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# TWO JUDGMENTS AND FOUR TYPES OF PEOPLE (LUKE 19:11-27)

EDITOR

## I. INTRODUCTION: ONE JUDGMENT, OR TWO?

The doctrine of the last days, eschatology, is closely related to the doctrine of salvation, soteriology. Unfortunately, errors in eschatology often translated into errors in the doctrine of salvation.<sup>1</sup>

For example, it has become common for Evangelical pastors and scholars to speak of *one final judgment* in which all people will be judged to determine whether they receive something they call *final salvation*<sup>2</sup> (or *eschatological salvation*).

John Stott said,

Twice Paul said that he did not “shrink” from his teaching responsibility. He did not “hesitate” (NIV) to declare anything profitable to them (v. 20), the whole counsel (or plan) of God (v. 27). Perhaps these phrases refer to the same thing, since all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable (2 Tim 3:16). What was this “whole purpose of God”? Doubtless it included the great doctrines of creation by God (as Paul unfolded this in Athens), redemption by Christ, and regeneration by the Spirit; the bringing into being of the church; the ethical standards of Christian discipleship; *together with final salvation and final judgment*. Much of contemporary preaching appears very

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<sup>1</sup> See Grant Hawley, “Dispensationalism and Free Grace: Intimately Linked, Parts 1 and 2” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (Spring and Autumn 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Nearly all who use the expression *final salvation* today suggest it refers to receiving the verdict that your works confirm or cause you to be finally justified by Christ at the final judgment. Final salvation is future and it is unknown. That is, you can’t know if you will end up spending eternity with Jesus or with Satan.

thin in contrast to the whole purpose of God Paul unfolded (*italics added*).<sup>3</sup>

A. W. Pink wrote,

Though the perfect life of Christ must not be exalted to the exclusion of His atoning death, neither must it be omitted as the believer's model. If it be true that no attempt to imitate Christ can obtain a sinner's acceptance with God, *it is equally true that the emulating of Him is imperatively necessary and absolutely essential in order to the saints' preservation and final salvation* [emphasis added]. "Every man is bound to the imitation of Christ under penalty of forfeiting his claim to Christ. The necessity of this imitation convincingly appears from the established order of salvation, which is fixed and unalterable. Now conformity to Christ is the established method in which God will bring many souls to glory. *For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren*' [emphasis his] (Rom. 8:29). The same God who hath predestinated men to salvation, hath in order thereto, predestinated them unto conformity to Christ, and this order of heaven is never to be reversed. We may as well think to be saved without Christ, as to be saved without conformity to Christ" (John Flavel).<sup>4</sup>

In an article entitled, "The Perseverance of the Saints: A History of the Doctrine," J. J. Davis, in a section entitled, "Perseverance in Recent Scholarship," says:

I. Howard Marshall has written a major treatment from a Wesleyan perspective. Marshall's work examines the OT and Jewish background and then in seven chapters discusses the relevant NT passages. He concludes that "while it is possible for a Christian to

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<sup>3</sup> John R. W. Stott, "Christian Ministry in the 21st Century, Part 4: Ideals of Pastoral Ministry" *Bibliotheca Sacra* (Jan 1989), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Walkington Pink, *Eternal Security* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2005), 75.

fail to persevere after a genuine experience of salvation...*the main emphasis of the New Testament is on confidence and assurance of final salvation*" (emphasis added) [*Kept by the Power of God: A Study of Perseverance and Falling Away* (London: Epworth, 1969), 207]. The NT, he says, knows neither the "rigid logic of Calvinism" nor the "casualness of Arminianism" but "teaches us to put our trust in God" (p. 207).<sup>5</sup>

Commenting on 1 Pet 1:5 and the phrase "kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," John MacArthur writes,

That is a rich statement, guaranteeing the consummation of every believer's eternal salvation. The phrase, "a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time," speaks of *full and final salvation* [italics added]—from the curse of the law, the power and presence of sin, all decay, every stain of iniquity, all temptation, all grief, all pain, all death, all punishment, all judgment, and all wrath. God has begun this work in Christians already, and He will thoroughly complete it (cf. Phil 1:6).<sup>6</sup>

MacArthur continues,

Furthermore, Christians are protected *through faith* (italics his). Continued faith in Christ is the instrument of God's sustaining work. God did not save Christians apart from faith, and He does not keep them apart from faith. Our faith is God's gift, and through His protecting power He preserves it and nurtures it. The maintenance of a Christian's faith is as much His work as every other aspect of salvation. Faith is kindled and driven and maintained and fortified by God's grace.

But to say that faith is God's gracious gift, which He maintains, is not to say that faith

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<sup>5</sup> J. J. Davis, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society Volume 34, 2* (Lynchburg, VA: The Evangelical Theological Society, 1991): 226-27.

<sup>6</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Master's Seminary Journal Volume 4, 1* (Sun Valley, CA: The Master's Seminary, 1993): 16-17.

operates apart from the human will. It is the faith *of Christians*. They believe. They remain steadfast. They are not passive in the process. *The means by which God maintains their faith involves their full participation* (emphasis added). They cannot persevere apart from faith, only *through* faith (italics his).<sup>7</sup>

According to most Evangelical teachers today, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Bema, is another name for the Great White Throne Judgment. The idea that there is one judgment for believers and a separate judgment for unbelievers is rejected by most Evangelicals today.

Why would anyone consider it good news that our final destiny is unknown to us and that it will be determined on the basis of how our works stack up at some final judgment? It's amazing to me that so many people who believe in a coming final judgment to determine their eternal destiny, both Calvinists and Arminians, manage to keep hope alive that they will get a good report concerning their works.

This sort of theology is certainly not well suited for perfectionists or other overly sensitive people. In fact, it isn't well suited for anyone. This is the doctrine of the Judaizers of Galatians, not the doctrine of the Lord and His apostles.

Michael Horton, himself a proponent of a mild form of Lordship Salvation,<sup>8</sup> nonetheless criticizes those within Lordship Salvation who place what he considers to be too much emphasis on self-examination. While discussing the antinomian controversy, Horton writes,

In America, however, Cotton found a lethargic populace regularly scourged with threats and calls to excessive self-examination. Despairing of ever attaining assurance of God's favor, many of the people gave up entirely, and New England fell into quite a secular period. Again the lesson was demonstrated: legalism produces antinomianism.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, *Christ the Lord: The Reformation and Lordship Salvation*, Michael Horton, Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), esp. 15-57, 146-47.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 143-144.

A few pages later, after quoting Cotton, Horton adds,

In other words, if my faith is too weak to have full assurance based on an unconditional promise, how on earth can I expect to get any better handle on my assurance by turning inward and taking inventory?<sup>10</sup>

## II. WHY USE THE PARABLE OF THE MINAS TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION?

Many texts in Scripture could be used to address the question of one judgment or two. However, most of them require comparing that text with other texts. By comparing multiple texts, the argument can be made.

For example, we could discuss texts like 2 Cor 5:9-10 and Rom 14:10-12 that discuss the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Bema. Then we could compare those texts with others like 1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Tim 2:12; 4:6-8; and Rev 2:26, which indicate that ruling with Christ is only for believers who endure in the faith. Then we'd have to look at other texts, like Rev 20:1-10, that teach the millennial kingdom. Putting it all together we could show that the Bema is before the Millennium and the Great White Throne is after the Millennium (as Rev 20:11-15 follows Rev 20:1-10).

The beauty of Luke 19:11-27 is that we don't need to go to other texts to answer our question. This one text, all by itself, shows that there are two separate judgments, one for believers and one later, for unbelievers. We go to other texts to confirm and complete<sup>11</sup> our understanding, but those other texts are not needed to prove the point.

In this parable, the Lord Jesus discusses two groups of people at two separate judgments. Jesus' servants will be judged first. The result of this judgment (the Judgment Seat of Christ) will

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>11</sup> This parable does not discuss details like the length of time between the two judgments (1,000 years, 2 Cor 5:9-10; Rev 20:11-15), the condition of being Jesus' servants (believing in Him, John 3:16; 8:30-32) and of being His enemies (not believing in Him, John 1:11; 8:33-59), what His servants were to do (confess Him, Matt 10:32; and, of course, serve Him in all areas of life), and what the wicked servant failed to do (endure in his confession of Christ, Matt 10:33; 2 Tim 2:12).

be that praise and rewards are given or withheld.<sup>12</sup> Jesus' enemies will be judged last. The result of that judgment (the Great White Throne Judgment) will be that the enemies are slain, that is, excluded from Jesus' kingdom altogether.

Luke 19:11-27 is a key passage dealing with the accountability of Christians.

### III. JUDGMENT ONE: THE JUDGMENT OF JESUS' SERVANTS LUKE 19:16-26

The parable begins with the Lord talking about two groups, His citizens who hated Him and didn't want Him to rule over them, and His servants whom He entrusted with money and said, "Do business till I come" (Luke 19:13-14).

Clearly the citizens who hated Him represent unbelieving Israel, and more broadly, all unbelievers.

Equally clear is that His servants are a separate group.

Without going into the outcome of the judgment of the three servants at this time, we can see initially that the servants are judged first.

The judgment of the servants is discussed in vv 16-26. The second judgment, the judgment of His citizens who hated Him and didn't want Him to rule over them, occurred at some time after the judgment and is discussed in v 27.

That the three servants are servants is clear both from the introduction to the parable in vv 11-15 and from the fact that the first and third servants are specifically called *servants* by the Lord at the judgment.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For further discussion of the Judgment Seat of Christ, see Earl D. Radmacher, "Believers and the Bema," *JOTGES* (Spring 1995): 31-43; Bob Wilkin, "The Biblical Distinction Between Eternal Salvation and Eternal Rewards," *JOTGES* (Spring 1996): 15-24; Zane C. Hodges, "We Believe in Rewards," *JOTGES* (Autumn 1991): 3-11.

<sup>13</sup> Even so, most commentators, as we shall see, understand the third servant to be an unbeliever who is cast into the lake of fire after this judgment.



## **IV. JUDGMENT TWO: THE JUDGMENT OF JESUS' CITIZENS WHO HATED HIM LUKE 19:27**

When the Lord says, “But bring here those enemies of mine” (v 27), three things are clear. First, the enemies of Jesus are not His servants. This is a separate group (note the adversative, *but*). Second, the enemies were not present in the judgment of the servants. These people *must be brought to the Lord* for their judgment to take place. Third, the judgment of the enemies occurs chronologically *after* the judgment of the servants. Now we cannot tell from the parable itself whether the time gap between the two judgments is a matter of minutes, days, months, years, or what. But we know from other Scripture that the judgment of the servants occurs before the Millennium (cf. 1 John 2:28) and the judgment of His enemies occurs 1000 years later, after the Millennium (cf. Rev 20:11-15).

## **V. THE RESULT OF EACH JUDGMENT**

### **A. THE SERVANTS RECEIVE DEGREES OF RULERSHIP IN JESUS' KINGDOM**

*Servant One: Wholehearted Faithfulness Results in Maximum Rulership (vv 15-17).* The first servant gives a very humble report: “Master, your mina has earned ten minas” (Luke 19:16). He does not boast that he had turned the one mina into ten minas. He recognizes that what he has was given to him by his Lord and he is just reporting on his stewardship.

Absent any other information, we see this as a very good result. This is a ten-fold return on investment. In fact, as the parable unfolds, we see that our suspicion is correct. This is the best result of the three servants discussed.

Every Christian can and should be like this first servant (2 Pet 1:3). We can all maximize our lives for Christ (1 Cor 9:24-27).

The Lord’s response to this first servant is wonderful: “Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17). Faithful service

in this life will result in a position of authority in the Lord's coming kingdom. In this case the man will be given rulership over ten cities.

Because the first servant is the most faithful of those studied, his reward is also the greatest. He is given twice as many cities to rule over than the second servant.

It should be noted that the rewards mentioned are service rewards.<sup>14</sup> This is the same sort of reward as we see after Presidential campaigns. After his election, the new President begins to appoint the members of his administration, including his cabinet and foreign ambassadors. These appointments are rewards for work during for the President during the campaign.

*Servant Two: Halfhearted Faithfulness Results in Half Rulership (vv 18-19).* The second servant too is humble: "Master, you mina has earned five minas" (Luke 19:18). Since we've just heard that the first servant earned ten minas by his investing, we realize that the second servant was half-hearted in his service.

Like the first servant, he had received one mina. Thus we wonder what the second servant will hear from his Lord. Will he be rebuked? While the man was faithful, he was far from the ideal servant.

The second servant doesn't hear "Well done, good servant" and he doesn't get ten cities to rule over. Yet the second servant does get in and does rule. The Lord tells him, "You also be over five cities" (Luke 19:19). There is no praise and there is no rebuke.

The reward is proportional to his return on investment. He brought a five-fold return on what the Lord gave him; hence he gets authority over five cities in the life to come. He will not have as great an opportunity to serve as he could have. But he will still have a significant position of rulership in the coming kingdom.

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<sup>14</sup> Other rewards are mentioned in the Book of Revelation, including the right to eat of the fruits of the tree of life and the hidden manna, a secret white stone with a special name engraved, special white garments, the right to enter the New Jerusalem by its gates, and an exalted name. While these rewards are certainly beneficial to the recipient, they all seem to enhance the person's ability to serve and glorify Christ.

Some commentators suggest that the missing “Well done, good servant” is not significant. They think the Lord left that off to save space.<sup>15</sup>

However, what of the fact that one will rule over *ten cities* and the other only over *five cities*? Clearly the second servant gets half the authority in the life to come.

When we compare this parable with the Parable of the Talents in Matt 25:14-30, the contrast between the first two servants is even clearer. In the Parable of the Talents the Lord gave “each to his own ability.” The first servant received 2.5 times as much as the second servant: five versus two talents. Both servants doubled the sum given to them. Both servants received identical commendation, unlike in the Parable of the Minas.

In Luke 19:11-27 all of the servants received the same sum, one mina. This suggests that unlike the Parable of the Talents, we are looking at a group of servants who had equal time, talent, treasure, and truth to invest. The first servant shows what was possible for all of them: ten minas. The second servant only gained five, hence he only received five cities to rule over.

Clearly the first two servants show that the Lord holds us accountable for what we do over the course of our entire Christian life, and that our reward will be commensurate with our productivity. Now this is still based on His grace, for apart from His grace, we can do nothing.

I am encouraged greatly by the fact that even if the Lord finds that I was not wholehearted in my service, I can still reign with Christ. Now I long for his “Well done, good servant.” But it’s good to know that ruling with Christ is not all or nothing. Actually there is a huge allowance for failure here.

*Servant Three: Unfaithfulness Results in No Rulership (vv 20-26).* Here is where most interpreters badly misinterpret this parable.

Since many people can’t conceive of a wicked servant as spending eternity with the Lord and His people, they conclude this servant must represent an unbeliever and then they try to make that fit the particulars of the parable.

John Martin, says of the third servant, for example,

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<sup>15</sup> Bock says, “Jesus really only needs two figures to make his point that some are faithful and ‘others’ are not” (Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 2: 9:51-24:53* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], p. 1537).

He was not at all concerned about the king's return so he did not bother with the king's business. Matthew related that the third servant was thrown out of the kingdom (Matt. 25:30). This indicates that this servant really belonged to the group of people who did want the king to reign over them (Luke 19:14).<sup>16</sup>

While surely well intentioned, Martin has ended up turning the passage on its head.

There is plenty of evidence that the third servant is a believer and that he will spend eternity with the Lord.

First, the third servant is one of Jesus' servants. He was given a stewardship by Christ. He had the potential of ruling with Christ in the life to come. Unbelievers are not given a stewardship and unbelievers have no possibility of ruling with Christ in the life to come (unless and until they cease to be unbelievers).

Second, the third servant is not one of those citizens who hated Him and didn't want Him reigning over them. Verse 27 shows that he is distinguished from that group.

Third, v 27 indicates that the citizens who hated Jesus were slain. In light of Rev 20:14-15, that refers to the second death, which is being sent to the lake of fire. More discussion of that point is given in the next section. However, since the third servant is not part of that group, he was not slain. He was not sent to the lake of fire.

In his commentary on Luke, Leon Morris comments,

The story finishes on a note of frightening severity. Those who rejected the nobleman and sent their embassy after him (14) are not forgotten. Safely installed in the kingdom and with accounts with his trading partners finalized, the nobleman commands the destruction of those he calls plainly *these enemies of mine*. They have set themselves in opposition to him; they must take the consequences.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> John Martin, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, New Testament Edition, s.v., "Luke" (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983): 253.

<sup>17</sup> Leon Morris, *Luke*, Revised Edition, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 302.

Note that he implies that *all* of Jesus' servants are "safely installed in the kingdom" with Him. He does not consign the third servant to the category of enemies of Jesus.

Even clearer is the discussion by Marvin Pate in his commentary on Luke:

Even though the action taken toward the disobedient servant was severe (even as it will be on Judgment Day for the unfaithful Christian), there is no hint in the text that the salvation of the faithless servant of the Lord was in jeopardy. Not so for the enemies of the nobleman, i.e., Christ, according to v. 27. The strong adversative "however" (*plēn*) seems to contrast the punishment of the unprofitable servant with that of the master's enemies (cf. v. 14) who did not want him to rule over them.<sup>18</sup>

Pate then makes the suggestion that the slaying of the enemies "probably had two focuses—historical and eschatological." He explains,

Historically, Jesus' enemies (i.e., the Jewish people who crucified Him) were indeed destroyed by the Roman army at the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (cf. Luke 21:6, 20-24; 23:28-31). Eschatologically, Jesus' enemies, those who reject Him, will be consumed at His return (cf. Luke 21:25-27; 22:66-70; cf. Rev. 19).<sup>19</sup>

Of course, many take the opposite position. One line of support is that taken by Martin. They go to the related Parable of the Talents in Matt 24:14-30 and argue that since the third servant in that parable was cast into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, that means the third servant here is sent to the lake of fire. Indeed, Martin doesn't even say what the Parable of the Talents actually says. He says, "Matthew related that the third servant was thrown out of the kingdom (Matt. 25:30)."<sup>20</sup> But Matthew did not say

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<sup>18</sup> C. Marvin Pate, *Luke*, Moody Gospel Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 358.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Martin, "Luke," 253.

that at all. That is Martin's interpretation, without discussion or even mention of the outer darkness in Matt 25:30.

Space does not permit an extended discussion of that parable or the issue of the outer darkness.<sup>21</sup> However, the expression *the outer darkness* only occurs three times in the NT, all three times in Matthew. And the evidence is overwhelming that this refers to the darkness outside the well-lit banquet hall. This is a figure of speech for missing out on the joys associated with ruling with Christ.<sup>22</sup> While weeping and gnashing of teeth is associated with the lake of fire, it is not some technical expression that only applies to people there. It is an expression of grief.

Huber shows that scholars are not united in understanding weeping and gnashing of teeth as indicating those mentioned are eternally condemned, providing citations from Eduard Schweizer and Karl Heinrich Rengsdorf.<sup>23</sup> Huber then adds,

The usage of both of these descriptive terms in the OT and the NT verifies that they should be interpreted at face value as simply cultural and emotional terms with no theological significance inherently attached. What is crucial is whether or not believers are said to be the subjects of these terms. In Acts 20:37 (mentioned at the outset of this article) the term for weeping (*klauthmos*) is used to describe the sorrow of the Ephesian elders because of Paul's imminent departure from them. The Septuagint has a host of similar uses. This word is used in reference to Joseph in Gen 45:2; 46:29; it is used of the Israelites who wept over Moses' death (Deut 34:8); Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:3); of Job (16:1; 30:31); of David in Psalm 6:8 (appropriated by Jesus Himself in Matt 7:23 and Luke 13:27).

