which almost universally means soul as distinct from body, as applying to the believers now reigning with Christ in glory, seems to make it perfectly plain that the first resurrection is [the new birth]. If it were a literal resurrection of the body, why should the author choose a word which almost always does *not* mean body?[91]

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[82] As Hamstra clarifies, "This reign begins for the believer while on earth but continues in heaven, since the believer's soul, on his or her death, is raised to heaven while the body waits for Christ's return" ("An Idealist View of Revelation," 121).

[83] Cox, *Amillennialism Today*, 4.

[84] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 249.

[85] Hamstra, "An Idealist View of Revelation," 120.

[86] Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith*, 117.

[87] Page, "Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," 37.

[88] Shepherd, "The Resurrections of Revelation 20," 36. As previously noted, Shepherd was postmillennial, but his view and argumentation here coincides with that of many amillennialists.

[89] Cox, *Amillennialism Today,* 4; Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith,* 118–20; Page, "Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," 37–39; Shepherd, "The Resurrections of Revelation 20," 36; Hamstra, "An Idealist View of Revelation," 120; Menn, *Biblical Eschatology*, 367.

[90] Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith*, 117–20. According to Cox, this view is based on the many places in the New Testament where the new birth is referred to as a resurrection (*Amillennialism Today*, 4), and Page states that "there is excellent NT precedent for describing Christian initiation as a resurrection" ("Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," 37). After examining several Pauline passages, Page concludes: "If the original readers of Revelation 20 were familiar with the sort of resurrection theology that we find in Paul, they might well have interpreted 'they came to life' in v 4, and 'the first resurrection' in v 5, as referring to regeneration" ("Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," 39).

[91] Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith,* 132. Amillennialist Dennis Johnson cites the use of "souls" as an argument *against* the regeneration view, but he does not explain why he thinks it presents a problem for this interpretation (*Triumph of the Lamb*, 293).

A third argument for this view is found in John 5:25–29.[92] In this passage, when Jesus refers to a spiritual resurrection of believers in the present (vv. 25–27)—in contrast to a physical resurrection of believers in the future (vv. 28–29)—the spiritual resurrection in view is the new birth of the one who believes in Christ. Because of the parallel between this passage and Revelation 20, John 5:25–29 is said to support the idea not merely that the "first resurrection" is spiritual in general, but that it is the regeneration of the believer in particular.

In response, there are several significant difficulties with this view of the first resurrection in Revelation 20. First, the word "resurrection" (ἀνάστασις) is used 39 times in the New Testament outside of Revelation 20 and never is it used to refer to regeneration.[93] This objection is not conclusive, because it is possible that Revelation 20 uses this word in a unique way, especially since a metaphorical use of ἀνάστασις would be a fitting way to signify being "made alive" in the spiritual realm. But nonetheless, the lack of precedent for this use of ἀνάστασις places the burden of proof on those who claim that the "first resurrection" is the believer's regeneration.

A second problem concerns the coming to life of "the rest of the dead" at the beginning of verse 5. When John says that these individuals "came to life" (ἔζησαν), most interpreters agree that this verb refers to a physical resurrection. Because John uses the same form of the same Greek word (ἔζησαν) to refer to the coming to life of the individuals in verse 4, it stands to reason that this "first resurrection" must be a physical resurrection as well. Otherwise, "we are faced with the problem of the same word being used in the same context with two entirely different meanings, with no indication whatsoever as to the change of meaning."[94] The premillennial view does not have this problem, because it sees the verb ἔζησαν as referring to a physical resurrection in both verses—a resurrection of the righteous in verse 4 and a resurrection of the wicked in verse 5.

Regarding the amillennial argument that John's use of the word "souls" in Revelation 20:4 supports this view, ψυχή is often used as a reference to the whole person (Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9; 9:56; Acts 2:41, 43; 3:23; 7:14; 15:26; 27:37; Rom 2:9; 13:1; 1 Cor 15:45; 1 Pet 3:20)[95] and therefore it need not refer to the resurrection of merely

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[92] Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 247–48; Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith,* 118; Page, "Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," 37–38; White, "Death and the First Resurrection," 22, 25–27.

[93] Gordon, "The First Resurrection," 82.

[94] George Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1972), 265–66; Gordon, "The First Resurrection," 82–83. The common amillennial response to this argument cites John 5:25–29 as an example where the very same passage refers to both the spiritual resurrection of regeneration (vv. 25–27) and the physical resurrection of the righteous and the wicked at the end of the age (vv. 28–29) (Riddlebarger, *A Case for Amillennialism*, 247–48; Hamilton, *The Basis of Millennial Faith,* 118; Page, "Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," 37–38; White, "Death and the First Resurrection," 22, 25–27). But as discussed earlier, the way the two uses of ἔζησαν are connected to each other in Revelation 20—"Some of the dead ἔζησαν (v. 4b), but the rest of the dead did not ἔζησαν until later (v. 5a)"—makes it clear that they refer to the same kind of coming to life.

[95] *BDAG*, 1099–1100; Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon*, 388; Deere, "Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4–6," 67. Furthermore, as Deere notes, "John has previously used ψυχή with a qualifying genitive to refer to the whole person (ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων in 18:13)." Amillennialist G. K. Beale makes the

the spiritual component of man. In fact, as amillennialist G. C. Berkouwer recognizes, there seems to be no soul-body dichotomy in view in Revelation 20:4–6, for John simply sees that those who had been beheaded come to life again and sit on thrones.[96] For this reason, the use of ψυχή in Revelation 20:4 is compatible with the premillennial view of the "first resurrection" and therefore fails to provide compelling evidence that it refers to the regeneration of believers.

A third problem with this view concerns the duration of the reign of the saints. In Revelation 20:4 and 6, the apostle John describes the saints reigning "for a thousand years" (χίλια ἔτη). In doing so, he uses an *accusative of time*, which indicates that the saints will reign for the entire thousand-year period.[97] This can be illustrated by John's use of the same accusative of time in Revelation 20:2—"for a thousand years" (χίλια ἔτη)—where Satan is bound and incarcerated for the entirety of the thousand years. According to John's portrayal of the vision, then, the individuals who come to life in the first resurrection will begin their reign at the same time—at the very beginning of the thousand years—and they will reign together with Christ for the entirety of that time period (Rev 20:4–6).[98]

In contrast, according to the amillennial view that the first resurrection equals regeneration, believers are regenerated *throughout* the thousand years (i.e., the present age) so that the entrance of these saints into this millennial reign is distributed throughout the millennium.[99] In this scenario, those saints who are saved during the church age do not reign for the entirety of the thousand years—as John says they will—and some of them do not begin their reign until the millennium is almost over.

If John had intended to communicate that the saints would reign *during* the thousand years (which would correspond to the amillennial view) instead of *throughout the extent* of the thousand years, a *genitive* of time would have been more appropriate.[100] As it stands, the apostle's use of the accusative χίλια ἔτη ("for a thousand years") not only presents a problem for the amillennial regeneration view, but it also fits perfectly with the premillennial view of believers coming to life in the first resurrection and reigning with Christ for the entirety of the thousand years.[101]

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same observation, noting that ψυχή is used as a substitute for "living body" elsewhere in Revelation (8:9; 12:11; 16:3; cf. 18:13) (*The Book of Revelation*, 998).

[96] G. C. Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ: Studies in Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1972), 304.

[97] See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1996), 201–3; cf. F. Blass, F. and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 88–89; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 469–71.

[98] Charles E. Powell, "Progression versus Recapitulation in Revelation 20:1–6," *BSac* 163, no. 649 (Jan 2006): 109.

[99] Ibid.

[100] See Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 122–24.

[101] The amillennialist cannot escape this difficulty by appealing to the symbolic nature of the Book of Revelation, for John's use of the accusative of time is not imagery but rather a grammatically precise explanation of the significance of what he saw in his vision. If the first resurrection refers to the regeneration of believers throughout the thousand years, why would John portray them as coming to life at the

Fourthly, and most significantly, according to the view that the "first resurrection" in Revelation 20 is regeneration, the people in verse 4 are not regenerated by the Holy Spirit *until after they are martyred for their faith in Christ*. In the second part of John's vision in Revelation 20:4, the apostle John writes:

> And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years (Rev 20:4).

According to the straightforward reading of Revelation 20:4, this view introduces "the absurdity of having souls being regenerated *after* they've been beheaded for their faithfulness to Christ!"[102] Because this is theologically impossible, this view of the first resurrection must be rejected.[103]

View 2: The Death of the Believer

Other amillennialists interpret the "first resurrection" of Revelation 20 as the believer's entrance into the intermediate state at the point of death and the blessings

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beginning of the millennium and reigning together with Christ throughout the entirety of the millennium? No satisfactory answer to this question has been proposed by proponents of amillennialism.

[102] McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, 488; emphasis original; also see MacLeod, "The Fourth 'Last Thing,'" 57; Walvoord, "Theological Significance," 235; Hoehner, "Evidence from Revelation 20," 253; Blaising, "Premillennialism," 223.

[103] Most amillennialists who interpret the "first resurrection" as regeneration neither acknowledge nor respond to this argument. A rare exception is R. Fowler White, who argues that the apostle John does not recount the martyrs' experiences in chronological order in Rev 20:4. According to White: "He speaks first of beheading, then of refusal to worship or bear the name of the beast, then of resurrection and reign. Whatever our understanding of the first resurrection, we must all concede that, though refusal to worship or bear the name of the beast *follows* beheading *in John's presentation*, that refusal actually *preceded* beheading *in history*" ("Death and the First Resurrection," 18; emphasis original). This allows White to argue that the first resurrection "actually precedes and ironically leads the saints into martyrdom rather than delivering them from it" (23). But White has subtly misrepresented John's presentation and thereby complicated an otherwise simple progression of events in Rev 20:4. In the second part of verse 4, the apostle uses only three independent clauses (each connected by καὶ) to describe the unfolding of his vision—"I saw the souls [(εἶδον) τὰς ψυχὰς]…they came to life [ἔζησαν]…they reigned with Christ [ἐβασίλευσαν μετὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ]"—and these events are presented in chronological order. When White describes John's presentation as departing from chronological order, he is referring to the clauses which are subordinate to the first independent clause. Rather than advancing the action of the actual vision, however, these subordinate clauses supply background information by explaining how and why the souls seen by John were killed in the first place. Condensing this subordinate description into a concise paraphrase results in the following rendering of verse 4: "I saw the souls of those [who were martyred] and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." The fact that John does not relay this background information in sequential order does not undermine the simplicity of the chronology of events portrayed by the three main clauses. Contrary to White's claim, the first resurrection does indeed remedy the death of the martyrs described in Rev 20:4 and it is therefore a physical resurrection. An additional problem with White's view (that the saints' resurrection preceded their martyrdom) is found in the very next verse. By referring to "the *rest* of the dead" (οἱ λοιποὶ τῶν νεκρῶν) not coming to life until after the thousand years (v. 5a), John makes it clear that those who came to life in verse 4 were indeed physically dead when they experienced the first resurrection.

of life that it brings.[104] William Hendriksen describes the first resurrection as "the translation of the soul from this sinful earth to God's holy heaven;"[105] Anthony Hoekema calls it "the transition from physical death to life in heaven with Christ during the time between death and the resurrection;"[106] and James Hughes defines it as "the soul's being raised from earth to heaven."[107]

According to this view, when the believer dies physically, his soul is raised and it ascends from earth to heaven, "the effect of which is the living and reigning Christ a thousand years."[108] This ascension—in which the soul enters the intermediate state of life with Christ—is called the "first resurrection."[109] In the words of Robert Strimple, "The first resurrection occurs when [the believer] departs this life and is immediately ushered into the presence of Christ to reign with him."[110]

According to this view, the first resurrection of Revelation 20 is considered a paradoxical reference to the physical death of the believer.[111] As Meredith Kline explains, "Just as the resurrection of the unjust is paradoxically identified as 'the second

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[104] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 451. This view is defended by Kline ("The First Resurrection," 366–75), Hoekema (*The Bible and the Future*, 232–37), Hendriksen (*More than Conquerors*, 191–93), Johnson (*Triumph of the Lamb*, 291–94), Poythress (*The Returning King*, 182, and "Genre and Hermeneutics in Rev 20:1–6," 53), Strimple ("Amillennialism," 127), Beale (*The Book of Revelation*, 991–1011), Storms (*Kingdom Come*, 462–65), and Davis (*The High King of Heaven*, 475–82). According to Riddlebarger (*A Case for Amillennialism*, 249) and Beale (*The Book of Revelation*, 1011–12), the two amillennial views of the "first resurrection" are not necessarily incompatible with each other, because believers are both raised spiritually from death to life at the moment of regeneration and raised spiritually from earth to heaven at the time of death.

[105] Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors*, 192.

[106] Anthony A. Hoekema "An Amillennial Response," in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, 57.

[107] Hughes, "The Question of the Millennium," 291.

[108] Ibid., 290–91. According to Hughes, this is an example of metonymy in which the "first resurrection" is "the entrance of the soul into a glorified state of life with Christ at physical death" even though "John uses the term to refer to the soul's living with Christ a thousand years (in heaven)" (291).

[109] Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 237; Hughes, "The Question of the Millennium," 291. For this reason, Johnson refers to the martyrs' first resurrection as "the deliverance of their souls from all that threatened them on earth" (*Triumph of the Lamb*, 294).

[110] Strimple, "Amillennialism," 127.

[111] Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 293; Garlington, "Reigning with Christ," 77. As Garlington explains: "To the non-Christian onlooker, the death of the believer is the end of existence, which compels him to draw the conclusion that there is no difference between the Christian and himself. John, however, comforts his readers by informing them that instead of being the termination of life, physical death is the portal through which the believing person enters into a new phase of that resurrection which began when he first heard the voice of the Son of Man" (74). According to Johnson: "Paradox is no stranger to those familiar with John's visions. The lion who has conquered is the lamb who has been slain. The carefully counted Israelite army of 144,000 celibate males is an innumerable multitude from every nation and people. The church is safe from destruction, yet exposed to persecution, even to the death. The beast overcomes Jesus's witnesses and kills them, yet in so doing the beast inadvertently forfeits to them the real victory, for in their fidelity to the death they overcome the dragon-accuser who animates the beast (Rev. 12:11). From one perspective the martyrs of heaven can be viewed as sacrificial victims, awaiting just vindication; but from another—even now, while the 'first things' (death, mourning, pain) exist—they have experienced a 'first resurrection,' the deliverance of their souls from all that threatened them on earth (cf. 7:15–17)" (*Triumph of the Lamb*, 293–94).

death' so the death of the Christian is paradoxically identified as 'the first resurrection'…. What for others is the first death is for the Christian a veritable resurrection!"[112] In other words, even though these believers have died, "John sees them as alive, not in the bodily sense, but in the sense that they are enjoying life in heaven in fellowship with Christ."[113]

According to amillennialist Sam Storms, if the apostle John's purpose in Revelation 20:4–6 was to encourage believers who were facing persecution and possible martyrdom,

> what better, more appropriate, or even more biblical way could he have done so than by assuring them that though they may *die physically* at the hands of the beast they will *live spiritually* in the presence of the Lamb? I can think of no more vivid way of making this point than that of *life* beyond and in spite of *death*.[114]

In fact, Storms argues that the terminology John uses to describe his vision fits perfectly with the view that the first resurrection refers to entrance into the intermediate state:

> If John were attempting to describe the blessings of the intermediate state for those facing martyrdom, what terminology could he possibly have used, other than what he does use, and still maintain the desired emphasis? There simply is no other Greek noun besides *anastasis* ["resurrection"] that would adequately make the point.[115]

As evidence that Revelation 20:4–6 refers to the experience of martyrs in the intermediate state—and therefore that the first resurrection must refer to entrance *into* the intermediate state—amillennialists point to John's use of the word "thrones" in verse 4.[116] According to Storms, because the Greek word for "throne" (θρόνος) consistently refers to heavenly thrones throughout the book of Revelation, it must refer to thrones in heaven in Revelation 20:4 as well.[117] For this reason, because the resurrected martyrs are described as sitting upon these heavenly thrones, the millennial reign of these saints must refer to life in heaven in the intermediate state.

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[112] Kline, "The First Resurrection," 371.

[113] Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 233; cf. Leon Morris, *Revelation*, TNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1987), 231.

[114] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 453; emphasis original.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 291; Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 232–33; Strimple, "Amillennialism," 125; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 998; Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors*, 191.

[117] According to Storms, "The word *thronos* appears sixty-two times in the New Testament, forty-seven of which are in the book of Revelation. Twice (2:13; 13:2) it refers to Satan's throne (being synonymous with his authority or power) and once to the throne of the beast (16:10). On four occasions it refers to God's throne on the *new* earth in consequence of its having *come down from heaven* (21:3, 5; 22:1, 3). In every other instance (forty times) *thronos* refers to a throne in *heaven*, either that of God the Father, of

As further evidence for this view, it is also noted that John specifically refers to "souls" (ψυχή) being resurrected and reigning with Christ (Rev 20:4).[118] According to this argument, the reason John refers to the experience of disembodied *souls* who are martyred is because he is describing the blessedness of the intermediate state of those who are now living and reigning with Christ during the thousand years.[119] Amillennialists also point to other uses of the verb "to live" (ζάω) in the New Testament.[120] According to this argument, because ζάω is used to describe the life and existence of souls after the death of the body in passages such as Matthew 22:32,[121] Luke 20:38,[122] and 1 Peter 4:6,[123] there is a clear precedent of this word being used to describe life in the intermediate state. This argument is said to support this specific use of the verb in Revelation 20:4.

As a final argument for this view, amillennialists point to other passages in the Book of Revelation which highlight spiritual life in the intermediate state after physical death. For example, Revelation 2:10–11 promises "the crown of life" to those believers who are faithful until death;[124] Revelation 6:9–11 "is a vision of the heavenly bliss of those who have suffered martyrdom for Christ;"[125] and Revelation 14:13 emphasizes "the blessedness of Christian death."[126] These parallels are said to confirm that Revelation 20:4–6 "is concerned with the bliss of the intermediate state"[127] and therefore that the "first resurrection" refers to entrance into the intermediate state.

In response, the primary difficulty with this view concerns the term ἀνάστασις. As even amillennialist Sydney Page observes, "Like all attempts to relate the first resurrection to the intermediate state, it faces the objection that the translation of the soul of the believer to heaven at death is not spoken of as a resurrection anywhere else in the NT."[128] But not only does this view insist on a use of ἀνάστασις which is unprecedented in the New Testament, it also argues for an interpretation of the "first

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Christ, of the twenty-four elders, etc." (*Kingdom Come*, 461; cf. Cornelis P. Venema, *The Promise of the Future* [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2000], 328).

[118] Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 293; Strimple, "Amillennialism," 125; Venema, *The Promise of the Future*, 329; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 998; Hendriksen, *More than Conquerors*, 191–92.

[119] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 458.

[120] According to Beale, "In the Apocalypse [ζάω] sometimes refers to physical resurrection (1:18; 2:8) or more generally to some form of physical existence (16:3; 19:20), but more often it has figurative connotation of spiritual existence, especially with respect to God's attribute of timeless existence (six occurrences). In 3:1 the verb refers to spiritual life (and the uses in 7:17 and 13:14 are probably also figurative)" (*The Book of Revelation*, 1004).

[121] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 455.

[122] Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 233–34; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1008–9.

[123] Garlington, "Reigning with Christ," 74, 94; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 1009.

[124] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 455. According to Storms, the parallels between Rev 2:10–11 and Rev 20:4–6 are "unmistakable."

[125] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 457; also see Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 234–35; Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 998, 1010; Poythress, *The Returning King*, 180; Menn, *Biblical Eschatology*, 294.

[126] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 458; also see Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 235; Johnson, *Triumph of the Lamb*, 294.

[127] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 458.

[128] Page, "Revelation 20 and Pauline Eschatology," 37.

resurrection" that is inconsistent with the very concept of a "resurrection."[129] According to this view, the word "resurrection" refers to those who *live spiritually* even though they have *died physically*. In this way, the term "resurrection" refers to "the Christian's entrance into non-bodily life after bodily death" or "the Christian's passage from bodily death into non-bodily life."[130] The problem is that "resurrection" does not imply life *after* death but rather life *from* death.[131] In other words, "When the Bible and its interpreters invoke resurrection as a term or concept, life and death are understood to be either *both spiritual* (non-bodily) or *both physical* (bodily)."[132]

Therefore, when someone who is physically dead is made alive in the physical realm, this is often referred to as a "resurrection." Likewise, when someone who is spiritually dead is made alive in the spiritual realm, this could also be described as a "resurrection."[133] But when someone who is already spiritually alive continues to live spiritually even after his physical death, no coming to life—and therefore no "resurrection"—has actually taken place. For this reason, "We may rightly call such life 'the intermediate state' or 'the Christian's afterlife,' but not 'resurrection.'"[134] The word ἀνάστασις is completely ill-suited to convey the believer's entrance into the intermediate state at death, and therefore this view should be rejected.[135]

A second problem with this view concerns the repetition of the identical form of the same verb ἔζησαν ("they came to life") in verses 4 and 5. If one resurrection is spiritual, then the other must also be spiritual, and if one is physical, the other must

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[129] In the words of N.T. Wright, "to use the word 'resurrection' to *refer to* death in an attempt to invest it with a new meaning seems…to strain usage well beyond the breaking point" (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003], 474; emphasis original). The amillennial view that the first resurrection equals regeneration does not have this problem, because being made alive in the spiritual realm certainly fits the concept of a "resurrection," even though ἀνάστασις never refers to the new birth in the New Testament.

[130] These definitions are provided by White ("Death and the First Resurrection," 8–9), who is critiquing this view rather than defending it, but they summarize it accurately.

[131] Ibid., 8.

[132] Ibid.

[133] This is acknowledged even though the New Testament itself does not use the term ἀνάστασις as a reference to regeneration (see above for discussion).

[134] White, "Death and the First Resurrection," 8. White states, "I do not see that such notions are consistent with the meaning of resurrection as a term or concept in the Bible or elsewhere" (9). Along these same lines, White objects that while the Bible clearly teaches two categories of resurrection outside of Revelation 20 (e.g., in John 5), this view creates a third category of resurrection otherwise unknown in the Bible.

[135] According to Storms, "If John wished to describe entrance into the intermediate state in terms of a resurrection…with what Greek noun other than *anastasis* ['resurrection'] could he have done it?" (*Kingdom Come*, 453). The problem with this argument is that it assumes what Storms is trying to prove: that John does indeed intend to describe the believer's entrance into the immediate state as a *resurrection*. Nobody disputes that the word ἀνάστασις is the best word to express the idea of a *resurrection*—what is disputed is whether John is describing *entrance into the intermediate state* as a resurrection. One could equally argue, "If John wished to describe prayers to God in terms of a *resurrection*, with what Greek noun other than ἀνάστασις could he have done it?," but this does not prove that the word "resurrection" refers to prayers.

be physical as well. As A. J. Gordon writes, "The meaning of the one fixes the meaning of the other."[136] This has significant implications:

> If ἔζησαν in both verses refers to a physical resurrection, there is no problem. But if ἔζησαν refers to a spiritual resurrection in both verses, then the exegete is confronted with an insurmountable problem. For this would imply that the unbelieving dead of verse 5 live spiritually in heaven like the martyrs of verse 4 after the thousand years is completed.[137]

This is a theological and exegetical impossibility, and for this reason the use of the word ἔζησαν as a description of the "first resurrection" weighs heavily against this view.

A third problem with this view concerns the designation χίλια ἔτη ("for a thousand years") at the end of Revelation 20:4. As explained above, John's use of the

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[136] Gordon, "The First Resurrection," 83.

[137] Deere, "Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4–6," 68. Because the same word ἔζησαν is used, amillennialist Anthony Hoekema agrees that both resurrections must be of the same nature, but he argues that neither of them are bodily resurrections. According to Hoekema, when John says "they came to life [ἔζησαν] and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (v. 4), this refers to a spiritual resurrection of the saints during the present age. But when John continues by writing that "the rest of the dead did not come to life [ἔζησαν] until the thousand years were completed" (v. 5a), he means that the wicked never did come to life spiritually (*The Bible and the Future*, 235–36; also Augustine, *City of God*, 20.9; Strimple, "Amillennialism," 126; Hughes, "The Question of the Millennium," 301–2). Hoekema defends this interpretation by arguing that the conjunction ἄχρι in verse 5—"until [ἄχρι] the thousand years were completed"—means "up to a certain point" but does not indicate a change in the state of affairs after the time period has ended. For this reason, says Hoekema, "The use of the word *until* does not imply that these unbelieving dead will live and reign with Christ after this period has ended," for they will *never* live and reign with Christ (*The Bible and the Future*, 236). But this interpretation is highly unlikely for several reasons: (1) Every time that ἄχρι is used in the New Testament as a conjunction (as in Rev 20:5) rather than a preposition, it refers to a period of time that will come to an end and be followed by a reversal of the condition just described (e.g., Rev 7:3; 15:18: 20:3) (Deere, "Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4–6," 68–69; Blaising, "Premillennialism," 225–26; MacLeod, "The Fourth 'Last Thing,'" 58). Therefore, the use of the conjunction ἄχρι in Rev 20:5 implies that the "rest of the dead" will indeed "come to life" (ἔζησαν) and experience a physical resurrection like the saints in verse 4. (2) The exact same expression is used in Rev 20:3 ("until the thousand years were completed"—ἄχρι τελεσθῇ τὰ χίλια ἔτη) where it clearly contemplates a change after the thousand years (since Satan will be released once the millennium is completed) (Rev 20:7–8). This implies that the rest of the dead will indeed "come to life" (ἔζησαν) after the thousand-year period. (3) If John wanted to deny the resurrection and reign to the others, he could have simply written, "The rest of the dead did not come to life." The addition of "until the thousand years were ended" clearly suggests subsequent action, whereas the clause is entirely superfluous if subsequent action is not intended (Saucy, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 276). (4) If neither use of ἔζησαν refers to a bodily resurrection, then there is no mention of the future resurrection of the believer in Revelation 20. (5) This interpretation raises the question of why John would have deemed it necessary to inform or assure his readers that unbelievers will not experience the spiritual resurrection promised only to believers. (6) A "*first*" resurrection simply implies a second one. As Saucy states, "The immediate identification of the coming to life of the first group as the 'first' resurrection seems clearly to suggest a second resurrection involving those remaining" (Saucy, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 276). Amillennialists G. K. Beale (*The Book of Revelation*, 1015–16) and Sam Storms (*Kingdom Come*, 468–69) argue against Hoekema's view, insisting that Rev 20:5 refers to the physical resurrection of unbelievers after the thousand years, which leaves them with no adequate response to the premillennial objection of the two uses of ἔζησαν having different meanings.

accusative of time indicates that the individuals who come to life in the first resurrection will begin their reign at the same time—at the very beginning of the thousand years—and they will reign together with Christ for the entirety of the millennium (Rev 20:4–6).[138] In contrast, according to the view that the first resurrection refers to believers entering the intermediate state at the point of death, the entrance of these saints into their reign is distributed throughout the millennial period as they die.[139] In this scenario, believers do not live in heaven and reign with Christ for the entirety of the thousand years—as John says they will—and some of them do not begin their reign until the millennium is almost over. A genitive of time would have been compatible with this view, but the accusative of time is not.

Furthermore, the various arguments in favor of this view are less than compelling. First, the claim of a clear precedent of the word ζάω ("to live") being used as a reference to life in the intermediate state is true, but also a bit misleading. The verb is used 139 times in the New Testament, but only three times is it used in this way (Matt 22:32; Luke 20:38; 1 Pet 4:6). Therefore, a clear precedent does exist, but the rarity of its use undermines the strength of this argument, especially in the absence of clear contextual indicators for this uncommon usage.[140] The verb can certainly be used to describe life in the intermediate state, but John's use of this specific word in Revelation 20:4 provides no compelling evidence that it does.

Second, John's use of the word "throne" (θρόνος) in verse 4 is not a decisive argument in favor of this view either. According to some amillennialists, because θρόνος refers to heavenly thrones throughout Revelation, it must refer to heavenly thrones in Revelation 20:4 as well. This is said to place the scene of Revelation 20:4–6 in heaven and therefore during the intermediate state. But the word θρόνος simply refers to a *throne*, without specifying the actual location of the throne. Instead, the location of the throne mentioned in any given passage must be determined from the immediate context of its use. In Revelation 20, the context indicates that the saints who reign from these thrones are "on the broad plain of the earth" (Rev 20:9). Furthermore, the promise in Revelation 5:10 that the saints "will reign upon the earth" also argues for earthly thrones in Revelation 20:4–6 since the former is fulfilled in the latter. This amillennial argument is less than compelling, for *if John had intended to refer to thrones on earth, what other word was available to him to do so?*

Thirdly, John's reference to "souls" (ψυχή) being resurrected and reigning with Christ (Rev 20:4) fails to provide compelling evidence for this view either. As noted previously, the use of ψυχή to refer to the whole person is well attested in the New Testament (e.g., Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9; 9:56; Acts 2:41, 43; 3:23; 7:14; 15:26; 27:37; Rom 2:9; 13:1; 1 Cor 15:45; 1 Pet 3:20).[141] In addition, there seems to be no soul-

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[138] Powell, "Progression versus Recapitulation," 109.

[139] Ibid.

[140] In addition, the verb ζάω is used elsewhere in Revelation to refer to bodily resurrection (Rev 1:18; 2:8; 13:14; cf. Rom 14:9). Furthermore, as Thomas notes, whenever ζάω is used in the context of bodily death in the New Testament, it always speaks of bodily resurrection (e.g., John 11:25; Acts 1:3; 9:41) (*Revelation 8–22*, 417).

[141] *BDAG*, 1099–1100; Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon*, 388; Deere, "Premillennialism in Revelation 20:4–6," 67.

body dichotomy in view in Revelation 20:4–6, for John sees simply that those who had been beheaded come to life again and sit on thrones.[142] For this reason, the use of ψυχή in Revelation 20:4 is compatible with the premillennial view of the "first resurrection" and therefore fails to prove the amillennial view.