Examples of the phrase "gnashing of teeth" are considerably more rare. However, Job does use it as a description of God's anger toward him in 16:10. It is clear again that this term is not used

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<sup>21</sup> For a thorough discussion of *the outer darkness* see Michael G. Huber, "The 'Outer Darkness' in Matthew and Its Relation to Grace," *JOTGES* (Autumn 1992): 11-25.

<sup>22</sup> See Gregory P. Sapaugh, "A Call to the Wedding Celebration: An Exposition of Matthew 22:1-14," *JOTGES* (Spring 1992): 11-34.

<sup>23</sup> Huber, "The 'Outer Darkness,'" 20-21.

strictly for those suffering in hell. By using the deductive method commentators have assumed this phrase to refer to hell and have gone on from there to interpret the passage. This should not be done. This phrase should be interpreted from the *context*. In Matt 22:1-14 it has been determined from the details of the context that, for the premillennialist in particular, the “outer darkness” is not symbolic of hell. Neither, therefore, is the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” descriptive in this passage of one suffering in hell. This phrase again fits into the cultural background.<sup>24</sup>

We know that some believers at the Bema will experience shame (1 John 2:28). Such people will experience emotional pain. However, that pain will surely be short lived. It is inconceivable that people in glorified bodies would grieve more than a few minutes or hours, even over a big loss like this.

Besides, this whole exercise of turning from the Parable of the Minas to the Parable of the Talents is a reversal of the analogy of faith. That hermeneutical principle says we start with clear texts and then understand the unclear in light of the clear.<sup>25</sup> It is widely agreed that Matt 25:14-30 is a tough text. Luke 19:11-27 is easily seen as a much easier passage to understand. Thus we ought to understand the third servant in Matt 25:14-30 in light of the third servant in Luke 19:11-27, and not the other way around.

Clearly we are dealing with three possible outcomes *for believers*, with a whole range implied between these as well.

## **B. THE ENEMIES ARE SLAIN (THE SECOND DEATH)**

This is not an evangelistic passage. So the Lord doesn't go over what a person must do to be born again. He expects the listener/reader to know the message of John 3:16.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 21, italics his.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, H. Wayne Johnson, “The ‘Analogy of Faith’ and Exegetical Methodology: A Preliminary Discussion of Relationships,” *JETS* (March 1988): 70. He says, “Obscure passages are to be interpreted by other clear and parallel passages in the Scriptures.” Johnson warns, however, that there is a subjective nature of the application of the analogy of faith (p. 80) and hence careful exegesis must be done in the use of this principle.

Clearly these citizens who hate him represent unbelievers, specifically unbelieving Jews, which is why they are called *citizens*. Of course the application extends to all unbelievers.

The issue is not Jesus ruling over their personal lives here and now,<sup>26</sup> it is Jesus ruling over them as Messianic King in the life to come after He returns. These Jews didn't believe He was the Messiah King and hence they didn't want Him to rule over them in the life to come.

Note that these people were not present at the judgment of the servants at the Bema. Jesus says, "But bring here those enemies of mine..." (v 27). Though details are not given, there is a 1000 year gap between verses 26 and 27. This is common in prophetic literature. For example, Zech 9:9 talks about Jesus' triumphal entry in His first coming and the very next verse, Zech 9:10, talks about His dominion in His Second Coming, which we now know is at least 2000 years later.

While details aren't given, *slaying* suggests eternal separation from the kingdom of Jesus, called the second death in Rev 20:14. They didn't want to be in His kingdom, and they will get their wish.

Revelation 20:11-15 gives more details than this verse gives. There we learn the full nature of their judgment. Implied is that their works (the books) are judged to determine their degree of suffering in the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:15 shows that they are not condemned because of their works, but because of their unbelief. While that is not stated in Luke 19:11-27, it is implied. After all, the third servant did not have any return on what the Lord gave him to invest, yet he is not slain.<sup>27</sup> In terms of good works, there seems to be

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<sup>26</sup>I am not aware of any Lordship Salvation proponent who, in an effort to prove Lordship Salvation, has used this statement about the enemies not wanting Jesus to reign over them. I suppose the reason it is rarely if ever so used is because the context so clearly is dealing with the coming kingdom, not with submission to Christ in this life. In addition, this would actually be a tough text for people with Lordship Salvation since the third servant, the unfaithful one, is not in the group that is slain in v 27. Rather than try to explain why the unfaithful person is called a servant and is judged with the servants and not with the enemies, they evidently go elsewhere for proofs of their position.

<sup>27</sup>*The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995) says concerning v 27, "The punishment of those who rebelled and actively opposed the king (v. 14) was much more severe than that of the negligent servant" (p. 1575). Previously *The NIV Study Bible* said concerning



little difference between the third servant and the citizens who hated Jesus. The reason why the third servant is not slain and the citizens are slain is belief in the Lord Jesus, though that is not stated directly.

## **VI. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHETHER THERE ARE TWO JUDGMENTS OR ONE?**

The practical difference is huge. It is a difference between assurance and non-assurance, between clarity in evangelism and non-clarity in evangelism, and between being properly motivated to serve God and improperly motivated to serve Him.

People who say that there is one judgment, not two, teach the following:

- There is a *final judgment* coming.
- At this final judgment everyone's works will be judged.
- The purpose of the judgment of everyone's works is to determine who gets *final salvation* and who does not.
- The warnings in Scripture about final judgment and final salvation are the means God uses to motivate believers to persevere in faith and good works.
- No one can be sure whether he will gain final salvation.
- God wants believers to fear hell.
- When we evangelize, we need to avoid giving people assurance based on their profession of faith in Christ.
- We are to tell people that only "true believers" will gain final salvation and that "true believers" are those who persevere in faith and good works until the end of their lives.
- Pastors should regularly warn their flocks that they may be false professors and that they must persevere if they are to be obtain final salvation.
- The call to discipleship is the call to everlasting life.
- One cannot believe in Jesus as Savior without also submitting to Him as Lord.

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the third servant, "those who neglect or squander what is given to them will become impoverished, losing even what they have" (p. 1575).

- The Judgment Seat of Christ is not a place where rewards are given out. It is a place where eternal destinies are determined.
- The Judgment Seat of Christ is another name for the Great White Throne Judgment.
- All believers will rule with Christ. There is no such thing as believers who will miss out on ruling with Him.
- There will be no degrees of rewards in the kingdom. Every believer will have the same fullness of life forever.
- Saving faith is not persuasion. That is *intellectual assent*.
- Saving faith is submission to Christ. Saving faith is active, obedient, and persevering.
- False assurance is assurance which is not grounded at least in part in our works.
- False assurance is assurance that is solely based on our faith in Christ.
- Faith without works cannot save anyone from hell. A lifetime of works must be added to faith in order to obtain final salvation.

The Free Grace position argues that there is no final judgment, no final justification, and no final salvation—unless by *final salvation* we mean what a person receives at the very moment of faith in Christ.

The Free Grace view hinges on two separate judgments. One cannot consistently be Free Grace and believe that there is only one judgment, final judgment where the destiny of people is determined by examining their works.

One can, of course, be Free Grace without knowing about the Bema or the Great White Throne Judgment.<sup>28</sup> But one cannot

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<sup>28</sup>Probably very few people at the moment of faith in Christ had even heard specifically about the Judgment Seat of Christ or of the Great White Throne Judgment. While the concept of *the final judgment* is probably something many if not most unbelievers have heard, even that concept is not universally known among unbelievers. Children in particular often do not have a conception of some judgment of their works to determine their eternal destinies. Thus some people, like Cornelius and his family in Acts 10 or the woman at the well in John 4, are quite open to believing in Jesus for the promise of everlasting life without hearing first an explanation of the two judgments. Of course, I see no reason why we could not explain the two judgments to unbelievers when evangelizing them if the issue comes up. For those already confused about this point, explaining the purpose of the two judgments could clear their confusion.

be Free Grace and believe in final salvation that is either by works or that is confirmed by works.

The concepts of final judgment and final salvation are antithetical to the Free Grace position. Jesus promised that the one who believes in Him “shall not come into judgment” (John 5:24). The context there concerns everlasting life. There is no future judgment regarding everlasting life for the believer. His eternal destiny is set.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Do you enjoy hearing someone tell you that you did well in a task?

The most important “Well done” we will ever hear will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ from the lips of Jesus. It isn’t guaranteed, but it is worth living for.

In the summer of 1982 I asked Dr. Charles Ryrie if he would preach my ordination service. He agreed to come and do it.

In the course of the conversation I told him how much I enjoyed preaching every week these past 4 months. His response has always stuck with me: “Bob, I’m glad you have preached God’s Word faithfully these past four months. I hope, however, that you will still be able to say that 40 years from now.”

While eternal life is received the moment we believe in Christ and is secure forever, approval is only received by putting our faith to work and approval can be lost.

Now the challenge is this, be faithful in the use of your time, talent, and treasure. Marcia Hornok pointed out to me recently that there is a fourth “T,” truth. Be faithful to apply and to teach the truth you’ve been given. The expression “to whom much is given, from him much will be required” (Luke 12:48) applies to our time, talent, treasure, and the truth God has entrusted to us.

Our aim should be to maintain a standing of full approval. We want to maximize our lives for Christ so that we will hear those blessed words, “Well done, good servant. Rule over 10 cities.”

The two judgments are the Bema, before the Millennium, where believers will be judged to determine their degree of reward in the kingdom, and the Great White Throne Judgment,

after the Millennium, where unbelievers will be judged to determine their degree of suffering in the lake of fire.

The four types of people are the good servants, the half-hearted servants, the wicked servants, and the unbelievers who aren't His servants at all. Good servants will rule with Christ fully. Half-hearted servants will rule with Him in a more limited way. Wicked servants won't rule with Christ at all, though they will be with Him forever. Unbelievers will experience the second death and will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

The idea put forward by Lordship Salvation and works salvation that the Free Grace position promotes sin or is against the commands of God is ludicrous. The Free Grace position opposes sin and promotes holiness and perseverance. The difference is, the Free Grace position actually works.

# **DISPENSATIONALISM AND FREE GRACE: INTIMATELY LINKED, PART 3**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the first article of this series, I advanced the position that proponents of Lordship Salvation have considered normative Dispensationalism to be the root cause of Free Grace Theology (which they view as an aberration). In the second, I showed how certain anti-Dispensational views have led proponents of Lordship Salvation to abandon literal hermeneutics with respect to key passages in the debate over soteriology. My goal was to contend for the point that Lordship Salvation cannot be consistently maintained without departing from certain key aspects of Dispensationalism. In this final article, I will turn the focus onto Dispensationalism itself and the soteriology which it bore—namely, Free Grace. My hope is to demonstrate first the historical linkage<sup>1</sup> between the two, second the theological linkage, and third, to offer some practical applications for those who hold to both Dispensationalism and Free Grace.

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<sup>1</sup> Many Dispensational distinctives were held by the early church fathers, and some aspects can be found in Protestant writers as far back as the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, this article will be limited to the discussion of Dispensationalism after it was formerly systematized by J.N. Darby (around 1828).

## II. DISPENSATIONALISM AND FREE GRACE: HISTORICALLY LINKED

John MacArthur has argued that Free Grace theology finds its roots in Lewis Sperry Chafer's Dispensationalism.<sup>2</sup> It is fair to say that Chafer, with the founding of Dallas Theological Seminary and with the writing of *He That Is Spiritual*,<sup>3</sup> *Grace: An Exposition of God's Marvelous Gift*,<sup>4</sup> and his *Systematic Theology*,<sup>5</sup> had a profound impact on the development of Free Grace theology. It is also true, however, that as Dispensationalism predates him in English and American theology, so does Free Grace. Because this topic could fill volumes, and because space is limited, the Free Grace writings of the early Dispensationalists will be only briefly surveyed.

Dispensationalism arose from Calvinistic theologians. The Brethren Dispensationalists such as J. N. Darby, C. H. Mackintosh, and William Kelley, and the Presbyterian and Congregationalist Dispensationalists such as James Hall Brookes, C. I. Scofield, and L. S. Chafer were all Calvinists of a sort, though the idea of Limited Atonement was not apparently held by any of them. Despite this, they did not entirely break from Calvinism and all held to a soft view of the Perseverance of the Saints, namely, that all true believers would have at least some change and works in their lives.

But in addition to Dispensationalism itself, two significant developments came through these Dispensational Calvinists.

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<sup>2</sup>“Who are the defenders of no-lordship dispensationalism? Nearly all of them stand in a tradition that has its roots in the teaching of Lewis Sperry Chafer. I will show in Appendix 2 that Dr. Chafer is the father of modern no-lordship teaching. Every prominent figure on the no-lordship side descends from Dr. Chafer's spiritual lineage. Though Dr. Chafer did not invent or originate any of the key elements of no-lordship teaching, he codified the system of dispensationalism on which all contemporary no-lordship doctrine is founded. That system is the common link between those who attempt to defend no-lordship doctrine on theological grounds.” John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to the Apostles*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000), p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He That Is Spiritual* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1918, 1967, 1983).

<sup>4</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Grace: An Exposition of God's Marvelous Gift* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1922, 1972).

<sup>5</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948).

First, they brought to the forefront doctrines other than soteriology (especially eschatology and ecclesiology). Second, they adamantly warned against looking to works for assurance.<sup>6</sup>

### A. BRINGING TO THE FOREFRONT DOCTRINES OTHER THAN SOTERIOLOGY

Regarding the first point, C. H. Mackintosh's short essay, "Calvinism and Arminianism: One Sided Theology" is representative of the Dispensational sentiment of his day. In it he argues that while he believes the five points of Calvinism to be true, they by no means consist of the whole counsel of God. He writes:

We believe these five points, so far as they go;<sup>7</sup> but they are very far indeed from containing the faith of God's elect. There are wide fields of divine revelation which this stunted and one-

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<sup>6</sup> Regarding this latter point, it has been noted by many that John Calvin also taught assurance apart from works. However, due to the combination of his doctrine of Perseverance with double predestination and Federal Theology, this concept fell away in Calvinistic circles shortly after Calvin. That one could have assurance based upon the promises of Christ alone without examination of his or her works was largely (there were a few exceptions) absent from theological discourse in the 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. By contrast, Dispensationalist teachers vigorously argued that assurance based upon the promises of Christ alone was essential to the Christian life. For the early roots of the view that assurance comes through careful consideration of one's works, see R.T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), and M. Charles Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of Assurance* (Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1985).

<sup>7</sup> Later in the same article Mackintosh seems to repudiate Limited Atonement. In addition, in an essay entitled, "God For Us," he wrote, "When we have from the lips of our blessed Lord Himself, the eternal Son of God, such words as these, 'God so loved *the world*,' we have no ground whatever for questioning their application to each and all who come under the comprehensive word 'world.' Before any one can prove that the free love of God does not apply to him, he must first prove that he does not form a part of the world, but that he belongs to some other sphere of being. If indeed our Lord had said, 'God so loved a certain portion of the world,' call it what you please, then verily it would be absolutely necessary to prove that we belong to that particular portion or class, ere we could attempt to apply His words to ourselves. If He had said that God so loved the predestinated, the elect, or the called, then we must seek to know our place amongst the number of such, before we can take home to ourselves the precious assurance of the love of God, as proved by the gift of His Son. But our Lord used no such qualifying clause." *The Mackintosh Treasury: Miscellaneous Writings by C.H. Mackintosh* (Sunbury, PA: Believers Bookshelf Inc., 1999), 607. Emphasis his. Clearly, Mackintosh rejected Limited Atonement.

sided system does not touch upon, or even hint at, in the most remote manner. Where do we find the heavenly calling? Where, the precious sanctifying hope of the coming of Christ to receive His people to Himself? Where have we the grand scope of prophecy opened to the vision of our souls, in that which is so pompously styled “the faith of God’s elect”?<sup>8</sup>

Mackintosh further observes that obsession with the doctrines of Calvinism (or with Arminianism for that matter) leads to a stunted spirituality:

Nothing is more damaging to the truth of God, more withering to the soul, or more subversive of all spiritual growth and progress than mere theology, high or low—Calvinistic or Arminian. It is impossible for the soul to make progress beyond the boundaries of the system to which it is attached. If I am taught to regard “the five points” as “the faith of God’s elect,” I shall not think of looking beyond them; and then a most glorious field of heavenly truth is shut out from the vision of my soul. I am stunted, narrowed, one-sided; and I am in danger of getting into that hard, dry state of soul which results from being occupied with mere points of doctrine instead of with Christ.<sup>9</sup>

While Mackintosh is not directly commenting on Covenant Theology’s soteriological view of history, the fact that he had broken free from it gave him the perspective to properly place soteriology in its rightful place as one of many glorious doctrines expressed in Scripture. As I argued in Part 2 of this series, this lays the foundation for rightly interpreting large portions of the Bible as non-soteriological and paves the way for distinguishing justification from sanctification and the free gift from reward.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 605.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> This last point was the cornerstone of Robert Govett’s (1813-1901) ministry and continued with those whom he influenced, including D. M. Panton, Watchman Nee, and G. H. Lang. Likewise, Chafer did devote some pages to discussion of the Bema in *Systematic Theology*, vol. III, 307-309, vol. IV, 396, 404-406, and vol VII, 296. However, the Judgment Seat of Christ to determine reward was somewhat absent from the Plymouth Brethren and



## B. ASSURANCE WITHOUT INTROSPECTION

In sharp contrast to the non-Dispensationalists, the belief that assurance should be found in looking to Christ and His promises alone and never to works was nearly universally held among the early Dispensationalists. And some of them argued vigorously for it. Some extended quotes are necessary to demonstrate how forcefully these Dispensationalists expounded this belief.

Darby presented faith and the peace (assurance) which it brings as properly resting on God's word, not on experience:

In real communion the conscience must be purged; there can be no communion if the soul be not at peace. We read here, "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." There is very frequently the confounding of what faith produces with what faith rests upon. Faith always rests upon God's estimate of the blood of Jesus as He has revealed it in His word: faith rests on no experience.<sup>11</sup>

Mackintosh takes this further, arguing that looking to works for assurance is not even Christianity:

The Spirit of God never leads any one to build upon His work as the ground of peace, but only upon the finished work of Christ, and the unchangeable word of God; and we may rest assured that the more simply we rest on these the more settled our peace will be, and the clearer our evidences, the brighter our frames, the happier our feelings, the richer our experiences.

In short, the more we look away from self and all its belongings, and rest in Christ, on the clear authority of scripture, the more spiritually minded we shall be; and the inspired apostle tells us that "to be spiritually minded (or, the minding

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Presbyterian Dispensationalists, and did not become heavily influential in mainstream American Free Grace Theology until Zane Hodges. See below.

<sup>11</sup>J. N. Darby, "No More Conscience of Sins." Available online at <http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/darby/EVANGEL/12018E.html>. Last accessed March 1, 2012. See also Darby, "The True Grace of God in Which You Stand," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (Autumn, 1995): 69-73.

of the Spirit) is life and peace.” The best evidence of a spiritual mind is child-like repose in Christ and His word. The clearest proof of an unspiritual mind is self-occupation. It is a poor affair to be trafficking in *our* evidences, or *our* anything. It looks like piety, but it leads away from Christ—away from scripture—away from God; and this is not piety, or faith, or Christianity.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, from the earliest days of systematized Dispensationalism, a Free Grace view of assurance was already strongly represented and had near universal acceptance. This is continued by Dispensationalists even today.

James Hall Brookes, who has been called the “father of American dispensationalism,”<sup>13</sup> makes perhaps an even more robust defense of the freeness of eternal life and assurance through Christ’s promises alone. His work, *Salvation: The Way Made Plain*, devotes 362 pages to the topic<sup>14</sup> (the rest of the book expresses the impossibility of man earning salvation through works) and argues for the believer’s right to absolute assurance apart from works from many different angles. For example:

It is my earnest desire and effort to turn your thoughts entirely away from yourself to the Saviour, for it is the most melancholy business that can engage even a redeemed sinner to be probing into his own soul to find some assurance

<sup>12</sup> Mackintosh, “The Christian: His Position and His Work,” *The Mackintosh Treasury*, 670, emphasis his.

<sup>13</sup> “Perhaps the father of American dispensationalism was James Brookes... Brookes wrote the book *Maranatha*, which achieved wide distribution as it popularized a dispensational view of prophecy... Perhaps Brookes will best be remembered as the one who introduced C.I. Scofield to Dispensationalism shortly after his conversion.” Thomas Ice, “A Short History of Dispensationalism, Part III” *Dispensational Distinctives* (May-Jun 1991), 1. Scofield said of Brookes, “During the last twenty years of his life Dr. Brookes was perhaps my most intimate friend, and *to him I am indebted more than to all other men in the world for the establishment of my faith.*” Ernest Sandeen, *The Origins of Fundamentalism* Historical Series no. 10 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1968), 223. As quoted by Larry Crutchfield *The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc.) 17. Italics supplied by Crutchfield.

<sup>14</sup> James Hall Brookes, *Salvation: The Way Made Plain* (Philadelphia: American Sunday-School Union, 1871), 123-484. Available online at <http://books.google.com/books?id=aRgHAAAAQAAJ&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>. Last accessed Mar 1, 2012.

that he is saved. You can never find it there, but only in the word; and, thank God! having once seen it in the word, you can see it every day and every hour, and as often as you read and believe what Jesus says. Nor is this assurance the privilege exclusively of ministers or of a favoured few who have made higher attainments in holiness than the common crowd can ever hope to reach, but it is the privilege of every one without exception who believes the testimony of God's word addressed alike to all.<sup>15</sup>

Illustrating the distinctiveness of the Dispensational position on this issue, Brookes commented on the profound difference between the lack of assurance that was prevalent in his day and what he saw in the New Testament:

[T]here is abundant proof that [the believers to whom the NT epistles were written] were strangers to the fear and uncertainty that make up the gloomy experience of at least nine-tenths of the people of God in modern times. Whoever they were, whatever they had been, wherever they lived, they had an assurance of salvation which must have formed at once an unfailing fountain of joy to their hearts and an effective instrument for achieving an easy victory over the world.<sup>16</sup>

Examples such as these could be multiplied in this work. Likewise, other early Dispensationalists, Robert Govett, C. I. Scofield,<sup>17</sup> D. M. Panton, and to a lesser extent, William Kelly, shared this view. The near uniformity on this issue among Dispensationalists is especially noteworthy because Dispensationalism spread as a grassroots movement, mostly in

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 445.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 283.

<sup>17</sup> Space does not permit a proper treatment of the significance of the *Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909), but it should be noted that it was instrumental in the grassroots rise of Dispensationalism and was for many the first exposure to the sharp distinction between law and grace (see note on John 1:17), the idea that James 2:14-26 was discussing justification before men (see note on Jas 2:24), and the idea that the Sermon on the Mount was a manifesto for the Messianic Kingdom intended in primary application to the Jews (see note on Matt 5:2).

independent churches, and without a top-down structure. Even those who might be styled leaders of the movement, rather than developing creeds and confessions, implored everyone to look only to Scripture to determine truth. For example, Darby said:

This is what I would press and urge upon every one: to apply themselves, for themselves, to the testimony of Scripture, to draw ideas simply and directly from this (and I can assure them, they will ever find them sanctifying ideas) but trust no man's mind, whether millenarian or amillenarian.<sup>18</sup>

Historically, Dispensationalism has been essentially Free Grace from the beginning. The scope of this article does not permit laying out the soteriology of the popular non-Dispensationalists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to show the contrast between it and the soteriology of these Dispensationalists. However, even a brief survey of the theological works of the time would reveal a sharp contrast to what you have seen above. In the midst of legalistic gloom, Dispensationalism provided a floodlight of grace and assurance to all who had eyes to see.

Chafer did not alone revive Free Grace theology. He merely picked up where the Dispensationalists before him had left off and increased its popularity through his writings and the establishment of DTS.

The view expressed above by Mackintosh and Brookes that assurance is the foundation of a holy walk was also the cornerstone of Chafer's teaching on the spiritual life. For example, in the first lesson of his series of lectures on the Christian Life addressed to DTS students, Chafer said:

Now honestly look into your heart. Has that been the motive in your Christian life, that you have lived the best you could because you were set right, or did you live the best you could hoping to be set right? There is a world of difference between those two things. I am sure that you don't need for me to multiply words here. But that is the difference right on the basis of it of

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<sup>18</sup> J. N. Darby, "Reflections Upon The Prophetic Inquiry and The Views Advanced in It" *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Prophetic* No. 1, Vol 2. Available online at <http://www.plymouthbrethren.org/article/11495>. Last accessed Mar 1, 2012.

law and grace and you're not under law because law in that system cannot apply or cannot enter into your relation to God at the present time. You would be insulting Him. You can see, I'm sure, you'd be insulting Him to immediately try to put yourself on an earn basis and as you put yourself there to say, "well I'll add something to what God has done" and what He has done is to give me the perfection. I am perfect in it forever in the one sacrifice of Christ. I *am* that. Now I *am* that.<sup>19</sup>

This concept is presented as foundational to the whole series of lectures.

Dallas Theological Seminary, founded by Dr. Chafer, was the alma mater of Charles Ryrie, Zane Hodges, Earl Radmacher, Bob Wilkin and others who have led the Free Grace movement, and who have consistently and powerfully expounded and defended Free Grace from a Dispensational perspective.

### III. DISPENSATIONALISM AND FREE GRACE: THEOLOGICALLY LINKED

The connection between Dispensationalism and Free Grace is not merely historical, it is theological as well. In the following section I lay out a few of these connections, though space does not permit a full treatment of all related issues. My hope is that these connections will be explored further by those who are more capable of doing so.

#### A. PURPOSE FOR NATIONAL ISRAEL

What does God do with His children who are stiff necked and rebellious? Does His holiness demand they be cast aside, or does His great integrity ensure that His promises stand firm, despite the rebellion of His people? The way we answer this question profoundly influences our views of God, of grace, and the security of the believer. With respect to Israel, Dispensationalists and non-Dispensationalists cannot offer the same answer to this question. Dispensationalists, taking a consistent literal view of

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<sup>19</sup>Lewis Sperry Chafer. 1948. "The Spiritual Life, Lesson 1," Lectures on the Spiritual Life. MP3 file. <http://raystedman.org/mp3/4321.mp3> [accessed January 5, 2012]. Italics mark verbal emphasis.

Scripture, view God as faithful to His promises to Israel despite their disobedience while non-Dispensationalists allegorize these promises and view God as casting national Israel aside to be replaced by the Church.

After the first four centuries of the Church, and prior to the systemization of Dispensationalism by John Nelson Darby (around 1828), Christendom almost universally believed that God had cast aside national Israel, visiting upon them all of the curses of the Mosaic Covenant. Likewise they reserved in their minds all of the blessings of the Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New Covenants exclusively for the Church. This is still the case for non-Dispensationalists today.

As Bell states, Covenant (or Federal) Theology casts its overarching idea of the Covenant of Grace in a light of conditionality:

In this covenant, God promised eternal life to the elect on the condition of acting faith in Jesus Christ (...) By inserting the element of conditionality into the arena of grace, the Federalists frequently distorted the nature of grace and faith. In the covenantal theology, grace too often ceased to be the unconditional expression of God's love for his people, and became, in the mercantile language of the Federalists, a commodity purchased by man in God's marketplace.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, in their view, man purchased and maintained covenantal relationship through active (working) faith.<sup>21</sup> This seems to be the natural result of the view that God has abandoned Israel despite His promises to them. If failure to persevere in obedience released God from His promises to Israel, why not also the ones made to the individual believer? In the view of Covenant Theology, both are related to the same "covenant of grace," so if one is breakable, so must the other be.

By contrast, the Dispensationalist sees several covenants of a different nature. The Mosaic Covenant *was* wholly conditional

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<sup>20</sup> Bell, *Scottish Calvinism*, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Calvinists avoid the charge of salvation through human merit by seeing the initial repentant faith as a gift, and perseverance in faith and works as guaranteed by God to all the elect. But this does not lessen the fact that in this system these are conditions which need to be met in order to fulfill one's end of the covenant and if anyone does not meet these conditions they will be damned.

(more on this below). Under it, Israel was promised blessing for obedience and cursing if they were disobedient. The Mosaic Covenant was breakable and indeed was broken. But, the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants<sup>22</sup> are guaranteed by God's faithfulness alone and cannot be broken. In the forging of the Abrahamic Covenant, God alone passed between the hewn animals demonstrating that He alone is responsible for seeing that it comes to pass (Gen 15:8-17). The Davidic and New Covenants, which further refine the Abrahamic,<sup>23</sup> are no less breakable.

Because of this understanding of the covenants, Dispensationalists see that despite Israel's disobedience, God has not entirely cast them aside, and that He still has a plan for their national redemption upon Christ's return. While the Church is grafted into Abraham's blessing, it does not supplant Israel and God will not under any circumstances allow His covenant to fail (see Ps 89:20-37; Jer 33:19-20; Ezekiel 37).

One can easily see that this very naturally supports the Free Grace position. On the front end, faith (active or otherwise) is not a means by which we purchase a covenant relationship; it is merely the channel by which God imparts the free gift of everlasting life.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, the security of the believer echoes God's dealings with Israel in the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants, in that those who have received everlasting life by faith are entirely in God's hands and their security is not in any way dependent upon their perseverance. God's faithfulness

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<sup>22</sup>To this could be added the Peace Covenant (Ezek 34:25-30), but this covenant it not mentioned often in Scripture and is almost entirely absent from the Dispensational literature on covenants. For this reason, the discussion will be limited to the other covenants.

<sup>23</sup>Also related to the Abrahamic Covenant is what is sometimes called *the Land Covenant*, described in Deut 29:1-30:20. While Israel will indeed be restored to the land promised in the Abrahamic Covenant (Ezek 37:1-25; Jer 33:19-26), I do not see this passage as expressing a separate covenant. Instead, it is a part of the blessings and curses of the Mosaic Covenant described in Deuteronomy 27-30, which states that Israel will be restored to the land after dispersion if they return to the Lord, see especially Deut 30:1-3.

<sup>24</sup>By contrast, Lordship Salvation proponents echo the language of the early Federalists when they speak of saving faith as something we exchange or trade with God for everlasting life. It is not difficult to see that the argument which says Free Grace makes it too easy is nonsensical if faith is not something which is traded for everlasting life.

alone secures Israel's future; and His faithfulness alone ensures the security of eternal life for those who believe in Jesus. "If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim 2:13).

## B. MOSAIC LAW AND THE CHRISTIAN

Everything in the Mosaic Law is conditioned upon works of obedience. This is plainly declared in Lev 18:5, "You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD" (see also Deuteronomy 28).<sup>25</sup> The Apostle Paul picks up on this and expresses the contrast between works-righteousness through the Law on the one hand and imputed righteousness through faith on the other in Gal 3:1-14 and elsewhere.

As discussed in the previous article, Dispensationalism alone is able to consistently maintain the distinction between grace and the Law and failing to do so introduces an element of conditionality into the relationship between the Savior and the Christian. However, in keeping the Church distinct from Israel and the Mosaic Dispensation separate from the Dispensation of Grace, the Dispensationalist is able to decisively and finally sever the ties between the Christian and the Mosaic Law as emphatically asserted by the Apostle Paul (Rom 6:14; 7:4-6; 2 Cor 3:3-18; Gal 2:16-3:25; 4:4-5; Eph 2:14-16; Col 2:11-23, etc.). This was the case among Dispensationalists from the very beginning. Commenting on Romans 7, Darby writes: "...we cannot be at the same time under the law and with Christ risen. This would be to have two husbands at once."<sup>26</sup>

McClain sums up the Dispensationalist position on the believer's freedom from the Law in justification, sanctification, and preservation:

In Romans 3:20 we read that "by the deeds of the law...shall no flesh be justified in his sight."  
And in this text the Holy Spirit seems to broaden sweepingly the exclusion of all deeds of the law

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<sup>25</sup> To avoid confusion, I must point out that the Law was never able to give Christ's life (Gal 3:21), and that justification never could be through the Law (Rom 3:19-20). This was simply not the Law's purpose.

<sup>26</sup> J. N. Darby, "Deliverance from Under the Law, as Stated in the Holy Scriptures." Available online at <http://www.stempublishing.com/authors/darby/DOCTRINE/07007G.html>. Last accessed Feb, 5 2012.



from the divine act in the justification of sinners. There are no definite articles. The Greek text reads simply “by deeds of law.” Again in Romans 6:14 the Scripture declares not only that the law as law has absolutely nothing to contribute in the accomplishment of the believer’s sanctification, but on the contrary that freedom from the law’s bondage is actually one indispensable factor in that important work of God in the soul. Still further, when Paul comes to deal with the matter of Christian security in Romans 8, he asserts that the law has no power to keep us in safety, but “what the law could not do” in this regard, God sent His Son to accomplish for us and also in us (Rom 8:3-4). Thus we see that the law can neither justify, sanctify nor preserve us.<sup>27</sup>

Dispensationalism not only sees the principles of law and grace as mutually exclusive (as means of obtaining the same thing), it sees them as *destructive* to one another. For example, Chafer writes:

The principles of law and grace are mutually destructive, and doctrinal confusion follows the intrusion of any legal principle into the reign of grace. When law is thus intruded, not only is the clear responsibility of the believer under grace obscured, but the priceless attitude of God in grace, which He purchased at the infinite cost of the death of His Son, is wholly misrepresented.<sup>28</sup>

To bring in the Law as a condition for sanctification does not necessarily wipe out justification by faith apart from works entirely, but when it is coupled with the trading and purchasing concept of faith found in Covenant Theology, keeping the Law becomes a condition for so-called “final salvation.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, by

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<sup>27</sup> Alva J. McClain, *Law and Grace: A Study of New Testament Concepts as They Relate to the Christian Life*, (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1954, 1967), 44-45.

<sup>28</sup> L. S. Chafer, *Grace: The Glorious Theme* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1922, 1950), 233. Regarding the law of Christ, see Hawley, “Dispensationalism and Free Grace: Intimately Linked, Part 1,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (Spring 2011): 66, n. 5.

<sup>29</sup> This unbiblical term is becoming more common in theological discourse and seems to be the logical result of Lordship Salvation.

helping the interpreter to avoid the pitfall of mixing law and grace, Dispensationalism again naturally leads the interpreter to Free Grace.

### C. JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Of course, there *is* an element of conditionality (though, not the Mosaic Law) found in Scripture primarily addressed to Christians (see, for example: John 15:1-6; Rom 8:17; 1 Cor 3:11-15; Phil 2:12; 2 Pet 1:5-11). This conditionality is not, however, associated with justification or with a so-called “final salvation.” It is related first to experiencing fellowship with God (John 14:21; 1 John 1:7). Secondly, we find it in connection with the Judgment Seat of Christ where believers will be rewarded according to their works. The Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10) as distinct from the Great White Throne Judgment of Rev 20:11-15 is a concept that is unique to Dispensationalism.

When the Judgment Seat of Christ became a primary doctrine early in the development of Dispensationalism through British Dispensationalist Robert Govett, and was carried on by those he influenced, it did not come into the forefront in American Free Grace theology until Zane Hodges.

Following the publication of *The Hungry Inherit*,<sup>30</sup> the Judgment Seat of Christ became a staple in Free Grace literature—and rightly so. While the Judgment Seat of Christ maintains its prominent place, a Free Grace interpretation of Scripture is almost inevitable. In addition, the apparent (though not actual) tension in Scripture between faith and works disappears. Faith alone has its proper place and works have theirs. The calls to persevere in order to inherit the kingdom (which are prevalent in the New Testament) are also easily explained without compromising the freeness of everlasting life, compromising the security of the believer, or manipulating statements which are clearly conditional into expressing inevitabilities.

Lastly, the doctrine also powerfully answers the charge of Antinomianism that is often leveled at Free Grace. Far from being unimportant, perseverance in faith and good works is tangibly related to the believer’s enjoyment of eternity because believers are rewarded on the basis of that perseverance (1 Cor 3:9-15; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12).

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<sup>30</sup>Zane Hodges, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972).

## IV. CONCLUSION AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Free Grace rises and falls with Dispensationalism. There have been many teachers in history who have taught Free Grace without ascribing to Dispensationalism. John 3:16 is understandable by anyone who desires to understand it. But such teachers have never represented a large portion of pastors, theologians, or other ministers outside of Dispensational circles. There are simply too many things that can easily confuse the message of life when the practice of consistent literal hermeneutics is abandoned. But as all of these difficulties are easily answered by Dispensationalism, the Bible interpreter who holds to Dispensationalism has the liberty to take verses like John 3:16 (and the many other calls to believe and receive eternal life as a free gift) at face value.

For those who agree with both Dispensationalism and Free Grace, and who recognize the significant connection between the two, some practical applications follow.

*Be vocal in sharing Dispensationalism.* This may seem like a daunting task, but in most cases, you will not need to walk people through a textbook. Simply pointing out one clear distinction between the Church and Israel, between the kingdom and the Church, or between law and grace, can go a long way in helping people see the Scriptures and the grace they teach more clearly. Most people have not heard of these distinctions and they can certainly be eye openers. In my experience I have found that a simple statement about these things can easily turn into an evening full of fruitful conversation.

*Teach Dispensationalism and hermeneutics in your church when appropriate.* This is one of the best ways to prepare disciplemakers. Our church has Dispensationalism and hermeneutics as part of our basic discipleship curriculum that all of our church family goes through. As we have engaged in studying hermeneutics and Dispensationalism our congregation has found a renewed interest in Bible study due to greater confidence in being able to understand Scripture, a renewed passion for grace because they are seeing it more clearly in Scripture, more people have volunteered to start new Bible studies with their friends, and we have seen increased evangelism due to

greater confidence in being able to field objections. Lastly, as our congregation has been more actively engaged in ministry and more aware of our place in God's immutable plan, we have experienced a greater unity and love for one another.

Because of the terminology, hermeneutics and Dispensationalism may sound like dry topics, but they are far from it. Hermeneutics is the tool that equips us to discern the meaning of God's perfect Word. Dispensationalism is the glorious theme of God's plan for mankind, the thought of which caused the Apostle Paul to burst into beautiful doxologies (for example, Rom 11:25-36; Ephesians 3).