In addition, the amillennial argument for interpreting ψυχή in Revelation 20:4 as a reference to man's soul (as distinguished from his physical body) actually highlights the primary problem with this view, for in what sense does the believer's soul experience a "resurrection" at the point of physical death? Again, when someone who is already spiritually alive continues to live spiritually even after his physical death, no *coming to life* has actually taken place.

Fourthly, none of the parallel passages cited by amillennialists confirm that Revelation 20:4–6 describes life in the intermediate state and therefore that the "first resurrection" refers to entrance into the intermediate state. The strongest amillennial argument in this regard is the appeal to Revelation 6:9–11.[143] According to amillennialist Sam Storms, a careful comparison between Revelation 6:9–11 and Revelation 20:4 reveals that they are clearly describing the same experience of martyred saints in the intermediate state:[144]

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[142] Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ*, 304.

[143] Amillennialists also cite Rev 2:10–11 and 13:14 as evidence that Rev 20:4–6 portrays life in the intermediate state. According to Storms, Rev 2:10–11 is parallel to Rev 20:4–6 in three specific ways: (1) "it speaks of *martyrdom* as the result of steadfast faith;" (2) "the faithful are promised 'the crown of *life*;'" and (3) "the faithful martyrs are exempt from the *second death*" (*Kingdom Come*, 459; emphasis original). But these parallels do not prove that Rev 20:4–6 describes life in the intermediate state. To use Rev 2:10–11 as a compelling argument, the amillennialist must be able to demonstrate (a) that receiving the crown of life takes place during the intermediate state rather than in the eternal state and (b) that it can be equated with the millennial reign portrayed in Rev 20:4–6. But this cannot be done. According to Kline, the "crown of life" in Rev 2:10 "might…be the royal crown," in which case it should be considered "the nominal equivalent of the verbal 'they lived and reign'…in Revelation 20:4ff" ("The First Resurrection," 374), but this has merely been asserted rather than proven.

Regarding Rev 14:13, Kline argues that the blessing of "rest from their labors" promised in this verse "is very much the same as the millennial blessings of Revelation 20:6" ("The First Resurrection," 373). According to Kline, "the biblical concept of sabbath rest includes enthronement after the completion of labors by which royal dominion is manifested or secured (cf., e.g., Isa. 66:1).… To live and reign with Christ is to participate in his royal sabbath rest." For this reason, Kline cites Rev 14:13 as evidence that Rev 20:4–6 describes life in the intermediate state. The simple problem with this argument is its inability to demonstrate that the rest of Rev 14:13 can indeed be equated with the reign of Rev 20:6. If a case can be made from Isa 66:1 that the two verses describe the same experience, then this needs to be demonstrated clearly. Until then, interpreters not already inclined to connect these dots may have a difficult time seeing the connection.

[144] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 457.

Revelation 6:9	Revelation 20:4a
"And…I saw"	"And I saw"
"the souls of those who had been slain"	"the souls of those who had been beheaded"
"because of the word of God"	"because of the word of God"
"and because of the testimony which they had maintained"	"because of the testimony of Jesus"

Figure 2. Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 458.[145]

Because of these parallels, Storms says it "seems beyond reasonable doubt" that these two visions are describing the same experience of the martyrs and therefore that Revelation 20:4–6 must portray life in the intermediate state.[146]

But the problem with this argument is that the similarities listed by Storms merely prove that both visions refer to the same group of individuals, not that both visions describe the same *experience* of those individuals. In fact, John identifies the martyrs and what led to their deaths in Revelation 6:9 and 20:4a, but he does not describe the *experience* of these martyrs until Revelation 6:10–11 and 20:4b. For this reason, if Storms wants to demonstrate that Revelation 6:9–11 and 20:4 describe the same experience of these martyrs in the intermediate state, he must show clear parallels between Revelation 6:10–11 and 20:4b.[147] But these are the very parts of the passages he ignores in his comparison.

The two visions are obviously related to one another, but their relationship is one of progression rather than simple identity.[148] More specifically, the progression from Revelation 6:9–11 to 20:4–6 is such that if the former refers to the intermediate state (as it clearly does), then the latter must refer to a subsequent stage in the experience of the martyred saints.[149] In Revelation 6:10–11 the martyrs cry out to the Lord to avenge their blood because of the ongoing martyrdom of the saints (v. 10). In response to their anguished pleas, they are given a white robe and told to wait until the full number of martyrs has been slain (v. 11), with the implied promise that vindication will come when this number has been reached. This is indeed the intermediate state.

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[145] Storms appears to have borrowed his chart from Michel Gourgues, "The Thousand-Year Reign (Rev. 20:1–6): Terrestrial or Celestial?," *CBQ* 47, no. 4 (Oct 1985): 680.

[146] Storms, *Kingdom Come*, 458.

[147] The only similarity in experience noted by Hoekema is that in both passages "the souls of deceased believers are said to be living between death and resurrection" (*The Bible and the Future*, 235). But this simply assumes that Rev 20:4–6 describes the intermediate state (i.e., the experience of saints between death and resurrection), which is precisely what Hoekema is trying to prove.

[148] Michaels, "The First Resurrection," 107; also see Blaising, "Premillennialism," 221–22.

[149] Michaels, "The First Resurrection," 107–8.

In Revelation 20:4b, however, their number is now complete (cf. Rev 13:15; 18:24) and their prayers for vindication have been answered, for the Lord has returned in judgment (Rev 19:11–21).[150] The wait for divine vengeance is over, and the entire group of martyrs comes to life and reigns with Christ for a thousand years (Rev 20:4). This distinction between the two is reflected in the fact that the experience of the martyred saints in Revelation 6:9–11 lasts for a short time ("a little while longer" in v. 11), whereas the experience of the martyred saints in Revelation 20:4–6 lasts for a long time ("a thousand years" in v. 4).[151] The two passages are clearly not describing the same experience or period of time.

Storms and other amillennialists may disagree with this reading of the Book of Revelation, but the consistency of this progression between the two passages demonstrates the compatibility of Revelation 6:9–11 with the premillennial view of Revelation 20:4–6. In doing so, it also demonstrates that Revelation 6:9–11 fails to provide compelling evidence that Revelation 20:4–6 describes life in the intermediate state.[152]

Conclusion

In the words of George Eldon Ladd, "It is difficult to see how this 'first resurrection' can be anything but literal bodily resurrection."[153] For this reason, the first resurrection in Revelation 20 must be the first of two physical resurrections which are separated by a thousand years. The first is a resurrection of the righteous, who will be raised at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev 20:4–6), and the second is a resurrection of the wicked (Rev 20:5a), who will be raised after the millennium to stand before the judgment of the great white throne (Rev 20:11–15). And between these two physical resurrections, King Jesus will reign upon the earth for a thousand years, just as premillennialism teaches.

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[150] As Michaels states, the prayer of Rev 6:9–11 is answered in Rev 20:4–6 ("The First Resurrection," 108).

[151] Webb, "Revelation 20," 32. Revelation 6:9–11 takes place during the intermediate state, but it does not cover the entirety of the present age. In fact, the event described in this passage is yet future, not yet having taken place. More specifically, it will take place during the seven-year tribulation and it describes the pleas of those who will be martyred earlier in that period. So the "little while longer" in verse 11 is less than seven years in length, in contrast to the millennial reign of Christ, which will last a thousand years.

[152] In response to Michaels' argument, Kline insists that Rev 20:4–6 views the entire period of the church in the intermediate state as a whole, whereas Rev 6:9–11 sees it at a particular point early on ("A Reaffirmation," 116–17). But in his argument, Kline simply assumes that Rev 20:4–6 describes the intermediate state without actually proving it through a comparison of the two passages.

[153] Ladd, "Revelation 20 and the Millennium," 169.

THE IDENTITY OF THE LITTLE HORN IN DANIEL 8:
ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES, ROME, OR
THE ANTICHRIST?

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Bible interpreters debate the identity of the little horn in Daniel 8. They even disagree on which verses in Daniel 8 pertain to the little horn. This article determines the pertinent verses by means of a structural and lexical analysis. It then compares the little horn to three primary candidates: Antiochus IV Epiphanes, Rome, and the antichrist. In light of the comparative analysis, the author evaluates the candidates in order to arrive at a conclusion concerning the little horn's identity.

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Introduction

Daniel 8 presents the vision concerning the ram, goat, and little horn.[1] The ram symbolizes Medo-Persia, and the goat, Greece (vv. 20–21). Bible readers dispute the identity of the little horn. Preterists regard the little horn as the Seleucid tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–163 BC). Historicists, represented primarily by Seventh-day Adventist writers, advocate Rome. Futurists mainly opt for Antiochus IV, the antichrist, or a combination thereof. The hybrid views incorporate typology, prefiguration, or double fulfillment. Which verses of Daniel 8 describe the little horn, and to what or whom does the little horn refer?

Which Verses of Daniel 8 Depict the Little Horn?

En route to identifying the little horn, the interpreter must determine which verses pertain to him. Verses 9–14 relay the horn's actions and attitudes, while the interpretation portion of the chapter discusses a king (vv. 23–26). Structural and lexical factors indicate that both textual units depict the same sovereign, and thus, verses 23–26 interpret 9–14.

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[1] Special thanks to Eugene Merrill for commenting upon the rough draft of this piece.

The literary structure of chapter 8 establishes the expectation that the king of verses 23–26 alludes to the little horn of verses 9–14. The chapter exhibits an orderly presentation of the symbols and their interpretation. The first part of the chapter describes the vision, and the last part gives the interpretation.

The interpretation of the symbols appear in order. The first symbol, the ram of verse 3, provides the first element to be interpreted (v. 20). The second major symbol, the goat of verses 5–8, follows as the second element to be interpreted (vv. 21–22). When the reader comes to the third major symbol, the proud little horn of verse 9, the expectation has been set as to where the interpretation might appear. One would expect it to appear immediately after the interpretation of the second symbol, and indeed it does. The table displays the orderly progression of the symbols and their interpretation.

Symbol	Interpretation
Ram (v. 3)	Medo-Persia (v. 20)
Two horns (v. 3)	Two kings (v. 20)
Goat (v. 5)	Greece (v. 21)
Large horn (v. 5)	First king (v. 21)
Four horns (v. 8)	Four kingdoms (v. 22)
Proud horn (v. 9)	Proud king (v. 23)

The vision and its interpretation unfold according to the identical pattern: ram → goat → horn. The systematic presentation of symbol and interpretation supports the notion that the proud king of verses 23–26 alludes to the proud king of verses 9–14.

When we examine the segments pertaining to the proud king, verses 9–14 and 23–26, we likewise find a corresponding pattern of presentation. Both the vision account and the interpretation account begin with a remark that relates the horn (king) to the preceding context (vv. 9, 23). And both accounts conclude with a statement about the 2,300 evenings and mornings (vv. 14, 26).

Lexically, the two textual units exhibit similarities and differences. On one hand, both units describe a king who "magnifies himself" (גדל) "against the Prince (שׂר)" and "performs" and "prospers" (עשׂה and צלח) and relates to "transgression" (פשׁע). On the other hand, the vision account uses cultic language, while the interpretation employs wisdom language, such as "skilled in intrigue" and "shrewdness" (vv. 23, 25).

In light of the structure and lexemes, the present writer concludes with Pröbstle that the two textual units "correspond to and supplement each other so that the vision of the horn benefits greatly from consideration of the corresponding angelic interpretation."[2] By observing the literary organization of Daniel 8 and the verbal parallels of the two textual units, it becomes evident that the king of verses 23–26 constitutes the same individual as the horn of verses 9–14.

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[2] Martin Pröbstle, "Truth and Terror: A Text-Oriented Analysis of Daniel 8:9–14" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2006), 602.

Does the Little Horn Represent Antiochus IV Epiphanes?

Antiochus IV Epiphanes satisfies some expositors as the individual behind the image. Eleven points of comparison facilitate an evaluation of this designation.

First, the little horn persecutes the saints: "He will destroy mighty men and the holy people" (Dan 8:24). For about seven years Antiochus persecuted the Jews, beginning with the murder of the High Priest Onias III in 170 BC, and ending near his death in 163 BC. Antiochus slaughtered eighty-thousand people in Jerusalem within a three-day period (2 Macc 5:14). He terrorized the city and citizens of Jerusalem (1 Macc 1:29–32; Josephus *Ant*. 12.2.3–4). He fulfills the prediction according to Davis.[3] Indeed, the persecution imposed by Antiochus serves as a primary reason why many scholars designate him as the fulfillment of the little horn.

Second, the little horn proudly "magnified *itself* to be equal with the Commander of the host" (Dan 8:11). Moreover, "He will even oppose the Prince of princes" (v. 25). By comparison, coins from the reign of Antiochus IV read, "King Antiochus, God manifest." This point of correspondence, for Butt, "adds additional weight to the idea that Antiochus Epiphanes IV is the little horn of Daniel's vision."[4] On the other hand, this commonality is by no means conclusive, given that many rulers exude pride.

Third, the little horn begins small (v. 9). Antiochus, upon the assassination of Seleucus IV Philopator, usurped the throne from his nephew Demetrius I Soter (Appian *Syr*. 45). Antiochus' unusual ascension to authority mirrors the little horn's peculiar start, according to Miller: "Antiochus would have an insignificant beginning. Although his nephew, son of his older brother Seleucus IV, was the rightful heir to the throne, Antiochus gained this position through bribery and flattery."[5] Again, this explanation has some merit and deserves consideration.

Fourth, the little horn "will be broken without human agency" (Dan 8:25). Natural causes killed Antiochus.[6] Moore equates the two characters based upon their means of death.[7] For other expositors, however, the little horn's demise seems supernatural, while Antiochus' death appears merely providential.[8]

Fifth, the little horn originates "Out of one of them" (v. 9). This raises a significant interpretive issue: What is the grammatical antecedent of "them"? Does the little horn originate from one of the "four conspicuous *horns*" (i.e., one of the four Greek successors of Alexander the Great) or from one of the "four winds of the sky" (i.e., one of the four directions of the compass)? Young assumes the former option: "this

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[3] Dale Ralph Davis, *The Message of Daniel: His kingdom cannot fail*, Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 111.

[4] Kyle Butt, "The Prophecy of Daniel 8," *Bible and Spade* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 62.

[5] Steven R. Miller, *Daniel*, New American Commentary 18 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 225.

[6] 1 Macc 6:1–16; 2 Macc 9:1–28; Josephus *Ant*. 12.9.1; Polybius *Hist*. 31.11; Appian, *Syr*. 66; Diodorus *Hist*. 31.18.

[7] G. F. Moore, "Daniel viii. 9–14," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 15, no. 1/2 (1896): 194.

[8] John C. Whitcomb, *Daniel*, Everyman's Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1985), 117.

horn grows out of one of the four horns."[9] Antiochus certainly meets the criterion of being a Greek lord who lives after the Diadochi chronologically. On the other hand, the current writer espouses the latter option based on three lines of argumentation.[10] (a) "Winds" is the closest grammatical antecedent to "them." (b) The little horn "comes forth" (יצא) from its place, whereas the other horns of verses 3 and 8 "come up" (עלה). The contrast in verb choice suggests a geographical origin, as reinforced by the geographical references in verse 9 (south, east, beautiful land). (c) The literary structure of the vision informs the interpretation. The descriptions of the three main players (the ram, goat, and little horn) unfold according to a set pattern: geographic origin → conquests → demise.[11] Given that the ram originates "before/east" (לִפְנֵי) of the canal (v. 3), and the goat originates from the west (v. 5), the reader would expect the segment about the little horn to follow suit by beginning with a statement of geographic origin. Such an interpretation would obviously leave the little horn unattached to a creature, which sometimes happens in Scriptural symbolism (e.g., Zech 1:18–19). The little horn does not need to be Grecian.

Sixth, the little horn defeats his enemies in the south, east, and beautiful land (Dan 8:9). To the south Antiochus launched an Egyptian campaign (170–168 BC). Initially he prevailed in Lower Egypt, but he evacuated the country when the Roman forces of Gaius Popillius Laenas thwarted his attack upon Alexandria.[12] His incomplete triumphs hardly seem "exceedingly great" (v. 9). Antiochus' two-year eastern campaign largely succeeded in Armenia, Babylonia, Media, and Persia. But he died during the campaign and retreated shamefully from the botched invasions of Elymais and Persepolis.[13] His eastern expansion pales in comparison to that of his predecessor, Antiochus III the Great, who reached India (1 Macc 8:6–8). The beautiful land of Palestine already belonged to Antiochus IV when he assumed the throne. Antiochus III had already secured it from the Ptolemies (Josephus *Ant*. 12.3.3–4). Antiochus IV persecuted the Jews, causing the Jews to revolt and overthrew their Syrian oppressors (1 Macc 1:20–62; 2 Macc 5–6; Josephus *Ant*. 12.5.3–4). Antiochus did not conquer the beautiful land; he lost control of it. Shea's chapter, "Why Antiochus IV Is Not the Little Horn of Daniel 8," traces the military history and rightly concludes, "the net results of what Antiochus accomplished in these three geographical spheres was rather negligible and even negative in some cases."[14]

Seventh, the little horn accumulates more territory than the ram. The ram, goat, and little horn each "magnify/enlarge" (גדל) their territory—the latter two more so than the former. The ram magnifies himself westward, northward, and southward (Dan 8:4). The goat magnifies himself "exceedingly" (מְאֹד) toward the east (vv. 5,

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[9] Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949), 170.

[10] Gerhard Pfandl, *Daniel: The Seer of Babylon* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004), 78.

[11] Holger Gzella, *Cosmic Battle and Political Conflict: Studies in Verbal Syntax and Contextual Interpretation of Daniel 8*, Biblica et Orientalia 47 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2003), 122.

[12] 1 Macc 1:16–19; Josephus *Ant*. 12.5.2; Livy *Hist*. 45.12; Polybius *Hist*. 29.27.

[13] 1 Macc 3:31, 37; 6:1–4, 56; 2 Macc 9:1–2; Josephus *Ant*. 12.9.1; Appian *Syr*. 45; Polybius *Hist*. 31.11.

[14] William H. Shea, *Selected Studies on Prophetic Interpretation*, rev. ed., ed. Frank B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1992), 46.

8). The little horn magnifies himself "excessively" (יֶתֶר) toward the south, east, and beautiful land (v. 9). Antiochus cannot be the little horn because he amassed less country than the ram. As Shea reasons, "Antiochus IV should have exceeded the Persian and Greek Empires in greatness. Obviously, this was not the case, since he ruled only one portion of the Grecian Empire with but little success."[15]

Eighth, the little horn emerges "In the latter period of their rule" (v. 23). Antiochus IV did not live during the latter period of the Seleucid Kingdom, but near the middle.[16] The Seleucid Dynasty endured from 311 to 65 BC, while Antiochus IV reigned from 175 to 164 BC. Antiochus served as the eighth of more than twenty rulers in the Seleucid Empire. If Daniel had envisioned Antiochus, he should have placed him in "the middle period of their rule." To alleviate the tension Steinmann interprets "the latter period" as "the second half."[17]

Ninth, the little horn reigns during "the time of the end" (v. 17). The end, for Collins, came at the end of the temple desecration by Antiochus.[18] Young thinks it marked "the end of the OT period and the ushering in of the new."[19] In the OT, the other four uses of "the time of the end" all appear in one vision within close proximity (11:35, 40; 12:4, 9). These four uses, bound together chronologically by "at that time" (12:1), point to a distant era when a resurrection takes place (v. 2).[20] LaRondelle stays on target: "Daniel's 'time of the end' does not take its point of reference from the first advent of Christ but from Christ's second advent, because at that time the establishment of God's kingdom and the resurrection of the dead takes place."[21] In addition, the "time of the end" cannot refer to the end of Antiochus because the Greek Empire endured for more than a century after his death.

Tenth, the little horn relates to the 2,300 evenings and mornings (8:11–14). Evening and morning together most naturally refer to one normal day, yielding 2,300 days. Antiochus' interruption of the Jewish sacrifices did not last 2,300 days, but approximately 1,080 days (1 Macc 1:54; 4:52–54). Consequently, "Innumerable explanations have been attempted to make the 2,300 days coincide with the history of Antiochus Epiphanes," Walvoord observes.[22] A popular solution involves regarding

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[15] Ibid., 44.

[16] William H. Shea, *Daniel 7–12: Prophecies of the End Time*, Abundant Life Bible Amplifier (Boise: Pacific, 1996), 97.

[17] Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel: A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture*, Continental Commentaries (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2008), 415.

[18] John J. Collins, "The Meaning of 'the End' in the Book of Daniel," in *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins; Presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, John J. Collins, and Thomas H. Tobin. College Theology Society Resources in Religion 5 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), 94.

[19] Young, *Daniel*, 176.

[20] Gerhard Pfandl, "Daniel's 'Time of the End,'" *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 143–44.

[21] Hans K. LaRondelle, *How To Understand The End-Time Prophecies Of The Bible: A Biblical-Contextual Approach*, rev. ed. (Bradenton, FL: First Impressions, 2007), 360.

[22] John F. Walvoord, *Daniel*, rev. and ed. Charles H. Dyer and Philip E. Rawley. John Walvoord Prophecy Commentaries (Chicago: Moody, 2012), 234.

the evenings and mornings as sacrifices.[23] Evening and morning, then, allude to the daily sacrifice (תָּמִיד) just mentioned in the context (Dan 8:11–13). Since the sacrifice ascends morning and evening (Exod 29:38–42), a time span of 1,150 days results. Exegetes gravitate toward this approach because 1,150 days approximates the 1,080 days (≈ three years) of temple desecration under Antiochus. Because no time period fits precisely, proponents usually advance this interpretation with caution.[24]

For three reasons the 2,300 evenings and mornings do not signal 2,300 sacrifices. (a) The comparable formula in Genesis 1 sets a precedent for how to interpret the evenings and mornings ("there was evening and there was morning"). According to Keil, "A Hebrew reader could not possibly understand the period of time 2300 evening-mornings of 2300 half days or 1150 whole days, because evening and morning at the creation constituted not the half but the whole day."[25] (b) Whenever the OT writers discuss the quotidian offerings, "morning" always precedes "evening" in the phraseology, and never the reverse.[26] Schwantes recognizes this modality: "'Burnt offerings morning and evening' becomes a stereotyped phrase which finds no exception in the biblical literature."[27] Hartman overlooks this point when he declares, "since the twenty-four-hour day began for the Jews in the evening, the evening sacrifices are mentioned before the morning sacrifices."[28] (c) Verse 14 reads "2,300 evenings *and* mornings" and not "2,300 evenings and 2,300 mornings." The fact that the number appears only once establishes morning and evening as a unit. As Keil explains, "When the Hebrews wish to express separately day and night, . . . the number of both is expressed. They say, e.g. forty days and forty nights (Gen. 7:4, 12; Ex. 24:18; 1 Kings 19:8), and three days and three nights (Jonah 2:1; Matt. 12:40)."[29]

Ultimately, whether one favors 2,300 days or 1,150 days, "there is no historical epoch mentioned in the book of Maccabees or in Josephus regarding Antiochus IV which corresponds with either set of figures."[30] Since "attempts to correlate it with specific historical events have not been very persuasive," Newsom concludes, "It thus remains likely that 2,300 has its significance in relation to some symbolic calculation, but it is no longer possible to decipher the system."[31] The interpreter need

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[23] Gleason L. Archer Jr., "Daniel," in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gæbelein, vol. 7, *Daniel–Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985), 103.

[24] Steinmann, *Daniel*, 406.

[25] C. F. Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, vol. 9, *Daniel*, trans. M. G. Easton (repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 693–94.

[26] Exod 29:39; Num 28:4; 2 Kgs 16:15; 1 Chr 16:40; 23:30; 2 Chr 2:4; 13:11; 31:3; Ezra 3:3.

[27] Siegfried J. Schwantes, "*'Ereb Boqer* of Daniel 8:14 Re-examined," in *Symposium on Daniel: Introductory and Exegetical Studies*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series 2 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1986), 469.

[28] Louis F. Hartman, "A New Translation with Notes and Commentary on Chapters 1–9," in *The Book of Daniel*, by Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Li Lella, Anchor Bible 23 (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 227.

[29] Keil, *Daniel*, 693.

[30] Gerhard F. Hasel, "The 'Little Horn,' the Heavenly Sanctuary, and the Time of the End: A Study of Daniel 8:9–14," in *Symposium on Daniel*, 432.

[31] Carol A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 267.

not resort to "symbolic calculation." Another solution accommodates 2,300 days, as discussed momentarily.

Eleventh, the little horn desecrates the sanctuary and interrupts the sacrifices (Dan 8:11–14). Antiochus indeed interrupted the sacrifices (1 Macc 1:41–50). No evidence exists that he destroyed the sanctuary building, but he did rob and defile it (1 Macc 1:20–24, 54–55, 59). Young states, "1 Macc. 1:44–47 describes the fulfillment of this prophecy, . . . Apparently Antiochus did not actually tear down the temple, although evidently he desecrated it."[32]

A different interpretation merits consideration. The desecration of the sanctuary and the abolition of the sacrifices transpire in connection with the "transgression/abomination that desolates" (Dan 8:11–13; 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). Since the abomination of desolation awaited a future fulfillment in the time of Jesus (Matt 24:15), this rules out a second-century BC fulfillment by Antiochus. Gulley argues persuasively against Antiochus as the fulfillment based upon the authority of the NT:

> Almost universally Antiochus is believed to be the desolater of the sanctuary, referred to in Dan 8:11–13; 9:27; 11:31; and 12:11, but Christ referred to this desolater as still future in His day. He said, "So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand" (Matt 24:15). We must allow Scripture to interpret Scripture, and particularly when Christ gives specific guidance and urges that understanding be sought in this matter. There could be no clearer refutation of a second century BC interpretation.[33]

Indeed, the Antiochus interpretation already existed in early sources as the LXX and the Book of Maccabees.[34] LaRondelle cites the Antiochus interpretation of Daniel 8 as a classic example of a prophecy that expositors misinterpret by imposing contemporary circumstances:

> Another danger is to allow current events to explain Bible prophecy, or to read some dramatic historical event back into biblical prophecy. A typical example is the apocryphal book of Maccabees, written by a Palestinian Jew in about 100 B.C. He assumed that the desecration of Jerusalem's temple by Antiochus IV was the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy of a coming "abomination of desolation" on the Jewish altar (Dan. 8:11–13; 11:31; 1 Macc. 1:52–55; Josephus, Ant. Jud. 10:11, 7).[35]

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[32] Young, *Daniel*, 172.

[33] Norman R. Gulley, "Why the Danielic Little Horn is Not Antiochus IV Epiphanes," in *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea*, ed. David Merling (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1997), 193.

[34] William H. Shea, "Early Development of the Antiochus Epiphanes Interpretation," in *Symposium on Daniel*, 260–61.

[35] LaRondelle, *End-Time Prophecies*, 345.

It appears that the writer of Maccabees read Antiochus into Daniel. One example of this comes from the use of Dan 8:10 in 2 Macc 9:10.[36] Daniel reads, "It grew up to the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the starts to fall to earth." According to Maccabees, Antiochus IV "thought he could touch the stars of heaven."

Overall, many of the eleven factors mentioned above negate the possibility that Antiochus IV fulfilled Daniel 8. Thus the reader can entertain the notion that another power meets the requirements of the biblical data.

Does the Little Horn Represent Rome?

The discontinuities between the little horn and Antiochus IV spur historicists to seek another power as the referent of the little horn. Some such interpreters propose the kingdom of Rome, as played out through human and church history.[37] The context of Daniel 7–8 allows for a kingdom rather than a king, according to Süring: "a close study of Dan 7:7, 24 and 8:3, 5, 21–22 reveals that the word *qrn* is used with the interchangeable meaning of 'king(s)'/'kingdoms,' and it appears that the term 'king(s)' is used in the sense of a ruling house or dynasty, rather than as designating an individual."[38] In agreement Shea contends that "The only place among these symbols where one can clearly point to the identification of a horn as an individual king is in the case of Alexander" (8:21).[39]

Historicists convert the 2,300 days to years by means of their day-year principle (Num 14:34; Ezek 4:6). This yields a time span from 457 BC (Artaxerxes' decree) to AD 1844, although some variation exists among scholars.[40] Thus when Gabriel reveals that "the vision pertains to the time of the end" (Dan 8:17), he alludes to the time span of the entire vision—the period of the ram, goat, and little horn—based upon the technical use of "vision" (חָזוֹן) in the chapter.[41]

On the other hand, the present writer holds that Gabriel's mention of the vision in verse 17 refers solely to the most recent panel of the vision (vv. 9–14), called "the vision about the regular sacrifice" (v. 13) and "the vision about the evenings and mornings" (v. 26). The technical use of "the time of the end" (עֵת קֵץ) in the OT bears this out. Thus the animal fight between the ram and the goat transpired (relatively) near the time of composition, while the little horn prophecy awaits a remote eschatological fulfillment. With that in mind the reader may consider a distant monarch as a candidate for the little horn.

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[36] Young, *Daniel*, 171.

[37] Samuel Nuñez, *The Vision of Daniel 8: Interpretations from 1700 to 1800*, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 14 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1987), 408–13.

[38] Margit L Süring, "The Horn-Motifs of the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1984): 339.

[39] Shea, *Prophetic Interpretation*, 44.

[40] William H. Shea, "Supplementary Evidence in Support of 547 B.C. as the Starting Date for the 2300 Day-Years of Daniel 8:14," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 89.

[41] Hasel, "Daniel 8:9–14," 433–36.

Does the Little Horn Represent the Antichrist?

Some futurists advocate the view that the prediction concerning the little horn of Daniel 8 points to a distant eschatological monarch known as the antichrist. Support for this hypothesis comes by way of linguistic and conceptual parallels between the little horn and other guises in the book that arguably depict this individual. These guises include the little horn of Daniel 7, the coming prince of 9:26–27, and the despicable person of chapters 11–12. The following discussion compares these characters and evaluates their commonalities in order to determine whether they depict the same individual.