*Pray for and support dispensational ministries.* If you are unable to teach these topics for one reason or another, you can still pray for and support Dispensational ministries. If literal interpretation is not taught to future generations, grace won't be taught to them either. Dispensationalism began as a grass-roots movement, and it can continue to be spread at the most basic level. This is because the concepts are simple and because those who embrace those concepts can handle Scripture with confidence. People can share it with their friends and families and they do not need advanced degrees to do so. But even recognizing this, we should still see that laborers are necessary and cheerfully help those who take up this task. The principle laid out by the Lord to the seventy is still true today, "Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2).

# WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?<sup>1</sup>

## THE GREEK TEXT WE ACCEPT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

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### I. INTRODUCTION

It has been commonly argued, for at least 260 years,<sup>2</sup> that no doctrine will be affected no matter what Greek text one may use. In my own experience, for over fifty years, when I have raised the question of what is the correct Greek text of the NT, regardless of the audience, the usual response has been: “What difference does it make?” The purpose of this article is to answer that question, at least in part.

The eclectic Greek text presently in vogue, N-A<sup>26</sup>/UBS<sup>3</sup> [hereafter NU] represents the type of text upon which most modern versions are based.<sup>3</sup> The KJV and NKJV follow a rather different type of text, a close cousin of the Majority Text.<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>This article is a revision (considerable) of ‘Appendix G’ in my book, *The Identity of the New Testament Text II*, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 3rd ed., 2003. (In the online version it is Appendix H.)

<sup>2</sup>John Bengel, a textual critic who died in 1752, has been credited with being the first one to advance this argument.

<sup>3</sup>*Novum Testamentum Graece*, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 26th ed., 1979. *The Greek New Testament*, New York: United Bible Societies, 3rd ed., 1975. The text of both these editions is virtually identical, having been elaborated by the same five editors: Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo Martini, Bruce Metzger and Allen Wikgren. Most modern versions were actually based on the ‘old’ Nestle text, which differs from the 26th edition in over 700 places. UBS<sup>4</sup> and N-A<sup>27</sup> do not offer changes in the text, just in the apparatus—it follows that the text was determined by the earlier set of five editors, not the present five (Matthew Black and Allen Wikgren were replaced by Barbara Aland [Kurt’s wife, now widow] and Johannes Karavidopoulos).

<sup>4</sup>*The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2nd ed., 1985. This text was edited by Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad. Very similar to this is *The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform 2005*, Southborough, MA: Chilton

discrepancy between NU and the Majority Text is around 8% (involving 8% of the words). In a Greek text with 600 pages, that represents 48 solid pages' worth of discrepancies. About a fifth of that reflects omissions in the eclectic text (e.g., Mark 16:9-20; John 7:53–8:11), so it is some ten pages shorter than the Majority Text. Even if we grant, for the sake of the argument, that up to half of the differences between the Majority Text and eclectic text could be termed inconsequential, this leaves some 24 pages' worth of differences that are significant (in varying degrees). In spite of these differences it is usually assumed that no cardinal Christian doctrine is at risk (though some, such as eternal judgment, the ascension, and the deity of Jesus, are weakened). *However*, the most basic doctrine of all, the divine inspiration of the text, is indeed under attack.

The eclectic text incorporates errors of fact and contradictions, such that any claim that the NT is divinely inspired becomes relative, and the doctrine of inerrancy becomes virtually untenable. If the authority of the NT is undermined, all its teachings are likewise affected. For well over a century the credibility of the NT text has been eroded, and this credibility crisis has been forced upon the attention of the laity by the modern versions that enclose parts of the text in brackets and have numerous footnotes of a sort that raise doubts about the integrity of the text.

The consequences of all this are serious and far-reaching for the future of the Church. It seems unreasonable that individuals and organizations that profess to champion a high view of Scripture, that defend verbal plenary inspiration and the inerrancy of the autographs, should embrace a Greek text that effectively undermines their belief.<sup>5</sup> Since their sincerity is evident,

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Book Publishing, 2005. This text was edited by Maurice A Robinson and William G. Pierpont. These differ somewhat from the *Textus Receptus* upon which the KJV and NKJV are based.

<sup>5</sup> For years it has been commonly stated that no two known Greek manuscripts of the NT are in perfect agreement (*however*, for Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Titus, Philemon, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 & 2 & 3 John, and Jude, I have in my possession copies of at least two identical manuscripts—not the same two for each book). In consequence, claims of Biblical inerrancy are usually limited to the autographs (the very original documents actually penned by the human authors), or to the precise wording contained in them. Since no autograph of the NT exists today (they were probably worn out within a few years through heavy use) we must appeal to the existing copies in any effort to identify the original wording.

one must conclude that they are uninformed, or have not really looked at the evidence and thought through the implications. So I will now set out some of that evidence and discuss the implications. I wish to emphasize that I am not impugning the personal sincerity or orthodoxy of those who use the eclectic text; I am challenging the presuppositions that lie behind it and calling attention to the proof of the pudding.

In the following examples, I give the reading of the Majority Text first,<sup>6</sup> the NU second, followed by any others. (Where NU uses brackets, or some modern version follows Nestle<sup>25</sup>, that will be clearly explained.) Immediately under each variant is a literal equivalent in English. To each variant is attached a statement of manuscript support taken from my edition of the Greek Text of the NT.<sup>7</sup> The set of variants with their respective supporting evidence is followed by a discussion of the implications. First I will present errors of fact and contradictions, then any serious anomalies and aberrations.

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The text-critical theory underlying NU presupposes that the original wording was ‘lost’ during the early centuries and that objective certainty as to the original wording is now an impossibility. A central part of the current debate is the argument that the text in use *today* is not inerrant—this is a recurring theme in *The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), for example.

I am prepared to offer objective evidence in support of the contention that the original wording was *not* ‘lost’ during the early centuries. I further argue that it is indeed possible to identify with reasonable certainty the original wording, based on objective criteria—today. (The “objective evidence” to which I refer is available free from <http://www.walkinhiscommandments.com>.)

<sup>6</sup>In the column labeled “Key Manuscripts,” the designation  $\mathfrak{M}$  stands not for a specific manuscript, but for the undivided Majority Text, which includes hundreds of individual manuscripts.

<sup>7</sup>This Greek NT may be downloaded free from <http://www.walkinhiscommandments.com>; the last footnote in Matthew, for example, explains the apparatus and the symbols used.

## II. ERRORS OF FACT AND CONTRADICTIONS

### A. LUKE 4:44

Variant Readings:	Percent of Manuscripts:	Key Manuscripts:
της Γαλιλαιας [in the synagogues] of Galilee	94.7%	Ⲙ, A, D
της Ιουδαιας [in the synagogues] of Judea	4.1%	Ⲕ <sup>75</sup> , Ⲛ, B, C, Q
των Ιουδαιων	0.2%	W
αυτων	0.5%	

Problem: Jesus was in Galilee (and continued there), not in Judea, as the context makes clear.

Discussion: In the parallel passage, Mark 1:35-39, all texts agree that Jesus was in Galilee. Thus NU contradicts itself by reading Judea in Luke 4:44. Bruce Metzger makes clear that the NU editors did this on purpose when he explains that their reading “is obviously the more difficult, and copyists have corrected it...in accord with the parallels in Mt 4.23 and Mk 1.39.”<sup>8</sup> Thus the NU editors introduce a contradiction into their text which is also an error of fact. This error in the eclectic text is reproduced by LB, NIV, NASB, NEB, RSV, etc. NRSV adds insult to injury: “So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea.”

### B. LUKE 23:45

Variant Readings:	% of Mss:	Key Mss:
εσκοτισθη [the sun] was darkened	96.8%	Ⲙ, A, D, Q, W
εκλιποντος [the sun] being eclipsed	0.4%	Ⲕ <sup>75</sup> , Ⲛ, C

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<sup>8</sup> Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, New York: United Bible Societies, 1971, pp. 137-38.



εκλειποντος	0.4%	B
εσκοτισθεντος	0.7%	
conflations	1.2%	

Problem: An eclipse of the sun is impossible during a full moon. Jesus was crucified during the Passover, and the Passover is always at full moon (which is why the date for Easter moves around). NU introduces a scientific error.

Discussion: The Greek verb εκλειπω is quite common and has the basic meaning *to fail* or *to end*, but when used to describe the sun or the moon it refers to an eclipse (*eclipse* comes from that Greek root). Indeed, such versions as Moffatt, Twentieth Century, Authentic, Phillips, NEB, New Berkeley, NAB, and Jerusalem overtly state that the sun was eclipsed. While versions such as NASB, TEV, and NIV avoid the word *eclipse*, the normal meaning of the eclectic text that they follow is precisely *the sun being eclipsed*.<sup>9</sup>

### C. MARK 6:22

Variant Readings:	% of Mss:	Key Mss:
αυτης της Ηρωδιαδος [the daughter] herself of Herodias	96.5%	℞, A, C, N
αυτου — Ηρωδιαδος his [daughter] Herodias	0.4%	ℑ, B, D
— της Ηρωδιαδος	1.3%	
αυτης — Ηρωδιαδος	0.7%	W
αυτου της Ηρωδιαδος	0.9%	

Problem: NU in Mark 6:22 contradicts NU in Matthew 14:6.

Discussion: Matthew 14:6 states that the girl was the daughter of Herodias (Herodias had been the wife of Philip, King Herod's brother, but was now living with Herod). Here NU

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<sup>9</sup> Arndt and Gingrich (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 242, referring to this passage, state: "Of the sun grow dark, perh. be eclipsed." One suspects that this statement was designed specifically to defend the reading of the eclectic text. Metzger dismisses the reading of over 97% of the manuscripts as "the easier reading" (p. 182).

makes the girl out to be Herod's own daughter, and calls her "Herodias." Metzger defends the choice of the NU Committee with these words: "It is very difficult to decide which reading is the least unsatisfactory" (p. 89). Do the NU editors consider that the original reading is lost? If not, the original reading must be 'unsatisfactory,' but are those editors really competent to make such a judgment? What is 'unsatisfactory' about the reading of over 98% of the manuscripts which creates no problem? The modern versions that usually identify with NU part company with them here, except for NRSV that reads, "his daughter Herodias."

#### D. 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
ονομαζεται is named	96.8%	ⲙ
—	3.2%	Ⲡ <sup>46</sup> , Ⲛ, A, B, C

**Problem:** It was reported that a man had his father's wife, a type of fornication such that not even the Gentiles would talk about. However, the NU text affirms that this type of incest did not even exist among the Gentiles, a plain falsehood. Every conceivable type of sexual perversion has existed throughout human history.

**Discussion:** Strangely, such evangelical versions as NIV, NASB, Berkeley, and LB propagate this error. I find it interesting that versions such as TEV, NEB, and Jerusalem, while following the same text, avoid a categorical statement.<sup>10</sup>

#### E. LUKE 3:33

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
του Αμιναδαβ, of Aminadab	του Αραμ of Aram	95% ⲙ, A, (D)
του Αμιναδαβ of Aminadab	του Αδμιν of Admin	0% none!
	του Αρνι of Arni	

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<sup>10</sup>The UBS apparatus gives no inkling to the user that there is serious variation at this point (but N-A does); in consequence Metzger doesn't mention it either.

	του Αδμειν του Αρνει	B
του Αδαμ	του Αρνι?	syr <sup>s</sup>
του Αδαμ	του Αδμιν του Αρνει	Σ
του Αδαμ	του Αδμειν του Αρνει	cop <sup>sa</sup>
του Αδμειν	του Αδμιν του Αρνι	cop <sup>bo</sup>
του Αμιναδαβ	του Αδμιν του Αρνει	Σ <sup>c</sup>
του Αμιναδαβ	του Αδμιν του Αρηι	f <sup>13</sup>
του Αμιναδαβ	του Αδμη του Αρνι	X
του Αμιναδαβ	του Αδμειν του Αρνι	L
του Αμιναδαβ	του Αραμ του Αρνι	N

Problem: The fictitious Admin and Arni are intruded into Christ’s genealogy.

Discussion: UBS has misrepresented the evidence in their apparatus so as to hide the fact that no Greek manuscript has the precise text they have printed, a veritable patchwork quilt. In Metzger’s presentation of the UBS Committee’s reasoning in this case he writes, “the Committee adopted what seems to be the least unsatisfactory form of text” (p. 136). The UBS editors concoct their own reading and proclaim it “the least unsatisfactory.” What is “unsatisfactory” about the reading of over 95% of the manuscripts except that it doesn’t introduce any difficulties?

There is complete confusion in the Egyptian camp. This confusion must have commenced in the second century, resulting from several easy transcriptional errors, simple copying mistakes. APAM to APNI is very easy (in the early centuries only upper case letters were used); with a scratchy quill the cross strokes in the A and M could be light, and a subsequent copyist could mistake the left leg of the M as going with the A to make N, and the right leg of the M would become I. Very early “Aminadab” was misspelled as “Aminadam,” which survives in some 25% of the extant Manuscripts (in the minuscule manuscripts the beta was frequently written like a mu, only without the tail). The “Adam” of Aleph, syr<sup>s</sup>, and cop<sup>sa</sup> arose through an easy instance of homoioarcton (the eye of a copyist went from the first A in “Aminadam” to the second, dropping “Amin-” and leaving

“Adam”). Α and Δ are easily confused, especially when written by hand—“Admin” presumably came from “AMINαδαβ/μ,” though the process was more complicated.

The ι of “Admin” and “Arni” is corrupted to ει in Codex B (a frequent occurrence in that manuscript—perhaps due to Coptic influence). Codex Aleph conflated the ancestor that produced “Adam” with the one that produced “Admin,” etc. The total confusion in Egypt does not surprise us, but how shall we account for the text and apparatus of NU in this instance? And it is surprising that the editors of NASB, NRSV, TEV, LB, Berkeley, etc. would embrace such an egregious error.

## F. MATTHEW 19:17

Variant Readings:	% of Mss:	Key Mss:
Τι με λεγεις αγαθον ουδεις αγαθος ει μη εις ο Θεος Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, God.	99%	Ⲛ, C, W
Τι με ερωτας περι του αγαθου εις εστιν ο αγαθος Why do you ask me about the good? One is good.	0.9%	Ⲛ, (B, D)

Problem: NU in Matthew 19:17 contradicts NU in Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:19 (wherein all texts agree with the Majority here).

Discussion: Presumably Jesus spoke in Hebrew, but there is no way that whatever He said could legitimately yield the two translations into Greek given above.<sup>11</sup> That the Latin versions offer a conflation suggests that both the other variants must have existed in the second century—indeed, the *Diatessaron* overtly places the Majority reading in the first half of that century. The Church in Egypt during the second century was dominated by Gnosticism. That such a nice Gnostic variant came into being is no surprise, but why do modern editors embrace it? Because it

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<sup>11</sup> In His teaching on general themes the Lord presumably repeated Himself many times, using a variety of expressions and variations on those themes, and the Gospel writers preserve some of that variety. In this case we are dealing with a specific conversation, which presumably was not repeated.

is the “more obscure one” (Metzger, p. 49). The NU Committee then printed another patchwork quilt—taking the young man’s question and this first part of the Lord’s answer together. The precise text of NU is found only in the corrector of Codex B; further, with reference to the main Greek manuscripts given as supporting the eclectic text here (Ⲛ, B, D, L, Θ, *f*<sup>1</sup>), no two of them precisely agree. On what basis, then, are they considered reliable witnesses? Most modern versions join NU in this error also.

### G. ACTS 19:16

Variant Readings:	% of Mss:	Key Mss:
αυτων them	90%	Ⲛ
αμφοτερων both of them	5%	Ⲛ, A, B, D

**Problem:** The sons of Sceva were seven, not two.

**Discussion:** To argue that “both” can mean “all” on the basis of this passage is to beg the question. An appeal to Acts 23:8, “For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both,” is likewise unconvincing. “Angel” and “spirit” if not intended as synonyms at least belong to a single class, spirit beings. The Pharisees believed in “both”—resurrection and spirit beings. There is no basis here for claiming that “both” can legitimately refer to seven (Acts 19:16).<sup>12</sup> Still, most modern versions do render “both” as “all.” NASB actually renders “both of them,” making the contradiction overt.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Arndt and Gingrich’s note (p. 47) seems designed to protect the reading of the eclectic text here. Metzger’s discussion is interesting: “The difficulty of reconciling [seven] with [both], however, is not so great as to render the text which includes both an impossible text. On the other hand, however, the difficulty is so troublesome that it is hard to explain how [seven] came into the text, and was perpetuated, if it were not original, . . .” (pp. 471-72). Notice that Metzger assumes the genuineness of “both” and discusses the difficulty that it creates as if it were fact. I would say that his assumption is gratuitous and that the difficulty it creates is an artifact of his presuppositions.

<sup>13</sup> Editor’s Note: The 1978 version of the NASB corrected this error. It and later versions read, “all of them.”

**H. MATTHEW 1:7-8**

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
Ασα Asa	98%	℞, W
Ασαφ Asaph	2%	ℑ <sup>iv</sup> , ℑ, B, C

**Problem:** Asaph does not belong in Jesus' genealogy.

**Discussion:** Asaph was a Levite, not of the tribe of Judah; he was a psalmist, not a king. It is clear from Metzger's comments that the NU editors understand that their reading refers to the Levite and should not be construed as an alternate spelling of Asa; he overtly calls Asaph an "error" (p. 1). In fact, "Asaph" is probably not a misspelling of "Asa." Not counting Asa and Amon (see v 10), Codex B misspells thirteen names in this chapter, while Codex Aleph misspells ten, which undermines their credibility. However, their misspellings involve dittography, gender change, or a similar sound (*z* for *s*, *d* for *t*, *m* for *n*)—not adding an extraneous consonant, like *f*, nor trading dissimilar sounds, like *s* for *n*.

In response to Lagrange, who considered "Asaph" to be an ancient scribal error, Metzger writes: "Since, however, the evangelist may have derived material for the genealogy, not from the Old Testament directly, but from subsequent genealogical lists, in which the erroneous spelling occurred, the Committee saw no reason to adopt what appears to be a scribal emendation" (p. 1). Metzger frankly declares that the spelling they have adopted is "erroneous." The NU editors have deliberately imported an error into their text, which is faithfully reproduced by NAB (New American Bible) and NRSV. The RSV and NASB offer a footnote to the effect that the Greek reads "Asaph"—which is true of only a tiny fraction of Greek manuscripts. The case of Amon vs. Amos in verse 10 is analogous to this one. Metzger says that "Amos" is "an error for 'Amon'" (p. 2), and the NU editors have duly placed the error in their text.

**I. MATTHEW 10:10**

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
μηδε ραβδους neither staffs	95%	Ⲙ, C, N, W
μηδε ραβδον neither a staff	5%	Ⲛ, B, D

**Problem:** In both Matthew 10:10 and Luke 9:3 NU has “neither a staff,” thus contradicting Mark 6:8 where all texts have “only a staff.”

**Discussion:** In Luke and Matthew the Majority Text reads “neither staffs,” which does not contradict Mark—the case of the staffs is analogous to that of the tunics; they were to take only one, not several. A superficial reader would probably expect the singular; that some scribe in Egypt should have trouble with “staffs” and simplify it to “a staff” comes as no surprise, but why do the NU editors import this error into their text? Almost all modern versions follow NU both here and in Luke 9:3.

**J. MARK 1:2**

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
εν τοις προφηταις [as it is written] in the prophets	96.7%	Ⲙ, A, W
εν τω Ησαια τω προφητη [as it is written] in Isaiah the prophet	1.3%	Ⲛ, B
Ησαια τω προφητη	1.8%	D

**Problem:** The NU text ascribes extraneous material to Isaiah.

**Discussion:** The rest of verse 2 is a quote from Malachi 3:1 while verse 3 is from Isaiah 40:3. Once again Metzger uses the harder reading argument, in effect (p. 73), but the eclectic choice is most probably the result of early harmonizing activity. The only other places that Isaiah 40:3 is quoted in the NT are Matthew 3:3, Luke 3:4, and John 1:23. The first two are in passages parallel to Mark 1:2 and join it in agreeing with the LXX verbatim. The quote in John differs from the LXX in one word and is also used in connection with John the Baptist. The

crucial consideration, for our present purpose, is that Matthew, Luke and John all identify the quote as being from Isaiah (without manuscript variation). It seems clear that the “Alexandrian-Western” reading in Mark 1:2 is simply an assimilation to the other three Gospels. It should also be noted that the material from Malachi looks more like an allusion than a direct quote. Further, although Malachi is quoted (or alluded to) a number of times in the NT, he is never named. Mark’s own habits may also be germane to this discussion. Mark quotes Isaiah in 4:12, 11:17 and 12:32 and alludes to him in about ten other places, all without naming his source. The one time he does use Isaiah’s name is when quoting Jesus in Mark 7:6. In the face of such clear evidence the ‘harder reading’ canon cannot justify the forcing of an error into the text of Mark 1:2. Almost all modern versions agree with NU here.

### K. LUKE 9:10

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
εις τοπον ερημον πολεως καλουμενης Βηθσαιδα(ν) into a deserted place belonging to a town called Bethsaida	98%	Ⓜ, (A), C, (N), W
εις πολιν καλουμενην Βηθσαιδα into a town called Bethsaida	0.5%	(Ⓜ <sup>75</sup> ), B
εις κωμην λεγομενην βηδσαιδα		D
εις τοπον ερημον		Ⓝ

**Problem:** NU has Jesus and company going into Bethsaida, but in verse 12 the disciples say they are in a deserted area; thus a contradiction is introduced. NU here is also at variance with NU in the parallel passages.

**Discussion:** In Matthew 14:13 all texts have Jesus going to a deserted place, and in verse 15 the disciples say, “the place is deserted... send the crowd away to the towns.” In Mark 6:31-32 all texts have Him going to a deserted place, and in verse 35 the disciples say it is a deserted place, etc. So NU not only makes Luke contradict himself, but sets him against Matthew and Mark. The modern versions do not surprise us.



**L. JOHN 18:24**

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
απεστειλεν [Annas] had sent [Him bound to Caiaphas]	90%	Ⓜ, A
απεστειλεν ουν then [Annas] sent [Him bound to Caiaphas]	9%	B, C, W
απεστειλεν δε	1%	Ⓝ

Problem: The NU variant sets up a contradiction within the immediate context. Verse 13 says Jesus was taken first to Annas, but all four Gospels are agreed that Peter’s denials and the judging took place in the house of Caiaphas. Here in John, verses 15-23 happened there. The NU variant puts verses 15-23 in the house of Annas, making John contradict the other three Gospels.

Discussion: Only John records that Jesus was taken first to Annas; the other three go directly to Caiaphas, so for them the difficulty of changing houses does not arise. After penning verses 15-23, John saw that his readers could get the idea that Jesus was still with Annas, so he wrote verse 24 to avert that misunderstanding. Verse 24 should be translated in parentheses: (Annas had sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest).

**M. JOHN 6:11**

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
τοις μαθηταις οι δε μαθηται to the disciples, and the disciples...	97%	Ⓜ, D
—————	3%	Ⓝ <sup>66,75v</sup> , Ⓝ, A, B, W

Problem: The NU text contradicts itself. In Matthew 14:19, Mark 6:41, and Luke 9:16, parallel passages, NU agrees with the Majority that Jesus handed the bread to the disciples, who in turn distributed it to the people. Here in John NU omits the disciples and has Jesus Himself distributing the bread to the people.

Discussion: This variant may be explained as an easy transcriptional mistake, a case of homoioarcton, a similar beginning—in this case jumping from one τοις to the next. There is no need to appeal to the ‘harder reading’ canon. If this were the only instance, it could be explained away, but when added to the others it has a cumulative effect.

I am well aware that the foregoing examples may not strike the reader as being uniformly convincing. By dint of ingenuity and mental gymnastics it may be possible to appear to circumvent one or another of these examples (including those that follow), but with each added instance the strain on our credulity increases. One or two circumventions may be accepted as possible, but five or six become highly improbable; ten or twelve are scarcely tolerable.

### III. SERIOUS ANOMALIES/ABERRATIONS

#### A. JOHN 7:8

Variant Readings:	% of Mss:	Key Mss:
ουπω not yet	96.5%	ℳ, ℑ <sup>66,75</sup> , B, N, T, W
ουκ not	3%	ℑ, D

Problem: Since Jesus did in fact go to the feast (and doubtless knew what He was going to do), the NU text has the effect of ascribing a falsehood to Him.

Discussion: Since the NU editors usually attach the highest value to P<sup>75</sup> and B, isn't it strange that they reject them in this case? Here is Metzger's explanation: "The reading ["not yet"] was introduced at an early date (it is attested by ℑ<sup>66,75</sup>) in order to alleviate the inconsistency between ver. 8 and ver. 10" (p. 216). They rejected ℑ<sup>66,75</sup> and B (as well as 96.5% of the manuscripts) because they preferred the inconsistency. NASB, RSV, NEB and TEV stay with the eclectic text here.

**B. ACTS 28:13**

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
περιελθοντες tacking back and forth [we reached Rhegium]	95%	ℳ, A, 048
περιελοντες taking away (something) [we reached Rhegium]	5%	ℵ, B

Problem: The verb chosen by NU, *περιαιρω*, is transitive, and is meaningless here.

Discussion: Metzger's unsupportable explanation is that a majority of the NU Committee took the word to be "a technical nautical term of uncertain meaning" (p. 501). Why do they choose to disfigure the text on such poor evidence when there is an easy transcriptional explanation? The Greek letters O and Θ are very similar, and being side by side in a word it would be easy to drop one of them out, in this case the *theta*. Most modern versions are actually based on the 'old' Nestle text, which here agrees with the Majority reading. NRSV, however, follows NU, rendering it as "then we weighed anchor".

**C. MARK 16:9-20**

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
(retain)	99.8%	every extant Greek manuscript (about 1,700) except three
(omit)	0.2%	ℵ <sup>c</sup> , B, 304

Problem: A serious aberration is introduced—it is affirmed that Mark's Gospel ends with 16:8.

Discussion: UBS<sup>3</sup> encloses these verses in double brackets, which means they are "regarded as later additions to the text," and they give their decision an {A} grade, "virtually certain." So, the UBS editors assure us that the genuine text of Mark ends with 16:8. But why do critics insist on rejecting this passage? It is contained in every extant Greek manuscript (about 1,700) except three (really only two, B and 304—Aleph is not

properly extant because it is a forgery at this point).<sup>14</sup> Every extant Greek Lectionary (about 2,000?) contains them (one of them, 185, doing so only in the Menologion). Every extant Syriac manuscript except one (Sinaitic) contains them. Every extant Latin manuscript (8,000?) except one (k) contains them. Every extant Coptic manuscript except one contains them. We have hard evidence for the inclusion from the II century (Irenaeus and the Diatessaron), and presumably the first half of that century. We have no such hard evidence for the exclusion.

In the face of such massive evidence, why do the critics insist on rejecting this passage? Lamentably, most modern versions also cast doubt upon the authenticity of these verses in one way or another (NRSV is especially objectionable here). As one who believes that the Bible *is* God's Word, I find it to be inconceivable that an official biography of Jesus Christ, commissioned by God and written subject to His quality control, should omit proofs of the resurrection, should exclude all post-resurrection appearances, and should end with the clause "because they were afraid." If the critics' assessment is correct we seem to be between a rock and a hard place. Mark's Gospel as it stands is mutilated (if it ends at v 8), the original ending having

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<sup>14</sup>Tischendorf, who discovered Codex Aleph, warned that the folded sheet containing the end of Mark and the beginning of Luke appeared to be written by a different hand and with different ink than the rest of the manuscript. However that may be, a careful scrutiny reveals the following: the end of Mark and beginning of Luke occur on page 3 (of the four); pages 1 and 4 contain an average of 17 lines of printed Greek text per column (there are four columns per page), just like the rest of the codex; page 2 contains an average of 15.5 lines of printed text per column (four columns); the first column of page 3 contains only twelve lines of printed text and in this way verse 8 occupies the top of the second column, the rest of which is blank (except for some designs); Luke begins at the top of column 3, which contains 16 lines of printed text while column 4 is back up to 17 lines. On page 2 the forger began to spread out the letters, displacing six lines of printed text; in the first column of page 3 he got desperate and displaced five lines of printed text, just in one column.

In this way he managed to get two lines of verse 8 over onto the second column, avoiding the telltale vacant column (as in Codex B). That second column would accommodate 15 more lines of printed text, which with the other eleven make 26. Verses 9-20 occupy 23.5 such lines, so there is plenty of room for them. It really does seem that there has been foul play, and there would have been no need for it unless the first hand did in fact display the disputed verses. In any event, Aleph as it stands is a forgery (in this place) and therefore may not legitimately be alleged as evidence against them.

disappeared without a trace. But in that event what about God's purpose in commissioning this biography?

#### D. JOHN 1:18

Variant Readings:	% of Mss:	Key Mss:
ο μονογενης υιος the only begotten Son	99.6%	ℳ, A, C, W
— μονογενης θεος an only begotten god	0.3%	℞ <sup>66</sup> , ℑ, B, C
ο μονογενης θεος the only begotten God	0.1%	℞ <sup>75</sup>

Problem: A serious anomaly is introduced—God, as God, is not begotten.

Discussion: The human body and nature of Jesus Christ was indeed literally begotten in the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit; God the Son has existed eternally. “An only begotten god” is so Gnostic that the apparent Egyptian provenance of this reading makes it doubly suspicious. It would also be possible to render the second reading as “only begotten God,” emphasizing the quality, and this has appealed to some who see in it a strong affirmation of Christ's deity. However, if Christ received His Godhood through the begetting process, then He cannot be the eternally pre-existing Second Person of the Godhead. Nor is “only begotten” analogous to *firstborn*, referring to priority of position—that would place the Son above the Father. No matter how one looks at it, the NU reading introduces a serious anomaly, and on the slimmest of evidence.

Presumably μονογενης is intended to mean something more than just μονος, “only.” In Luke 7:12, even though for reasons of style a translator may put “the *only* son of his mother,” we must understand that he is her own offspring—he could not be an adopted son. The same holds for Luke 8:42 and 9:38. In Hebrews 11:17, with reference to the promise and to Sarah, Isaac was indeed Abraham's “only begotten,” even though he in fact had other sons with other women. Note that in Genesis 22:12, 16 God Himself calls Isaac Abraham's “only” son. John uses μονογενης five times, always referring to the Son of God (John 1:14,

18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). I see nothing in NT usage to justify the rendering “unique.”

That  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$  should have a conflation of the first two readings is curious, but demonstrates that the discrepancy arose in the second century. (Articles modify nouns not adjectives, when in a noun phrase such as we have here, so the article is part of the same variation unit.) Most modern versions avoid a straightforward rendering of the NU reading. NIV offers us “but God the only [Son].” (A subsequent revision has “God the One and Only”—a pious fraud since none of the variants has this meaning.) TEV has, “The only One, who is the same as God”—only slightly better. NASB actually renders “the only begotten God” (the reading of  $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$ ). The Amplified Bible serves up a conflation, “the only unique Son, the only begotten God.”

### E. JOHN 7:53–8:11

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
(retain)	85%	$\mathfrak{M}$ , D
(omit)	15%	$\mathfrak{P}^{66,75}$ , $\aleph$ , B, N, T, W

Problem: UBS<sup>3</sup> encloses these verses in double brackets, which means they are “regarded as later additions to the text,” and they give their decision an {A} grade, “virtually certain.” The omission introduces an aberration.

Discussion: The evidence against the Majority Text is stronger than in any of the previous examples, but assuming that the passage is spurious (for the sake of the argument), how could it ever have intruded here, and to such effect that it is attested by some 85% of the manuscripts? Let’s try to read the larger passage without these verses—we must go from 7:52 to 8:12 directly. Reviewing the context, the chief priests and Pharisees had sent officers to arrest Jesus, to no avail; a ‘discussion’ ensues; Nicodemus makes a point, to which the Pharisees answer:

(7:52) “Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.”

(8:12) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world...”

What is the antecedent of “them,” and what is the meaning of “again”? By the normal rules of grammar, if 7:53-8:11 is missing

then “them” must refer to the “Pharisees” and “again” means that there has already been at least one prior exchange. But, 7:45 makes clear that Jesus *was not there* with the Pharisees. Thus, NU introduces an aberration. And yet, Metzger claims that the passage “interrupts the sequence of 7.52 and 8.12 ff” (p. 220). To look for the antecedents of 8:12 in 7:37-39 not only is contrary to the syntax but also runs afoul of 8:13—“the Pharisees” respond to Jesus’ claim in verse 12, but “the Pharisees” are somewhere else, 7:45-52 (if the pericope is absent).

Metzger also claims that “the style and vocabulary of the pericope differ noticeably from the rest of the Fourth Gospel”—but, wouldn’t the native speakers of Greek at that time have been in a better position than modern critics to notice something like that? So how could they allow an extraneous passage to be forced into the text? I submit that the evident answer is that they did not; it was there all the time. I also protest their use of brackets here. Since the editors clearly regard the passage to be spurious they should be consistent and delete it, as do NEB and Williams. NIV, NASB, NRSV, Berkeley and TEV also use brackets to question the legitimacy of this passage.

### F. 1 TIMOTHY 3:16

Variant Readings:	% of Mss:	Key Mss:
θεος God [was manifested in flesh]	98.5%	ℳ, A, C <sup>v</sup>
ος who [was manifested in flesh]	1%	ℵ
ο that [was manifested in flesh]		D

Problem: A grammatical anomaly is introduced. “Great is the mystery of godliness, who was manifested in flesh” is worse in Greek than it is in English. “Mystery” is neuter in gender while “godliness” is feminine, but “who” is masculine.

Discussion: In an effort to explain the “who,” it is commonly argued that the second half of verse 16 was a direct quote from a hymn, but no evidence for this is offered. Without evidence

the claim begs the question.<sup>15</sup> That the passage has some poetic qualities says no more than that it has some poetic qualities. “Who” is nonsensical, so most modern versions that follow NU here take evasive action: NEB and NASB have “he who;” Phillips has “the one;” NRSV, Jerusalem, TEV, and NIV render “he.” Berkeley actually has “who.” The Latin reading, “the mystery...that,” at least makes sense. The true reading, as attested by 98.5% of the Greek manuscripts, is “God.” In the early manuscripts “God” was written ΘΣ (with a cross stroke above the two letters to indicate an abbreviation), “who” was written ΟΣ, and “that” was written Ο. The difference between “God” and “who” is just two cross strokes, and with a scratchy quill those could easily be light (or a copyist could be momentarily distracted and forget to add the cross strokes). The reading “who” can be explained by an easy transcriptional error. The reading “that” would be an obvious solution to a copyist faced with the nonsensical “who.” Whatever the intention of the NU editors, their text emasculates this strong statement of the deity of Jesus Christ, besides being nonsensical—what is a ‘mystery’ about any human male being manifested in flesh? All human beings have bodies.

## G. 2 PETER 3:10

Variant Readings:	% of Mss:	Key Mss:
κατακαησεται [the earth...] will be burned up	93.6%	Ⲙ, A, 048
ευρεθησεται [the earth...] will be found	3.2%	(Ⲣ <sup>72</sup> ), Ⲛ, B

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<sup>15</sup> A pronoun normally requires an antecedent, but quoted material might provide an exception. Thus, 1 Corinthians 2:9 is sometimes offered as an instance: the quote from Isaiah 64:4 begins with a pronoun, without a grammatical antecedent (although “mystery” in verse 7 is presumably the referential antecedent). However, the words from Isaiah are formally introduced as a quotation, “as it is written,” whereas the material in 1 Timothy 3:16 is not, so there is no valid analogy. Colossians 1:13 or 1:15 have been suggested as analogies for “who” in 1 Timothy 3:16, even claimed as “hymns,” but there is no objective support for the claim. The antecedent of the relative pronoun in Colossians 1:15 is “the son” in verse 13, and the antecedent of the relative pronoun in verse 13 is “the father” in verse 12. Again, there is no valid analogy.



**Problem:** The NU reading is nonsensical; the context is clearly one of judgment.

**Discussion:** Metzger openly states that their text “seems to be devoid of meaning in the context” (p. 706). So why did they choose it? Metzger explains that there is “a wide variety of readings, none of which seems to be original”—presumably if “shall be burned up” were the only reading, with unanimous attestation, he would still reject it, but he can scarcely argue that it is meaningless. The NU editors deliberately chose a variant that they believed to be “devoid of meaning in the context.” NASB abandons UBS here, giving the Majority reading; NEB and NIV render “will be laid bare;” TEV has “will vanish.”

## H. JUDE 15

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
παντας τους ασεβεις [to convict] all the ungodly [among them of all their ungodly deeds]	97.8%	ℳ, A, B, C
πασαν ψυχην [to convict] every soul [of all their ungodly deeds]	2.2%	℞ <sup>72</sup> , ℵ (only one other manuscript)

**Problem:** NU introduces a serious anomaly.

**Discussion:** Certain very evil persons have been rather graphically described in verses 4, 8 and 10-13. In verse 14 Jude introduces a prophecy “about these men,” the same ones he has been describing, and the quotation continues to the end of verse 15. Verse 16 continues the description of their perversity, but verse 17 draws a clear distinction between them and the believers that Jude is addressing. So, Enoch cannot be referring to “every soul”—the NU reading is clearly wrong. In fact, Nestle<sup>25</sup> and UBS<sup>2</sup> stayed with the Majority, reading “all the ungodly.” UBS<sup>3</sup> changes to “every soul,” without comment. It is curious that the UBS editors reverse an earlier position, following just three manuscripts and the Sahidic version, and do not even mention it in their apparatus. This is especially unfortunate, given the serious nature of the change. Most modern versions are with the Majority here, but NRSV has “convict everyone.”

**I. MATTHEW 5:22**

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
εικη without a cause	96.2%	Ⲙ, D, W
—	1.9%	Ⲡ <sup>64</sup> , ⲛ, B

**Problem:** The NU omission has the effect of setting up a conflict with passages like Ephesians 4:26 and Psalm 4:4, where we are commanded to be angry, and even with the Lord's own example, Mark 3:5.

**Discussion:** God hates injustice and will judge it; but He also hates evil and commands us to do likewise (Ps 97:10). The NU variant has the effect of forbidding anger, which cannot be right. Again, if this were the only instance, it could be explained away, but when added to the others it has a cumulative effect.