The Little Horn of Daniel 7

Daniel 7 records the vision of the four vile kingdoms that succumb to the indestructible kingdom. Chapters 2 and 7 both exhibit a 4 + 1 pattern, a bipartite second kingdom, and a ten-king aspect of the fourth kingdom. The fourth kingdom exists (at least in part) during the eschaton because of factors like the usage of "time, times, and half a time" (7:25; 12:7; Rev 12:14). Far and away the fourth kingdom receives more attention than the first three kingdoms combined. Much of the attention goes to the little horn with the big mouth.

The little horns of chapters 7 and 8 exhibit multiple commonalities. Both individuals share the same symbol—a horn (7:8; 8:9). Both live after the height of Grecian rule and during the end time (7:25; 8:17). Both begin small and become great (7:8, 20; 8:9). Both possess the power of perception (7:8; 8:23). Both exude hubris and blasphemy (7:8, 11, 20, 25; 8:11, 25). Both conquer and destroy (7:8, 20–21, 24; 8:9, 24–25). Both persecute the saints (7:21, 25; 8:24). Both suffer a supernatural demise as expressed grammatically by divine passives (7:26; 8:25).[42] Both receive the most attention in their respective visions.[43] Both appear as the final malevolent power in the literary structure of the visions.

The extensive overlap suggests that chapters 7 and 8 describe the same ruler. As Shea puts it, "when two powers represented by the same prophetic symbol arise and carry out the same kinds of action in the same time slot in the flow of the visions, the probabilities appear to be on the side of those commentators who have identified them as the same historical entity."[44] According to Doukhan, "Everything that happens to the little horn of chapter 7 has its counterpart in the little horn of chapter 8. Indeed, the little horn of chapter 8 and the little horn of chapter 7 are undoubtedly the same."[45]

For Greidanus, a key difference between the little horns pertains to their origin: the horn of chapter 7 comes from the *fourth* regime, whereas the horn of chapter 8

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[42] Cp. Pfandl, *Daniel*, 77.

[43] Paul A. Porter, *Metaphors and Monsters: A Literary-Critical Study of Daniel 7 and 8*, Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series 20 (Toronto: Porter, 1985), 11.

[44] Shea, *Prophetic Interpretation*, 38.

[45] Jacques B. Doukhan, *Daniel: The Vision of the End*, rev. ed. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1989), 25.

emerges from the *third* empire.[46] But 8:8–9 does not necessitate that the little horn originate from the third kingdom, as demonstrated earlier.

The Coming Prince of Daniel 9:26–27

In Daniel 9, the prophet prays to Yahweh concerning the seventy-year captivity of the Israelites, and Gabriel responds by granting him special revelation concerning the seventy periods of seven that await the Israelites and Jerusalem. The Babylonian exile had lasted seventy years because the Israelites violated the sabbatical-year principle for 490 years (Lev 25:2–5; 26:34–35, 43; 2 Chron 36:21; Dan 9:2). When the end of the seventy years drew near, Gabriel revealed to Daniel another 490-year period of testing—a period of "seventy sevens" (Dan 9:24). This period would consist of "seven sevens," plus "sixty-two sevens," plus "one seven" (vv. 25–27). The final period of seven awaits a yet future fulfillment because all six goals of verse 24 have not yet come to fruition.[47]

During the final period of seven, the coming prince emerges onto the scene. The prince represents the same ruler as the little horn of chapter 8, as confirmed by three specific points of correspondence. Namely, this individual lives in the end time (8:17; 9:26–27), he stops the sacrifices (8:11–13; 9:27), and he pertains to "the transgression/abomination that desolates (שמם)" (8:13; 9:27). The vision of the coming prince develops the vision of the little horn by revealing the start time for the abolition of the sacrifices and the transgression/abomination that desolates. These atrocities begin "in the middle of the week/period of seven." Davies rightly recognizes the eradication of the sacrifices in chapter 8 as "an event which dominates the remaining visions."[48]

The Despicable Person of Daniel 11–12

In stride with the prior visions of the book, the vision of Daniel 11–12 unfolds in a predictable manner. It treats the worldly empires in order: the second empire of Persia, the third empire of Greece, and the fourth empire with its expanded discussion of the little horn. Indeed, chapter 11 equates the little horn with the "despicable person" (11:21).

The little horn of chapter 8 and the despicable person of chapters 11–12 constitute one and the same person based on the following commonalties. He desecrates the sanctuary, terminates the sacrifices, and set ups the transgression/abomination of desolation (8:11–13; 11:31; 12:11). He rules as a "king" (8:23; 11:27, 36). He is the only person in the book said to practice "trickery/deception," מִרְמָה (8:25; 11:23). He conquers the south and the beautiful land (9:9; 11:25, 41–42). He destroys "many" (8:25; 11:44). He "prospers," צלח (8:12, 24; 11:36). He exalts himself (גדל) above the

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[46] Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from Daniel: Foundations for Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 257–58.

[47] Paul D. Feinberg, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24–27," in *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*, ed. John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg (Chicago: Moody, 1981), 212.

[48] Philip R. Davies, "Eschatology in the Book of Daniel," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 17 (1980): 36.

gods and the God of gods (8:11, 25; 11:36–37). He starts small: "a rather small horn which grew" (8:9) and "a despicable person will arise, on whom the honor of kinship has not been conferred . . . and will seize the kingdom by intrigue" (11:21). He lives during "the time of the end," עֵת קֵץ (8:19; 11:35, 40; 12:4, 9). He lives during "the appointed time" (מוֹעֵד) of "the end," קֵץ (8:19; 11:27, 29, 35). He lives during a time of "ease/security," שַׁלְוָה (8:25; 11:21, 24). He lives during the final period of "indignation" (זעם) and fosters "indignation" (זעם) against the covenant (8:19; 11:30, 36). Such excessive and sometimes exclusive overlap signals that the writer envisions one and the same tyrant.[49]

We can ascertain the timing of the despicable person by observing the timing of his contemporaries, "those who have insight" (11:33, 35; 12:3, 10). They live near the time of a distant future resurrection (12:2). This group possesses and provides "understanding," and they help many become "refined" and "purged" and "purified." An additional factor sets the despicable person in an eschatological context. The stoppage of the Jewish sacrifices and the start of the abomination of desolation in 12:11 remains yet future, and since 12:11 merely repeats 11:31, the fulfilment of 11:31 must remain yet future.

The vision of 12:11–12, just like the visions of 8:11–14 and 9:27, uses the cessation of the sacrifices and the activation of the abomination of desolation as a starting point for counting time. These atrocities function as a benchmark for counting time in the Book of Daniel. Twice in the book someone asks, "how long" will particular events endure (8:13–14; 12:6–12)? Both answers incorporate a specific number of days, as counted from the same chronological benchmark. The 2,300 days, the 1,290 days, and the 1,335 days all begin at the middle of the seventieth seven.

According to 12:12, the indestructible kingdom begins 1,335 days after the sacrifices cease at the midpoint of the seventieth seven.[50] Since the 2,300 days also commence when the sacrifices stop, that places the restoration of the holy area 965 days after the start of the enduring empire. During that time, an individual named Branch, with assistance from his followers, will build a new temple (Zech 6:12–15), the magnificent temple of Ezekiel 40–48.

From Pember's perspective, the 2,520 days (seven years) of the tribulation will be cut short to 2,300 days, because "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved" (Matt 24:22). In a subsequent publication he changes his view so that the 2,300 days begin 220 days into the tribulation period, and end at the culmination of the tribulation.[51] These variations, however, do not account as well for the interrelatedness of the visions in Daniel 7–12.

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[49] For the opinion that 11:21–35 pictures Antiochus IV, see Andrew E. Steinmann, "Is the Antichrist in Daniel 11?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162, no. 646 (April–June 2005): 203.

[50] Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 327–29.

[51] G. H. Pember, *The Great Prophecies concerning the Gentiles, the Jews, and the Church of God* (1887; repr., London: Conley & Schoettle, 1984), 105; G. H. Pember, *The Great Prophecies of the Centuries concerning Israel and the Church* (1909; repr., London: Conley & Schoettle, 1984), 311.

Conclusion

The little horn of Daniel 8:9–14 constitutes the same individual as the king of verses 23–26. He emerges as a distant eschatological dictator known also as the little horn of chapter 7, the coming prince of 9:26–27, and the despicable person of chapters 11–12. The NT calls him the antichrist. In no way does the little horn point to Antiochus IV Epiphanes or Rome. The incongruities between the little horn, Antiochus, and Rome bolster this conclusion.

A SIN OFFERING LYING IN THE DOORWAY?
A MINORITY INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 4:6–8

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Several key interpretive problems emerging from the text of Genesis 4:6–8 have received exegetically unsupportable treatment. It is essential that the expositor revisit the text in order to grasp the intent of the passage. Furthermore, the narrative is laden with theological significance as to Yahweh's intervening mercy toward the unworthy sinner. In this text, God Himself has provided an animal fit for sacrifice in order to put an end to Cain's sin. Failure of the first brother to accept the offer of atonement leads to further sin with irreparable consequences.

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Introduction

Genesis 4:6–8 presents in two scenes the tragic fall of the first family's firstborn son into sin, despite Yahweh's interaction and intervention. Many problems emerge from this short narrative section. These can lead expositors to exegetically unsupportable conclusions. Many of these are built upon questionable assumptions as to the nature and relation of the brothers' sacrifices in verses 3–5. Such problems in the current passage include the emotional state of Cain resulting from divine disregard, Yahweh's intent for questioning Cain, the identity and meaning of the "sin" positioned "at the door," and the pathos and circumstances which led to fratricide. A clause-by-clause exegesis of Genesis 4:6–8 will help resolve perceived problems and approach a more accurate and faithful understanding of this rich text. Furthermore, this study provides deeper insight into the grace and mercy of Yahweh for the sinner.

Hebrew text[1] with translation[2] is presented below as a guide to the exegetical discussion:

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[1] Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 5th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997.

[2] This translation is the product of the ensuing exegesis and represents an admittedly minority position, particularly at verse 7.

6   וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־קָיִן לָמָּה חָרָה לָךְ וְלָמָּה נָפְלוּ פָנֶיךָ:

So Yahweh said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why are you downcast?"

7   הֲלוֹא אִם־תֵּיטִיב שְׂאֵת וְאִם לֹא תֵיטִיב לַפֶּתַח חַטָּאת רֹבֵץ
וְאֵלֶיךָ תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ:

"Surely, if you do well, won't there be a lifting up? On the other hand, if you do not do well, a sin offering is lying at your door. Its will is yielded to you, but you must rule over it."

8   וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה
וַיָּקָם קַיִן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ:

Therefore, Cain proceeded to speak to Abel his brother, and while they were in the field, Cain attacked Abel his brother and slew him.

In the first phrase of verse 6, **וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־קָיִן** (*wyʾmr yhwh ʾel-qāyin*), the *wayyiqtol* verb (אמר) and subject (יְהוָה, "Yahweh") followed by definite direct object marker (אֶל־) and object (קָיִן, "Cain") signal the primary protagonists of the narrative. They continue as the main characters of the story through verse 16.[3] God is referenced by the divine name Yahweh, the God of Israel.[4] Yahweh's direct speech to Cain begins with two questions, **לָמָּה חָרָה לָךְ** (*lmh ḥārâ lāk*) and **וְלָמָּה נָפְלוּ פָנֶיךָ** (*wlmh noplû pānêkā*). Both questions use the interrogative pronoun with attached proposition,[5] echoing Cain's animus in verse 5.[6] In the first divine question, the third person perfect

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[3] See Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. by Mark E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 43. Gunkel finds the appearance of Yahweh here a "very strange" obscuring of the clear narrative forms with regard to divine speeches, as if there were a "missing introduction" (typified by Gen 3:8; 16:7).

[4] See D. N. Freedman, "יְהוָה *YHWH—IV. Meaning*," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 15 vols., eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. by David E. Green. 5:500–21 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1986), 513–16. Hereafter referred to as *TDOT*. This name previously occurs followed by the divine name אֱלֹהִים (12x chap. 2; 9x chap. 3), but stands alone in Chapter 4 (9x). Derivatives of אֱלֹהִים are added appositively from chapter 24, most notably in direct speech (e.g. יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי in 24:27).

[5] See William D. Barrick, and Irvin A. Busenitz, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*, rev. ed. (Sun Valley, CA: Grace Books International, 2011), 41. This longer form of the interrogative pronoun מָה which creates *Milʿêl* accentuation is used when either connecting to the following words by *Maqqeph*, or by a *conjunctive accent*, as here (see Wilhelm Gesenius and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, eds. E. Kautzsch, and Sir Arthur Ernest Cowley, 2nd English ed [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910], § 37e). The pronoun inserts the *dagesh forte* because it is followed by the strong guttural ח (Gesenius, *Grammar*, § 102l), which refuses doubling by the strong *dagesh* (Barrick & Busenitz, *Grammar*, 29). A *dagesh* is expected in לְךָ, but instead the text gives לָךְ because the tone is thrown back from the ultima of חָרָה on to the penultima, the syllable which otherwise would have *Metheg*, a secondary accent which forces its syllable to remain open (Barrick & Busenitz, *Grammar*, 45), because the penultima of חָרָה could not have *Metheg*. See Gesenius, *Grammar*, § 20f; Franz Delitzsch, *New Commentary on Genesis*, transl. Sophia Taylor (T&T Clark, 1888; reprint, Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1978), 182; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 282.

[6] See Gordon John Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*. Word Biblical Commentary, ed. David Allen Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1987), 104. Westermann finds the repetition of words

verb חָרָה in the qal reflects having become hot or angry, an outbreak of wrathful, burning emotion.[7] The masculine singular of the perfect is often used impersonally such that Yahweh's question, "Why does it anger you?," is more aptly translated, "Why are you angry?"[8] The second divine question, "Why are you downcast?," is literally, "Why has your countenance fallen?"[9] Here the perfect verb נפל functions like the English perfect to denote a completed action with continuing results in the present[10]—Cain's face became downcast and so remained at the time God questioned him.[11] Therefore it may be concluded that in verse 6, Yahweh questions Cain with the intent of bringing him to self-examination and repentance over his anger and dejection.[12]

Verse 7 poses for the expositor an array of problems as to translation and meaning. There is also the added difficulty that proper translation may not immediately reveal the intended meaning. The first clause of verse 7, **הֲלוֹא אִם־תֵּיטִיב שְׂאֵת** (*hălôʾ ʾm-tytyb śěʾēt*) leads with the interrogative הֲ and strong negative לֹא to mean "surely," expressing the conviction that the contents of the statement are unconditionally and

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and phrases from v. 5 to potentially indicate that the material in v. 6 is not original to the text, though such a view reflects the bias of redaction criticism rather than sound exegesis. See Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 299.

[7] So Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 5 vols., revised by Walter Baumgartner and Johann Jakob Stamm, ed. and transl. M. E. J. Richardson (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 1999), 351; William L. Holladay, ed. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 116 (Hereafter referred to as *HALOT*); John C. Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), 192; Delitzsch, *Genesis*, 181; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 93. Less forcefully, Mathews prefers "scowling" for the meaning of חָרָה to reflect Cain's grimaced face in relation to his downcast פָּנִים in v. 5 (see Kenneth Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*. New American Commentary 1A [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996], 269). Barrick prefers "irritated" (see William D. Barrick, *Genesis 4—Translated and annotated* [unpublished notes, 2013], 2); Westermann, *Genesis*, 299, recognizes an air of "resentment." These choices presumably aim to reflect the relationship between חָרָה and the fallen פָּנִים in the next clause, with the result that an angry response seems downplayed, and a state of emotional dejection made most prominent.

[8] Gesenius, *Grammar,* 144b; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 282.

[9] "Face" or "countenance," פָּנִים, is an example of *plurale tantum*, in which only the plural form of the noun is used, such as מַיִם for water. Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed, transl. and rev. Takamitsu Muraoka (Rome: Pontifical Bible Institute, 1996), § 90f.

[10] A. B. Davidson, *Introductory Hebrew Grammar Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1902), 39b.

[11] For discussion on Cain's emotional state as one of depression, see Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1–17*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1990), 224. Though some translators in n. 7 show greater continuity between the emotions of חָרָה and נָפְלוּ פָנֶיךָ, Hamilton understands them as essentially one in the same, translating Yahweh's two interrogations as, "Why are you depressed and why are your crestfallen?" There seems to be no hint at irritation or anger in Hamilton's translation, though such seething emotion is lexically significant for חָרָה. Merrill unites both clauses by expressing that Cain's countenance had fallen with anger. See Eugene Merrill, *The Bible Knowledge Key Word Study*, *Genesis–Deuteronomy*, (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications), 55.

[12] So Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26,* 269; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 104. Delitzsch, *Genesis*, 182; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11,* 299, delves more negatively, finding in these questions a kind of moral condemnation which "implies a reproach" for incorrect conduct, a line of questioning which deems Cain's resentment unjustified. He admits however that such a conclusion is in light of verse 7 rather than strictly found in verse 6.

unequivocally certain.[13] The rhetorical question, "Surely, if you do well, won't there be a lifting up?" is axiomatic. It is dependent upon Cain taking right action to reverse his current animus.[14]

A significant debate exists over the use of שְׂאֵת, the infinitive construct of נשא, since there is no successive word with which to create a construct relationship. The *nomen rectum* has not been supplied after the *nomen regens* of the construct state. The term is viewed as a substantivized infinitive. However, this is admittedly very rare—especially when a literal translation would read, "if you do well, a lifting up of…(?)."[15] The strongest solution for the missing object of שְׂאֵת comes from the context itself: it is Cain's פָּנִים (face) which may be held high with right action.[16] Cain's downcast face may be lifted up by a sense of encouragement, because proper conduct would restore God's favor. Furthermore, Cain himself would be lifted up to a favored position. Thus, שְׂאֵת may mean encouragement, confidence or acceptance, an exaltation or elevation akin to "favor" with Yahweh.[17]

The following clause וְאִם לֹא תֵיטִיב (wĕ ʾim lō ʾ têṭîb) employs a *waw* adversative to mark the opposite circumstance to the previous clause: "On the other hand, if you do not do well."[18] The contrasting circumstance will bear a contrasting consequence, exposed in the highly problematic phrase לַפֶּתַח חַטָּאת רֹבֵץ (lpth ḥṭ ʾt rōbēṣ). The preposition לְ attached to the noun פֶּתַח with an elided article[19] is spatial,[20] marking the point at which a consequential action is performed: at Cain's door.[21] While the identity of

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[13] Gesenius, *Grammar,* 150e. The protasis with אם is durative and frequentative, to be translated in the present tense such that results are understood to continue (Joüon, *Grammar*, §167h).

[14] So Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26,* 270; Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 198–99; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11,* 299. Delitzsch recognizes that the intrinsically transitive hiphil imperfect תֵּיטִיב speaks equally of good external action and internal attitude (see Delitzsch, *Genesis*, 182), whereas *HALOT* (408–09) and Holladay, (*Concise Lexicon*, 133), emphasize correct behavior. The latter seems more in line with the context of performing a sacrifice.

[15] *HALOT*, 1301; Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 225; Gesenius, *Grammar,* § 113a.

[16] Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 225–227; Barrick, *Genesis 4*, 2; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26,* 269; *HALOT*, 1301; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11,* 299.

[17] *HALOT*, 1301; Holladay, *Concise Lexicon*, 348. The concept of "forgiveness" for שְׂאֵת is presented by Barrick, *Genesis 4*, 2; Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 227; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26,* 269 n. 268; Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 192 n. 10. Collins sees a parallel usage of נשא in verse 13, where Cain cannot "bear" forgiveness for his sin. Delitzsch, *Genesis*, 182, does not agree with the concept of forgiveness here, noting that specific to verse 7, "Wherever שְׂאֵת is used without an addition, it means neither *oblatio* nor *acceptio*, still less *remissio peccati*, but *elatio*…."

[18] Barrick, *Genesis 4*, 2. Both NASB and ESV translate the *waw* "and," not sharply delineating the contrast in situations and results. This clause is not equally axiomatic to the preceding, however. Rather, it is a specific statement which is understood in light of the treatment of the following clause.

[19] The simple *shewa* of לְ is replaced by a *pathach*. Barrick & Busenitz, *Grammar*, 56–57.

[20] Bruce K.Waltke, and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 11.2.10.a. Hereafter referred to as *IBHS*.

[21] The definite article is used possessively (see Frederic Clarke Putnam, *Hebrew Bible Insert: A Student's Guide to the Syntax of Biblical Hebrew,* 2nd ed. [Ridley Park, PA: Stylus Publishing, 2002], §1.4.3b, hereafter called *HBI*). The term פֶּתַח refers to a spatial opening or entrance exclusively in the Pentateuch (75x in Pentateuch; 165x in the OT; figuratively only in Ps 119:130 and Hos 2:15). The verb form most frequently means "to open," in an outside/inside context; the noun "door" or "gate" is most frequently its object (21x), almost equally to "mouth" (22x). See Victor P. Hamilton, "פתח," in *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols., ed. Willem A. VanGemeren

the door raises questions, much of the debate centers on the meaning of the following two words, commonly translated as "sin crouching," where the seemingly feminine noun חַטָּאת relates to the masculine participle רֹבֵץ.[22] The noun חַטָּאת occurs 271 times in the Hebrew OT, 109 times meaning "sin offering," 89 of which occurrences are found in the Torah. The other occurrences of חַטָּאת refer to the abstract concept of "sin."[23]

Reasons supporting a translation and meaning of the abstract "sin" rather than "sin offering" for חַטָּאת here include the following: (1) If חַטָּאת serves as the missing *nomens rectum* of שְׂאֵת, then "lifting up" can connote "forgiveness" in a sin context: "if you do well, there is forgiveness for חַטָּאת." (2) This forgiveness concept may parallel the נשׂא of verse 13, as the bearing away of the guilt of Cain's חַטָּאת.[24] (3) If the masculine participle of רבץ refers to the lying down or resting of flocks of sheep and goats or beasts of burden,[25] and adjectivally refers to the thing crouching or lying, then here it may relate to the relentless haunt of sin, figuratively crouching in the doorway like a wild animal or a mythical demon waiting in ambush for its prey.[26]

Taking the view that חַטָּאת refers to "sin" presents several difficulties, however, especially in relation to רֹבֵץ: (1) In Scripture, the participle never refers to anything crouching in ambush to hunt, but only in a state of repose.[27] (2) A resting position is

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(Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1997), 3:716–18 (hereafter referred to as *NIDOTTE*). Therefore, here the preposition and noun are best read spatially, referring to the doorway to the room in which Cain is standing. Mathews contrarily takes פֶּתַח as figurative for a "door of opportunity," (Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26,* 270), and Delitzsch understands this as the "door of the heart" (Delitzsch, *Genesis*, 183). Bartelmus makes improper analogy between the literal door in Prov 5:8 and what he considers a figurative "breach or boundary incursion" in Gen 4:7. Rüdiger Bartelmus, "פֶּתַח," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 12:186.

[22] The gender disagreement between female חַטָּאת and male רֹבֵץ does not mean the terms are unrelated. While חַטָּאת appears feminine because of the ת ending, it is considered a common, non-gendered noun which joins appositively to the masculine רֹבֵץ. The ת ending of חַטָּאת is thus not the reason for the construct relationship, but rather the conjunctive accent joining the terms appositively (Barrick & Busenitz, *Grammar*, 81).

[23] For example, Gen 18:20; 31:36; 50:17.

[24] Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 198–99.

[25] *HALOT*, 1181; Holladay, *Concise Lexicon*, 331.

[26] Mathews translates the participle as "crouching" or "lurking," giving the metaphorical sense of an animal resting temporarily in a doorway, ready at any moment to pounce if stirred (Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26,* 270). Speiser develops the position that חַטָּאת means "sin" and accords with רֹבֵץ in gender only if the participle functions as the predicate: "Sin is a רֹבֵץ," or "a lurker." On this basis he suggests רבץ is an Akkadian loanword with a common gender representing a legendary demon who lurks into doorways for his next unsuspecting victim (see E. A. Speiser, *Genesis: Introduction, Translation, and Notes,* Anchor Bible [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964], 32–33). While Westermann dismisses the doorstep demon theory (though he toys with the theory that the lurker is Abel's ghost), his tradition history bias forces a simplistic response: the relationship between חַטָּאת and רֹבֵץ is difficult because of textual corruption (Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 299).

[27] Consistently רבץ denotes an animal in a position of rest on all four legs, even an apex predator such as a lion or wolf (cf. Gen 29:2; 49:9; Exod 23:5; Ps 23:2; Isa 11:6). Assigning a unique usage in Gen 4:7 is highly improbable and exegetically irresponsible, as it would force the term to incorporate the temporary rest of a hunting animal "at bay," which is not supported in any other context in Scripture. Furthermore it would impose a sense of predatory volition which is also foreign to any other context.

not an attack position.[28] (3) The abstract concept of "sin" cannot perform physical action.[29] (4) Sin is not outside of the sinner, in a doorway.[30] The preferred translation by the majority of commentators, that "sin is crouching at the door," therefore presents an unsupportable and unsatisfying solution.

It is more exegetically compelling to recognize חַטָּאת as a sacrifice for sin rather than "sin" itself, such that "a sin offering is lying in [Cain's] doorway." Supporting evidence for this preferred view includes the following: (1) The context of Cain's unacceptable offering (מִנְחָה)[31] provides the framework for a "re-do" sacrifice.[32] Whereas Cain's offering was rejected, a sin offering may be made which both lifts his downcast face and restores Yahweh's favor to him. The חַטָּאת therefore serves as a second attempt at the ineffective and damaging מִנְחָה. A proper מִנְחָה, however, must this time cover Cain's sin, which may include guilt incurred by improper worship, or the resultant anger which burned within him, or both. Now he must "do well" with a sin offering (חַטָּאת) in order to experience "a lifting up" emotionally and spiritually. (2) The means by which Cain may "re-do" his offering is understood by the masculine participle רֹבֵץ which is in apposition to חַטָּאת.[33] Only an actual animal befits the action of the participle, whose gender may reveal it to be a male animal in accordance with later prescriptions of Torah.[34] (3) As the doorway (פֶּתַח) is not figurative, neither can be the חַטָּאת lying in it.[35] It is illogical that one of these objects would physically exist while the other to which it is related is only metaphorical or conceptual, and therefore not actually present.

Another particularly challenging problem concerns the desire and rule concepts of the final statement of verse 7, וְאֵלֶיךָ תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ (wĕʾēlêkā tšqtw), translated as "Its will is yielded to you." This translation differs in wording from the common "Its desire is for you," or "Its desire is against you," and the meaning is wholly different. According to the minority "sin offering" view of חַטָּאת, the "desire" of which Yahweh speaks

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[28] With the variety of "lurking" and "prowling" verbs available in Hebrew and used in direct relation to predators (e.g. ארב in Ps 10:9; ישב in 17:12; רמש in 104:20), it is a wonder that none other was chosen for an attack stance than the diametrically-opposed position of "lying down."

[29] There is no Scriptural example of the evil nature of sin directly personifying an animal in order to seek out a person or lay in wait for its prey. Likewise, no clear simile is presented here using the expected כְּ in order for an abstract concept to metaphorically typify an actual being (Joüon, *Grammar*, §133g), as in Isa 64:6, "And our iniquities, like the wind (כָּרוּחַ יִשָּׂאֻנוּ), carry us away." Neither is it textually relevant to find mythical demons or ghosts personified in this way (see n. 27).

[30] Sin is in the heart of every man, not external to him (cf. Jas 1:13–14).

[31] Verse 5 does not specify the function of the "offering" (מִנְחָה), whether it was expiatory or a gift of homage and thanksgiving, neither does the text reveal in what way the offering was unacceptable to Yahweh. For a brief discussion, see Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, 199–200, 215–16.

[32] This view is also held by Josiah Blake Tidwell, *Genesis—A Study of the Plan of Redemption* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1924), 77; and Barrick, *Genesis 4*, 2.

[33] The common, non-gendered חַטָּאת accentuates the masculine רֹבֵץ, drawing the reader's attention to the gender of the thing which lies at the doorway. See *IBHS*, 6.1.b.

[34] Male animals made suitable sin offerings according to Levitical law, the context in which Moses recorded this early account by divine revelation (cf. male bulls and goats in Lev 16).

[35] See discussion in footnote 21 on פֶּתַח as the doorway to the room in which the narrative scene is set. Because the פֶּתַח and the חַטָּאת are related in the phrase, they must both be related in the physical realm—the spatial aspect of the doorway is the location in which the חַטָּאת lies.

reflects the positive desire of the animal crouching in the doorway, who submits his will (תְּשׁוּקָה) as a sin offering unto Cain.[36] Among the reasons for this understanding: (1) The nearest antecedent for the masculine pronominal suffix is the masculine participle רֹבֵץ which modifies the non-gendered חַטָּאת, that is, the animal which is to be offered.[37] "Desire," more commonly associated as a product of human cognition, must be applied to the animal. So as not to anthropomorphize emotion, a submitted volition or a yielded will is the preferred concept in this instance of תְּשׁוּקָה.[38] (2) Yahweh provides the means by which Cain's favor with God may be restored—a second chance at an offering has now been divinely submitted to him, lying at the doorway so that the sinner will not be hindered from "doing rightly." Yahweh Himself has facilitated restoration. Thus the animal's divinely decreed volition ensures that it will remain in a state of rest until the time that Cain will come and take it. (3) Desire is an inherently positive feature of a God-ordained relationship. This is established in Song of Solomon 7:10 and contextually applied to Gen 3:16.[39] The positive aspect of the term lexically carries over to Genesis 4:7 *a priori* despite the fact that the relationship between the offering and the one offering is not the same as the other passages.

A negative reading for תְּשׁוּקָה, wagered by proponents of the "sin" view, forces a hermeneutic foreign to the context, especially with regard to the following clause, וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ (wʾth tmšl-bw), "But you must rule over it." Cain is again emphatically addressed by the personal pronoun in the leading position, and the adversative use of the *waw* is warranted to nuance opposition in the disjunctive clause[40]—Cain must make a choice whether he will rule over the רֹבֵץ (בּוֹ) once again introduces the object

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[36] אֵלֶיךָ, emphatically placed at the beginning of the clause, refers to Cain. See *IBHS*, 16.3.1.b; Putnam, *HBI*, 1.5.1a.