**J. MARK 10:24**

<b>Variant Readings:</b>	<b>% of Mss:</b>	<b>Key Mss:</b>
τουφ πεποιθοταφ επι χρημασιν for those who trust in riches	99.5%	Ⲙ, A, C, (D), N
— — — — —	0.4%	ⲛ, B
πλουσιον		W

**Problem:** The NU variant has Jesus saying: "How difficult it is to enter the Kingdom of God!" Within the context this is a stupidity, besides having the effect of making Him contradict Himself, since in other places He gives an open invitation: "Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

**Discussion:** Within the context the Majority reading is clearly correct. Taking into account all that Scripture offers on the subject, being rich in itself is not the problem; the problem is precisely one of trust—are you really trusting in God, or in your wealth? Most modern versions follow NU here, and some offer a footnote that says, "some (later) manuscripts add, 'for those who trust in riches'." It is their way of referring to 99.5% of the manuscripts; and the Latin and Syriac versions take the Majority reading back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

There are many further examples, some of which, taken singly, may not seem to be all that alarming. But they have a cumulative effect and *dozens* of them should give the responsible reader pause. Is there a pattern? If so, why? But for now enough has been presented to permit us to turn to the implications.

#### IV. IMPLICATIONS

How is all of this to be explained? I believe the answer lies in the area of presuppositions. There has been a curious reluctance on the part of conservative scholars to come to grips with this matter. To assume that the editorial choices of a naturalistic scholar will not be influenced by his theological bias is naive in the extreme.

To be sure, both such scholars and the conservative defenders of the eclectic text will doubtless demur. "Not at all," they would say, "our editorial choices derive from a straightforward application of the generally accepted canons of NT textual criticism" ["generally accepted" by whom, and on what basis—that is, what are the presuppositions behind them?]. And what are those canons? The four main ones seem to be: 1) the reading that best accounts for the rise of the other reading(s) is to be preferred; 2) the harder reading is to be preferred; 3) the shorter reading is to be preferred; 4) the reading that best fits the author's style and purpose is to be preferred. It could be said the first canon distills the essence of them all, and therefore should be the ruling canon, but in practice it is probably the second that is most rigorously applied. From B.M. Metzger's presentation of the NU Committee's reasoning in the examples given above it appears that over half the time they based their decision on the 'harder reading' canon (for four of them he has no comment because the UBS apparatus does not mention that there is any variation; for two of them he says that all the variants are unsatisfactory). But, how are we to decide which variant is 'harder'? Will not our theological bias enter in?

Let's consider an example: in Luke 24:52 the Nestle editions 1-25 omit "they worshipped him" (and in consequence NASB, RSV, and NEB do too). UBS<sup>3</sup> retains the words, but with a {D} grade, which shows a "very high degree of doubt." Only one solitary Greek manuscript omits the words, Codex D, supported

by part of the Latin witness. In spite of the very slim external evidence for the omission it is argued that it is the ‘harder’ reading—if the clause were original, what orthodox Christian would even think of removing it? On the other hand, the clause would make a nice pious addition that would immediately become popular, if the original lacked it. However, not only did the Gnostics dominate the Christian church in Egypt in the second century, there were also others around who did not believe that Jesus was God—would they be likely to resist the impulse to delete such a statement? How shall we choose between these two hypotheses? Will it not be on the basis of our presuppositions? Indeed, in discussing this variant set, along with Hort’s other “Western non-interpolations,” Metzger explains (p. 193) that a minority of the UBS committee argued that “there is discernible in these passages a Christological-theological motivation that accounts for their having been added, while there is no clear reason that accounts for their having been omitted.” Had they forgotten the Gnostics?

#### **A. PROBLEMS WITH USING SUBJECTIVE CANONS**

It is clear that the four canons mentioned above depend heavily upon the subjective judgment of the critic. But why use such canons? Why not follow the manuscript evidence? It is commonly argued that the surviving manuscripts are not representative of the textual situation in the early centuries of the Church. The official destruction of manuscripts by Diocletian (AD 300), and other vagaries of history, are supposed to have decimated the supply of manuscripts to the point where the transmission was totally distorted—so we can’t be sure about anything. (Such an argument not only seeks to justify the eclectic proceeding, it is used to claim its necessity.) But, the effectiveness of the Diocletian campaign was uneven in different regions. Even more to the point are the implications of the Donatist movement which developed right after the Diocletian campaign passed. It was predicated in part on the punishment that was deserved by those who betrayed their manuscripts to destruction. Evidently some did *not* betray their manuscripts or there would have been none to judge the others. Also, those whose commitment to Christ and His Word was such that they withstood the torture would be just the sort who would be most careful about

the pedigree of their manuscripts. So it was probably the purest exemplars that survived, in the main, and from them the main stream of transmission derives.

Since the Byzantine (Majority) textform dominates over 90% of the extant manuscripts, those who wish to reject it cannot grant the possibility that the transmission of the text was in any sense normal. (If it was then the consensus must reflect the original, especially such a massive consensus.) So it is argued that the ballot box was stuffed, that the Byzantine text was imposed by ecclesiastical authority, but only after it was concocted out of other texts in the early fourth century. But, there is simply no historical evidence for this idea. Also, numerous studies have demonstrated that the mass of Byzantine manuscripts are not monolithic; there are many distinct strands or strains of transmission, presumably independent. That at least some of these must go back to the third century (if not earlier) is demonstrated by Codex Aleph in Revelation, in that it conflates some of those strands. Asterius (d. 341) used manuscripts that were clearly Byzantine—presumably most of his writing was not done on his deathbed, so his manuscripts would come from the third century. There are further lines of evidence that militate against the eclectic position, not least the very nature of their canons.

“The shorter reading is to be preferred.” Why? Because, we are told, scribes had a propensity to add bits and pieces to the text. But that would have to be a deliberate activity. It is demonstrable that accidental loss of place results in omission far more often than addition—about the only way to add accidentally is to copy part of the text twice over, but the copyist would have to be really drowsy not to catch himself at it. So, any time a shorter reading could be the result of parablepsis it should be viewed with suspicion. But even when deliberate, omission should still be more frequent than addition. If there is something in the text that you don’t like it draws your attention and you are tempted to do something about it. Also, it requires more imagination and effort to create new material than to delete what is already there (material suggested by a parallel passage could be an exception). Further, it is demonstrable that most scribes were careful and conscientious, avoiding even unintentional mistakes. Those who

engaged in deliberate editorial activity were really rather few, but some were flagrant offenders (like Aleph in Revelation).

“The harder reading is to be preferred.” Why? The assumption is that a perceived difficulty would motivate an officious copyist to attempt a remedy. Note that any such alteration must be deliberate; so if a harder reading could have come about through accidental omission then this canon should not be used. But in the case of a presumed deliberate alteration, how can we really ascribe degrees of hardness? We don’t know who did it, nor why. Due allowance must be made for possible ignorance, officiousness, prejudice and malice. In fact, this canon is unreasonable on the face of it—the more nonsensical a reading is, whether by accident or design, the stronger is its claim to be original since it will certainly be the hardest. It does not take a prophet to see that this canon is wide open to manipulation, both in the ancient creation of variants and in their contemporary evaluation. But in any case, since it is demonstrable that most copyists did not make deliberate changes, where there is massive agreement among the extant manuscripts this canon should not even be considered. Indeed, where there is massive agreement among the manuscripts none of the subjective canons should be used—they are unnecessary and out of place. Of the 6,000+ differences between NU and the Majority Text, the heavy majority of the readings preferred by the NU editors have slender manuscript attestation.

## **B. THE MYTH OF NEUTRALITY**

We need to lay to rest the myth of neutrality and scholarly objectivity. Anyone who has been inside the academic community knows that it is liberally sprinkled with bias, party lines, and personal ambition. Neutrality and objectivity should never be assumed, and most especially when dealing with God’s truth. In Matthew 12:30 the Lord Jesus said: “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters abroad.” God declares that neutrality is impossible; you are either for Him or against Him. Jesus claims to be God. Faced with such a claim we have only two options, to accept or to reject. (Agnosticism is really a passive rejection.) The Bible claims to be God’s Word. Again our options are but two. It follows that when dealing with the text of Scripture neutrality is impossible.

Furthermore, there is a pervasive satanic influence upon all human culture. First John 5:19 states that “the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.” The picture is clearly one of massive influence, if not control—NASB, RSV, NEB and Jerusalem render “in the power of,” TEV has “under the rule of,” NIV has “under the control of.” All human culture is under pervasive satanic influence, including the culture of the academic community. Ephesians 2:2 is even more precise: “in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.” Satan actively works in the mind of anyone who rejects God’s authority over himself. Materialism has infiltrated the Church in Europe and North America to such an extent that what the Bible says on this subject has been largely ignored. But I submit that for someone who claims to believe God’s Word to accept an edition of the Bible prepared on the basis of rationalistic assumptions is really to forget the teaching of that Word.

Interpretation is preeminently a matter of wisdom. A naturalistic textual critic may have a reasonable acquaintance with the relevant evidence; he may have knowledge of the facts, but that by no means implies that he knows what to do with it. Anyone who edits or translates the text of Scripture needs to be in such a spiritual condition that he can ask the Holy Spirit to illumine him in his work as well as protect his mind from the enemy.

In Jesus’ day there were those who “loved the praise of men more than the praise of God” (John 12:43), and they are with us still. But, the “praise of men” comes at a high price. To accept the world’s value system is basically a type of idolatry. Those conservative scholars, who place a high value on academic recognition, on being acknowledged by the academic community, etc., need to ask themselves about the presuppositions that lie behind such recognition. Please note that I am not decrying true scholarship—I have three earned graduate degrees myself—but I am challenging conservatives to make sure that their definition of scholarship comes from the Holy Spirit, not from the world, that their search for recognition is godly, not selfish. I rather suspect that were this to happen there would be a dramatic shift in the conservative Christian world with reference

to the practice of NT textual criticism and to the identity of the true NT text.

## V. CONCLUSION

To sum it up, I return to the opening question: “What difference does it make?” Not only do we have the confusion caused by two rather different competing forms of the Greek text, but one of them (the eclectic text) incorporates errors and contradictions that undermine the doctrine of inspiration and virtually vitiate the doctrine of inerrancy; the other (the Majority Text) does not. The first is based on subjective criteria, applied by naturalistic critics; the second is based on the consensus of the manuscript tradition down through the centuries. Because the conservative evangelical schools and churches have generally embraced the theory (and therefore the presuppositions) that underlies the eclectic text (UBS<sup>3</sup>/N-A<sup>26</sup>),<sup>16</sup> there has been an ongoing hemorrhage or defection within the evangelical camp with reference to the doctrines of Biblical inspiration and inerrancy (especially). The authority of Scripture has been undermined—it no longer commands immediate and unquestioned obedience. As a natural consequence there is a generalized softening of our basic commitment to Christ and His coming kingdom. Worse yet, through our missionaries we have been exporting all of this to the emerging churches in the third world.

So what shall we do, throw up our hands in despair and give up? Indeed no! It is better to light one candle than to sit and curse the darkness. With God’s help let us work together to bring about a reversal of this situation. Let us work to undo the damage. We must start by consciously trying to make sure that all our presuppositions, our working assumptions, are consistent with God’s Word. When we approach the evidence (Greek manuscripts, patristic citations, ancient versions) with such presuppositions we will have a credible, even demonstrable, basis for declaring and defending the divine preservation, the inspiration and the inerrancy of the NT text. We can again have a compelling basis for total commitment to God and His Word. The present printed Majority Text (whether Hodges-Farstad or

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<sup>16</sup>UBS<sup>4</sup> and N-A<sup>27</sup> have changes in the apparatus, but not the text, so the text is still that of the prior editions.



Robinson-Pierpont) is a close approximation to the original, free from the errors of fact and contradictions discussed above. (All modesty aside, I consider that my Greek Text is even closer.)



# MISSION, GODLINESS, AND REWARD IN 2 PETER 1:5-11

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## I. INTRODUCTION

On a recent road trip I happened to tune in to a local talk radio station. The talk show host was reacting to a billboard on which an atheist had posted a sign decrying Christmas and claiming that atheists are good people, too. In his diatribe the host asked a provocative question: “What have the atheists done for society? Have atheist organizations accomplished anything beneficial for their fellow man? If they want to be legitimized in America then let them sponsor soup kitchens like the Salvation Army or fund orphanages like the Christians do. If atheists want to be socially accepted let them do something for others.”

He touched a truth known to people who participate in God’s mission:<sup>1</sup> our effectiveness as witnesses relates directly to the quality of our lives. The Bible calls God’s people to godly lives so they will be productive witnesses. The fruit of our mission will be evaluated and rewarded at the Bema Seat. We are rewarded for missional productivity. Since missional productivity hinges in part on our sanctification, effective mission becomes an incentive to godliness.

Although we enjoy a rich body of literature documenting the Free Grace perspective on the motives for godly living (e.g., love and gratitude, promise of rewards, fear of discipline, present blessings) missional effectiveness as a motive has been

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<sup>1</sup> “Mission” and “missional” refer to God’s initiative to restore his creation to the blessedness it enjoyed before the Fall, to the role God has assigned to his people (collectively and individually) within that initiative, and to everything involved in evangelism. In pastoral ministry I find it necessary to use these terms rather than “evangelism” because many misunderstand the disciple-making mission. Missional terms help believers to realize the significance of a Christ-like life and to grasp the overarching biblical narrative.

overlooked. This essay will examine 2 Pet 1:5-11 to illustrate the link between godly living, missional effectiveness and rewards at the Bema Seat.<sup>2</sup> The objective is to encourage others to develop the connection between virtue, God's mission and rewards at the Bema in order to furnish pastors and ministry leaders with additional tools to motivate believers to godly living.

The catalog of virtues in 2 Pet 1:5-11 exhorts believers to move beyond faith into virtuous Christian living that leads to reward at the Bema Seat.<sup>3</sup>

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Several terms, laden with meaning, invite careful study before settling into conclusions about Peter's intended meaning. The terms "unfruitful" (Gr. *akarpos*) and "election" (Gr. *eklogē*) suggest intimate knowledge of Old Testament texts and themes

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<sup>2</sup> In this essay, consideration will largely be confined to vv 8-11.

<sup>3</sup> Hodges has shown that this passage does not support the Reformed doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints. Reward at the Bema Seat is in view. Entrance into God's kingdom isn't at stake; the *kind* of entrance is. Zane C. Hodges, "Making Your Calling and Election Sure: An Exposition of 2 Peter 1:5-11," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Theological Society* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 22-34.

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise noted all English quotations will be of the English Standard Version. *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version, Journaling Bible* (Crossway Bibles).

regarding the mission of God. Election is particularly important in texts about God's mission, his covenant with Abraham, and Israel's role among the nations.

## II. CHOSEN FOR MISSION

Reformed theology has conditioned many to think of soteriology when we encounter "election" in the Bible. When we examine how the term is used, when we consider Abraham and Israel as God's elect, and when we pay close attention to context in the NT we discover that election is a missional term. It is only rarely soteriological.<sup>5</sup> Let us turn to the first revelation of God's mission and examine the connection between mission and election.

### A. ABRAHAM

The first instance of God's "election at work"<sup>6</sup> was his choice of Abraham where Abraham was called to go and "be a blessing" (see Gen 12:1-3). No Hebrew term for election appears in Gen 12:1-3 but God's choosing is evident.<sup>7</sup> Centuries later the Israelites returning from exile gathered to repent and renew covenant obligations. That ceremony included a detailed and lengthy review of God's dealing with them in which they spoke of Abram's election, "You are the Lord, the God who *chose* Abram...and made with him the covenant" (Neh 9:7, emphasis added)<sup>8</sup>.

Mission and election are bound together in this text. This suggests several cautions when considering the doctrine of election.

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 8:33 (*eklektos*) and Eph 1:4 (*eklegomai*) may be rare instances in which election has a soteriological reference. C. Gordon Olson, "Astounding New Greek Discoveries About 'Election,'" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Grace Evangelical Society, Fort Worth, TX, April 19-22, 2011), PDF file, [http://www.mediatetheology.org/uploads/Astounding\\_Discoveries\\_on\\_Election.pdf](http://www.mediatetheology.org/uploads/Astounding_Discoveries_on_Election.pdf). Last accessed March 8, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Wright, 72.

<sup>7</sup> The primary Hebrew term *baḥar*, "to choose," is a common term with a broad field of meaning: men choosing wives (Gen 6:2) and real estate (Gen 13:11); appointing men to lead (Exod 18:25); selecting men for battle (Josh 8:3) and so forth.

<sup>8</sup> This verse uses the Hebrew verb *baḥar*. The prayer focuses on the land grant covenant that was part of the Abrahamic covenant to bless all the families.

First, we should check our propensity to automatically think of salvation when we encounter this term.<sup>9</sup> Second, abandonment or reprobation<sup>10</sup> are not necessarily entailed. Third, God's purpose in election deputized one for the benefit of all. Finally, as will be seen, election does not necessarily imply the selection of one from a pool of potential electees.<sup>11</sup>

## B. ISRAEL

Abraham's descendants inherited the covenant and its responsibility. When Israel's leaders,<sup>12</sup> prophets<sup>13</sup> and poets<sup>14</sup> contemplated their relationship with the Lord they used the verb "choose" (Heb. *baḥar*) liberally. "Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and *chose* their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day" (Deut 10:15). "Because he loved your fathers and *chose* their offspring after them..." (Deut 4:37).

For Israel responsibility accompanied election: the duty of holy living by obedience to the covenant. This is seen, for example, in Moses' justification for restrictive dietary laws. "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and the Lord has *chosen* you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth" (Deut 14:2). The demand for sanctified living stems from their election as God's mission to the nations. Israel was chosen to declare that there is no god or savior other than the Lord (Isa 43:8-13, 44:1-8). The connection between election, mission and godly living were clear.

The same was true of individuals and groups in Israel. Being chosen for service imposed a duty. God chose the Levites for spiritual and civil leadership, thereby making them responsible

<sup>9</sup> Abraham's spiritual status before the Lord is settled in Genesis 15 where terms of election are absent.

<sup>10</sup> In fact Abraham's election has the blessing of others in view.

<sup>11</sup> Olson offers persuasive evidence that election in certain NT contexts concerns the qualifications of the one chosen rather than the act of choosing. This is particularly true when the text has Christ in view as the object of election.

<sup>12</sup> Moses used *baḥar* 38 times in the Pentateuch. Most describe the Lord choosing a place for his name to dwell. E.g., Deut 12:11, 14:23, 15:20.

<sup>13</sup> *Baḥar* is used 28 times in the prophets, 20 of those appear in Isaiah.

<sup>14</sup> *Baḥar* is used 7 times in Job, 13 times in the Psalms, 4 times in Proverbs and 1 each in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs.

for adjudicating disputes (Deut 21:5), carrying the ark of the Lord (1 Chr 15:2), and performing tasks required to facilitate temple worship (2 Chr 29:3-11).<sup>15</sup> David was the chosen king, making him responsible for Israel's political and military governance.

And David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord—and I will celebrate before the Lord" (2 Sam 6:21).<sup>16</sup>

### C. MESSIAH

The Servant who figures prominently in Isaiah is God's elect. The Lord promised that the Servant, despised and abhorred, would receive obeisance from kings and princes "because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has *chosen* you" (Isa 49:7, emphasis added). As God's elect the Servant will fulfill Israel's mission to the nations: "I will make you as a light for the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isa 49:6). The Lord extols the elect Servant saying, "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my *chosen*, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations" (Isa 42:1, emphasis added) and establish justice in the earth (Isa 42:4) Paul confirms Christ's mission to the nations; "Therefore I will praise you among the nations" (Rom 15:9 quoting Ps 18:49) and "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people" (Rom 15:10 quoting Deut 32:43 from the LXX).

### D. SUMMARY

The Old Testament texts that speak of God electing are missional rather than soteriological. Abraham was elected to be the

<sup>15</sup> At the end of the list of duties *baḥar* is used in v 11.

<sup>16</sup> Election implies duty in some contexts as seen in the term "appoint" (Heb. *tsavah*). The Piel stem connotes "ordain, give charge, i.e. assign a role or function for a task or office with a focus on the authority of the one who appointed the leader." James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Hebrew (Old Testament)*. electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997). s.v. *tsavah*. See also Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2000), 845-846.

channel of blessing for humanity. Israel was elected to attract the nations to worship Him whom Israel serves in holiness. The Servant was elected to redeem Israel from its sin and to illuminate the nations with the glory and justice of God.

Election needs to be seen within the doctrine of mission, not only as a component of salvation. If we speak of being chosen, of being God's elect, it is to say that we are chosen for the sake of God's plan that the nations of the world come to enjoy the blessing of Abraham (which is exactly how Paul describes the effect of God's redemption of Israel through Christ in Gal 3:14).<sup>17</sup>

God's mission began with his promise to bless the nations through Abraham, his elect agent. The promise and its responsibility passed to his son Isaac (Gen 26:2-5), to his grandson Jacob (Gen 28:13-14), and eventually became the provenance of the nation of Israel (Deut 4:5-8).<sup>18</sup> An important pattern is established: God chooses people to participate in his mission. With that choice comes responsibility.

### III. GODLY LIVING AND MISSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

God's dealing with Abraham establishes another pattern: missional effectiveness is bound to godly living. A remarkable soliloquy in Genesis 18 finds the Lord himself articulating that link.

#### A. KEEP THE WAY OF THE LORD

Shortly before bringing destruction on Sodom and Gomorrah the Lord visited Abraham. Sandwiched between the remarkable promise that Sarah would bear a son within the year<sup>19</sup> and Abraham's intercession for the righteous in Sodom<sup>20</sup> the Lord converses with himself.

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<sup>17</sup> Wright, 72.

<sup>18</sup> Psalm 105:6-11 celebrates God's blessing and delivering the nation as he had promised Abraham (v 42). They were redeemed from Egypt that they might keep his statutes (v 45).

<sup>19</sup> Isaac's miraculous birth was critical to the fulfillment of God's promise to bless the nations.

<sup>20</sup> Abraham participated in God's mission by interceding for a nation about to be removed from the possibility of blessing. Arnold G.



“Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him” (Gen 18:17-19).

Verse 19 links election (“I have chosen him”), godly living (“keep the way of the Lord”) and missional effectiveness (“bring to Abraham what he has promised”).<sup>21</sup> The godly lives of Abraham’s heirs were required to fulfill the mission and promise. The logic is simple:

1. God’s Mission: bless the nations.
2. God’s Means: people who keep the way of the Lord.
3. God’s Method: elect Abraham to be father and teacher of that people.<sup>22</sup>

Gentile believers in the Church are now heirs of God’s promise to Abraham and of the responsibility that comes with it (Rom 4:13-17; Gal 3:7-9, 29). Our effectiveness is in part determined by our obedience to the way of the Lord. Though spoken in a different context, Jesus’ admonition to Jews resting comfortably in their lineage is fitting: “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did” (John 8:39).

## **B. GODLINESS AND MISSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The NT fortifies the link between godly living and missional effectiveness. Jesus’ declaration that “you are my witnesses” (Acts 1:8 cf. John 15:27) echoes Israel’s mission: “‘You are my witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘and my servant whom I have chosen...’” (Isa 43:10). We have been appointed to the same mission. Our mission effectiveness depends on our godly living as in Israel’s case. Many NT texts urge godly living for the sake

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Fruchtenbaum, *Ariel’s Bible Commentary: The Book of Genesis*. 1st Ed. (San Antonio, TX: Ariel Ministries, 2008), 315.

<sup>21</sup> Wright, 82.

<sup>22</sup> Wright, 93.

of effective witness. The most that we can accomplish within the modest confines of this essay is to note a few such texts.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus explicitly linked effective mission to godly living: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matt 5:16). This alluded to Isaiah’s prophecy of Israel’s future glory:

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising (Isa 60:1-3).

The good works Jesus mentioned are likely those found in the Beatitudes (Matt 5:1-10).<sup>23</sup>

Paul referred to the persuasive power of godly living (1 Thess 1:5).<sup>24</sup> He urged bondservants to live honorably so God’s name and teaching would be held in high regard (1 Tim 6:1; Titus 2:9-10).<sup>25</sup> He urged young wives to virtuous conduct for the same reason (Titus 2:4-5). Peter held that a godly life is often sufficient to silence foolish unbelievers (1 Pet 2:15). Indeed, a woman’s godly life may be so persuasive that her unbelieving husband will embrace the faith (1 Pet 3:1). Luke may have hinted at the importance of godly living for the mission of the church in the story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:32–5:16).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Philippians 2:14-16 alludes to Jesus’ admonition and the Isaiah passage.

<sup>24</sup> Paul notes that the Holy Spirit was the source of persuasion but adds that “the kind of men we proved to be among you” complemented the Spirit’s work, resulting in their belief in the truth of the gospel. The Thessalonians were chosen (v. 4) and imitated the godly lives of Paul and his cohort (v. 6). They then became a sterling example for others in Macedonia, Achaia and the rest of the world (v. 6-8). Their example still persuades to this day, having been enshrined in Paul’s letter.

<sup>25</sup> The latter suggests that godly living beautifies (Gr. *kosmeo*) the doctrine of God. J. P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (2 Volume Set), 2nd ed. (United Bible Societies, 1999-05), 1:694.

<sup>26</sup> More work is needed to establish this point. Here I simply offer the observation that deceit and hypocrisy were purged from the Church with the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. This event is preceded by mention of the believers’ sacrificial generosity (Acts 4:32-37) and the apostles’ power (4:33)

### C. HISTORY'S TESTIMONY

Extra-biblical evidence from the first centuries of the church confirms the persuasive power of the godly lives of the saints. Stark adduces many examples.<sup>27</sup> One powerful example is the Christians' response to plague in the ancient city. In the centuries before Christ plague was a source of dread terror. In his *History of the Peloponnesian War* Thucydides' reports a deadly plague that hit Athens in 431 BC.

The doctors were quite incapable of treating the disease because of their ignorance of the right methods... Equally useless were prayers made in the temples, consultation of the oracles, and so forth; indeed, in the end people were so overcome by their sufferings that they paid no further attention to such things.

They died with no one to look after them; indeed there were many houses in which all the inhabitants perished through lack of any attention... The bodies of the dying were heaped one on top of the other, and half-dead creatures could be seen staggering about in the streets or flocking around the fountains in their desire for water. The temples in which they took up their quarters were full of the dead bodies of people who had died inside them. For the catastrophe was so overwhelming that men, not knowing what would happen next to them, became indifferent to every rule of religion or of law... No fear of god or law of man had a restraining influence. As for the gods, it seemed to be the same thing whether

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and followed by a description of the apostolic miracles (5:12-16). Nestled in this is notice that people held the believers (5:14, note the antecedent "all" in v 13) in high esteem. The net result is that the church continued to swell with "multitudes". The persuasive power of the miracles is in view but that alone does not account for Luke's editorial decision to place the Ananias and Sapphira story in this context. Perhaps Luke is instructing us that both miracles and the godly lives of the believers are persuasive elements of the mission.

<sup>27</sup> Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal, Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 1997).

one worshipped them or not, when one saw the good and the bad dying indiscriminately.”<sup>28</sup>

Dread fear of plague would, centuries later, be the bleak setting against which the selfless deeds of Christians were displayed. In contrast to the indifference and deliberate neglect shown by the wealthy and powerful, Christians provided humanitarian relief in the ancient city, housing the homeless, feeding the poor, caring for orphans and widows, and nursing the victims of epidemics.<sup>29</sup> Stark recounts examples of how Christians responded to plague in the Church’s early centuries:

To cities filled with the homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity as well as hope. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered an immediate basis for attachments. To cities filled with orphans and widows, Christianity provided a new and expanded sense of family. To cities torn by violent ethnic strife, Christianity offered a new basis for social solidarity. And to cities faced with epidemics, fires and earthquakes, Christianity offered effective nursing services.<sup>30</sup>

The Old and New Testaments, supported by history, teach that godly living is vital for fruitful mission.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

When God chooses he obligates the chosen one to a godly life that results in greater missional fruitfulness. A pattern was established in God’s dealing with Abraham and Israel and holds true for us today: Election leads to mission, which leads to duty, which leads to godliness, which leads to effective witness.

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<sup>28</sup> Stark, 84-85.

<sup>29</sup> This echoes the Lord’s intention that Abraham’s descendants should do just and righteous deeds.

<sup>30</sup> Stark, 161.

## IV. THE CALL TO FRUITFULNESS IN 2 PETER 1:8-11

### A. EDITORIAL PURPOSE

Peter's second letter,<sup>31</sup> written to the same audience as his first, reveals his editorial purpose by its vocabulary and contents.<sup>32</sup> Careful word choice illuminates the moral laxity of false prophets threatening the believers' sanctity.<sup>33</sup> Arrogant (2 Pet 2:9) false teachers (2 Pet 2:1) motivated by sinful desires rationalized their sin by rejecting accountability and judgment (2 Pet 3:3-4). Mention of sensuality, blasphemy, greed, deception, and denying the Master reveal the threat (2 Pet 2:2).

His argument opens (1:3-4) by reminding his readers that the plentitude of divine resources provides everything needed to conduct a godly life worthy of the Lord.<sup>34</sup> The catalog of virtues (5-7) bracketed by the admonition to "make every effort"<sup>35</sup> leads into the purpose statement.

<sup>31</sup> Second Peter 3:1. Scholarly opinion notwithstanding it is best to take the author's word for it.

<sup>32</sup> Regarding the genre and structure of 2 Peter, Green notes that "the body opening is the place where the principal occasion for the letter is usually indicated...The opening of the letter body in 2 Peter is somewhat unusual in that it is neither a thanksgiving nor a blessing, yet it serves this common function [the function served by the body opening in Greek epistolary literature of this period] of introducing the fundamental themes that the author will subsequently address." Gene Green, *Jude and 2 Peter* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 179, 191.

<sup>33</sup> J. Daryl Charles, *Virtue Amidst Vice: The Catalog of Virtues in 2 Peter 1* (JSNT Supplement Series, 150) (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 86.

<sup>34</sup> The datives in the phrase "to his own glory and excellence" (Gr. *tou kalesantos hemas idiā doxē kai arete*) (v 3) could mean we are called to become like him in his glory and virtue or that his glory and virtue are the means by which we are called to a godly life. In view of "become partakers of the divine nature" (v 4) and the rhetorical "what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness?" (3:11), they refer to our objective: to become like Christ.

<sup>35</sup> The phrase "make every effort" (v 5) employs the noun *spoudē* while the phrase "be all the more diligent" (v 10) uses the cognate *spoudazō*. The verb is used again in v 15 to describe Peter's efforts. This threefold use of these terms underscores the gravity of the situation.

Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things (2 Pet 1:12-15).

His argument closes with a question that had been answered earlier. In view of certain judgment “what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness” (2 Pet 3:11). This leads to a final exhortation: “You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability” (2 Pet 3:17).<sup>36</sup>

Peter wrote to provide a continual reminder of the Bema judgment lest they be seduced by the moral laxity of false prophets. Steadfast godliness will result in a fruitful life that will be rewarded with a rich welcome into the kingdom.

## B. CATALOG OF VIRTUES

Mention of “these qualities” (v 12) in Peter’s purpose statement refers back to the catalog of virtues found in vv 5-7.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.

Peter adjured his readers to make special effort to develop these virtues in ever increasing measure. Verse 5 “make every effort” uses the noun *spoudē* where v 10 “be all the more diligent”

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<sup>36</sup> “Stability” (Gr. *sterigmos*) occurs only here in the NT, but a related verb (Gr. *sterizō*) occurs in 2 Pet 1:12. The antonym “unstable” or “unsteady” (Gr. *asteriktos*) is found in 2:14 and 3:16. By use of this word Peter challenged his audience to remain firm and fixed in the truth. Davids suggests that Barnabas was “carried away” when he joined Peter in refusing to eat the fellowship meal with the Galatian Gentiles (Gal 2:13). Davids, p. 311.

uses the cognate verb *spoudazō*, bracketing the passage with an urgent plea for diligence in cultivating Christian character. But the virtues are not an end in themselves; they serve a higher purpose. The reason Peter urged diligence in this matter is introduced next.

### C. EFFECTIVE AND FRUITFUL

Verse eight employs antenantiosis to illuminate the phrase “keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful (Gr. *argous oude akarpous*).”<sup>37</sup> Effectiveness and fruitfulness will be evaluated at the Bema Seat.<sup>38</sup> What are effectiveness and fruitfulness? What will the Lord look for in this judgment? What did Peter mean by using these terms and this figure?

Peter used a seldom-employed adjective *ineffective* (Gr. *argos*).<sup>39</sup> In the NT it signals “unemployed” (= unable to find work [Matt 20:3, 6]), “idle” (= “unwilling to work” [1 Tim 5:13, Titus 1:12]), “careless” (Matt 12:36) and “useless” or “worthless” (Jas 2:20).

Likewise *akarpous* often wraps “not at work” in disapproval. Here it means “without fruit”, perhaps as an allusion to Jesus cursing the fig tree (a metaphor for Israel) for its failure to produce.<sup>40</sup> To convey the positive sense of the figure of speech some form of superlative such as “a lavish harvest” is appropriate. Hodges’ comment is apt: “Conversely, a believer who is vigorous

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<sup>37</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible. Explained and Illustrated*. electronic ed. (London, England: Eyre & Spottiswoode; New York: NY: E. & J. B. Young & Co., 1898), 159. Antenantiosis employs a negative assertion to express the superlative. This differs from meiosis (also known as litotes), which diminishes one thing in order to elevate something else. Bullinger, 155. Some commentators treat this as hendiadys. Richard J. Bauckham, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 50, 2 Peter, Jude*. electronic ed. (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983-02-15), 188.

<sup>38</sup> For the moment I am presupposing that the text has the Bema Seat judgment in view, a point that will be established momentarily by reference back to Hodges’ paper and his commentary.

<sup>39</sup> The adjective *argos* appears eight times in the NT and the related verb, *argeō* appears once. The related verb (Gr. *argeō*) means “stop doing something, slack off, become idle.” William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. electronic ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 128. (BDAG hereafter).

<sup>40</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter, Jude (The NIV Application Commentary)*, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 47. See also Mark 12:12-14, 20-26.

in his service for God will most assuredly be fruitful.”<sup>41</sup> This brings us to the question of what Peter meant by *unfruitful*.

#### D. FRUITFUL/UNFRUITFUL

Peter’s lexicon isn’t much help as this is his only use of the adjective and the related noun (Gr. *karpos*) is also solo in Peter’s lexicon.<sup>42</sup> This invites consideration of the term’s use elsewhere in the NT.

##### 1. *The universe of meanings*

*Unfruitful* is relatively infrequent, occurring seven times in the NT (Matt 13:22; Mark 4:19; 1 Cor 14:14; Eph 5:11; Titus 3:14; 2 Pet 1:8; Jude 12), but several meanings are discernible: (1) the product of a stunted spiritual life (Matt 13:22, Mark 4:19), (2) the intellectual value of praying in a tongue (1 Cor 14:14), (3) deeds of those who walk in darkness (Eph 5:11, Jude 12), (4) and, by way of contrast, the opposite of merciful deeds. Five of the six non-Petrine occurrences relate to the believer’s meritorious behavior or lack thereof.<sup>43</sup>

The related noun, *karpos*, occurs sixty-six times in material and spiritual senses. The material sense applies to (1) agricultural products and (2) the offspring of livestock and humans. The spiritual sense includes (1) Christ-like character (e.g., Gal 5:22-23, Eph 5:8-11, Heb 12:11, Jas 3:17-18), (2) charity for the poor (Rom 1:13),<sup>44</sup> and (3) ministry results<sup>45</sup> including new

<sup>41</sup> Zane C. Hodges, “The Second Epistle of Peter,” *The Grace New Testament Commentary* (Denton, TX: The Grace Evangelical Society, 2010), 1173.

<sup>42</sup> In Acts 2:30 the noun refers to Christ as David’s offspring and heir to his throne.

<sup>43</sup> The Septuagint adds little additional information about this term using it three times: 4 Maccabees 16:7 (fruit of the womb), Wisdom 15:4 (the toil of those who paint idols), and Jer 2:6. This last translates the Hebrew noun *šalmāwet*, the deep darkness encountered in the wilderness during the Exodus.

<sup>44</sup> M. A. Kruger, “Tina Karpon, “Some Fruit” in Romans 1:13,” *Westminster Theological Journal*. electronic ed. 49, no. 1, (1987): 168-73.

<sup>45</sup> Philippians 1:22 presents an interesting question: what is the force of *karpos ergou*? The ESV, NASB and NIV translate “fruitful labor” as if the noun *karpos* carried adjectival force. Since *karpos* is nominative this is not the best understanding of the syntax. The AV, KJV and NKJV offer a better solution, rendering this as “fruit of (or “from” NKJV) my labor.” This genitive of source, rare in the NT, identifies whence the fruit derives. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics—Exegetical Syntax*



believers (e.g., John 4:31-36, 15:16; Col 1:6) and verbal praise to God (Heb 13:15).

The synonym “first fruits” (Gr. *aparche*) contributes to our understanding. As Rosscup notes, “though he uses the word *aparche*, and not *karpos*, his figure is drawn from the farmer’s ‘first fruits,’ the first token fruits representative of the full harvest he is yet to reap.”<sup>46</sup> Paul (1 Cor 16:15, Rom 16:5, 2 Thess 2:13), John (Rev 14:4), and James (Jas 1:18) use the term thus. Clement reported the apostles “preaching everywhere in country and town, they appointed their first-fruits, when they had proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons...”<sup>47</sup>

## 2. *Narrowing the field*

From a lexical standpoint a broad universe of meanings for *unfruitful* was available to Peter. We can’t consult Peter’s lexicon to close in on his meaning but we can narrow the field by considering the influence others may have had on his use of the word.

In this regard we find that Jesus used the term *karpos* forty-one times both literally and figuratively. He used it to refer to agricultural products (Matt 21:19, 26:29; Mark 11:14, 14:25; Luke 22:18), to the false prophet’s teaching (Matt 7:16-20), to careless words of judgment spoken against Christ (Matt 12:33) or others (Luke 6:43-44), to the product of a believer’s new life, to his resurrection (John 12:24), and to new converts (John 4:35-36, 15:16 and possibly John 15:2-5, 8). In the parable of the tenants, fruit refers to Israel’s disbelief under the Pharisees’ stewardship (Matt 21:33-41; Mark 12:1-11),<sup>48</sup> much as the

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*of the New Testament*. electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI:Zondervan, 1999), 109 on the genitive of source.