[37] The more remote antecedent, Abel ("Hebel") in v. 4, is less likely grammatically and contextually, and thus rejected. It does, however, present an interesting case: Cain is to rule over his brother as firstborn son, but his conduct spiritually so far may result in loss of preeminence in the family, much as it did Esau (Gen 25:19–34; Heb 12:16–17), Reuben (Gen 49:1–4), and Manasseh (49:22–26).

[38] In ANE literature, the nuances of "urge," "craving," and "impulse" encapsulate the idea of "desire" or "longing" for תְּשׁוּקָה. Most scholars transfer this meaning here, as well as at 3:16 and Song 7:10, and the Septuagint (LXX) uses ἡ ἀποστροφὴ (hē apostrophē) summarily (see discussion in David Talley, "תְּשׁוּקָה," in *NIDOTTE*, 4 vols., edited by Willem VanGemeren [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1997], 4:341–342). That no nuanced definition of the term until now incorporates the submission or yielding of the will, per sé, poses little difficulty since (1) desire, longings, and impulses inherently involve volition; (2) only here is an animal's "desire" in view, and since the majority of translators do not recognize חַטָּאת as such, there has previously not been the need to nuance תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ so as to avoid overly anthropomorphizing the otherwise emotionally-charged term with regard to an animal; (3) the will of all creatures, highly cognitive or not, is submitted to the divine will of the Creator, such that the animal's "desire" to submit itself as a sin sacrifice to Cain reflects the will of an animal to obey the dictates of its Creator to both lie down in the doorway and lay down its life in submission to man, who is the highest order of earthly creation.

[39] Song 7:10 establishes the role of desire in the love relationship, and Gen 3:16 shares that context. Though the application of desire may, like any emotion, run outside of its proper godly confines along a gradient of sinful application, the concept of desire is itself not negative, especially in the marital union established by God. For a detailed rebuttal of the negative attribution of desire within the context of the curse section of Genesis 3, see Irvin A. Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man: Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered," *Grace Theological Journal*, 7.2 (1986): 211.

[40] Joüon, *Grammar*, §172b; Putnam, *HBI*, 3.2.2b–c.

lying in the doorway). The cohortative verb in the subjunctive mood, מְשֹׁל, is Yah-weh's call to Cain to slay the animal and be accepted; but the ensuing narrative silence on the matter implies that Cain will not do it, and does not do it.

Much of the reason for the view that חַטָּאת refers to the abstract concept of sin rather than to an animal ready for sacrifice depends in large part on the textual proximity and parallelism of Genesis 3:16 to 4:7, where "[the man] will rule over [the woman]."[41] There are striking textual similarities in word choice and order. Nevertheless, no matter how closely paralleled the passages may seem, neither word choice nor order are sufficient measures of cross-interpretation, since lexical meaning is not guaranteed to be similar in both contexts.[42] In fact, there are significant differences often overlooked between 3:16 and 4:7. These include: (1) The genres of the passages are different, leading to different uses of the imperfect of מְשֹׁל.[43] (2) The marriage relationship of 3:16 is foreign to 4:7, creating different contexts for desire.[44] (3) The negative understanding of the woman's desire in 3:16 is overstated and therefore problematic, superimposing an irrelevant pathos on 4:7.[45] (4) In the "sin" view, "desire" is literal language in 3:16, but must be figurative in 4:7 because the former subject (the woman) is actual while the latter (sin) is abstract; this is hermeneutically inconsistent and contradicts the proposed parallelism.[46] (5) Cain is the object of sin's

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[41] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11,* 300, believes 4:7 is taken directly from 3:16 by later redactors.

[42] Textual alignment does not necessarily imply semantic parallelism. For greater discussion, see Busenitz, "Woman's Desire," 209–10.

3:16   וְאֶל־אִישֵׁךְ   תְּשׁוּקָתֵךְ   וְהוּא   יִמְשָׁל־בָּךְ:
4:7   וְאֵלֶיךָ   תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ   וְאַתָּה   תִּמְשָׁל־בּוֹ:

[43] In 4:7 the genre is hortatory, such that מְשֹׁל is a cohortative imperfect—God exhorts Cain to prevent him from sinning. In 3:16b the genre is not hortatory, and so מְשֹׁל must be understood as an explanatory statement which is continuative in the present (Chisholm, 103; Gesenius, *Grammar,* § 107a).

[44] Genesis 4:7, though textually proximal to 3:16, relays a different context than the human relationship (see n. 40), and so one must draw fewer inferences from one's findings on 3:16 (see Busenitz, "Woman's Desire," 211).

[45] Busenitz appeals for more appropriate hermeneutics when evaluating the three passages in which תְּשׁוּקָה is used. Though תְּשׁוּקָה in 3:16 is often understood as a curse statement, it falls outside of the curse formula of the passage, where each of the three culprits receives one punishment and one explanation. To understand the woman's desire as a negative result of the curse is to disregard the pattern of pronouncement and explanation, giving the woman two punishments, but really causing the man to bear the brunt of the woman's overreaching תְּשׁוּקָה. (Busenitz, "Woman's Desire," 206–07). Furthermore, overstating the parallelism between 3:16 and 4:7 has led Mathews to see in Cain the battle between the "two seeds" of 3:15 (Mathews, 270–71). Foh reads 4:7 into 3:16 incautiously, understanding the woman's marital desire as matching Cain's contentious struggle with sin. She writes, "Sin's desire is to enslave Cain…. An active struggle between Cain and sin is implied…. The woman has the same sort of desire for her husband that sin has for Cain, a desire to possess or control him." See Susan T. Foh, "What is the Woman's Desire?" *The Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (1974/75): 380–81.

[46] There is no scriptural precedent for assigning volition directly to an abstract concept (see n. 30). To do so requires a hermeneutical shift from the tangible desire of a living being (the woman) to the figurative desire of a metaphorical being (sin). Forcing textual parallelism between 3:16 and 4:7 leads to the forcing of meaning, creating an incongruent which fails to resolve how an actual figure and a metaphorical figure may share similar negative emotion without sharing similar qualities of being. Does sin's proposed ability to desire one's demise relegate it to the status of a conscious being? Assuming semantic parallelism between the passages leads to contradiction: real desire from a real character cannot be the same as figurative desire from an abstract concept (were such a thing possible).

desire, as well as the one who is cursed, whereas the man is the object of the woman's desire, but she is the one who is cursed. The problems associated with חַטָּאת being "sin" are therefore great enough to warrant adopting the term as a "sin offering." Such a shift in translation and meaning is not only textually viable, but theologically rich. Yahweh, after having been offended by Cain's improper offering, not only encouraged the sinner to make a sacrifice for the offense, but He Himself has provided the animal fit and ready for slaughter. Oh, that Cain might have received the grace extended toward him, finding mercy in his time of need!

Verse 8 brings the cliff-hanging end of the sacrifice scene to a tragic plummet in which Cain murders his brother Abel. The first clause, וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל־הֶבֶל אָחִיו (*wyʾmr qayin ʾel-hebel ʾāḥîw*), may be translated "Therefore, Cain proceeded to speak to Abel his brother." Cain and Abel are mentioned as brothers 7 times in this narrative to emphasize the horrors of fratricide in the first family.[47] Cain's unrecorded speech to Abel marks the climax of the narrative, employing the *waw* correlative with the imperfect of אמר.[48] The verb leaves much to the imagination.[49] The following phrase adds to the expositor's difficulty in understanding the transition from the divine offer of a re-do sacrifice in verse 7 to the violent act of verse 8. The phrase וַיְהִי בִּהְיוֹתָם בַּשָּׂדֶה, (*wayhiy bhywtm bśdh*), "While they were in the field," may suggest that Cain plotted to take Abel outside in order to kill him.[50] This is conjectural and based on hypotheses as to the variant readings of the LXX and Samaritan Pentateuch which do not conclusively reveal a long-forgotten text.[51] The reader, therefore, must not elaborate upon, or fantasize beyond the text as it stands today, and must resist the urge to fill in the perceived narrative holes.

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[47] Verses 2, 8 (twice), 9 (twice), 10, 11; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 106.

[48] Westermann, *Genesis 1–11,* 301. Throughout Chapter 4, changes in speaker are marked by וַיֹּאמֶר, then dialogue (4:6, 9, 10, 13, 15), except here since no dialogue is recorded.

[49] Nothing of the conversation prior to the murder can be known from the text itself. Scribal error (parablepsis) is assumed by many scholars because וַיֹּאמֶר is syntactically clause-initial six times in the narrative of 4:1–16, leading to direct discourse which is conspicuously absent in verse 8 (see Ronald S. Hendel, *The Text of Genesis 1–11,* Textual Studies and Critical Edition [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 46–47; Mark William Scarlata, *Outside of Eden—Cain in the Ancient Versions of Genesis 4.1–16* [New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2012], 111–12). Silence however does not admit textual emendations, though commentators often expect them here (e.g. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 229–30; Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 302). Nor does silence point to a textual omission (see John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*, SBL Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series Number 35 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993], 56), though it does point to narrative brevity (see Delitzsch, *Genesis*, 183; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 106).

[50] Deuteronomy 22:25–27 may evidence premeditation on Cain's part by virtue of the fact that attacks in fields were absolutely incriminating if not worthy of death, because it is violence away from the public eye. Moses may have had this passage in mind as an intertextual link.

[51] Wevers, Mathews and Kidner posit that direct discourse between the brothers is missing. They agree that such speech may have included the phrase, "Let us go out to the field" (see Wevers, *Notes*, 56; Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, 273, and Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973], 75). Such phrase is present in the LXX and its contemporary recension of the Hebrew text, the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP). The LXX's "Let us pass through (διέρχομαι + εἰς) into the field," differs from the SP's "Let us go to the field," a notable difference since Hebrew does not have a consistent equivalent of the verb + preposition. The use of the phrase in LXX and SP appears to be due to independent scribal additions, filling in what seemed to be lacking discourse in the Hebrew text, rather than translating Hebrew Vorlage lost through time (see

The final phrase of verse 8 vividly brings the narrative to its close: וַיָּקָם קַיִן אֶל־ הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ (*wyqm qayin ʾel-hebel ʾāḥîw*), "Cain attacked Abel his brother and slew him." Cain commits murder in two phases, attacking then slaying. Assonance in Hebrew is employed when vocalizing וַיָּקָם קַיִן, "Cain attacked," which literally means, "he rose up."[52] The sure result of his rising against his brother is the *wayyiqtol* of הרג with the masculine singular pronominal suffix—he slew him.[53] Though premeditation may be hinted at lexically, it is not possible to discern any of the following: (1) the exact motive for the murderous act; (2) the lapse of time between Cain's failed offering and the brothers entering the field; (3) the time between the fomenting of anger and the forming of a murderous plot; or (4) any role which Abel might have played in inciting Cain to rise against him once they were in the field. It seems clear, nevertheless, that in the end Cain vented his anger on the only available scapegoat— his brother.[54]

Conclusion

This article has reconsidered the exegetical assumptions of many scholars with regard to several key problems emerging from the text of Genesis 4:6–8. While this study affirms the prior treatment of certain clauses, a fresh evaluation of others proved necessary. A summary of the new minority interpretation of the passage is as follows: Genesis 4:6–8 presents two harrowing scenes in which Yahweh's intervening grace is ignored by Cain in his anger and dejection over an unacceptable sacrifice. Yahweh has provided a male animal in Cain's doorway which waits in obedient submission for the offender to slay it for the purposes of atoning for his sin. Rather than correct his conduct before Yahweh by sacrificing the animal, Cain took no action

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Scarlata, *Outside of Eden—Cain in the Ancient Versions of Genesis 4.1–16*, 111–14). A scribal addition to the MT here is not surprising given that the LXX-Torah on the whole evidences frequent divergences— two to three times as many attempts to harmonize like narratives than SP, often by adding text which is not understood to pertain to the original Hebrew Vorlage (see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012], 82; 136 n. 227, 229). SP as an authentic Hebrew witness is not without its differences to the MT, registering more than 6,000 grammatical changes, among which are some significant semantic (ideological) changes (see Ibid., 75, 87–88; also see Bryan Murphy, "Genesis 1:1–2:3—A Textual And Exegetical Examination As An Objective Foundation For Apologetical And Theological Studies" [Th.D. diss., The Master's Seminary, 2008], 59 n. 9). The presence of the "missing" phrase in either LXX or SP therefore does not constitute an objective textual or contextual challenge to the MT reading.

[52] Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 106. *HALOT*, 1086; Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, eds., *Enhanced Brown- Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 877 (hereafter referred to as BDB). The idea may be that Cain rose over Abel in a stance permitting him a violent advantage. The verb קום is used of both standing and rising up to attack (cf. Num 23:24; Deut 22:26; 32:43; Ps 68:1).

[53] הרג is used of bloody violence by individuals—intentional murder. See BDB, 255. This verb differentiates from the "murder" of the Decalogue, Exod 20:13, רצח, in that רצח also includes unpremeditated homicide (*HALOT*, 1283). See Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 230.

[54] So David W. Cotter, *Genesis*. Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 42. Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 230 adds that envy and jealousy must be at the center of Cain's emotional decision. No textual clues in the narrative, however, suggest either that the brothers were aware of each other's offering, or that they discussed Yahweh's responses toward them when they spoke. The text's reticence leaves such insights unresolvable.

whatsoever. Rather, at some point after speaking with his brother Abel about an unknown topic in the field, he violently attacked him and ruthlessly killed him.

The passage is a theological treasure house, displaying divine condescension toward a sinner with otherwise no recourse for restoration. At the opportune time, God Himself extended the offender grace by means of a "re-do sacrifice." Cain, however, would not accept this grace by slaying the animal. Ultimately he rose up and killed the wrong object—his brother Abel.

Further investigation on the narrative in verses 3–5 may shed clearer light on the reason(s) for which Cain's offering was not done well and led him to fall from Yahweh's favor, as well as how the divinely presented animal of verse 7 would serve as the means to reverse Cain's spiritual condition. New Testament references to this narrative also await further study in order to provide much-desired insight as to the dynamics of the relationship between the brothers from verses 3–8. Among the questions to raise: (1) Hebrews 11:4—In what way was Abel's sacrifice better, obtaining righteousness for himself? (2) 1 John 3:12—What made Cain's deeds evil, and what was the dynamic interplay which led to murder? (3) Jude 11—What does it mean to "go the way of Cain?" and thus to one's destruction?

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DID EDWARD IRVING INVENT THE
PRE-TRIB RAPTURE VIEW?

Thomas Ice
Executive Director
The Pre-Trib Research Center, Justin, TX

Some have argued that J. N. Darby got his idea for the pre-trib rapture from either Edward Irving or another Irvingite source. Such a view is not possible since Edward Irving and the Irvingites never held to a pre-trib rapture. The Irvingites did hold to a version of a two-stage second coming where the rapture occurs days before the second coming. The Irvingite view is far different than the pretribulational understanding of Darby and the Brethren.
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* * * * *

Introduction

John Nelson Darby (1800–1882) was no doubt the modern developer of dispensational (pretribulation) premillennialism. However, did key elements of the doctrine of the pretribulation rapture originate with either Edward Irving (1792–1834) or the broader Irvingite movement[1] and were they then conveyed to Darby and the Brethren?[2] This is the general thesis put forth in dozens of books and articles for many

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[1] Most of the followers of Edward Irving were part of the newly formed Catholic Apostolic Church that continued until the late 1990s when the last remnant of the church ceased to exist in London.

[2] Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1947), 168–69; Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism: Its Historical Genesis and Ecclesiastical Implications* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1960), 146–49; Ralph Woodrow, *Great Prophecies of the Bible* (Riverside, CA: Ralph Woodrow, 1989), 35–40; Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1971), 185–206; Arthur Katterjohn with Mark Fackler, *The Tribulation People* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1975), 106–15; Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1973), 185–88; Mark Patterson and Andrew Walker, "'Our Unspeakable Comfort' Irving, Albury, and the Origins of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture," in Stephen Hunt, ed., *Christian Millenarianism: From the Early Church to Waco* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 98–115; Mark Rayburn Patterson, "Designing the Last Days: Edward Irving, The Albury Circle, and the Theology of The Morning Watch," (Ph. D. thesis, King's College, London, 2001); P. Allan Carlsson, "A Historical Approach to the Doctrine of the Rapture," (M.A. thesis, Wheaton College, 1956), 75–86; Thomas Croskery, *Plymouth-Brethrenism: A Refutation of its Principles and Doctrines* (London: William Mullan & Son, 1879), 138–43; Ovid E. Need, Jr., *Death of the Church Victorious: Tracing the Roots and Implications of Modern Otherworldliness* (Lafayette, IN:

years. However, I do not believe there is merit to such a position since Irving and his movement never taught pretribulation theology and because Irving and Darby came from very different eschatological systems.[3]

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Sovereign Grace Publishers, 2002), 1–234; Harry Ramey, *The Rapture: Another Look* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing, 2007), 7; Jon Zens, *Dispensationalism: A Reformed Inquiry Into Its Leading Figures and Features* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1980), 18. This is not a full list of advocates; many more could be cited.

[3] Probably, all pretribulationists who deal with this issue take a similar view. For example, Charles C. Ryrie, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus: What You Need to Know About The Rapture* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 75–82; Gerald B. Stanton, *Kept From The Hour: Biblical Evidence for the Pretribulational Return of Christ*, 4th. ed. (Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle Publishing Company, 1991), 326–31; John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1979), 150–58; Hal Lindsey, *The Rapture: Truth or Consequences* (New York: Bantam Books, 1983), 168–74; *Vanished Into Thin Air: The Hope of Every Believer* (Beverly Hills, CA: Western Front, 1999), 112–35; Tim LaHaye, *No Fear of The Storm: Why Christians Will Escape <u>All</u> The Tribulation* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1992), 95–184; *The Rapture: Who Will Face the Tribulation?* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2002), 145–87, 245–8; Thomas D. Ice, "Why the Doctrine of the Pretribulational Rapture Did Not Begin with Margaret Macdonald," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147, no. 586 (April–June 1990): 155–68; Kenneth Alan Daughters, "review of *The Rapture Plot*, by Dave MacPherson," *Emmaus Journal* 5, no. 1 (Summer 1996): 90–8. This is also the main view of those within the scholarly world, whether pro or anti-pretribulational. Timothy C. F. Stunt, "The Tribulation of Controversy: A Review Article," *Brethren Archivists & Historians Network Review* 2, no. 2 (Autumn 2003): 91–8; Paul Richard Wilkinson, "John Nelson Darby and the Origins of Christian Zionism" (PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2006), 172–97, 291–331, 436–38; *For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby* (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2007), 119–32, 177–201, 262–63; Max. S. Weremchuk, *John Nelson Darby* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1992), 111–35; Larry V. Crutchfield, *The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992), 188–92; Daniel Payton Fuller, "The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism" (ThD diss., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1957), 36–54; George L. Murray, *Millennial Studies: A Search for Truth*, 2nd. ed. (Swengel, PA: Bible Truth Depot, 1951), 132; Ian S. Rennie, "Nineteenth-Century Roots" in Carl E. Armerding and W. Ward Gasque, editors, *A Guide to Biblical Prophecy: A Balanced and Biblical Assessment of the Nature of Prophecy in the Bible* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 49–54; Gerald B. Stanton, *Kept From The Hour: A Systematic Study of the Rapture in Bible Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1956), 217–26; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1978), 59–80; William Everett Bell, Jr., "A Critical Evaluation of the Pretribulation Rapture Doctrine in Christian Eschatology," (Ph.D. thesis, New York University, 1967), 56–65; Crawford Gribben, *Rapture Fiction and The Evangelical Crisis* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2006), 27–42; Mark Sweetnam and Crawford Gribben, "J. N. Darby and the Irish Origins of Dispensationalism," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 52, no. 3 (September 2009), 569–77; Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism 1875–1982* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1983), 21–22; "Dispensational and Historic Premillennialism as Popular Millennialist Movements," in Craig L. Blomberg and Sung Wook Chung, eds., *A Case for Historic Premillennialism: An Alternative to 'Left Behind' Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 8–11; Columba Graham Flegg, *'Gathered Under Apostles' A Study of the Catholic Apostolic Church* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1992), 423–41; Grayson Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals: Protestant Secessions From The Via Media, c. 1800–1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 222–28; Floyd Saunders Elmore, "A Critical Examination of the Doctrine of the Two Peoples of God in John Nelson Darby," (ThD dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1990), 26–76; Gary Lynn Nebeker, "The Hope of Heavenly Glory in John Nelson Darby (1800–1882)," (PhD dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1997), 19–21, 25–26, 88–91; Napoleon Noel, *The History of the Brethren*, 2 vol., ed. William F. Knapp (Denver: W. F. Knapp, 1936), 1:73–75; Jonathan David Burnham, "The Controversial Relationship Between Benjamin Wills Newton and John Nelson Darby," (PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 1999), 128–33; A. C. Gaebelein, "The Attempted Revival of an Unscriptural Theory," *Our Hope* 41, no. 1 (July 1934), 18–25; Robert H. Krapohl, "A Search for Purity: The Controversial Life of John Nelson Darby," (PhD dissertation, Baylor University, 1988), 103–8; Paul N. Benware, *Understanding End Times Prophecy: A Comprehensive Approach,* Rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2006), 242–48. The most voluminous defender of this view has been

Some Claims

American Dave MacPherson is convinced "that the popular Pre-Trib Rapture teaching of today was really instigated by a teenager in Scotland who lived in the early 1800's", who was connected with the broader Irvingite movement.[4] "If Christians had known [this] all along," bemoans MacPherson, "the state of Christianity could have been vastly different today."[5] He thinks this ignorance has been due not merely to historical oversight, but rather to a well-orchestrated "cover-up" carefully managed by clever pre-tribulation leaders.[6] MacPherson complains: "during the first 18 centuries of the Christian era, believers were never 'Rapture separators'; they never separated the minor Rapture aspect of the Second Coming of Christ from the Second Coming itself."[7]

In 1983, MacPherson declared, "fifteen years ago I knew nothing about Pre-Trib beginnings."[8] He began his quest by writing to his father and received an answer that indicated a lack of consensus among scholars, "so I decided to do some research on my own."[9] MacPherson's investigation gathered steam when he found a rare book

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the American Brethren researcher Roy A. Huebner in *The Truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Recovered* (Millington, NJ: Present Truth Publishers, 1976); *Precious Truths Revived and Defended Through J. N. Darby, Volume One, Revival of Truth 1826–1845* (Millington, NJ: Present Truth Publishers, 1991); *Elements of Dispensational Truth,* Volume 1 (Morganville, NJ: Present truth Publishers, 1996); *John Nelson Darby: Precious Truths Revived and Defended, Volume One, Revival of Truth 1826–1845*, 2nd ed., augmented (Jackson, NJ: Present Truth Publishers, 2004).

[3] Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1947), 168–69; Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism: Its Historical Genesis and Ecclesiastical Implications* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1960), 146–49; Ralph Woodrow, *Great Prophecies of the Bible* (Riverside, CA: Ralph Woodrow, 1989), 35–40; Ian Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1971), 185–206; Arthur Katterjohn with Mark Fackler, *The Tribulation People* (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1975), 106–15; Robert H. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1973), 185–88; Mark Patterson and Andrew Walker, "'Our Unspeakable Comfort' Irving, Albury, and the Origins of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture," in Stephen Hunt, ed., *Christian Millenarianism: From the Early Church to Waco* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 98–115; Mark Rayburn Patterson, "Designing the Last Days: Edward Irving, The Albury Circle, and the Theology of The Morning Watch," (Ph. D. thesis, King's College, London, 2001); P. Allan Carlsson, "A Historical Approach to the Doctrine of the Rapture," (M.A. thesis, Wheaton College, 1956), 75–86; Thomas Croskery, *Plymouth-Brethrenism: A Refutation of its Principles and Doctrines* (London: William Mullan & Son, 1879), 138–43; Ovid E. Need, Jr., *Death of the Church Victorious: Tracing the Roots and Implications of Modern Otherworldliness* (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 2002), 1–234; Harry Ramey, *The Rapture: Another Look* (Kearney, NE: Morris Publishing, 2007), 7; Jon Zens, *Dispensationalism: A Reformed Inquiry Into Its Leading Figures and Features* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1980), 18.

[4] Dave MacPherson, *The Great Rapture Hoax* (Fletcher, NC: New Puritan Library, 1983), 7.

[5] MacPherson, *Hoax,* 180.

[6] The cover-up emphasis is greatly stressed in MacPherson's *The Incredible Cover Up* (Medford, OR: Omega Publications, 1975). Jim McKeever's foreword compares the pretribulation cover-up to the Watergate cover-up that dominated political news in America in the 1970s. MacPherson even alleges that Dallas Seminary conspired, groomed, and commissioned Hal Lindsey for the purpose of popularizing the pretribulation rapture for the Jesus Movement in the early 1970s (131–32).

[7] MacPherson, *Hoax,* 15.

[8] Ibid*.,* 47.

[9] Ibid.

in 1971 by Robert Norton, *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church* (1861). "The important part in Norton's book," claimed MacPherson, "is a personal revelation that Margaret Macdonald had in the spring of 1830."[10] MacPherson uses this finding to project the notion that the doctrine of the pre-tribulational rapture is of demonic origin.

Since the 1970s in America it has become commonplace for writers of articles and books against pre-tribulationism to bring up some form of the argument that Darby got key elements of his view from an Irvingite source. Marvin Rosenthal is typical of this approach, writing that the pre-tribulation rapture was of Satanic origin and unheard of before 1830. "To thwart the Lord's warning to His children, in 1830," contends Rosenthal, "Satan, the 'father of lies,' gave to a fifteen-year-old girl named Margaret Macdonald a lengthy vision."[11] Similar examples could be multiplied.

In a more scholarly vein, Mark Patterson claims Irvingite eschatology is an antecedent source to Darby and pretribulationism.[12] "Irving's writing in *The Morning Watch* reveal that he was, above and before anything else, a pretribulational-premillennial theologian," declares Patterson. "This cannot be overstated. From his meeting with Hately Frere in 1825 until his death in December 1834, Irving's every thought and writing was shaped under the aegis of his imminent Adventism and premillennial convictions."[13] Initially, Patterson denies any intention to connect dispensationalism with Irving's teaching:

> It is not my purpose here to correlate or equate Albury's premillennialism with contemporary dispensationalism or to prove the source of the latter is to be found in the former. My intention is simply to demonstrate that Albury's hermeneutic led to a specific systematic theology that I believe is best described as "nascent dispensationalism". The precise relationship between Albury's theology and that which will follow in John Nelson Darby, the Plymouth Brethren, and especially 20th century dispensationalism, while remarkable, lie beyond the purview of this thesis.[14]

Later, however, he makes the broad claim: "In the end, and at the very least, Irving must be considered the paladin of pre-tribulational pre-millennialism and the chief architect of its cardinal formulas."[15]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Marvin J. Rosenthal, 'Is the Church in Matthew Chapter 24?' *Zion's Fire* (November-December 1994), 10.

[12] Mark Rayburn Patterson, 'Designing the Last Days: Edward Irving, The Albury Circle, and the Theology of The Morning Watch' (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, King's College, London, 2001).

[13] Ibid., 228–29.

[14] Ibid., 136.

[15] Mark A. Patterson and Andrew Walker, "'Our Unspeakable Comfort': Irving, Albury, and the Origins of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture", in Stephen Hunt, editor, *Christian Millenarianism: From the Early Church to Waco* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 115. Walker says, "The hunch that Irving, rather than Darby, has a greater claim to be the father of modern Dispensationalism stems from my research on Irving . . . The credit for finding the evidence that at the very least Irving and the Albury

MacPherson's Claims

Irvingite Robert Norton included a handwritten account of Margaret Macdonald's 'prophecy,'[16] which MacPherson says was the fountainhead for Darby's development of the pretribulational rapture doctrine.[17] MacPherson does not say that Macdonald included a clear statement of the pretribulational rapture, but that she "separated the Rapture from the Second Coming before anyone else did."[18] According to MacPherson, Darby pilfered this two-stage teaching from Macdonald and then developed it systematically, skillfully passing it off as the fruit of his personal Bible study.

Macdonald's so-called revelation that MacPherson cites to make his case revolves around two key phrases. "Margaret dramatically separated the *sign* of the Son of man from the *coming* of the Son of man,"[19] declares MacPherson, based on her phrase, "now look out for the sign of the Son of man."[20] MacPherson argues that, "she equated the *sign* with the Rapture—a Rapture that would occur *before* the revealing of Antichrist."[21] He bases this on her statement: "I saw it was just the Lord himself descending from Heaven with a shout, just the glorified man, even Jesus."[22]

MacPherson makes two major errors in his attempt to argue that Macdonald originated the basis for the pretribulation rapture. First, it is highly doubtful that the Macdonald "prophecy" refers to a two-stage coming of Christ, as MacPherson contends. Therefore, it would be impossible for this source to be the basis for a new idea if it did not contain those elements. The scriptural references she cites are considered to be second coming statements by pretribulationists. Stunt tells us "that the text of Margaret Macdonald's prophecy (published by Robert Norton in 1840) is so very confused that it hardly provides a basis for constructing a coherent eschatology and there is no evidence that this particular prophecy was characteristic of all her utterances."[23] MacPherson has misinterpreted Macdonald's words by equating her use of "sign" with a rapture. (Pretribulationists teach that the rapture is sign-less.) Rather, she is saying that only those who are spiritual will see the secret *sign* of the Son of

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circle predate Darby's mature view on the pre-tribulation Rapture belongs entirely to Mark Patterson," 98, n. 1.

[16] Macdonald's revelation was first published in a book by physician Robert Norton, who later married Margaret, *Memoirs of James & George Macdonald, of Port Glasgow* (London: John F. Shaw, 1840), 171–76. Norton published the account again in *The Restoration of Apostles and Prophets; In the Catholic Apostolic Church* (London: Bosworth & Harrison, 1861), 15–18. The two versions have some significant differences. Norton's *Memoirs* version is longer than the later *Restoration* version. The earlier version has at least 19 instances where the account adds a significant amount of words not found in the more economical later edition of Margaret Macdonald's utterance. Dave MacPherson records a compilation of both versions in *The Rapture Plot* (Simpsonville, SC: Millennium III Publishers, 1994), 249–52.

[17] MacPherson, *Hoax*, 50–57.

[18] Ibid., 121.

[19] Ibid., 128.

[20] Ibid., 125.

[21] Ibid., 129.

[22] Ibid., 126.

[23] Timothy C. F. Stunt, "The Tribulation of Controversy: A Review Article", *Brethren Archivists & Historians Network Review* 2:2 (2003), 93.

Man that will precede the single, post-tribulation second coming of Christ. In other words, only those who have the light of the Holy Spirit within them will know when the second coming will take place because this spiritual enlightenment will enable them to have the spiritual perception to see the secret sign (not the secret rapture). These are her own words as recorded by Norton:

> all must, as Stephen was, be filled with the Holy Ghost, that they might look up, and see the brightness of the Father's glory. I saw the error to be, that men think that it will be something seen by the natural eye; but 'tis spiritual discernment that is needed, the eye of God in his people . . . Only those who have the light of God within them will see the sign of his Appearance. No need to follow them who say, see here, or see there, for his day shall be as the lightning to those in whom the living Christ is. "Tis Christ in us that will lift us up—he is the light—"tis only those that are alive in him that will be caught up to meet him in the air. I saw that we must be in the Spirit, that we might see spiritual things. John was in the Spirit, when he saw a throne set in Heaven . . . it is not knowledge *about* God that it contains, but it is in entering into God— . . . I felt that those who were filled with the Spirit could see spiritual things, and feel walking in the midst of them, while those who had not the Spirit could see nothing.[24]

Macdonald is clearly concerned with spiritual insight for several reasons. First, Stephen *saw* into heaven; he was not raptured or taken to heaven. Second, the sign will be seen only by the spiritually enlightened. It will not be a natural or physical sign, but one perceived by "spiritual discernment." Third, she is discussing "the sign of his appearance," not His actual appearance. Fourth, once a person has been so enlightened, he will not need direction from others. He will be guided directly by 'the living Christ." Finally, the emphasis is on seeing: "John was in the Spirit, when he *saw*," "those who were filled with the Spirit could *see*." D. H. Kromminga observes that Macdonald's "prophecies made it plain that the return of the Lord depended upon the proper spiritual preparation of His Church."[25]

John Bray agrees that Macdonald was teaching a single coming, not a two-staged event. "The only thing new in her revelation itself seems to be that of just Spirit-filled Christians being caught up at the second coming of Christ following heavy trials and tribulation by the Antichrist."[26] In other words, Macdonald seems to have been teaching a post-tribulation and partial rapture. Bray further explains:

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[24] Norton, *Memoirs*, 172–77 (emphasis original).

[25] D. H. Kromminga, *The Millennium in the Church: Studies in the History of Christian Chiliasm* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1945), 250.

[26] John L. Bray, *The Origin of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Teaching* (Lakeland, FL: John L. Bray Ministry, n.d.), 21–22. Interestingly Bray argues that Emmanuel Lacunza, a Jesuit priest from Chile, writing under the assumed name of Rabbi Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra as a converted Jew, came up with a two-staged coming in the 1790s. However, such a view was taught a few hundred years earlier by Joseph Mede, *A Paraphrase and Exposition of the Prophecie of Saint Peter, Concerning the day of Christ's second Coming, Described in the third Chapter of his second Epistle. As Also, How the Conflagration, or Destruction of the World by fire, (whereof Saint Peter speaks) and especially of the Heavens, is to be*

It seems to me that Margaret MacDonald was saying that Christians WILL face the temptation of the false Christ (antichrist) and be in "*an awfully dangerous situation*", and that only the Spirit IN US will enable us to be kept from being deceived; and that as the Spirit works, so will the antichrist; but the pouring out of the Spirit will "*fit us to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb*", and those filled with the Spirit would be taken while the others would be left . . . Margaret MacDonald did teach a partial rapture, of course, but this did not necessarily mean that the teaching included a tribulation period FOLLOWING THAT for the other Christians . . . It would not be right to take for granted that Margaret MacDonald believed in a tribulation period following the appearing of Christ unless she had definitely said so.[27]

Another point MacPherson makes to support his opinion is that "Macdonald was the first person to teach a coming of Christ that would precede the days of Antichrist."[28] This would mean, according to MacPherson, that Macdonald had to be teaching a two-stage coming. However, it is highly questionable, as already noted, that Macdonald was referring to the rapture, as MacPherson insists. Also Macdonald was still a historicist; she believed the church was already in the tribulation and had been for hundreds of years. Therefore the Antichrist was to be soon revealed, but before the second coming. She said believers need spiritual sight so they will not be deceived. Otherwise, why would believers, including herself, need to be filled with the Spirit to escape the deception that will accompany "the fiery trial which is to try us" associated with the Antichrist's arrival? Further, she certainly includes herself as one who needs this special ministry of the Holy Spirit, as can be seen from this passage from her "revelation":

> now shall the awful sight of a false Christ be seen on this earth, and nothing but the living Christ in us can detect this awful attempt of the enemy to deceive. . . The Spirit must and will be poured out on the church, that she may be purified and filled with God . . . There will be outward trial too, but "tis principally temptation". It is brought on by the outpouring of the Spirit, and will just increase in proportion as the Spirit is poured out. The trial of the Church is from the Antichrist. It is by being filled with the Spirit that we shall be kept. I frequently said, Oh be filled with the Spirit—have the light of God in you, that you may detect Satan—be full of eyes within—be clay in the hands of the potter—submit to be filled, filled with God . . . This is what we are at present made to pray much for, that speedily we may all be made ready to meet our Lord in the air—and it will be. Jesus wants his bride. His desire is toward us.[29]

Charles Ryrie also notes a further misunderstanding of Macdonald's "prophecy":

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understood. (London: R. Bishop, 1642). This essay is included in *The Works of Joseph Mede*, 609–19. Mede's view was widely held during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

[27] Bray, *Origin*, 20–21 (emphasis original).

[28] MacPherson, *Cover-Up*, 155–56.

[29] Norton, *Memoirs*, 174–76.

> She saw the church ("us") being purged by Antichrist. MacPherson reads this as meaning the church will be raptured before Antichrist, ignoring the "us". In reality, she saw the church enduring Antichrist's persecution of the Tribulation days.[30]

Macdonald, then, was a post-tribulationist. She believed the church would go through the tribulation. This is hardly the beginning of pre-tribulation theology! John Walvoord observes:

> readers of MacPherson's *Incredible Cover-Up* will undoubtedly be impressed by the many long quotations, most of which are only window dressing for what he is trying to prove. When it gets down to the point of proving that either MacDonald or Irving was pretribulationist, the evidence gets very muddy. The quotations MacPherson cites do not support his conclusions.[31]

Timothy Stunt also notes that

> none of the contemporary witnesses of the Clydeside utterance made any mention of Margaret Macdonald proclaiming a new doctrine. In fact it is only with some difficulty that one can identify what MacPherson calls her "pretribulationist" teaching in the transcript of 1840, and when in 1861 Norton quoted from her prophecy he omitted the passage which referred to "the fiery trial" which "will be for the purging and purifying of the real members of the body of Jesus"—a passage which clearly assumes that Christians will go through the tribulation.[32]

Second, in spite of MacPherson's great amount of research and writing he has yet to produce hard evidence that Darby was influenced by Macdonald's utterances, regardless of what they meant. MacPherson only assumes the connection. Throughout MacPherson's writings, he keeps presenting information about issues, developments, and beliefs from Great Britain during the early 1800s, apparently thinking he is adding proof for his thesis that "the popular Pre-Trib Rapture teaching of today was really instigated by a teenager in Scotland who lived in the early 1800's."[33] Much of the information is helpful and interesting, but does not provide actual evidence for his thesis. Even if Darby developed the doctrine of the pre-tribulation rapture after Macdonald's utterance, which he did not, specific proof would be needed to make a link between Macdonald and Darby. Instead MacPherson offers only speculative guesses about how Darby used his training for the law profession to manipulate Christians by hiding the supposed true origins of his teaching on the rapture.

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[30] Charles Ryrie, *What You Should Know about the Rapture* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 71.

[31] John F. Walvoord, *The Blessed Hope and the Tribulation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), 44.

[32] Stunt, 'Controversy', 93.

[33] MacPherson, *Hoax*, 7.

F. F. Bruce says, "Where did he [Darby] get it? The reviewer's answer would be that it was in the air in the 1820s and 1830s among eager students of unfulfilled prophecy . . . direct dependence by Darby on Margaret Macdonald is unlikely."[34] Stunt draws a similar conclusion when he says,

> When considering the new eschatological framework which was taking shape around 1830, my own suspicion is that a significant element in its origin is to be found in the profound anxiety and bewilderment induced by a series of what seemed to be cataclysmic or even apocalyptic events. Catholic emancipation, revolutions on the continent of Europe, the death of George IV and two general elections in close succession, rural and urban violence (in which, for example, the Bishop of Bristol's palace was burnt down), the ongoing agitation for re-form, as well as the scourge of cholera—these are some of the more obvious factors which we have to consider when asking why many people felt that they had reached a watershed in prophetic development and why the possibility of deliverance from tribulation seemed so attractive.[35]

Roy Huebner considers MacPherson's charges as "using slander that J. N. Darby took the [truth of the] pretribulation rapture from those very opposing, demon-inspired utterances."[36] He concludes that MacPherson:

> did not profit by reading the utterances allegedly by Miss M. M. Instead of apprehending the plain import of her statements, as given by R. Norton, which has some affinity to the post-tribulation scheme and no real resemblance to the pretribulation rapture and dispensational truth, he has read into it what he appears so anxious to find.[37]

Columba Flegg notes that the Brethren teaching on the rapture and the present invisible and spiritual nature of the church "were in sharp contrast to Catholic Apostolic teaching . . . attempts to see any direct influence of one upon the other seem unlikely to succeed . . . Several writers [referring specifically to MacPherson] have attempted to trace Darby's secret rapture theory to a prophetic statement associated with Irving, but their arguments do not stand up to serious criticism."[38]

It seems, then, most likely that Margaret Macdonald did not teach *any* of the features of a pre-tribulation rapture theology as MacPherson suggests, and therefore she could not have been a source for the origin of that doctrine. The most likely origin

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[34] F. F. Bruce, review of *The Unbelievable Pre-Trib Origin* in *Evangelical Quarterly* 47 (1975), 58.

[35] Stunt, 'Controversy', 96–97. He adds, "This inquiry into the emotional and spiritual mind-set of men and women who lived 160 years ago requires sympathetic understanding rather than the polemics of judgment. In this respect, the help given by Mr. MacPherson's book is minimal" (97).

[36] R. A. Huebner, *The Truth of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture Recovered* (Millington, NJ: Present Truth Publishers, 1976), 13.

[37] Huebner, *Truth*, 67.

[38] Columba Graham Flegg, *'Gathered Under Apostles': A Study of the Catholic Apostolic Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 436.

of modern pre-tribulationism is Darby's study of the Bible and meditation. Walvoord concludes,

> Any careful student of Darby soon discovers that he did not get his eschatological views from men, but rather from his doctrine of the church as the body of Christ, a concept no one claims was revealed supernaturally to Irving or Macdonald. Darby's views undoubtedly were gradually formed, but they were theologically and biblically based rather than derived from Irving's pre-Pentecostal group.[39]

Huebner's Likely Suggestion

Roy Huebner argues that Darby first began to believe in the pre-tribulation rapture and develop his dispensational thinking while convalescing from a riding accident during December 1826 and January 1827 (more likely December 1827 and January 1828).[40] If true, Darby would have had a head start on any who would have supposedly influenced his thought, making it chronologically impossible for any of the "influence" theories to have credibility. Huebner demonstrates that Darby's understanding of the pre-tribulation rapture was the product of the development of his personal interactive thought with the text of Scripture as he and his associates have long contended.

Darby's pre-tribulation and dispensational thinking, says Huebner, was developed from the following factors. First, "he saw from Isaiah 32 that there was a different dispensation coming . . . that *Israel and the Church were distinct*."[41] Second, "during his convalescence JND learned that *he ought daily to expect his Lord's return*."[42] Third, "in 1827 JND understood the fall of the church . . . 'the ruin of the Church.'"[43] Fourth, Darby also was beginning to see a gap of time between the rapture and the second coming by 1827.[44] Fifth, Darby himself said in 1857 that he first started understanding things relating to the pre-tribulation rapture "thirty years ago." And "with that fixed point of reference, Jan. 31, 1827 [1828 TDI]," Huebner argues, we can see that Darby "had already understood those truths upon which the pre-tribulation rapture, i.e., the pre-Revelation 4 rapture, hinges."[45] Therefore, when reading

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[39] Walvoord, *Blessed Hope*, 47.

[40] R. A. Huebner, *John Nelson Darby: Precious Truths Revived and Defended*, *Vol. 1: Revival of Truth 1826–1845*, 2nd. edition (Jackson, N. J.: Present Truth Publishers, 2004), 7–18. Stunt's research supports an adjusted date for Darby's convalescence, more likely December 1827 till January 1828. See Timothy C. F. Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession: Radical Evangelicals in Switzerland and Britain 1815–35* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 171.

[41] Huebner, *John Nelson Darby*, 10 (emphasis original). It could have been at this time that Darby shifted from postmillennialism to premillennialism.

[42] Huebner, *John Nelson Darby*, 12 (emphasis original).

[43] Ibid., 11.

[44] Ibid., 16.

[45] Ibid. For a more extended presentation of the evidence for when Darby first discovered pretribulationism see Thomas Ice, "John Nelson Darby and the Rapture," *The Journal of Ministry and Theology*, 17, no. 1 (Spring 2013), 106–14.

Darby's earliest published essay on biblical prophecy (1829), it is clear that while it still has elements of historicism, it also reflects the fact that for Darby, the rapture was to be the church's focus and hope.[46] Even in this earliest of essays, Darby expounds upon the rapture as the church's hope.[47] It is not unusual for inconsistencies to arise in one's thought when transitioning from one system (historicism) to another (futurism).

The timing of Darby's rapture discovery can be attested by a couple of sources. Francis Newman served as a tutor for the Pennefather children for fifteen months during 1827 and 1828 and confirms the timing of Darby's textual and doctrinal discoveries. As a tutor in the household daily, he would have been at the Pennefather residence during Darby's convalescence.[48] Newman speaks of Darby's influence upon him while at the Pennefathers, during Darby's three-month convalescence. "Darby's realization in 1827–28 that earthly Jewish promises should not be appropriated by the Christian church is circumstantially corroborated in Frank Newman's letter to B. W. Newton (17 April 1828)," notes Stunt, "written after Darby's deliverance experience, where he makes a similar distinction between the promises made to Israel and those made to the Church."[49]

Benjamin Wills Newton (1807–99) writes of his Oxford tutor and friend Frank Newman, "While I was at Oxford and we were friends, F. Newman went to Ireland (1827) and there made the acquaintance of John Darby."[50] Thus, Newton says that Newman returned from his stay in Ireland, having been influenced by Darby in relation to prophecy, and that Newman wanted Darby to share this prophetic information with his friends at Oxford. This also confirms Darby's doctrinal discoveries occurred during his convalescence during December 1827 and January 1828.

John Gifford Bellett (1795–1864) also had interaction with Darby during his convalescence. He wrote the following about Darby:

> In the beginning of 1828 I had occasion to go to London, and then I met in private and heard in public those who were warm and alive on prophetic truth, having had their minds freshly illumined by it.
> In my letters to J. N. D. at this time, I told him I had been hearing things that he and I had never yet talked of, and I further told him on my return to Dublin what they were. Full of this subject as I then was, I found him quite prepared for it

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[46] J. N. Darby, 'Reflections upon the Prophetic Inquiry and the Views Advanced in it', *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, vol. 2 (Winschoten, Netherlands: H. L. Heijkoop, reprint 1971), 1–31.

[47] Darby, 'Reflections,' 16–18, 25, 30.

[48] "... in 1827 I went to Ireland ... In the Autumn of 1828 I returned to Oxford. .." F. W. Newman, *Contributions Chiefly to the Early History of the Late Cardinal Newman*, pp. 21 and 24. "In Dublin (1827–8) . . .," ibid, p. 62. Cited from Huebner, *John Nelson Darby*, 12, f.n. 60. In *Phases of Faith*, Newman says the following: "After taking my degree, I became a Fellow of Balliol College; and the next year I accepted an invitation to Ireland, and there became private tutor for fifteen months in the house of one now deceased" (p. 17).

[49] Timothy C. F. Stunt, "Influences in the Early Development of J. N. Darby" in Crawford Gribben and Timothy C. F. Stunt, eds., *Prisoners of Hope? Aspects of Evangelical Millennialism in Britain and Ireland, 1800–1880* (Carlisle, UK: 2004), 59, fn. 56.

[50] Benjamin Wills Newton, *The Fry Collection*, 61. Newton makes a similar statement about Newman visiting Darby in 1827 on page 235. See also *Fry Collection*, 240–41.

also, and his mind and soul had traveled rapidly in the direction which had thus been given to it.[51]

Bellett said he discussed "prophetic truth" with Darby. It was noted earlier in a footnote that in addition to a letter J. G. Bellett wrote to Darby, he also penned one to his brother George and spoke of his impending visit with Darby. The Bellett letter was dated January 31, 1828. John wrote to George saying, "I hope on Friday to see John Darby. You will be grieved to hear that he has been laid up for nearly two months from a hurt in his knee. His poor people in Calary miss him sadly."[52] Bellett's statement that Darby was "quite prepared for it also" is a reference to prophetic discussions during his visit with Darby while Darby was recuperating from his injury. Very likely the phrase, "his mind and soul had traveled rapidly in the direction which had thus been given to it" is a reference to the discoveries that Darby learned through his personal Bible study.

Irvingite Influences?

Mark Patterson claims that, "Irving must be considered the paladin of pre-tribulational pre-millennialism and the chief architect of its cardinal formulas."[53] He adds the following:

> In addition to the *a priori* dismissal of Irving, there exist two fundamental errors common among those who uncritically assume Darby to be the source of the pre-tribulation Rapture. First, few acknowledge the degree to which Darby's theology reflects the very millenarian tradition in which he was immersed. The core principles of his theology—literalistic hermeneutic, apostasy in the Church, the restoration of the Jews to their homeland, details of Christ's coming, and his belief that biblical prophecy spoke uniquely to his day—were concepts held, discussed and propagated by a large body of prophecy students. Second, the development of Darby's own theology, in spite of how he remembers it, was from 1827 to even as late as 1843 in a largely formative stage.[54]

There are a number of problems created when one sees too great a similarity between Irvingite historicism and Brethren futurism. Patterson appears to make such errors.

The "core principles" of Darby's theology, as expressed by Patterson, are too broad and general. Look at this list of Darby's core principles, and compare them to those of Irving and his followers. First, consider the "literalistic hermeneutic." Patterson himself describes Irving and the Albury hermeneutic as not just literal since

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[51] John Gifford Bellett, *Interesting Reminiscences of the Early History of "Brethren:" With Letter from J. G. Bellett to J. N. Darby* (London: Alfred Holness, n.d.), 4.

[52] Bellett, *Recollections*, 27.

[53] Mark A. Patterson and Andrew Walker, ''Our Unspeakable Comfort': Irving, Albury, and the Origins of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture', in Stephen Hunt, (ed.), *Christian Millenarianism: From the Early Church to Waco* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001), 115.

[54] Ibid., 114–15.

that "tells only half the story." Instead, he argues, Irving is best understood as following a "literal-typological methodology."[55] This is typical of the quasi-literalism of historicism. By contrast, Darby was a consistent literalist, and did not attempt to make days into years or find historical fulfillment of seal, trumpet or bowl judgments in the church's past history, instead seeing these judgments as future literal events. Also, Irving and Albury believed many of the passages that spoke of events in a future Jewish tribulation were unfolding before their eyes. For example, Babylon was seen as a symbol of the apostate Church in their own day. David Bebbington distinguishes between the historicist hermeneutic and a futurist form of literalism:

> Historicists found it hard to be thoroughgoing advocates of literal interpretation. There was too great a gulf between the detail of biblical images and their alleged historical fulfillment to make any such claim possible. Futurists did not suffer from this handicap. Consequently, they shouted louder for literalism—and, among the futurists, the dispensationalists shouted loudest of all. J. N. Darby was contending as early as 1829 that prophecy relating to the Jews would be fulfilled literally. As his thought developed during the 1830s, this principle of interpretation became the lynchpin of his system. Because Darby's opinions were most wedded to literalism, his distinctive scheme enjoyed the advantage of taking what seemed the most rigorist view of scripture.[56]

Thus, Irving and Albury do not have a common hermeneutic with Darby as Patterson contends.

No doubt both held the apostasy of the church, but even this similarity reflects a great chasm of differences between the Albury historicist view and that of the futurist. The Albury view of apostasy is tied to their historicist view of Revelation. They taught that the church had just finished the 1,260 days, which are really 1,260 years that ended with the defeat of Antichrist (i.e., Roman Catholicism) in 1789 in the French Revolution. These events forewarned the impending rise of the whore of Babylon (Revelation 17–18), which is also a symbol of the apostate church.[57] On the other hand, Darby, as a futurist, held that the apostasy of the church was predicted primarily in the New Testament epistles and would increasingly characterize the end of the current church age.[58] His view is very different than the historicist notion,

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[55] Patterson, "Designing the Last Days," 76. See also page 62.

[56] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1989), 89.

[57] See Edward Irving, "Preliminary Discourse by the Translator" in Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty* (London: L. B. Seeley and son, 1827), xxxiii.

[58] See the following passages relating to church age apostasy: Romans 1:18–32; 10; 16:17–18; 2 Corinthians 11:1–15; 13:5; Galatians 1:6–9; 5:1–12; Philippians 3:2, 18–19; Colossians 2:4–23; 1 Timothy 1:3–7; 4:1–3; 6:3–5; 2 Timothy 2:11–26; 3:1–9; 4:15; Titus 1:10–16; Hebrews 2:1–4; 3:7–4:13; 5:12–6:12; 10:26–31; 12:14–17; 1 Peter 3:19–20; 2 Peter 2:1–22; 3:3–10; 1 John 2:18–23; 3:4–12; 4:1–6; 2 John 9; Jude 3–23. On Darby's view of the ruin of the church see *Letters of J. N. Darby*, vol. 3, 297–305 for his explanation of how he came to his view. See the following essays for expositions of his view: *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, vol. 1, 117–23, 138–55, 169, 198, 250; vol. 4, 10–36; vol. 14, 88–90, 272–300; vol. 16, 384; vol. 20, 189, 192; vol. 21, 209.

which has a completely different role for the apostasy. Albury historicism saw apostasy as a harbinger of the second coming of Christ to the earth, while Darby saw the ruin of the church as a characteristic that precedes an imminent rapture of the church followed by literal events of the seven-year tribulation.

Both approaches do see a restoration of the Jews to their homeland, but as with the previous two issues, there are significant differences. Darby believed the Jews would return to their land in unbelief and then be converted during the seven-year tribulation. He says, "At the end of the age the same fact will be reproduced: the Jews—returned to their own land, though without being converted—will find themselves in connection with the fourth beast."[59] However, Irving believed that concurrent with this present age, "when the Lord shall have finished the taking of witness against the Gentiles . . . will turn his Holy Spirit unto his ancient people the Jews."[60] Shortly after that time Christ will return.[61]

The last two items mentioned by Patterson are "details of Christ's coming, and his belief that biblical prophecy spoke uniquely to his day." These are so broad that they could be said to characterize just about any evangelical view of eschatology, whether amillennial, premillennial or postmillennial, whether preterist, historicist, futurist or idealist. Every approach has details of Christ's coming and certainly every system believes that their view speaks uniquely to his day. More important are the differences concerning the details of Christ coming as seen by the different systems and also many differences would arise in relation to how each prophetic view spoke uniquely to his day. Thus, it is less than compelling to see how Irving and Albury's eschatology is the forerunner to Darby, pre-tribulationism and dispensationalism. Instead, it is Irving and Albury that Darby and the new school of futurism was set against. Concerning Patterson's second point, I agree that it was a process of about fifteen years in which Darby developed a mature system; however, the initial idea of something like a pre-tribulation rapture would come in an instant, even though it might take a decade and a half to work out the implications and settle one's conscience. Just such a scenario appears to fit what we know of Darby. Further, there is little in Darby's intellectual legacy that would suggest he was incapable of producing a unique theology.

Irvingite Historicism

If one conducts an extensive examination of Irving and Irvingite doctrine, one will see they were still overwhelmingly historicist, while Darby and the Brethren had become clear futurists.[62] Columba Graham Flegg, an Irvingite scholar who grew up within that church, claims the differences between the two movements are far-reaching:

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[59] John Nelson Darby, *The Hopes of the Church of God, in Connection with the Destiny of the Jews and the Nations as Revealed in Prophecy* (1840). Collected Writings, vol. 2 (Winschoten, Netherlands: H. L. Heijkoop, reprint 1971), 324.

[60] Irving, "Preliminary Discourse," v.

[61] Ibid., vi.

[62] For an excellent overview and relatively brief presentation of Irving's eschatology by Irving himself, see his "Preliminary Discourse," i–cxciv.

The later Powerscourt Conferences were dominated by the new sect. The Brethren took a futurist view of the Apocalypse, attacking particularly the interpretation of prophetic 'days' as 'years', so important for all historicists, including the Catholic Apostolics . . . It was the adoption of this futurist eschatology by a *body* of Christians which gave it the strength to become a serious rival to the alternative historicist eschatology of the Catholic Apostolics and others. Darby introduced the concept of a *secret* rapture to take place "at any moment", a belief which subsequently became one of the chief hallmarks of Brethren eschatology. He also taught that the "true" Church was invisible and spiritual. Both these ideas were in sharp contrast to Catholic Apostolic teaching, and were eventually to lead to schism among the Brethren. There were thus very significant differences between the two eschatologies, and attempts to see any direct influence of one upon the other seem unlikely to succeed—they had a number of common *roots*, but are much more notable for their points of disagreement. Several writers have attempted to trace Darby's secret rapture theory to a prophetic statement associated with Irving, but their arguments do not stand up to serious criticism.[63]

When reading the full message of Irvingite eschatology it is clear that they were still very much locked into the historicist system which views the entire church age as the tribulation. After all, the major point in Irving's eschatology was that Babylon (false Christianity) was about to be destroyed and then the second coming would occur. This was a classic historicist outlook. He also taught that the second coming was synonymous with the rapture.[64] Irving believed that it was the single return of the Lord that was getting near. This is hardly pre-tribulational since Irving believed that the tribulation began at least 1,500 years earlier and he did not teach a separate rapture, followed by the tribulation, culminating in the second coming. Ernest Sandeen tells us:

> Darby's view of the premillennial advent contrasted with that held by the historicist millenarian school in two ways. First, Darby taught that the second advent would be secret, an event sensible only to those who participated in it . . . There were, in effect, two "second comings" in Darby's eschatology. The church is first taken from the earth secretly and then, at a later time, Christ returns in a public second advent as described in Matthew 24 . . . .
> Second, Darby taught that the secret rapture could occur at any moment. In fact, the secret rapture is also often referred to as the doctrine of the any-moment coming. Unlike the historicist millenarians, Darby taught that the prophetic timetable had been interrupted at the founding of the church and that the unfulfilled biblical prophecies must all wait upon the rapture of the church. . .

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[63] Flegg, *'Gathered Under Apostles,'* 436 (emphasis original). Flegg's chapter on Catholic Apostolic eschatology is extensive (249 pages), more than half the volume of the book.

[64] Edward Irving, "Signs of the Times in the Church," *The Morning Watch* 2 (1830), 156.

Darby avoided the pitfalls both of attempting to predict a time for Christ's second advent and of trying to make sense out of the contemporary alarms of European politics with the Revelation as the guidebook.[65]

The Irvingite View of the Rapture

Even though Irving and his Albury disciples spoke often about the translation of saints to heaven, they clearly did not hold to any form of a pre-tribulation rapture. Flegg's definitive work on the Catholic Apostolic Church makes it clear that "the translation may not be simply a single event at the time of the first resurrection, but spread over a short period of time prior to it."[66] Such a view does not sound like pre-tribulationism! Flegg further explains what is meant:

> This period of great tribulation was inevitable, but would be escaped by an elect body (those referred to by St. Paul in I Thess. 4:16–17) who would be resurrected by Christ or translated (caught up in the clouds) through the operation of the Holy Spirit at the beginning (morning) of the Second Advent. This was the *first resurrection*—the gathering of the "first-fruits", the resurrection from/out of the dead of which the New Testament spoke and which was indicated by the woman in travail (Apoc. 12:1–2). The Old Testament "saints" would participate in it, and both the resurrected and the translated would receive their resurrection bodies and remain standing with Christ upon Mount Zion.[67]

We see from the above notation that the Irvingite rapture is part of the second coming. Thus, their doctrine teaches a brief interval between the rapture and the second advent, not a rapture followed by a multi-year tribulation and then a new event, the second coming. Patterson cites seventy-four examples of what he calls a "pretribulational rapture" in Irvingite literature.[68] After examining everyone, it is clear these references are better viewed as references to the second coming, as described above, including a translation of believers. This is not pre-tribulation theology as taught by Darby, the Brethren or any form of contemporary dispensationalism.

Conclusion

While Irving and the Albury group had a few eschatological ideas that were unique, a belief in the pre-tribulation rapture was not one of them. It is impossible for one to follow the historicist approach and also believe the rapture will occur before the tribulation, since historicists believe that the tribulation began hundreds of years ago and runs the course of most of the current church age. It is also true that Irvingites spoke of a soon coming of Christ to translate believers to heaven, but this view was

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[65] Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 62–64.

[66] Flegg, *'Gathered Under Apostles'*, 434.

[67] Ibid., 425.

[68] Robert Patterson, 'Designing,' n. 87, 165.

part of their second coming belief that they could have derived from Manuel Lacunza's writings, which were not the product of futurism at that point.[69] Such a view has similar elements as seen in Robert Gundry's version of post-tribulationism. Gundry holds there will be a rapture or catching up to meet the Lord in the air "to form a welcoming party that will escort the Lord on the last leg of his descent to earth."[70]

On the other hand, Darby most likely thought of and then developed the idea of pre-tribulationism in the process of shifting to futurism. Paul Wilkinson notes that "Darby found an exegetical basis in Scripture for his doctrine of a pretribulation Rapture. As a careful student of the Bible, Darby had no need to appeal to an oracle for his doctrines. The unfounded and scurrilous accusations of MacPherson and his sympathizers contravene the whole ethos of John Nelson Darby, a man of integrity to whom the Word of God was paramount."[71]

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[69] Manuel Lacunza, also known as Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra, *The Coming of Messiah*, 99–101; 214–17; 248–51; 266–67.

[70] Bob Gundry, *First the Antichrist* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 109.

[71] Paul Richard Wilkinson, 'John Nelson Darby and the Origins of Christian Zionism' (University of Manchester, 2006), 322.
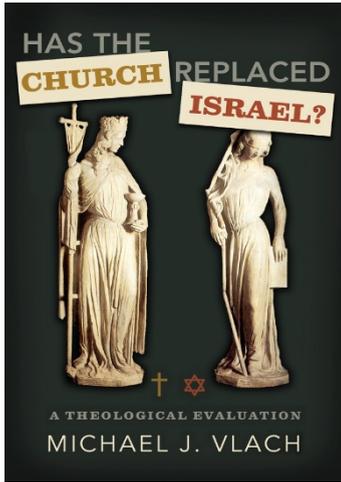
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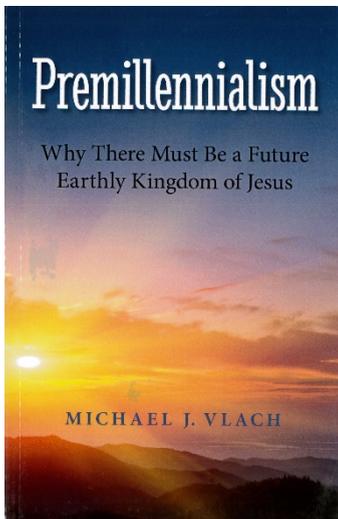
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INERRANCY AND CHURCH HISTORY:
IS INERRANCY A MODERN INVENTION?

Jonathan Moorhead
Instructor, The Master's Academy International, Czech Republic

The claim that the church has always believed in the inerrancy of Scripture has been challenged for over a century. In particular, it has been charged that the doctrine of inerrancy was invented by Princetonian theologians and proto-fundamentalists. This article will show from primary resources that this claim is without warrant.

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In 1970, Ernest Sandeen (Macalester College) claimed that nineteenth-century Princeton theologians A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield created the doctrine of inerrancy to combat the burgeoning threat of liberalism.[1] In particular, Sandeen posited that the doctrine of inerrancy in the original autographs "did not exist in either Europe or America prior to its formulation in the last half of the nineteenth century."[2] In 1979, Jack Rogers (Fuller Seminary) and Donald McKim (Dubuque Theological Seminary) wrote, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach*, which popularized this theory on a broad scale. Over the past forty years, the conclusions of Sandeen, Rogers and McKim have affected how many Christians think about the doctrine of inerrancy. Namely, if the doctrine of inerrancy was not promoted throughout church history, why should the church fight for it now?

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[1] Ernest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). Sandeen did not originate this charge. As early as 1893 Philip Schaff claimed, "the theory of a literal inspiration and inerrancy was not held by the Reformers" (quoted by B.B. Warfield in, *The Independent* magazine, July 1893). Also, in 1923 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A claimed that inerrancy was a new development of fundamentalism that was unknown by the drafters of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Karl Barth follows this error when he writes, "the historic view of the Bible with its cult of heroes and the doctrine of mechanical inspiration are both products of the same age and spirit. A common feature is that they both represent means whereby Renaissance man tried to control the Bible and also tried to set up obstacles to stop it controlling him, as indeed it ought to do" (*Church Dogmatics* I:1 [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2010], 112–13).

[2] Ernest Sandeen, *The Origins of Fundamentalism: Toward A Historical Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 14.

Despite the widespread influence of Sandeen, Rogers and McKim, their claim was historically inaccurate. In 1982 John Woodbridge (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) wrote, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal*, to give abundant evidence that the doctrine of inerrancy was the dominant view of the church before Hodge and Warfield. As a result, Woodbridge offered a devastating critique of Sandeen, Rogers and McKim and all those who would follow in their footsteps of faulty scholarship.

Following the example of Woodbridge, it is the goal of this article to give evidence that the doctrine of inerrancy was not the creation of the Princetonians or American fundamentalists. Rather, the original resource material will show that the inerrantist view has been nearly unanimously accepted throughout church history by the Eastern and Western churches.[3] A major thrust of this article will be to let theologians from the first to the nineteenth centuries speak for themselves, in their own words. There will also be a discussion concerning the origin of biblical criticism in the Modern Period.

The Early Church

Despite the fact that the early Christians did not have Bibles, and that doctrinal controversies of the time were much more focused on the Trinity and the nature of Christ, there are significant affirmations from the early church to support their conviction that the Scriptures were without error. Understandably, the early believers would have inherited this belief from their view of the Old Testament Scriptures. Bruce Vawter explains,

> It would be pointless to call into question that Biblical inerrancy in a rather absolute form was a common persuasion from the beginning of Christian times, and from Jewish times before that. For both the Fathers and the rabbis generally, the ascription of any error to the Bible was unthinkable . . . . If the word was God's it must be true, regardless of whether it made known a mystery of divine revelation or commented on a datum of natural science, whether it derived from human observation or chronicled an event of history.[4]

Clement of Rome (d. ca. 99) gives us the earliest letter from one church to another outside of Scripture. Writing around 96 AD, Clement claims, "the holy Scrip-

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[3] Origen (154–251) is an interesting exception to the rule. While he believed that every jot and tittle of Scripture was precisely recorded according to God's will (thus inerrant), the content of what was recorded contained impossibilities or events that never occurred. This is instructive for us since Origen used this view of inspiration to make Christianity palatable to the high, cultured elite of Alexandria by use of what was reasonable to them (see especially *First Principles* IV.I). Peter Abelard (1079–1142) is another theologian who held to the limited inerrancy of Scripture.

[4] *Biblical Inspiration* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 132–33.

tures, which are true, which were given through the Holy Spirit; you know that nothing unrighteous or counterfeit is written in them."[5] The greatest apologist of the second century, Justin Martyr (d. ca. 165), affirms the authority of Scripture over his reason when he writes, "since I am entirely convinced that no Scripture contradicts another, I shall admit rather that I do not understand what is recorded, and shall strive to persuade those who imagine that the Scriptures are contradictory, to be rather of the same opinion as myself."[6] Justin attempts to describe how the Holy Spirit moved men to write by saying,

> For neither by nature nor by human conception is it possible for men to know things so great and divine, but by the gift which then descended from above upon the holy men, who had no need of rhetorical art, nor of uttering anything in a contentious or quarrelsome manner, but to present themselves pure to the energy of the Divine Spirit, in order that the divine plectrum itself, descending from heaven, and using righteous men as an instrument like a harp or lyre, might reveal to us the knowledge of things divine and heavenly.[7]

He goes on to say, "When you hear the utterances of the prophets spoken as it were personally, you must not suppose that they were spoken by the inspired themselves, but by the Divine Word who moves them."[8] Connecting the veracity of Scripture with the character of God, Irenaeus (115–202) writes,

> If, however, we cannot discover explanations of all those things in Scripture which are made the subject of investigation, yet let us not on that account seek after any other God besides Him who really exists. For this is the very greatest impiety. We should leave things of that nature to God who created us, being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit . . . .[9]

The early apologist Athenagoras (133–190) also describes the role of the Holy Spirit in the giving of Scripture by saying, "It would be irrational for us to cease to believe in the Spirit from God, who moved the mouths of the prophets like musical instruments, and to give heed to mere human opinions."[10] He goes on to write that the prophets were "lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the Divine Spirit, utter[ing] the things with which they were inspired,

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[5] *Letter of the Romans to the Corinthians*, 45:2–3 in *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3rd edition, edited and translated by Michael W. Holmes (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic), 105.

[6] *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, LXV in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Philip Schaff (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 1:230.

[7] *Horatory Address to the Greeks*, VIII in ibid., 276.

[8] *The First Apology*, XXXVI in ibid., 175.

[9] *Against Heresies*, II.XXVIII.2 in ibid., 399. See also III.V.1, 417.

[10] *A Plea for Christians*, VII in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 2:132.

the Spirit making use of them as a flute player."[11] Furthermore, the Eastern father Clement of Alexandria (150–215) writes, "I could adduce ten thousand Scriptures of which not 'one tittle shall pass away' without being fulfilled; for the mouth of the Lord the Holy Spirit hath spoken these things."[12] For Clement, the biblical writings were an "infallible criterion of faith."[13]

Tertullian (160–220), the great theologian from Carthage writes, "we point to the majesty of our Scriptures, if not to their antiquity. If you doubt that they are as ancient as we say, we offer proof that they are divine."[14] Noting the extent of inspiration, Tertullian says, "The Divine Scripture has made us united in one body; the very letters are our glue."[15] Also answering critics of the Bible, Caius (180–217) notes, "For either they do not believe that the divine Scriptures were dictated by the Holy Spirit, and are thus infidels; or they think themselves wiser than the Holy Spirit, and what are they then but demoniacs?"[16] Summing up the view of the apologists from the early church, Geoffrey W. Bromily concludes, "there can be no mistaking that they held to divine, inerrant inspiration."[17]

The defender of Nicene orthodoxy against the Arians, Athanasius of Alexandria (293–373), also affirms the inerrancy of Scripture in accordance with church tradition. He writes, "divine Scripture is sufficient above all things."[18] Recognizing heresy of the day, he writes, "Now it is the opinion of some, that the Scriptures do not agree together, or that God, Who gave the commandment, is false. But there is no disagreement whatever, far from it, neither can the Father, Who is truth, lie."[19]

The great Eastern expository preacher, John Chrysostom (349–407), also upheld the inerrancy of the canonical writings. In his sermons he was careful to explain to his audience how differing Gospel accounts were complimentary, and not contradictory. The reason for this, he affirms, lies in the character of the sacred Scriptures. He says, "Let us act so as to interpret everything precisely and instruct you not to pass by even a brief phrase or single syllable contained in the Holy Scriptures. After all they are not simply words, but words of the Holy Spirit, and hence the treasure to be found in even a single syllable is great."[20] In his famous sermons "Concerning the Statues," Chrysostom preaches, "For the Scripture by no means speaks falsely."[21] Furthermore, in his sermon on John 12:39–41, Chrysostom discusses John's quotation of Isaiah with the caveat, "He desires hence to establish by many proofs the

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[11] Ibid., IX, 133.

[12] *Exhortation to the Heathen*, IX in ibid., 195.

[13] *Stromata*, II.IV in ibid., 349–50.

[14] *Apology*, XX in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 3:33.

[15] *On Modesty*, V in ibid., 78.

[16] *Fragments*, III in Ibid., 5:602.

[17] *Historical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1978), 27.

[18] *De Synodis*, I.6 in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 4:453.

[19] Letter XIX.3 in ibid., 546.

[20] Homily 15.3 in *Homilies on Genesis 1–17*, translated by Robert C. Hill (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 195.

[21] "Concerning the Statues," II.22 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, edited by Philip Schaff (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 9:352.

unerring truth of Scripture, and that what Isaiah foretold fell not out otherwise, but as he said."[22]

The great eastern Cappadocian Fathers (Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil of Caesarea) are unanimous concerning the full trustworthiness of the sacred writings. Gregory of Nazianzus (329–390), also one of the great four Eastern doctors of the church, writes, "We, however, who extend the accuracy of the Spirit to the merest stroke and tittle, will never admit to the impious assertion that even the smallest matters were dealt with haphazard by those who have recorded them, and have thus been borne in mind down to the present day."[23] Gregory's brother, and father of Eastern monasticism, Basil the Great (330–379), concurs, "all Scripture is God inspired and profitable, and there is nothing in it unclean."[24] Gregory of Nyssa (331/40-395) agrees and connects the character of the writings with the nature of God, "Thus it is by the power of the Spirit that the holy men who are under Divine influence are inspired, and every Scripture is for this reason said to be 'given by inspiration of God,' because it is the teaching of the Divine afflatus."[25] He goes on to say, "the Scripture does not lie."[26]

Other theologians such as Hilary of Poitiers (300–368) upheld the "sacred narrative," proclaiming "The Scripture is accurate and consistent . . . ."[27] The Eastern theologian John Cassian (360–435) compares the New Testament writings with the "testimony of the old prophets, intermingling at times new things with old, that everybody may see that the holy Scriptures proclaim as it were with one mouth . . . ." Citing the Old Testament prophets, Cassian concludes, "How wonderfully consistent the Holy Scriptures always are!"[28] Jerome (347–420), the famous translator of the Latin Vulgate, agrees with his contemporary Cassian when he writes, "I am not, I repeat, so ignorant as to suppose that any of the Lord's words is either in need of correction or is not divinely inspired."[29]

The Medieval Church

Augustine (354–430) is arguably the greatest theologian in church history and is generally thought to usher in the Medieval Period because of his theological contributions. His influence upon all subsequent theology cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, it is significant that Augustine held to a strong view of biblical inerrancy. Augustine writes,

> For it seems to me that the most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books: that is to say, that the

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[22] Homily LXVIII, in Ibid., 14:252.

[23] "Orations," II.105, in Ibid., 7:225.

[24] Letter XLII.3, in Ibid., 8:145.

[25] "Against Eunomius," VII.1, in Ibid., 5:193.

[26] Ibid., VII.2.

[27] *On the Trinity*, IV.28, in Ibid., 9:80.

[28] *Against Nestorius*, IV.IX, in Ibid., 11:579.

[29] *Epistles*, XXVII.1, in Ibid., 6:44.

men by whom the Scripture has been given to us, and committed to writing, did put down in these books anything false. . . . For if you once admit into such a high sanctuary of authority one false statement . . . , there will not be left a single sentence of those books which, if appearing to any one difficult in practice or hard to believe, may not by the same fatal rule be explained away, as a statement in which, intentionally, . . . the author declared what was not true.[30]

Furthermore,

For I confess to your Charity that I have learned to yield this respect and honor only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. And if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to me opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the manuscript is faulty, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it.[31]

Finally, "the authority of the Divine Scriptures becomes unsettled (so that every one may believe what he wishes, and reject what he does not wish) if this be once admitted, that the men by whom these things have been delivered unto us, could in their writings state some things which were not true . . . ."[32] In an age where various religions and philosophies held to sundry cosmologies, Augustine's high view of Scripture resulted in a literal interpretation of biblical events that was unpalatable to some of his cultured contemporaries. Gregg Allison summarizes,

This all-encompassing notion of the truthfulness of Scripture resulted in Augustine affirming the divine creation of the universe out of nothing; the origin of humanity no more than six thousand years before his time; the great age of people who lived before the flood; and the scientific possibility of the worldwide flood and of Noah's ark to save eight people and the animals on board. Clearly, he believed that biblical inerrancy extended to matters of cosmology, human origins, genealogy, and the like. Scripture's infallibility also meant that no contradictions exist in the Bible. Accordingly, Augustine underscored that 'we are bound to believe' everything in Scripture.[33]

To confirm this interpretation of Augustine, Hans Küng describes Augustine's view: "the Spirit alone decided the content and form of the biblical writings, with the result that the whole Bible was free of contradictions, mistakes, and errors, or had to be kept free by harmonizing, allegorizing, or mysticizing. St. Augustine's influence in regard to inspiration and inerrancy prevailed throughout the Middle Ages and right

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[30] Letter XXVIII.3 in Ibid., 1:251–52.

[31] Letter LXXXII.3 in Ibid., 350.

[32] Letter XXVIII.3 in Ibid., 1:252.

[33] *Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2011), 103.

into the modern age."[34] Herman Sasse agrees with Küng's assessment of the influence of Augustine's view of inerrancy on subsequent church history,

> During all these [fifteen] centuries no one doubted that the Bible in its entirety was God's Word, that God was the principal author of the Scriptures, as their human authors had written under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, and that, therefore, these books were free from errors and contradictions, even when this did not seem to be the case. The Middle Ages had inherited this view from the Fathers who had established it in numerous exegetical and apologetical writings.[35]

Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) is famous for his work *Why God Became Man* and for his formulation of the ontological proof for God's existence. In words similar to those of Justin Martyr, Anselm writes, "For I am sure that, if I say anything which is undoubtedly contradictory to Holy Scripture, it is wrong; and, if I become aware of such a contradiction, I do not wish to hold to that opinion."[36] Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), the most significant Western theologian of the Middle Ages, agrees with his predecessors when he asserts, "It is plain that nothing false can ever underlie the literal sense of Holy Writ."[37] Although Aquinas' theology was affected by Aristotelian philosophy, he recognized the unique place of Scripture. He writes, "other disciplines derive their certitude from the natural light of human reason, which can err, whereas theology derives its certitude from the light of the divine knowledge, which cannot be misled."[38] While he exalted the ability of natural human reason, Aquinas was clear that the salvation of man not only depended upon the Bible, but an inerrant Bible. He states, "it was necessary that man should be taught by a divine revelation; because the truth about God, such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors. Whereas man's whole salvation, which is in God, depends upon the knowledge of this truth."[39]

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[34] Hans Küng, *Infallible? An Enquiry* (London: Collins, 1972), 174.

[35] "The Rise of the Dogma of Holy Scripture in the Middle Ages," *Reformed Theological Review* 18:2 (June 1959): 45.

[36] *Why God Became Man*, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 298.

[37] *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*, part. 1, question 1, article 10 (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1948), 7.

[38] Ibid., p1.q1.a5, 3.

[39] Ibid., p1.q1.a1, 1. Even in the time of the Reformation, the Catholic Church held to this doctrine. The famous opponent of Luther in the Leipzig Debate of 1519, John Eck (1486–1543), wrote to Erasmus: "Listen, dear Erasmus: do you suppose any Christian will patiently endure to be told that the evangelists in their Gospels made mistakes? If the authority of Holy Scripture at this point is shaky, can any other passage be free from the suspicion of error?" (*Collected Works of Erasmus*, translated by R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson, vol. 5, *The Correspondence of Erasmus* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976], 289–90).

The Reformation Church

As theological heirs of the Reformation, it is critical that the Reformers' position on inerrancy is understood by contemporary evangelicals. It is no surprise that the Reformation, which was known for *sola scriptura,* would emphasize the power, authority and inerrancy of the Bible. The great German Reformer, Martin Luther (1483–1546), wrote that Scripture "never erred" and "cannot err."[40] Furthermore,

> But everyone, indeed, knows that at times they [the Fathers] have erred as men will; therefore I am ready to trust them only when they prove their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred.[41]

> It is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself, only that it so appears to the senseless and obstinate hypocrites.[42]

> Whoever is so bold that he ventures to accuse God of fraud and deception in a single word and does so willfully again and again after he has been warned and instructed once or twice will likewise certainly venture to accuse God of fraud and deception in all of His words. Therefore it is true, absolutely and without exception, that everything is believed or nothing is believed. The Holy Spirit does not suffer Himself to be separated or divided so that He should teach and cause to be believed one doctrine rightly and another falsely.[43]

> One little point of doctrine means more than heaven and earth, and therefore we cannot suffer to have the least jot thereof violated.[44]

> For it is established by God's Word that God does not lie, nor does His word lie.[45]

This does not mean that Luther ignored difficulties in the Bible, however. In the case of biblical chronologies, Luther writes that he refuses to agree with "those rash men who in the case of a Bible difficulty are not afraid to say that Scripture is evidently wrong; I conclude the matter with a humble confession of my ignorance, for it is only the Holy Ghost who knows and understands everything."[46] Therefore, we can conclude with J. Theodore Mueller, who, in his article "Luther and the Bible," writes,

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[40] *Works of Martin Luther (*St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), XV:1481; XIX:1073.

[41] Ibid., XXXII:11.

[42] Ibid., IX:650

[43] *D. Martin Luthers Werke: kritische Gesammtausgabe* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1928), 54:158.

[44] *Works of Martin Luther*, IX:650

[45] Ibid., XX:798

[46] Ibid., I:721.

"Luther unfailingly asserts the inerrancy of Scripture over against the errancy of human historians and scientists."[47]

John Calvin (1509–1564) is largely recognized as producing the most significant theological representation of the Reformation in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion.* In his sermons and commentaries Calvin is clear that the authors of Scripture "put forward nothing of their own,"[48] and "dared not announce anything of their own, and obediently followed the Spirit as their guide, who ruled in their mouth as in his own sanctuary."[49]

Commenting on Calvin's view of Scripture, J.I. Packer notes, "Calvin could never have consciously entertained the possibility that any mistakes, whether of reporting or of interpreting facts of any sort whatever, could have entered into the text of Scripture as the human writers gave it."[50] Edward Dowey concurs, "To Calvin the theologian an error in Scripture is unthinkable."[51]

Following Calvin, Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) inherited a high view of the Scriptures from his predecessor, Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) in Zürich. He writes, "all the words of God are true, steadfast, and undoubted. For heaven and earth shall pass away, but the eternal word of God shall never perish, nor shall one jot or title fall from it."[52]

In addition to its most famous theologians, the creeds of the Reformation also testify to the importance of inerrancy. Below are a sampling:

> The French Confession of Faith (1559): "And inasmuch as it [the Bible] is the rule of all truth, containing all that is necessary for the service of God and for our salvation, it is not lawful for men, nor even angels, to add to it, to take away from, or to change it." (Article V)

> The Belgic Confession of Faith (1561): "We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing, without any doubt all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts that they are from God, whereof they carry the evidence in themselves." (Article V)

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[47] In *Inspiration & Interpretation*, edited by John Walvoord (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1957), 99.

[48] "Twenty-fourth sermon on 2 Timothy," in *The Deity of Christ and Other Sermons*, trans. Leroy Nixon (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1950), 244.

[49] *Calvin's Commentaries,* volume XXII, 2 Peter 1:20 (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1981) 391.

[50] "John Calvin and the Inerrancy of Holy Scripture," ed. John Hannah in *Inerrancy and the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 178.

[51] *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 104.

[52] "Letter CCCLIII" from 24 August 1554 in *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, volume 2, edited and translated by Hastings Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1847), 750.

The Irish Articles of Religion (1615): "All [Scripture] we acknowledge to be given by the inspiration of God, and in that regard to be of most certain credit and highest authority."[53]

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) follows the terminology used throughout history to support inerrancy. The authors of the confession explain that the Bible is "infallible truth" and that "a Christian believes to be true whatever is revealed in the Word because the authority of God himself speaks therein."[54] This is confirmed by future confessions such as the New Hampshire Baptist Confession (1833), which states that the Bible "has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter."[55]

The Puritans were also completely committed to the inerrancy of Scripture. As one of the most popular theology books of the time, William Ames' (1576–1633) *The Marrow of Sacred Theology* clearly states the case: "Only those could set down the rule of faith and conduct in writing who in that matter were free from all error because of the direct and infallible direction they had from God."[56] As one of the members of the Westminster Assembly, William Whitaker writes, "We cannot but wholly disapprove the opinion of those, who think that the sacred writers have in some places, fallen into mistakes."[57]

John Owen (1616–1683), perhaps the greatest Puritan theologian, followed the church's tradition on the inerrancy of Scripture. He writes,

It is, then, the wisdom of every Christian to inquire upon what account he receives this rule; – why he believes it and submits to it; – whether he be persuaded that it is of God by God himself, or only by man. For if he can find indeed that he receives it upon the authority of God, he may be secure of the truth and sufficiency of it; but if only on that of men, they being liable to mistakes, may lead them into error; and so he can never be sure that what he owns as his rule is indeed the right one, and of God's own prescribing.[58]

Explaining the nature of inspiration, Owen continues, "The word that came unto them was a book which they took *in* and gave *out* without any alteration of one tittle or syllable . . . . The word is come forth unto us from God, without the least mixture or intervenience of any medium obnoxious to fallibility."[59]

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[53] *The Creeds of Christendom*, edited by Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Baker Books), 3:362, 386–87, 527.

[54] Ibid., 602, 630.

[55] Ibid., 742.

[56] *The Marrow of Sacred Theology* (Boston: Pilgrim, 1968), 185.

[57] *Disputation on Holy Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1849), 36–37.

[58] *The Works of John Owen* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1968), 8:497. See also 8:506 and 20:38.

[59] *Works*, 3:144–45.

Owen's rival to the claim of greatest Puritan theologian, Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), was a confirmed follower of the church's traditional belief in inerrancy. In his sermon on 2 Timothy 3:16, Edwards says,

> . . . no man could make such a Book as the Bible . . . . It must be made by wicked men or good men . . . . Wicked men would not make it. Good men could not . . . .
>
> Hence we may learn that all the Scripture says to us is certainly true . . . .
> Consider how much it is worth the while to go often to your Bible to hear the great God Himself speak to you. There you may hear Christ speak. How much better must we think this is than the word of men . . . . Here all is true; nothing false.[60]

John Smith, former professor of philosophy at Yale University, affirms Edwards' position with lament: "The central problem is this: Edwards . . . accepted totally the tradition established by the Reformers with respect to the absolute primacy and authority of the Bible, and he could approach the biblical writings with that conviction of their inerrancy and literal truth which one usually associates with Protestant fundamentalism."[61]

The Modern Church

It was during the Modern Period that critical views of the Bible began to emerge in a significant way. Following the rise of René Descartes' (1596–1650) philosophical rationalism, reason became the chief guide in all matters. Characteristic of this modern project was a rejection of authority (church, Bible), a trust in autonomous reason to determine truth, a quest for certainty, individualism, and optimism about human ability.

It is at this time that Isaac La Peyrere (1592–1676) claimed that the apostle Paul revealed to him that there was a pre-Adamic race that existed more than 50,000 years ago. This had such an impact that Richard Popkin comments, "The whole enterprise of reconciling Scripture and the new science was blown apart by a mad genius, Isaac La Peyrere . . . [who] really set off the warfare between theology and science."[62] Following Peyrere, Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) questions the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and claimed that most of the Old Testament was post-Exilic (*Leviathan* [1651]). Baruch de Spinoza (1632–1677) then posits that the Bible is not a divine book, but a part of nature and subject to its laws (*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* [1670]).

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[60] "2 Tim. iii.16–'All scripture is given by inspiration of God'" in *Selections from the Unpublished Writings of Jonathan Edwards of America*, edited by Rev. Alexander Grosart (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1992), 194–95.

[61] "Jonathan Edwards as Philosophical Theologian" in *Review of Metaphysics* 30 (December 1976), 306.

[62] "Skepticism, Theology, and the Scientific Revolution in the Seventeenth Century," *Problems in the Philosophy of Science*, ed. I. Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (Amssterdam: North Holland Publishing, 1968), 3:18.

The empirical philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) gives a classic statement regarding the elevation of reason over the Scriptures, "Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything. I do not mean, that we must consult reason, and examine whether a proposition revealed from God can be made out by natural principles; and if it cannot, that then we may reject it; but consult it we must, and by it examine if it be a revelation from God or no; and if reason finds it to be revealed from God, reason then declares for it, as much as for any other truth, and makes it one of her dictates."[63] This would quickly affect Christianity as seen by the Christian apologist Joseph Butler (1692–1752) who wrote, "Let reason be kept to: and if any part of the Scripture account of the redemption of the world by Christ can be shown to be really contrary to it, let the Scripture, in the name of God, be given up."[64]

It was this rationalistic philosophy that led to a major movement called Deism. In Deism, God is portrayed as a watchmaker who winds the clock (the world) and then leaves the clock to run by itself. Consequently, if everything is under natural law, there is nothing supernatural in our world: including divine revelation, God becoming man, miracles, prophecy, and the Trinity. They also rejected original sin because they believed in the innate goodness of man to improve himself. For Deists, the purpose behind Christianity was not to believe in Jesus per se, but to maintain a life of true virtue and piety for the improvement of society. So the Bible was for them simply an ethical guidebook. Popular deists were the Scottish philosopher David Hume (1711–76) who strongly attacked biblical miracles. In France were Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) and Voltaire (1694-1778), and in America Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), and Thomas Paine (1737–1809). Thomas Jefferson is famous for the Jeffersonian Bible in which he removed all of the miracles in the Bible. He describes his method of editing the text: "Abstracting what is really [Jesus'] from the rubbish in which it is buried . . . [is like separating] the diamond from the dung hill . . . ."[65] Again, autonomous reason decides what God is allowed to say.

Jean LeClerc (1657–1736) continued the work of Spinoza in rejecting the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch but claimed that a distinction should be made between inspired portions of Scripture with uninspired. To characterize the Modern Period, it is appropriate to cite the words of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804): "Enlightenment is man's exodus from his self-incurred tutelage . . . use the mind without the guidance of another. 'Dare to know' (*sapere aude*)! Have the courage to use your own understanding; this is the motto of the Enlightenment."[66]

Such is the background for the birth of liberalism. The father modern liberalism is known as Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834). He is perhaps the most influential theologian of the 19th century. In 1799 Schleiermacher released one of his most important works, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*. As

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[63] *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London: William Baynes and Son, 1824), 640.

[64] In *The Works of Bishop Butler* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 260.

[65] Thomas Jefferson, letter to William Short from Monticello (October 31, 1819). Quoted in Merrill D. Peterson, ed., *Thomas Jefferson: Writings (*New York: Library of America, 1994), 1430–33.

[66] "An Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment," 58–64 in *What is Enlightenment?: Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), 58.

the title of his book indicates, Schleiermacher's goal was to save Christianity by making it palatable to the rational man. He posits that Christianity is misunderstood—it is not about knowledge and doctrine of the Bible, but about human experience, feeling, and intuition. In his next book, *Christian Faith* (1821), he defined religion as "the feeling of absolute dependence" or "God-consciousness." This is of course radically individualistic, and anti-authoritarian. Consequently, he denied cardinal doctrines such as original sin, the virgin birth, authority of the Bible, the Trinity, the atonement and others. This then would lead to the severe criticism of the Bible by men such as Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860), David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874), Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976), and Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930).

Despite this burgeoning criticism of the Bible, conservative Christians maintained and defended the inerrancy of Scripture. Writing in the time of Descartes, Francis Turretin (1623–1687) states, "The sacred writers were so acted upon and inspired by the Holy Spirit (as to the things themselves and as to the words) as to be kept free from all error and . . . . their writings are truly authentic and divine . . . . The prophets did not fall into mistakes in those things which they wrote as inspired men (*theopneustos*) and as prophets, not even in the smallest particulars; otherwise faith in the whole of Scripture would be rendered doubtful."[67] Writing with similar conviction, John Andrew Quenstedt (1617–1688) notes, "[the prophets and apostles] could in no manner make mistakes in their writing, and no falsification, no error, no danger of error, no untruth obtained or could abstain in their preaching or writing. This was because the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth and the Fountain of all wisdom, and who had as His hand and pen holy writers, cannot deceive or be deceived, neither can He err or have a lapse of memory."[68]

Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), popularly believed to be America's greatest theologian, and a key figure in the First Great Awakening, directly addressed the growing dependence upon reason to attack the Bible. He believed in the "perfection of the Scripture"[69] and as a result preaches, "we learn [that] that rule of interpreting Scripture so much insisted upon by many of late, namely, first to determine by our own reason what is agreeable to the moral perfections of God and then to interpret the Scriptures by them, is an unjust and fallacious one." For Edwards, to do so is "absurd, namely, to make the dictates of our own reason the highest rule in judging of the things of God and to make it a rule to revelation itself." He rejected the theistic rationalism of his day by preaching, "Divine revelation . . . does not go a begging for credit and validity by approbation and applause of our understandings."[70]

Living coterminously with Edwards, John Wesley (1703–1791) was also a great revivalist and an important figure in the establishment of Methodism. He writes, "Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there

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[67] *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr., translated by George Musgrave Giger, 3 volumes in 1 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Press, 1997), 2nd topic, 4th questions, section 5, section 23, 1:62, 69.

[68] *Theologia Didactico Polemica* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), I:112.

[69] *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 13:203.

[70] Richard A. Bailey and Gregory A. Wills, editors, *The Salvation of Souls: Nine Previously Unpublished Sermons on the Call of Ministry and the Gospel by Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 127.

be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth."[71] Affirming the trustworthiness of the Scripture, Wesley continues, "The Scripture, therefore, of the Old and New Testament is a most solid and precious system of divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God; and all together are one entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess."[72]

Moving into the nineteenth century, Princetonians such as Charles Hodge (1797–1878) and Benjamin Warfield (1851–1921) popularized the inerrantist view against liberalism. Concluding that century, perhaps no one has given a more eloquent response to the challenges to inerrancy than the great Baptist preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892):

> I believe that there is no mistake whatever in the original Holy Scriptures from beginning to end. There may be, and there are, mistakes of translation; for translators are not inspired; but even the historical facts are correct. Doubt has been cast upon them here and there, and at times with great show of reason—doubt which it has been impossible to meet for a season; but only give space enough, and search enough, and the stones buried in the earth cry out to confirm each letter of Scripture. Old manuscripts, coins, and inscriptions, are on the side of the Book, and against it there are nothing but theories, and the fact that many an event in history has no other record but that which the Book affords us. The Book has been of late in the furnace of criticism; but much of that furnace has grown cold from the fact that the criticism is beneath contempt. "The words of the Lord are pure words": there is not an error of any sort in the whole compass of them. These words come from him who can make no mistake, and who can have no wish to deceive his creatures. If I did not believe in the infallibility of the Book, I would rather be without it. If I am to judge the Book, it is no judge of me. If I am to sift it, like the heap on the threshing-floor, and lay this aside and only accept that, according to my own judgment, then I have no guidance whatever, unless I have conceit enough to trust to my own heart. The new theory denies infallibility to the words of God, but practically imputes it to the judgments of men; at least, this is all the infallibility which they can get at. I protest that I will rather risk my soul with a guide inspired from heaven, than with the differing leaders who arise from the earth at the call of "modern thought."[73]

Conclusion

This article has shown that the majority of theologians throughout church history have held to the inerrancy of Scripture. R. Laird Harris confirms this when he writes, "It is safe to say that there is no doctrine, except those of the Trinity and the

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[71] *The Journal of John Wesley,* 8 volumes, edited by Nehemiah Curnock (London: The Epworth Press, 1938), 6:117.

[72] "Preface," *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, point 10 accessed at "The Wesley Center Online" on 1 March 2014 (http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/john-wesleys-notes-on-the-bible/preface-to-the-new-testament-notes).

[73] "The Bible Tried and Proved," preached on 5 May 1889. *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 1975), 35:253–64.

deity of Christ, which has been so widely held through the ages of Church history as that of verbal inspiration."[74] Consequently, it must be emphasized that those who posit an errant Bible not only contradict the Scriptures, but also place themselves outside of church tradition. As Gregg Allison writes,

> The church has historically acknowledged that Scripture in its original manuscripts and properly interpreted is completely true and without any error in everything that it affirms, whether that has to do with doctrine, moral conduct, or matters of history, cosmology, geography, and the like. Over time, the church has expressed this conviction by applying a number of terms to the Bible, such as truthful, inerrant, and infallible. No matter what term it used, the church from its outset was united in its belief that the Word of God is true and contains no error. The first significant challenge to this belief did not arise until the seventeenth century.[75]

Acknowledging that the evidence overwhelmingly supports this claim, one may wonder why it is challenged. After his detailed analysis of this topic, John Woodbridge concludes that Rogers' and McKim's scholarship "does little to enhance an open-minded reader's confidence in the reliability of their documentation, or in their manner of doing history."[76] It is evident that historians such as Rogers and McKim have revised history in order to make their theology palatable to mainstream evangelicalism.[77] As a result of these observations, and realizing that the writing of history is an ethical responsibility, Christians should hear the clarion call for careful and honest scholarship.

The battle over the Bible is a struggle worth fighting. Harold Lindsell, once Vice-President of Fuller, and champion of inerrancy, warns us, "Down the road, whether it takes five or fifty years, any institution that departs from belief in an inerrant Scripture will likewise depart from other fundamentals of the faith and at last cease to be evangelical in the historical meaning of that term."[78] Former President of Fuller Seminary, Harold Ockenga, concurs, "The evidence that those who surrender the doctrine of inerrancy inevitably move away from orthodoxy is indisputable."[79] If God has exalted His Word to the extent of His name (Ps 137:2), then defending the truthfulness of Scripture is an extension of defending the honor of God. May the

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[74] *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1969), 72. J.N.D. Kelly concurs, "it goes without saying that the fathers envisaged the whole Bible as inspired. It was not a collection of desperate segments, some of divine origin and others of merely human fabrication . . . . their general view was that Scripture was not only exempt from error but contained nothing that was superfluous" (*Early Christian Doctrines* [New York: HarperCollins, 1978], 61).

[75] *Historical Theology,* 99.

[76] Ibid., 27.

[77] Elsewhere Woodbridge writes, "They wanted to baptize as evangelical the hypothesis that the Bible is infallible for matters of faith and practice but errant in matters of science, history, and the like." "Toward an Evaluation of the Rogers and McKim Proposal," in *Biblical Authority and Conservative Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1997), 62.

[78] *Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1978), 120–21.

[79] Ibid., "Preface," 12.

church universal continue to defend this doctrine of inerrancy as it has been passed down to her by a long line of godly men and women throughout history.

> Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door
> And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
> When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
> Old hammers worn with beating years of time.
> "How many anvils have you had," said I,
> "To wear and batter these hammers so?"
> "Just one," said he; then with a twinkling eye,
> "The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."
> And so, I thought, the anvil of God's Word,
> For ages, skeptics blows have beat upon;
> Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
> The anvil is unharmed–the hammers gone.
> -John Clifford[80]

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[80] New Zealand Herald, volume XXII, issue 7461, 17 October 1885, 3.

REVIEWS

Mitchell Bard. *Death to the Infidels*. New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014. 282 pp. (hardback) $20.35.

Reviewed by Gregory H. Harris, Professor of Bible Exposition.

"Now that the Arab-Israeli conflict is fueled by Muslim hatred of the Jews, what started as a political dispute has transformed into an out-and-out religious war," (from the inside cover), writes American foreign policy analyst Mitchell Bard in *Death to the Infidels*. Throughout his book, Bard argues for and documents that the Arab-Israeli conflict has never been about just who owns the land—which is often portrayed in various news shows and articles as the main problem—but rather how utterly offensive the mere existence of national Israel is to the Muslim world at large. Bard writes in a clear and easy to read style, and supports his findings with more than adequate endnotes that the Muslims have shifted their focus to such an extent that existing side-by-side as separate nations cannot be the goal, but rather the total annihilation of the Jewish people.

Death to The Infidels contains ten chapters. In Chapter One, "Islam and the Jews," Bard traces the history of the mostly strained relationship between the Jews and Muslim over the centuries. In Chapter Two, "Jews Invade the Heart of Islam," Bard writes: "For many Muslims, especially the radicals, the mission of the faithful is to restore Muslim domination. One thorn in their side—or as they commonly refer to it, cancer in the Islamic bode—is the Jewish presence in the Middle East" (15). Bard further traces and documents the historical development of the Jews and the Muslims in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the world events that led to the creation of the modern nation of Israel. Most of the Palestinian Arabs view all that occurred to make the modern state of Israel as *Nakba* (catastrophe), but did not see the situation remaining status quo: "Though many Muslims still had faith that over time they could expel the Zionists, the role of Islam took a temporary backseat in the development of the region as Arab states won their independence from the imperial powers and began to assert more nationalistic goals" (41).

In Chapter Three, "Arab Unity and Disunity," Bard demonstrates how the Muslims were, almost from their beginning, disunited under rival families and factions—Shiites and Sunnis—which continue to this day, and takes the political events up through the importance of 1967 and 1973 in this on-going conflict. Even after such overwhelming defeats, the Arab world at large pined for the unified Arab people.

Chapter Four, "From Terrorists to Jihadists," develops the rise of the PLO, Hezbollah, and Hamas, up to the present day. At the end of the chapter, Bard summarizes:

> The media and diplomats often divide the Muslim world into moderates and radicals, but those involved in the conflict with the Jews would be more accurately described as radical and more radical. The unwillingness to accept a Jewish state in their midst also is a common thread among Islamists and "moderate" Muslims. Yasser Arafat, for example, was often portrayed as a secular leader, but he was not. The Islamists from the more extreme movements may have seen him as an apostate, but Arafat was a Muslim and he was no more willing to accept Jewish sovereignty over Muslim land than the leader of Hamas or Islamic Jihad, and that is one reason why he would never end the conflict with Israel (105–06).

In Chapter Five "The Arab Spring's Transformation in the Islamic Winter," Bard shows how the utter dissatisfaction with much of the Arabic world with their leaders has set the table for the various uprisings due not only to the people's disgust with chronic problems such as poverty or hopelessness, but also with the inept corruption of many of the unelected and unaccountable Arab leaders. Bard writes, "For Israel, the surrounding upheaval has been a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the internal struggles its neighbors are facing have distracted them from Israel and forced the leaders to devote all their attention to pacifying their populations" (124). Yet on the other hand: "Israel is in a far more dangerous situation than in the past several decades. No one knows if or when the Islamic Winter will end. Any one of its neighbors could still fall to radical Islamists. Israel could find itself surrounded by radical regimes who believe that Jews have no business ruling over Muslims and that a Jewish state has no place in the Islamic world. In addition, the greatest existential threat to Israel remains Iran's nuclear program" (125).

Chapter 6, "Iran and Little Satan," traces again the development from ancient times up to the present time (as of the time of the writing of this book, 2014), and also supports the theme that many Arab countries fear Iran obtaining nuclear weapons almost as most as Israel does. Thus, the logical development is Chapter Seven, "The Global Jihad," that includes the influx of Muslims from the Middle East into North Africa and Europe and beyond. Bard also documents that with the rise of anti-Semitism makes it more and more dangerous for Jews to live in the countries where they have previously lived. Even more recent events past the publication of this book have caused more and more Jews to leave their recent homelands and return to Israel to live. In addition to this, the UN has become increasingly more anti-Israel in word and action. Also as part of these developments, "Criticism of Islam is already largely squelched through intimidation, violence and threats of violence. While it's been said that in response to anti-Semitic attacks Jews will talk you to death, Muslims have demonstrated they will actually kill their critics" (187).

Chapter 8, "Jerusalem: Ground Zero of the Conflict," begins, "Anyone who doubts the conflict is rooted in religion need look no further than Jerusalem. Every aspect of the dispute is on display in discussions about Jerusalem. The holy city is the place where all the elements of Middle East conflict intersect: politics, history,

psychology, and geography" (189). "Psychologically, Jews feel that Jerusalem is a source of strength and symbol of their ancient connection to the land of Israel. The Muslims find it unimaginable that Jews should control their holy sites" (ibid.). Bard, as with his other chapters, describes the historical development up to modern times, primarily done with a historian or analyst's eye, of course, and not a religious one. Chapter 9, "Shattered Dreams of Peace: From Camp David's Success to Obama's Fiasco," is a revealing chapter that takes the reader up to (pretty much) the present situation.

Chapter 10, "Can the Islamic-Jewish/Israeli Conflict Be Resolved?" From the analyst Bard's view, things do not bode well for peace at the present time: "These and other polls consistently show a lack of faith on both sides, with Palestinians doubting Israeli sincerity and Israelis convinced that all the Palestinians' demands would not bring about peace. They also display an alarming degree of Palestinian support for violence. Little encouragement can be found in any of these results" (243). Bard further points out that even if Israel were removed from existence as a nation, as most in the Muslim and Gentile world see as the key component for world peace, it still would not eliminate other hostilities such as the Shiite-Sunni rivalry, the Syrian war, and Iran's nuclear program. "Moreover, the disappearance of Israel [the nation] would not satisfy radical Muslims who believe the destruction of Israel and the eradication of the Jews is necessary to satisfy their interpretation of the will of Allah" (244). Further:

> The destruction of Israel is only a small part of the Islamist agenda. As Osama bin Laden and others have emphasized, the grand plan is to reconstruct the glorious Islamic empire, so Israel is just an obstacle on the way to the reconquest of Spain, the rest of Europe, and ultimately, the entire world. The war may be initially most intensely focused on Jews and Israel; however, the Islamic revival is also aimed at the Christian world (245–46).

Bard also documents and supports how utterly wrong many of the leaders in the United States view the Muslim world, and who cannot reason other than Westerners who "refuse to accept the goals and motivations of the terrorists and discount their guiding ideology and theology" (248). The situation is so entrenched and inter-connected that Bard offers this sobering assessment: "Other than a violent clash sometime in the future between Islamists and the West, or the sub-mission of non-Muslims to their 'superiors,' the only hope for an end to the conflict is a reformation of Islam led by Muslims" (251). Further, "For now, Muslim radicals can only terrorize Jews, but can't threaten Israel's existence. The long-term danger facing Jews and Israel is the continued Islamization of Europe and the Middle East combined with the acquisition by Muslim extremists of weapons of mass destruction" (252). Bard additionally asserts: "Peace activists argue that an agreement with the Palestinians will improve Israel's security because Israelis will no longer have to worry about Palestinian terrorists, and other countries in the region will no longer have any reason for antagonism toward Israel. This is naïveté of those who refuse to acknowledge the conflict is rooted in Islam and not politics" (257).

Because of all of the factors stated, plus many others, Israel looks out and finds more and more armed, active enemies surrounding them:

> This is essentially the situation Israel finds itself in since the Islamic Winter began. Israel is almost totally surround by countries that are antagonistic, unstable, heavily armed, and likely to become more dangerous as the upheavals continue and, possibly, escalate. It is a remarkable change from two decades ago, when the region was relatively stable and the prospect for a comprehensive peace became imaginable. Conditions today have reverted back to what they were prior to the 1973 War, when Israel faced enemies from all directions (261).

As part of not only the ongoing stalemate, add to this the mammoth intensifier: "Moreover the transformation to the dispute into an Islamic-Jewish conflict guarantees that radical Muslims will continue to do everything in their power to fulfill their conception of what Allah wants them to do, namely, kill Jews in hope of destroying Israel. From their perspective the current clash is 'nothing less than a continuation of Mohammad's battles with the Jews of Arabia' in the seventh century" (261).

Bard concludes *Death to The Infidels* with this synopsis and dire outlook for the future:

> No one should confuse the Muslim's states' unwillingness [at the time of the book's publication] to engage in a war with Israel as a permanent acceptance of Israel's presence in the Middle East. If the balance of power in the region shifts, and coalition of governments can form with the capability to destroy Israel, it is possible the conflict will intensify. In the short run, most Muslim's states will do the minimum required to satisfy their populations' animosity toward Israel (which the leaders have indoctrinated and stoked); namely, spout pious slogans about the Palestinian cause, sponsor anti-Israeli resolutions at the UN and other international forums, support terrorists, and engage in anti-Semitic rhetoric. It isn't pretty, and it isn't peace, but Israel can survive provided the radicals do not obtain weapons of mass destruction.
>
> Israel and Jews around the world will remain in danger in the long run, however, unless the West recognizes it is in a fight to the death with radical Islam. No permanent accommodation can be reached between Islam and Jews because Muslims believe that Allah is the one true God and that his teachings are the final word for all people. Muslims believe they will triumph over the Jews, even if it takes centuries to do it, and then they will proceed to restore the caliphate and impose their beliefs on the entire world (262).

Death to the Infidels is not a Christian book, but as with all books from historians and/or analysts, I cannot read the book without a biblical perspective. If these are indeed "the last of the last days" and the Tribulation is upon us at some point in the near future, I cannot help but see not only how God sovereignly has brought the world players into position (Heb 1:13), also because of the worldwide attention now taken by the brutal attacks by Muslim jihadists, but brought world attention to this; no one is exempt anywhere in the world; no place is safe to be other than in the will of God. And if the Tribulation is indeed upon us, God certainly has set the stage for the man of lawlessness to sign a strong treaty with the many (Dan 9:24–27), who will bring

in a temporary worldwide peace, restart the sacrifices in the rebuilt Temple of God on the Temple Mount, and who will eventually temporarily reign until the true King returns in glory and takes back what is His.

Victor H. Matthews. *The Cultural World of the Bible: An Illustrated Guide to Manners and Customs*. 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015. xv + 318 pp. (paperback) $26.99.

Reviewed by Mark A. Hassler, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Virginia Beach Theological Seminary.

Previously titled *Manners and Customs in the Bible: An Illustrated Guide to Daily Life in Bible Times*, this contribution constitutes an accessible and useful survey of Bible culture. Matthews serves as the dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs and professor of religious studies at Missouri State University. In 2012 Baker Academic released the second edition of his book, *The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World: An Introduction*. A review of that work appears in the *Journal of Theological Studies* (vol. 66, no. 1).

The current edition includes significantly expanded discussions and pedagogical improvements. Photographs and text boxes appear throughout. One such text box, quoting the "Teachings of Ahiqar," states, "I have hauled sand and carried salt, but nothing is heavier than debt" (123). Following the introduction, five chapters elucidate the manners and customs chronologically, from the "Ancestral Period" (chap. 1) to the "Intertestamental and New Testament Periods" (chap. 5). A glossary, annotated bibliography, and full set of indexes round out the volume.

Bible readers can certainly appreciate Matthews' apt word of caution: "An eagerness to draw conclusions from documents that offer some parallels to biblical narrative can therefore lead to wishful thinking and incorrect interpretations" (4).

Matthews advances some debatable interpretations of the OT. The unrighteous do not experience punishment in Sheol (80, 135). Ezra lived during the reign of Artaxerxes II (179). Ephraim lost "forty-two military units" rather than "forty-two thousand" persons according to Judg 12:6 (65). The biblical narratives employ anachronisms such as camels, the Philistines, the Chaldees, and the city of Dan (17, 22, 41). Camels, he says, merely symbolize Abraham's wealth (34). In recounting the story of David's ascension to kingship, Matthews minimizes Yahweh's role in choosing David. As he explains, "the priests chose a successor they thought they could control" (96).

Furthermore, after Zipporah circumcised her son, she touched the foreskin to Moses' genitals and called Moses "a bridegroom of blood," חֲתַן דָּמִים (41, 89). Then again, perhaps Zipporah touched the foreskin to the boy's feet (or genitals) and called the boy "a kinsmen by bloodshed" (cf. Duane Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel Exegetical Library, 2014, pp. 225–30).

Matthews finds the biblical date of the exodus "problematic" because of the strong Egyptian presence in Canaan during the Eighteenth Dynasty (49). He takes issue with John Garstang's identification of the stratigraphy at Jericho (4–5). And he

identifies the Ai of Joshua 7–8 as Khirbet et-Tell without mentioning the evidence for Khirbet el-Maqatir (52–53).

The author's critical outlook colors the presentation. The ancestral narratives provide little historical value: "These stories are not intended to serve as a history of the time period when Abram and his descendants first settled in Canaan. Instead they provide the basis for theological and traditional precedents" (16). Judges had "large segments of the narrative edited out" (3). The received texts of Scripture betray a "heavily editorialized version of the events" (3). An unidentified source composed the Book of Daniel during the Maccabean Revolt (206).

Matthews aims "to assist students to more effectively read the Bible with the social world of ancient Israel in mind" (11). He provides a clear exposition of the Bible's manners and customs. Readers can find more detail and breadth of material in the four-volume *Dictionary of Daily Life in Biblical and Post-Biblical Antiquity* edited by Edwin Yamauchi and Marvin Wilson (Hendrickson, 2014–). Philip King's and Lawrence Stager's *Life in Biblical Israel* remains the best option for an undergraduate or graduate-level textbook in the area of Bible culture (Westminster John Knox, 2001).

Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent. *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010, 383 pp., $16.12.

Reviewed by Jonathan Moorhead, The Master's Academy International, Brno, Czech Republic.

The primary authors of *Encountering Theology of Mission* are Craig Ott (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) and Stephen J. Strauss (Dallas Theological Seminary). Both men served on the mission field for over twenty years and bring a wealth of experience to this volume. Timothy C. Tennent (president of Asbury Theological Seminary) also contributed the final chapter on the necessity of mission.

Understanding the massive changes in the twentieth century concerning how Christians think of missions, the authors unabashedly state their commitment to the authority of Scripture and evangelical theology. They write, "If our mission practice and passion are based solely on catchy slogans, trendy strategies, or contemporary social scientific discoveries, and not on sound biblical foundations, mission practice will be reduced to pragmatism, enthusiasm, or even political correctness" (xiii).

In the "Introduction," basic terms that set the tone of the book are defined. For example, "mission" is used "broadly to describe all of God's sending activity: God's mission in the world" (cf. 105, 160); "missions" is "*the sending activity of God with the purpose of reconciling to himself and bringing into his kingdom fallen men and women from every people, nation, and tongue*;" and "missionaries" are defined as "people who have been commissioned by the church or a Christian mission agency dedicated explicitly and intentionally to the work of missions" (xv, xvii). In their discussion of foundational aspects of interpretation and theology, the authors approve of a "missional hermeneutic of the Bible, whereby mission becomes the focus of

hermeneutical coherence (xviii)." Furthermore, "Missional theology is concerned with providing an interpretive frame of reference by which we understand the message of scripture and the mission of the church in its entirety" (ibid.).

The authors present three parts to their book, which are composed of thirteen chapters. Part One is "Biblical Foundations of Mission" (six chapters), Part Two is "Motives and Means for Mission" (four chapters), and Part Three is "Mission in Local and Global Context" (three chapters). Part One is largely historical, addressing the mission of God in the Old and New Testaments, and the history of missiological debate primarily through the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. The chapters on the Old and New Testaments were helpful summaries of more in-depth works such as Köstenberger and O'Brien's, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission* (InterVarsity, 2001). Also beneficial are the treatments of the centripetal-centrifugal-centripetal pattern of missions from the Old to New Testament; the Trinitarian basis for mission; a critique of the incarnation model of cultural identification; the conversion only and social approaches to missions; and the doxological focus of missions. In this section it would have been helpful to see a brief review of the main passages of Scripture that are used by apologists of the social approach to missions (see *What is the Mission of the Church?: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* [DeYoung and Gilbert, 2011]).

Although there are benefits of the first section, the reader should be aware that Craig Ott holds to the church as the "new people of God" or "the new Israel" (9). The warrant for this, according to Ott, is that "Israel failed" and thus "forfeited its blessing altogether" (22–23; see also 24, 27, 30, 46, 51, 73, 93). That said, the authors do agree on the premillennial reign of Christ on the earth (29, 34, 86–92). Also, while it is good that the authors understand that "if everything is mission, nothing is mission" (quoting Stephen Neill, 79), and that "ethical obligations, such as being a good citizen or feeding the hungry, by themselves cannot alone rightly be considered the task of missions" (155), the authors create a subcategory of the church that they label "kingdom communities" (156). These kingdom communities "may or may not have the formal elements of organized churches," but must contain the hallmarks of doxology, evangelism and discipleship, and compassion with social concern. With that as a foundation, the authors then state, "*The task of missions is the creation and expansion of kingdom communities among all peoples of the earth*" (ibid.). The concept of kingdom communities is not a biblical category of the church and results in convoluting the true mission of the church in evangelism, the nurture of the saints (which includes training national elders), and church planting.

Section Two evaluates improper (cultural superiority, ecclesial power, pity, asceticism, salvation, adventure, self-realization) and proper (love for God, love for neighbor, obedience to the Great Commission, calling, doxology, eschatology) motives for missionary work, which is helpful for introspective evaluation. Also, the section deals with the role of the local church in its missionary focus, training, sending, and mission endeavors; missions as a biblical vocation for select individuals (as opposed to every Christian as a missionary) that is an imperative until Christ's return (with helpful treatments of the missionary call and comparing the biblical term "apostle" with "missionary"); and spiritual considerations on the mission field such as empowerment by the Spirit, spirit warfare, prayer, signs and wonders, and a critique of movements promoting power encounters, prayer walks, and confronting demons.

Section Three addresses issues of contextualization, comparative religions and the exclusivity of the gospel against postmodernism, pluralism, and inclusivism; the necessity of mission in light of Christian uniqueness; and the reality of eternal hell even for those that have never heard the gospel. The absolute truth and context of Scripture are named as the key components of maintaining a proper view of contextualization so as to avoid syncretism. Through the process of contextualization, as Christians from various cultures interact, the authors explain the benefits of a globalized theology: it "is not 'dumbing down' theology to irreducible minimums shared by all Bible-believing Christians. Rather, it is sharing perspectives on theology, worship, and Christian living and learning so that we *enhance* one another's Christian experience. The result will be a more richly hued, deeply textured theology and practice that can be shared by the universal church around the world" (287).

Consistent with all of the volumes included in the "Encountering Missions" series, *Encountering Theology of Mission* is written by experienced authors in missiology, and includes a glossary of terms, bibliography, helpful online links, sidebars, diagrams, and thought-provoking case studies. The book is conservative in the sphere of evangelical theology, but does lack some critical depth when describing Eastern Orthodoxy (83) and Roman Catholicism (114–15), hermeneutics, and lacks the cultural diversity in research that is promoted by the book. Dispensationalists will be uncomfortable with the replacement theology of Craig Ott, although it does not appear in the chapters by Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent. Also, the concept of "kingdom communities" as a subcategory of the church is unhelpful and can lead to confusion about the mission of the church. Despite these shortcomings, the book is a helpful, conservative, evangelical resource for being aware of the main issues in theology of mission and how to answer common, contemporary questions.

Sean A. Adams and Seth M. Ehorn. *Composite Citations in Antiquity,* volume 1: Jewish, Graeco-Roman, and Early Christian Uses. Library of New Testament Studies. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2015. 209 pp. (hardbound) $120.00.

Reviewed by Brent Belford, Provost & Executive Vice President, Central Baptist Theological Seminary (Minneapolis, MN).

Sean Adams and Seth Ehorn lead a host of scholars interested in looking closely at how ancient authors joined multiple sources together into composite citations. This practice was not only common for New Testament authors who cite the Scriptures. Many other Greek, Roman, and Jewish authors formed composite citations in their writings.

Composite Citations in Antiquity: *Jewish, Graeco-Roman, and Early Christian Uses* is the first of two volumes devoted to composite citations. While this first volume studies an array of *non-canonical authors* from 350 BCE to 150 CE, the future volume will analyze how New Testament authors fused Scripture together in composite citations. Adams and Ehorn state their intent for this study on the first page: "It is the working hypothesis of this volume that by studying the citation technique in

wider compass, one can gain a more incisive understanding of the phenomenon in its own right, but also as it is found in the New Testament."

In the first chapter, Ehorn and Adams lay the groundwork for both volumes. They review the scant scholarly attention previously given to the practice of joining citations before giving attention to the words "composite" and "citation." For their definition of citation, they depend heavily on the criteria previously established by Christopher Stanley and D. A. Koch. Accordingly, readers can detect the presence of a citation by observing any of the following marks: (1) an explicit attribution to an author or speaker, (2) the presence of introductory formula, (3) a noticeable break in the syntax of the author's argument, or (4) that the citation is well-known in antiquity or cited elsewhere by the same author.

Their description of the word "composite," however, demands closer scrutiny. For a citation to be considered composite, three characteristics are required: (1) two or more texts must be fused together into the quotation, (2) no intervening conjunctions can break the syntax of the citation, and (3) the authors must not mention a plurality of sources before or after the citation (3–4). Citations that do not meet these three criteria are rejected.

It is not clear to this reviewer, however, why the second and third criteria are necessary. For instance, why can there be no intervening conjunctions between source texts? Does the presence of a καί or a δέ necessarily break the syntax of a quotation? Should any significant differences be expected between citation chains with intervening conjunctions, chains both some intervening conjunctions, or chains without any intervening conjunctions? Couldn't other textual additions *within* one source text break the syntax of the original quotation as surely as an imposed conjunction between two source texts?

Requiring their third category is even more puzzling. Does it really matter if an author indicates a plurality of sources before or after a composite citation? Is not the mixed citation still composite even when the author informs the reader that the quotations come from various places? Are Ehorn, Adams, and the other contributors only looking at a certain type of composite citation? Perhaps they should add the descriptors "non-transparent" or "non-explicit" to the type of composite citations that they address (e. g., non-transparent, composite citations). In fact many of the earlier works on composite citation did not comment on, demand, or require this criterion for a quotation to be considered composite (cf. Hatch and Johnson; perhaps also Koch). Instead of giving "definitional improvement," Adams and Ehorn might actually narrow this phenomenon further than necessary.

In Chapter 2, Sean Adams looks at over twenty composite citations of Homer found in Greek literature. He organizes these citations not according to author, but according to three broad uses for composite citations. First, sometimes authors use composites to summarize or condense longer sections of material. This allows authors to eliminate material that is irrelevant to their point. Second, authors create new citations to support their line of argumentation. In other words, they take bits of various passages and tie them together to form a new quotation that directly supports their argument. In some of these cases, however, Adams demonstrates that authors embellish details of the text or use citations in ways completely foreign to their meaning in their original texts (e. g., Lucian in *Char.* 14; Heraclitus in *Hom.* 1.5). Third,

authors also fuse texts together to provide literary style and allow them to demonstrate their competency with Homer's writings. Adam's three broad uses form helpful categories for those interested in noticing how authors use composite citations. Further research in this area should build on his three broad uses and probe even deeper to the various ways that authors create or use composites to summarize lengthier texts or the different ways that authors fuse verses together for literary style. Adams concludes this chapter by asking how the use of composite citations became an accepted practice. He suggests that school texts or scholia might have contained composites, but has to reckon with scant existing copies of such texts.

Seth Ehorn surveys Plutarch's literary practices at the beginning of Chapter 3 before specifically discussing Plutarch's use of composite citations. He points out that Plutarch normally uses single quotations in his work, although Ehorn offers comments on eleven composite quotations. Of Plutarch's eleven composite citations, all but one occur in *Moralia*. One further note, however, might be of utmost importance. Ehorn demonstrates Plutarch's reliance on ὑπομνημάτα ("notebooks"; *Mor.* 464f) in his literary production. He concludes, "Plutarch may have utilized notebooks when delivering a speech *and* when composing his texts" (56). These notebooks might have been the source of his composite citations as well.

In Chapter 4, Margaret Williams explores cases of composite citation in elite Roman epistles. She declares that instances of fusion in these letters are extremely rare. She analyzed over one thousand letters and found only three composites. Two composites are found among the letters of Seneca and she finds this entirely fitting since Seneca desires to use citations to confer authority. By fusing quotations together, Seneca "bends his source material to fit his agenda" (70). Seneca was attempting to persuade his reader to submit to his ideas and thus fuses and edits authoritative sources to strengthen his argument. In this way, Williams suggests that Seneca is similar to early Christian writers. She says, "Seneca's letters resemble the writings of early Christians, with whom he shared a determination to convert non-believers. Given that common purpose, it is not surprising that in his epistles we also come across the occasional composite citation. For, like the Christians, Seneca was not above manipulating the evidence if the point he wished to make could thus be strengthened" (73). What is lacking in this chapter, however, is discussion of *any* passage where an early Christian writer embellished source texts or manipulated the evidence to convert someone to his or her opinion. She assumes that this comparison will hold without any evidence from the work of Christian writers themselves.

James Royse works with Philo's composite citations. Although Philo quoted biblical and non-biblical authors extensively, Royse found that Philo only joined scriptural texts. After briefly describing Philo's citation techniques, Royse analyzes four composite citations. Some unique characteristics of these composites are worth mentioning. In one instance, Royse found only one word from a second source text that had been added to the main quotation. In a few other cases, Royse comments on why Philo might have joined the various source texts together. For instance, Royse's work with the composite citation of Exod 6:7 and Lev 26:12 in *Sacr.* 87 is very helpful. He demonstrates that by joining these two texts, Philo is able to quickly combine two notions that are important to his argument. Since neither OT text by itself or in

its greater context could make both points for Philo, he joins the texts to make two points central to his own argument.

In Chapter 6, Jonathan Norton discusses two composite citations in the Damascus Document, yet spends more time questioning the value of determining the explicitness of a reference to a source text. He suggests that the standard hierarchy in explicitness of citations (quotation-allusion-echo) is "neither easy to maintain nor necessarily helpful" (93). His case is strengthened by the occurrence of composite quotations, because they often contain greater degrees of textual emendation and thus bear many of the marks of an allusion. That is, any distinction between quotation and allusion almost disappears when studying composite citations.

Sean Adams and Seth Ehorn co-author a treatment of four composites of Scripture in the LXX Apocrypha in Chapter 7. In their first discussion they give a helpful treatment of 4 Mac 18:18–19. The author of *4 Maccabees* joins Deut 32:39 and 30:20 in this text to support a claim that he is making about life following death. By joining these two texts together, the author is able to provide support for the sequence of life following death that neither of the texts from Deuteronomy could do on their own. While authors might occasionally stockpile texts to support one point in their argument, it appears that they use composites to provide support for two or more interrelated arguments as well.

Garrick Allen surveys three composite citations of Scripture in Jewish Pseudepigraphic works. Of most significance are the following observations. First, Allen suggests that in each case the composites found within the Jewish Pseudepigraphic works were joined together because of verbal or thematic coherence. Furthermore, he suggests that these composites might have been fused together by legally minded scribal experts who assumed the harmonious nature of the Scriptures (152). Second, he declares that the composite nature of the quotations did not necessarily add to the rhetorical effect that the quotation might have upon its readers. Finally, Allen suggests that any attempt to measure how these composites might be received by their original audience is questionable and highly subjective. He writes, "Nevertheless, even if an ideal audience can be reconstructed or a particular community selected, measuring audience responses to these citations is tenuous" (155).

Philippe Bobichon analyzes the composite citations in the extant writings of Justin Martyr (i. e., *Apologies; Dialogue with Trypho*). All of Martyr's composite citations join Scripture together. Bobichon works through many composites found in the writings of Martyr and classifies them in twelve different categories. Although most scholarship criticizes Martyr's "hijacking" of Scripture, Bobichon finds Martyr's composite citations fitting in both their place and function in his argument (181).

In Chapter 10, Martin Albl discusses the relationship between composite citations and the *Testimonia* hypothesis (i. e., the theory that certain Scriptural texts were joined together in collections for apologetic reasons). After briefly tracing the history of the *Testimonia* hypothesis, Albl treats two composites within *The Epistle of Barnabas.* Among his interesting findings, Albl displays how the author did not demonstrate sensitivity to the original contexts of the Scriptural quotations. Further, he suggests that the author "takes no obvious account of the original contexts" and "deliberately suppresses those contexts" (190). Albl also declares that a common core of

quotations is found in the composites of *The Epistle to Barnabas,* the works of Clement, and Irenaeus, and suggests that these authors might have shared a *Testimonia* collection for their composite citations.

In the final chapter, Christopher Stanley summarizes the most important contributions of this volume and suggests ways forward for the study of composite citations. He suggests that contributors to the second volume should pay attention to the frequency and types of composite citations found among the writers of the New Testament. Further observations on the origins and sources of NT composite citations should be considered as well. Finally, further study should offer comments on the way that these NT authors adapt source texts. Ultimately, Stanley wonders if there is anything distinctively Christian in the way NT authors join Scripture (209).

A vast array of scholars has contributed to this study, including noted specialists in relevant areas. Their work in these texts is commendable and interacts well with the original texts. Furthermore, they helpfully analyze the literary techniques of various Second Temple authors, including how those authors adjust source texts for their own letters. Some important questions about composites, however, are yet to be answered. How are the literary or rhetorical methods any different between transparently fused and non-transparently fused citations? And perhaps even more significantly, in what way (if any!) are composite citations different from other citations, whether fused or simple? In other words, can any demonstrable difference in hermeneutical practices, literary methods, or rhetorical effect be observed through a study of composite citations?

Tremper Longman III. *Job*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 491 pp. (hardback) $44.99.

Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Retired Professor of Old Testament.

The commentary series of which this volume is a part targets primarily the needs of "scholars, ministers, seminary students, and Bible study leaders" (11). It includes volumes on Psalms (3 vols. by John Goldingay, 2006–2008), Proverbs (by Longman, 2006), Song of Songs (by Richard S. Hess, 2005), Ecclesiastes (by Craig G. Bartholomew, 2009), and the current volume on Job. Tremper Longman III is the Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies at Westmont College (Santa Barbara, CA) and the editor of this series. He has authored or co-authored more than twenty books, including commentaries on Ecclesiastes (NICOT; Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), Daniel (NIVAC; Zondervan, 1999), the Song of Songs (NICOT, Eerdmans Publishing 2001), Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, Tyndale 2006), and Jeremiah and Lamentations (NIBC; Hendrickson, 2008).

Longman's approach to the book of Job includes a rethinking of the traditional view of its essential unity (26) and historicity (32–33). He treats each topic as a matter of real doubt. As he admits, "It is highly likely, in my opinion, that Job is not a historical person, or at best there was a well-known ancient sufferer named Job, whose life provided the grist for the author to create a scenario where he could reflect on wisdom and suffering" (34). Nowhere does he discuss the use of the unusual term

qesitah for a type of currency in Job 42:11 (found elsewhere only in Gen 33:19 and Josh 24:32), although it is one key piece of evidence for an early dating of both the events and the writing of the book. His only reference to the apparent patriarchal setting for the events occurs in his commentary on 1:1–3 regarding his herds and flocks (80) and on 1:4–5 in relation to his acting as the family priest (81). In both of these, Longman admits that the intended setting, at least, is patriarchal, but fails to offer any explanation as to why the book could not have been written in that same period. When he discusses the mention of the Chaldeans in 1:13–19, he sees them as an indication of a date following the seventh century B.C. (85). A footnote directs readers to his "Authorship and Date" in the introduction for the significance of the Chaldeans to the dating of the book (85, n31). However, the reader can look in vain for any such discussion under "Authorship and Date" (24–27)—perhaps a mere over-sight.

Another area of departure from traditional evangelical interpretation comes in Longman's insistence that the adversary in the prologue cannot be identified as Satan, but as one of the angelic beings in the heavenly court (82). One must wonder if he takes the same view with regard to the adversary of Joshua in Zechariah 3:1–2. Along with many commentators and theologians, Longman mischaracterizes Job's wife as being foolish (89–90). Job had only said that she was "speaking like one of the foolish women" (2:10; Longman's own translation, 77). Speaking "like" and actually being foolish are two different things, if language means anything.

In two key discussions of theological implications, Longman correctly points out that Job's grumbling is like that of the Israelites in the wilderness (106). Job's problem is that he grumbles to others rather than to God Himself (107, 182). The fact that Job accused God of injustice means that God will eventually reprimand him, because "The whole idea of God as unjust is preposterous since God himself defines justice" (183).

Readers approaching the Book of Job too often come with the preconceived idea that it is a book about suffering. Longman takes the same basic path (66–68). However, the book of Job deals with the vindication of God in the midst of life's mystifying troubles. It is more about God's vindication than Job's. That is the major contribution of the book. God will, in the end, prove to be righteous in all He says and does. This reviewer looked for Longman to make this point somewhere in one of his "Theological Implications" sections, but he never did.

Longman argues that Job intentionally used the term "Redeemer" in 19:25 as a reference to Yahweh (260). However, he rejects the idea that Job believes that he will see God (his Redeemer) after his death. Instead, he argues that the peeling off of his skin actually refers to his tremendous suffering and pain (261). Longman rightly sees a progression in Job's thinking about his Redeemer or mediator in 9:32–35; 16:18–22; and 19:23–29 (262–63). He even sees a potential connection to Elihu's speech in 33:23–30, but he takes Elihu's statement as a suggestion that angelic beings do some-times intercede for sufferers (263).

Speaking of Elihu, Longman relies very heavily on the argument that Elihu merely repeats what the other three friends have said, inferring from that observation that Elihu "can safely be ignored" (367). Is his evaluation of Elihu correct? Or, could it be that Elihu was a truly wise man with a true passion for God? Let's remember that Elihu respected his elders (32:4), but did not allow their error to infect him

(32:14). He claimed impartiality (32:21–22), desired Job's justification (33:32), and offered what he described as true wisdom (33:33). The young man declared that his ultimate aim was to justify God and that should also be Job's desire (34:12; 35:10–11; 36:2–3, 22–26). Prior to Elihu's speeches the dialogue had been more anthropocentric than theocentric. God allows him the nearly prophetic privilege of announcing the approaching theophany (37:1–5, 22). It may also be significant to a positive assessment of Elihu that he was excluded both from God's condemnation of Job's friends (42:7–9) and Job's prayer of intercession (42:8-10). Like a herald or a forerunner, Elihu prepares Job for the transition. Job had longed for an audience with his Maker and now he was going to get it. Especially for those of us who are married, one has to wonder what passed through the patriarch's mind when God addressed the matter of Job's obsession with his integrity (40:8)—Job's wife had focused on that very issue at the beginning of his suffering (2:9). She was right, and so was Elihu. There is no solid reason to question the reliability of Elihu's words concerning Job. Casting a jaundiced eye on Elihu seems to cause Longman to misunderstand his words. However, the narrator, Job's wife, Job himself, and God all confirm Elihu's assessment of Job's situation. It would seem logical to also accept what he has to say about the remedy for Job's situation in 33:23–30.

Job 33:23–30 is, at minimum, a very early signal that the redemption of a human being from an ultimate residence in the realm of the unrighteous dead is a superhuman task. The OT provides no evidence whatsoever to indicate that a mere angelic personage can accomplish such a redemptive work either. In fact, according to Psalm 49, only God can provide such a deliverance. Longman comes close to admitting this concept into Job 33:23–30, but ends up going with a mediating angel (388–89).

When it comes to Behemoth (40:15–24) and Leviathan (41:1–34; Heb. 40:25–41:26), Longman bristles at the thought that "so-called young-earth creationists" advocate identifying the creatures with dinosaurs. He insists that the suggestion is "preposterous" and that it is "the result of an overly literalistic reading of Job" (441). He further claims that the co-existence of dinosaurs "is supported by neither science nor the Bible" (444, n60). This actually reveals more about Longman's presuppositions and world view than anything about the identification of what he considers to be imaginary ("not real," 441) creatures. It is unfortunate that he could not approach the topic with an irenic and objective disposition. The first piece of evidence has to be that God created all sea creatures on the fifth day and all land animals on the sixth day prior to His creation of mankind (Gen 1:21, 24)—the dinosaurs must be included among them, since Exodus 20:11 declares very clearly that "in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them" (NASU). This statement is part of the fourth commandment that God Himself spoke and inscribed on stone tablets on Mt. Sinai (Exod 31:18), not what some fallen human author composed. Longman prefers to deny the biblical account of creation and to contradict the Ten Commandments written by God Himself, in order to adopt the opinions of secular scientists as authoritative over the Scriptures.

In spite of a number of issues with regard to Longman's treatment of the book of Job and its interpretation, this volume is worth possessing, reading, and referring to throughout one's study. As with all commentaries, the reader must read with care

as a noble Berean, checking to see whether the commentator is accurate in his exegesis and theological implications.

Alec Motyer. *Psalms by the Day*. Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016. 422 pp. (hardback) $24.99.

Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Retired Professor of Old Testament.

Spending countless hours over the years reading books and writing reviews can make anyone a little cynical: "Another book on the Psalms? Isn't that getting a bit repetitive?" Occasionally the semi-hardened critic finds unexpected pleasure in reading a new volume that addresses anew an old and oft-repeated topic of study. *Psalms by the Day* is that kind of eye-popping, heart-stopping, fresh approach.

J. Alec Motyer, formerly principal of Trinity College, Bristol, England, produced two helpful commentaries on Isaiah: *Isaiah*, TOTC 20 (InterVarsity Press, 2009 reprint) and *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (InterVarsity Press, 1993). In 2001 Christian Focus published Motyer's *Isaiah by the Day*, the precursor to the current volume on Psalms. Motyer's many published works include *The Message of Exodus*, Bible Speaks Today (InterVarsity, 2005), *Look to the Rock: An Old Testament Background to Our Understanding of Christ* (InterVarsity, 1996), and *The Story of the Old Testament: Men with a Message* (Baker Books, 2001). He also co-edited four editions of the *New Bible Commentary* (from Eerdmans Publishing, 1953 to InterVarsity Press, 1994). His ministry in the church has gained him recognition as beloved pastor and Scripture expositor.

Psalms by the Day presents seventy-three days of reading the Psalms in the author's new translation and with his notes. Motyer explains his purpose in this volume: "The aim of this book is not to try to tell you what the Psalms mean, but to try to offer you a few helps towards discovering for yourself what they mean" (9). His translation seeks to preserve word order when it indicates emphasis in the Hebrew. The translation's short lines represent the poetic lines of the Hebrew, as well as causing the reader to slow down in order to give the words "due weight" (9). Most of the time Motyer leaves "and" without identifying some of the usages the conjunction can have in the Hebrew (10). Where the meaning of a noun often becomes adjectival (e.g., "holy mountain" is normally "mountain of holiness"), he deliberately preserves the noun. In order to protect the distinct nature of divine names, he uses "Yahweh" for the Tetragrammaton (*YHWH*). In fact, Motyer spiritedly defends his use of "Yahweh" (10)—a defense with which this reviewer strongly agrees.

Each day's grouping of psalms (e.g., Day 1—Psalms 1–2, Day 2—Psalms 3–7, Day 3—Psalms 8–10, etc.) concludes with a "Pause for Thought" that reviews the major themes and messages of those particular psalms. Motyer provides each psalm with a topical or thematic heading (e.g., "Psalm 1. The Great Decision and its Fruits"; "Psalm 19. Three Voices in Harmony"; "Psalm 67. Put to Rights at Last"). He divides his translation with points of the outline he has determined by examining each psalm's structure. Psalms 1–9, among others, each fit a chiastic (mirror image) structure. Other psalms, however, do not exhibit a chiastic structure (e.g., Psalms 11, 13,

14, 19, etc.). An interesting example of the way Motyer offers further structural observations comes in the first six verses of Psalm 19. He notes the topics of *Space* in verse 1, *Time* in verse 2, *Universality* in verses 3–4b, and "*The sun, the great marker of time and space*" for verse 4c (51). Unfortunately he did not recognize that the sun might mark universality, too.

Throughout his translation, Motyer provides superscript numbers tying the text (and sometimes his titles and outlines) to marginal notes. These notes cover a wide range of insightfully presented information for readers. A few samples cannot do justice to the richness of this treasure trove, but it behooves the reviewer to choose a few of the best notes in an attempt to illustrate their value:

> **Psalm 1:2 (his pleasure),** "Note the emphasis – not an outward obedience (as v. 1) – but on inward realities: 'pleasure', the delight of the will; 'meditates', directing and feeding the mind. Compare Joshua 1:8. Godliness starts on the inside." (11n8)

> **Psalm 9:9 (top-security),** "From *sagabh*, 'to be high, inaccessible', *misgabh* is a place of security, high out of the reach of the foe." (27, n26)

> **Psalm 19:8 (pure),** "Is there a distinction between 'pure' and (verse 9) 'clean'? 'Pure' is used of everything that is as it should be, free of what is questionable (whether in essence or by acquisition), Psalm 24:4; Proverbs 14:4; Song 6:9,10. 'Clean' (from the 'levitical' *tahar*), free of anything that would separate from Yahweh." (52, n12)

> **Psalm 91:9 (Assuredly),** "This half verse is the physical and thematic centre of the psalm. The initial *kiy* (compare 90:4, note 12) is not an explanation ('because') but an affirmation ('assuredly')." (260, n35)

> **Psalm 119:106 (have determined to implement it),** "*qum* is part of covenanting vocabulary. In the Hiphil mode (causative active) it means to implement a previously undertaken covenant obligation (e.g. Genesis 6:18 NKJV 'establish'). Here the intensive active (*piel*), as is customary with stative verbs, has the same meaning. It is a perfect of determination."

Through the variety of his comments, Motyer displays an expansive grasp of revelation in both testaments, as well as a careful attention to the details of the original languages. Superb exegetical and theological insights permeate the pages of this volume. They cause the reader to drill deeply into the text and to ascend the heights to view the biblical landscape as a whole. Motyer explains that Psalm 87 describes "acquiring new citizenship (compare Philippians 3:20), and therefore new possibilities, resources and privileges" (14; see also 243–45). By examining the grammar and contextual uses of "Yahweh of Hosts," our author presents a cogent case for the divine title expressing the unity of God—He is "Hosts," comprising "within himself every potentiality and power" (63, n14).

Sheol, to Motyer, does not consist of the physical grave in the soil, but a "'place' where the dead live on" (40, n20). In that same note he argues that the Old Testament saints possessed a clear understanding of life after death (as revealed in Pss 16:10; 49:14–15; and 73:23, just to mention a few psalm texts). Unfortunately, he missed the opportunity to point his readers to the New Testament's significant explanatory quotations of Psalm 16:10 (Acts 2:24–32 and 13:32–37).

In his notes on Psalms 46–48 (121, n1) Motyer seems to reject the all too common viewpoint that Israel celebrated an annual "enthronement festival." He reasons, instead, that it is "more illuminating to think of them [Pss 46–48] as poetically meditating on 2 Kings 19:35–37, the eleventh hour deliverance of Jerusalem from Sennacherib; . . ." Noting that Psalm 105 begins and ends with reference to Abraham (294, n2). Motyer expounds on the significance of that fact in his "Pause for Thought" (298). Although that half-page exposition fits as well with premillennialist theology, Motyer elsewhere indicates that he adheres to the amillennialist position that dominates English theologians ("Pause for Thought," 14).

Motyer takes the high road regarding the authority, integrity, and inerrancy of Scripture in his treatment of the Psalms. Such a viewpoint shows up in his defense of the seemingly corrupted text of Psalms 9 and 10:

> The evidence suggests that Psalms 9–10 were originally one psalm—a (very) broken alphabetic acrostic. . . . Usually commentators explain such 'irregularities' as errors that have crept into the text in the course of transmission—and even try to correct what is amiss and supply what is lacking (as does NIV, for example, in Psalm 145:13). It is more likely that the broken acrostic is a deliberate literary form, to be explained either because the theme is one which human thought cannot fully comprehend, or (as may be the case in 9–10) to reflect the brokenness, unevenness and unexpectedness of life itself (26–27).

Motyer is not the first biblical scholar to note that apparent brokenness, incoherence, or irregular speech and grammar establishes the authenticity of the text. Such irregularities accurately represent the Scripture writer's emotions and state of mind. David Noel Freedman and Francis I. Andersen made a similar observation regarding the text of Hosea: "God's will to punish and his will to pardon . . . are expressed together in the strongest terms, savage and tender. This gives the speeches a turbulence, a seeming incoherence, in which we reach the limits of language for talking about the goodness and severity of God" (*Hosea*, AYB 24, Yale University Press, 2008, 51–52). However, S. R. Driver in his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (9th ed., Edinburgh, 1913) pointed it out nearly a hundred years earlier:

> Hosea's style seems to be the expression of the emotion which is stirring in his heart: his sensitive soul is full of love and sympathy for his people; and his keen perception of their moral decay, and of the destruction towards which they are hastening, produces in consequence a conflict of emotions, which is reflected in the pathos, and force, and artless rhythm of sighs and sobs, which characterise his prophecy. (305)

Thus, Motyer challenges his readers to maintain a reverence for the text as we have received it, and to be very reluctant to charge the text with corruption or inaccuracy. In other words, the problem too often lies with our own ignorance, not some error in transmission or preservation.

From such profound truth, this reviewer reluctantly draws the reader's attention to something less sublime. The publishers tastefully designed and bound the hardback volume and thoughtfully included a ribbon for marking the reader's personal progress. Motyer intended for the volume to be a devotional. The physical properties of the volume make that a practical reality.

Recognizing the believer's sheer delight in God's pure Word, Motyer suggests that, "If you find any day's allocation more than is manageable, why not spread it over two or more days?" (9). Few volumes have received as enthusiastic a recommendation as this reviewer awards *Psalms by the Day*. Dear readers, obtain it. Read it—slowly. Be satiated by the Scriptures' truth. Put those truths to work in your life (James 1:22). Do not miss out on experiencing first hand the joys of this volume. Motyer provides us with a devotional that transcends what the church has been far too accustomed to adopt.

Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer. *Jerusalem: The Temple Mount*. Jerusalem: Carta, 2015. 160 pp. $12.00 (paper).

Reviewed by Michael A. Grisanti, Professor of Old Testament.

Ritmeyer is a Dutch-born archaeological architect who lived in Jerusalem for 22 years, focusing on various aspects of life in the biblical land of Israel, but has focused on the temple and monumental buildings in Jerusalem. He is best known for his ability to take what archaeologists have found or the Bible describes and creating an image that helpfully portrays that building or item. He has published numerous books that contain his images and explanations. His images have appeared in *National Geographic*, the *ESV Study Bible* and the new GLO Bible study computer program. He has a very helpful blog that deals with issues related to Israel's biblical history (http://www.ritmeyer.com/) as well as a website where he makes his numerous images available for purchase (http://store.ritmeyer.com/). He works with several ongoing archaeological digs to create images for buildings they are uncovering.

In 1998, Ritmeyer published a related book entitled, *Secrets of Jerusalem's Temple Mount*, through the Biblical Archaeology Society, which he updated in 2006. Ritmeyer is well-qualified to write on this subject. His doctoral dissertation at the University of Manchester dealt with "The Architectural Development of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem". The current volume contains several images and explanations that did not appear in his previous published works.

In the preface, the Ritmeyers present the book as a concise guide and explanation of many aspects of the Temple Mount. The current volume involves four chapter, four appendices, as well as a select bibliography, source index, and a general index. Chapter One provides a brief history of the Temple Mount area, from the time there was no temple on Mount Moriah (back to 4000 B.C.) to the modern situation at

the end of the 1990s. The next two chapters describe a walk around the Temple Mount walls and a tour of the Temple Mount Platform. However, it is important to see that those two chapters provide a unique summary of key features of the six distinct areas connected to the Temple Mount. Each route through the six sections involves its own detailed tour map. The section begins with a "Useful information" box and then provides a numbered presentation of important sites.

The first of the four appendices that conclude the volume offers brief but helpful treatments of many of the areas/sections of the Temple Mount with references to relevant Scripture passages as well as passages in the Talmud. The next one describes the varied cisterns and structures located underneath the platform of the Temple Mount. The third appendix provides a description of the Muslim buildings currently on the Temple Mount, while the last appendix involves an enlightening glossary of archaeological and architectural terms that occur in varied published treatments of the Temple Mount and other monumental buildings in NT Jerusalem.

As one who visits Israel regularly, leading trips, this volume provides a treasure trove of information that provides great insight into this part of Jerusalem that played such a key role in Israel's life from the time of Solomon to the time of its destruction in AD 70 by the Romans. Regardless, anyone who wants to understand the history of the Temple Mount and to better understand biblical references to it will profit from this book. Even though some of the sections might be interesting to a narrow section of readers, the superb diagrams, photos, and reconstructions will provide its readers with a much better understanding of the structure that, in many ways, was the center of Israelite life for centuries.
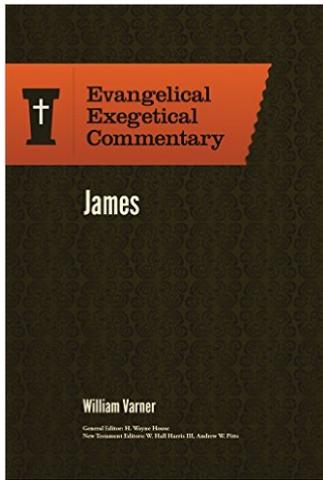
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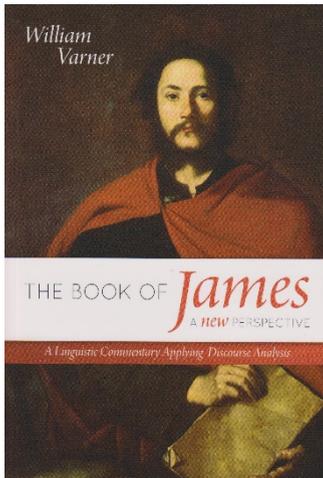
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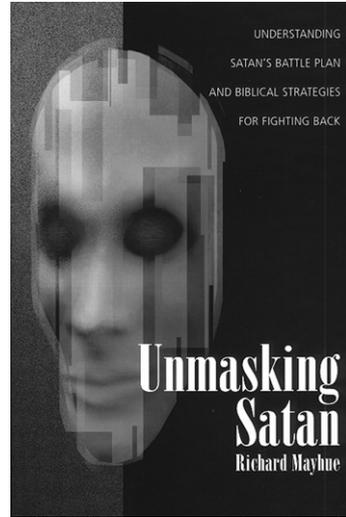
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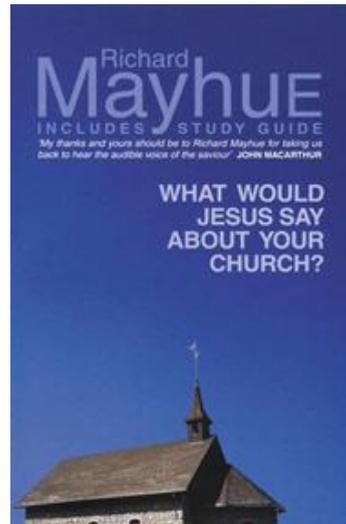
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