<sup>46</sup> James E. Rosscup, “Fruit in the New Testament.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125, no. 497 (January 1968): 65.

<sup>47</sup> First Clement 42:4. See J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, “The Epistle of S. Clement to the Corinthians” *The Apostolic Fathers*, Second Edition, electronic ed. (London, England: Macmillan and Co., 1893).

<sup>48</sup> The parable is reminiscent of Isaiah 5:1-7 in which the Lord made every possible provision for Israel, expecting a harvest of justice (Heb. *mišpāt*) and righteousness (Heb. *šedāqa*). Precisely the same terms appear in Gen 18:18-19. The Isaiah text treats justice and righteousness as ends in themselves while the Genesis text views them as a missional means to bless the nations. We cannot press the parable in Matthew 21 too hard for a definition of the fruit the vineyard owner sought since Jesus’ point, as in the parable before it (Matt 21:28-32), concerns the Jews’ rejecting him.

barren fig tree symbolized Israel's failure to produce anything of value (Luke 13:6-9).

Four instances (all in the parable of the soils) are oblique references to spiritual productivity.<sup>49</sup> Jesus explained the parable with the verb "bears fruit" (Gr. *karpaphoreō*) to denote the results produced by believers who persevere in the faith despite opposition<sup>50</sup> and resist the seduction of wealth.<sup>51</sup> "Fruit" refers to what grain that has sprouted and grown produces: more seed to sow.<sup>52</sup> The verb tenses describe sustained increases in the number of believers.<sup>53</sup> Character plays a role since productivity rests on persevering under duress, being circumspect about riches and pleasure, having honest and good hearts, and refusing to allow "cares" to distract from the mission. So although the fruit in this parable are new believers, spiritual maturity is in the background. As Rosscup states, "fruit as character and fruit as witness do not exist in an either/or relationship but rather in a both/and unity."<sup>54</sup> Christian character is "mission critical" to our role in God's mission, but the parable of the soils portrays new believers as the fruit.

Now we come to a verse of particular interest, John 15:16. "You did not choose (Gr. *eklegomai*) me, but I chose (Gr. *eklegomai*) you and appointed (Gr. *tithēmi*) you that you should go and bear fruit (Gr. *karpos*) and that your fruit (Gr. *karpos*) should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you." Jesus joined *karpos* and *eklegomai* for a reason that is identified in the purpose clause: "that you should go and

<sup>49</sup> Matt 13:8; Mark 4:7-8; Luke 8:8.

<sup>50</sup> Mark 4:16-17; Matt 13:20-21.

<sup>51</sup> Mark 4:18-19; Matt 13:22.

<sup>52</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke Volume 1: 1:1–9:50* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament), electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 726. Blomberg differs, arguing that the fruit is "consistent obedience to God's call." Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 218. The emphasis on quantity (thirty, sixty, one hundred) favors the notion that multiplication of additional seed is in view rather than spiritual transformation of the seed that sprouted. Seed sown in good soil produces more seed, which is then sown in other good soil.

<sup>53</sup> The imperfect *edidou* suggests that seed sown once (aorist *epesen*) continues to reproduce. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992), 337, n.22.

<sup>54</sup> Rosscup, 65.

bear fruit.”<sup>55</sup> Although using a different verb *go* this is similar to Matt 28:18-20.<sup>56</sup> Missional emphasis is reinforced by the word *appointed* (Gr. *tithēmi*), a term often referring to “being set apart” for ministry.<sup>57</sup>

Kostenberger writes:

The term “appoint” (τιθημι, *tithēmi*) probably reflects Semitic usage (Barrett 1978: 478). The same or a similar expression is used in the OT for God’s appointment of Abraham as father of many nations (Gen. 17:5; cf. Rom. 4:17), the ordination of Levites (Num. 8:10), and Moses’ commissioning of Joshua (Num. 27:18). In the NT, the term refers to being “set apart” for a particular ministry, such as Paul’s apostolic work (e.g., Acts 13:47, citing Isa 49:6; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11), the role of pastor (Acts 20:28), or a great number of other callings in the church (1 Cor. 12:28); in Heb. 1:2, the expression even refers to Jesus’ being made heir.<sup>58</sup>

Carson adds:

The best Greek texts record that Jesus chose them and set them apart (*ethēka*) that they might go and bear fruit. This verb also occurs in v 13: Jesus ‘sets apart’ or ‘sets aside’ (NIV ‘lays down’) his life for others. The verb commonly occurs, with a personal object, in contexts where people are being ‘set apart’ for particular ministry.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The syntax is typical of NT purpose clauses, *hina* plus a subjunctive verb.

<sup>56</sup> The verses use two different but synonymous terms for “go.” John 15:16 uses *hupagō* and Matthew 28:18 *proserchomai*. The first has the sense of “going away” (BDAG, 1028) while the second conveys the sense of “moving toward” (BDAG, 878).

<sup>57</sup> Olson has shown that *eklegomai* carries meaning “much the same as before the New Testament, that is, the appointment or commissioning of qualified people to an office or responsibility *with an obligation to fulfill it well*.” Olson, 3. My emphasis.

<sup>58</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, *John*. electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 459-460.

<sup>59</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*. electronic ed. (Leicester, England: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 523. Beasley-Murray similarly argues that in John 15:16 the apostles were being sent on a mission. George R.

Although the disciples had become Jesus' friends, privy to his reasoning and motives, they remained accountable for mission results. The gravity of this pronouncement, its mission emphasis and the purpose of their election were important influences on Peter's thinking. It is hard to imagine Peter using "fruitful" and "chosen" together without remembering Jesus' words.

So we see that Peter had a broad universe of possible meanings available for the adjective *unfruitful* or, by virtue of the figure of speech, the positive *fruitful*. The context of 2 Peter rules out agricultural products, human and animal offspring, charity and praise. This narrows the likely meaning to one of two: Christian maturity or new believers.

### E. IS CHRISTIAN CHARACTER IN VIEW?

At first glance the catalog of virtues preceding Peter's comments about being fruitful and effective are strong evidence that he had nothing more than Christian character in view. This is prevailing scholarly opinion.<sup>60</sup> In addition, those who have been conditioned to think first of virtue when they encounter these terms will default to that interpretation.<sup>61</sup> There are, however, good reasons to hold that new converts are in view.

### F. PETER'S USE OF "ELECTION"

In his first letter, written to the same audience (2 Pet 3:1), Peter wrote at length about the purpose for which God had chosen them (1 Pet 2:5-11). On this passage Olson observes,

It is significant that in the same context after Peter referred to Christ as the "choice stone" (2:4, 6), he went on to refer to the Church as "a chosen [choice] race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous

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Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 36, John* (Second Edition). electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 275.

<sup>60</sup> Hodges holds this view. Hodges, "Making Your Calling and Election Secure," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* (Spring, 1998): 30-31. See also, e.g., Bauckham, 188, Rosscup, 62.

<sup>61</sup> Many will think of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22-23 here, but it is more likely that Peter was influenced by Jesus than by Paul when he used the term "fruitful."

light.” (2:9 HCSB). Peter borrowed language used of the nation Israel to refer to the Church, thus indicating that the Church’s election, like Israel’s, was corporate and had an obligation attached. Peter indicated in Chapter 1 that election is conditional and in Chapter 2 that it is corporate.<sup>62</sup>

It is important to note Peter’s admonition in vv 11 and 12: “Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.”

He urged them to maintain honorable conduct in the face of powerful temptation so their godly lifestyles would be evident to all, resulting in greater glory to God. The link between God’s elective purposes and their need to maintain sanctified lives is inescapable. In this context godly living is not the goal; it is a means by which the mission is conducted in daily life.<sup>63</sup>

Peter returned to the theme of missional effectiveness in his second letter to warn the saints, lest indulging in the moral laxity promoted by false teachers would compromise their ministry.<sup>64</sup> If their sanctification is ruined, their witness will be ruined. If so, their mission will be compromised.

## G. ALLUSION TO THE BEMA

The *rich welcome* looks forward to rewards at the Bema Seat judgment, a fact missed by many commentators.<sup>65</sup> Hodges has shown what is at stake here; it is not entrance into the kingdom but a *rich welcome*.<sup>66</sup> The phrase “there will be richly provided”

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<sup>62</sup> Olson, 5.

<sup>63</sup> Thus Peter urges wives to godly character that their husbands might be won to the faith, 1 Pet 3:1-2. A godly life is of great interest to unbelievers who observe believers suffering unwarranted affliction with dignity, 2 Pet 3:13-15.

<sup>64</sup> See p. 77 under “Editorial Purpose.”

<sup>65</sup> Bauckham (p. 190), for example, asserts, “the ethical fruits of Christian conduct are objectively necessary for the attainment of final salvation.” Schreiner (p. 303) adds, “Peter likely meant that they give no evidence that their conversion is genuine.”

<sup>66</sup> Hodges, “Making Your Calling and Election Secure,” 21.

uses the adverb *plousiōs* (which refers to wealth) and the verb *epichorēgeō*, a term used of generous gifts.

The Scripture attests that we will be rewarded for mission productivity. Paul, for example, asks, “For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?” (1 Thess 2:19).<sup>67</sup> Jesus spoke of rewards for mission productivity. The parable of the talents teaches that Jesus will be looking for *increase*, not merely good intentions (Matt 25:14-30). The theme appears in His story of the nobleman who went afar and returned to receive his kingdom (Luke 19:11-27), and in a warning to be about the master’s work (Luke 12:48). What we are called to is not limited to personal sanctification. We are also called to make disciples (Matt 28:18-20).

Peter’s warning about falling (Gr. *ptaiō*) is germane to the Bema. Most commentators see this as final failure to enter the kingdom. Although Moo asserts that this refers to final failure to enter the kingdom, his comment that “‘stumbling’ here is the opposite of ‘receiving a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’” is in fact correct.<sup>68</sup> Here “fall” refers to losing one’s footing.<sup>69</sup> James used the term for an isolated failure to keep the law (Jas 2:10) and avers that all of us make many *mistakes* (Jas 3:2, twice). Gangel’s felicitous translation “to experience a reversal” captures the thought. Peter simply warned of a possible reversal of fortune, a loss of reward that can be averted by cultivating the virtues, thereby insuring that we bear much fruit for which we will be rewarded at the Bema.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> In Phil 4:1 Paul calls the saints, “my brothers whom I love and long for, my joy and crown.” In 2 Tim 4:5 he wrote of the “righteous crown” (genitive of attribute) to be awarded at the Bema for sustained perseverance in ministry.

<sup>68</sup> Moo, 49. His mistake is in equating receiving a rich reward with entering the kingdom. Stumbling is the opposite of receiving a rich reward in that one who stumbles forfeits the reward to be received at the Bema.

<sup>69</sup> BDAG cites 2 Pet 1:11 as the lone instance where the term means, “to experience disaster” and offers the formal equivalents *be ruined*, *be lost*. But this is only a secondary meaning. They indicate that the primary meaning of the term is “to lose one’s footing.” BDAG, 894.

<sup>70</sup> Hodges, “Making Your Calling and Election Secure,” 21.

## H. CONFIRM

We need to take into account the word “confirm” (*bebaian poiēsthai*). The adjective *bebaios* means “something that can be relied on not to cause disappointment.”<sup>71</sup> The related verb *bebaioō* means, “to put something beyond doubt.”<sup>72</sup> Legal and commercial transactions in the ancient world were often accompanied by the seller’s guarantee to protect the buyer’s rights in the transaction.<sup>73</sup>

Hodges sees this as similar to James’ doctrine of justification by works before men.<sup>74</sup> This is unlikely since the Bema is an accounting between the believer and the Lord Jesus. The believer is to make certain his calling and election, but to whom? It is offered *to the Lord*. The fruit our lives have produced—new believers—demonstrate that we were faithful in carrying out the mission given to us by Jesus.

## I. GODLINESS

Peter uses “godliness” (Gr. *eusebia*) three times in this context at vv 3 (once) and 7 (twice). This is relatively rare in the NT. The NT authors use it to summarize the “behavior expected of Christians who have come to know the God of Scripture.”<sup>75</sup> Peter’s catalog of virtues is a list of observable behaviors, not just interior conditions of the believer’s spiritual life. “Significantly, all the occurrences of “godliness” are confined to the Pastorals and 2 Peter, where it serves to underscore a particular way of life, that is, the behavior that is worthy of praise.”<sup>76</sup> This contributes to the missional emphasis in the passage by pointing

<sup>71</sup> BDAG, 172.

<sup>72</sup> BDAG, 179.

<sup>73</sup> Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friederich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), s.v. *bebaios*. Bauckham backs away from the legal metaphor because he is looking for the Reformed doctrine of Perseverance. But if we retain the commercial or legal meaning of the term and also retain the meaning of *eklogē* that Olson has established, then this text means that the new believers produced by our faithful participation in the mission guarantee that Christ was wise in choosing us to serve in his mission. Our fruit confirms that we are well suited for and apt to complete the mission.

<sup>74</sup> Hodges, “Making Your Calling and Election Secure,” 30.

<sup>75</sup> Moo, 41.

<sup>76</sup> Charles, 144.

to praiseworthy Christian conduct. The praise is probably the praise of other people but praise at the Bema Seat may also be in view.

**J. THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST**

Second Peter 1:8 presents an interesting syntactical question that must be answered in order to discover Peter’s intended meaning. How is the phrase ‘in (Gr. *eis*) the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ’ related to the adjectives ineffective and unfruitful? The syntax is somewhat complicated: the adjectives are object-complements for the suppressed object of the verb “keep” (Gr. *kathitēmi*). For clarity’s sake the diagram omits parts of the verse that don’t bear directly on the significance of the prepositional phrase in question.

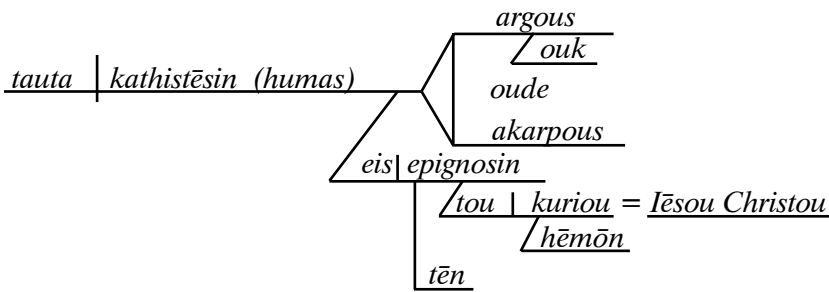


Diagram 1: A portion of 2 Peter 1:8

The lexicons and grammars offer little illumination. The preposition is common and the accusative case covers a broad field so we look to the context to answer the question.<sup>77</sup> Commentaries that address this tend to favor one of two views. Most see this as indicating the *goal* or *results* of an effective and fruitful life<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> BDAG devotes four pages (288-291) to the preposition *eis*. Wallace identifies fourteen distinct uses of the accusative case in NT Greek. Wallace, 176-205.

<sup>78</sup> G. Green (p. 197) states, “...moral virtue rebounds to their knowledge of Christ (εἰς, *eis*, in or unto, which introduces the goal)” but his conclusion that the possession of ever increasing virtue will “cause them not to be ‘worthless’ in this knowledge of Christ” lacks clarity and precision. Bauckham (p. 188) notes that “Most commentators take this phrase to refer to the goal or product of the virtues: virtuous conduct leads to fuller knowledge of Christ (Plumptre, Mayor, Wand, Chaine, Windisch, Schelkle, Reicke, Spicq, Green, Schrage, Grundmann; also Spicq, *Agape*, 376–77).”



while others see it as the *basis* of spiritual growth.<sup>79</sup> Both views make good sense of the text and neither adversely affects the thesis that ‘fruit’ refers to new believers rather than spiritual maturity.

If this construct refers to results then the logic would be something like this: the ever increasing presence of virtue in your life enhances your effectiveness in the mission for which you have been chosen, and, in addition to the rich welcome you will receive at the Bema, you will in this life enjoy a greater degree of intimacy with Christ.<sup>80</sup> A virtuous life—one marked by the catalog of virtues and the fruit of new believers—leads to fuller knowledge of Christ.

More likely, however, is the notion that v 8 looks back to v 2: “May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge (Gr. *epignōsis*) of God and of Jesus our Lord.” Here we see that intimacy with the Lord is the sphere in which grace and peace are lavishly supplied.<sup>81</sup> This means that, according to v 8, “knowledge of Christ becomes the root of the virtuous life.”<sup>82</sup> If we are firmly grounded and deeply rooted in our knowledge of Christ, these commendable virtues will be evident in us and we will be effective in the mission for which we were chosen.

In summary, the word *unfruitful* in 2 Pet 1:8 appears in a context rich with word choices, allusions and literary connections that offer strong evidence that new believers were present in Peter’s mind when he used the term. This is not an either/or situation because godly living is an important element in the believer’s mission success. Because the production of fruit-as-new-believers depends on sanctified living it was natural for Peter to have fruit-as-Christian-conduct in mind while he wrote about mission success. In view of the passage’s strong connections with mission, election, and Bema judgment, new believers are the fruit that confirms we are worthy of the reward.

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<sup>79</sup> This is the accusative of reference or respect. Wallace, 203. Again Bauckham’s helpful survey indicates “a few commentators take the knowledge of Christ to be the root from which moral progress proceeds (Spitta, Bigg, Kelly; also Dupont, *Gnosis*, 32–33).” Bauckham, 188.

<sup>80</sup> The oft cited distinction between *gnōsis* and *epignōsis* as though they were technical terms with precisely delimited meanings finds no support in Peter’s use of the terms. See Strange, 16, Schreiner, 288, Bauckham, 169-70, and Davids, 165-66.

<sup>81</sup> Davids, 166.

<sup>82</sup> Arichea, 82.

## K. PAUL'S CONFIRMATION

Paul also used “fruit” to refer to new believers in a context where holy living is also present in his letter to the Colossian church:<sup>83</sup>

...the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth...(Col 1:5-6).

The subsequent admonition in Col 1:9-12 hits many of the notes sounded in 2 Pet 1:5-11:

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light (Col 1:9-12).<sup>84</sup>

The Colossians' character and witness were the focus of Paul's prayer. “Bearing fruit in every good work” clarifies *how* one walks worthy of the Lord. The phrase draws attention to the abundant gospel harvest for which Paul gave thanks.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> I am not suggesting that this was the only way Paul employed the term. Clearly in texts like Gal 5:22-23 and Eph 5:8-11 we see Paul using it to refer to Christian character.

<sup>84</sup> While conceivable that Paul used “fruit” in two different ways in vv 6 and 10 the context offers no clear indication that he switched referents in v 10. To switch meanings while reading reveals the reader's predisposition to favor one meaning over the other without contextual hints that this is appropriate. After his exposition of what it means to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord” (2:6-4:1) Paul returns to the mission by asking prayer for opportunity and clarity (4:2-4) and by reminding them that their “walk” has specific missional responsibility (4:5-6).

<sup>85</sup> Peter T. O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 44, Colossians-Philemon*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 24.

The gospel produced plentiful harvest of new believers even in Colossae. “Bearing fruit in every good work” refers to ministry activities that result in the birth and growth of new believers with emphasis on (but not limited to) evangelism.<sup>86</sup> In this text we are justified in saying that “the results of the missionary are his fruit.”<sup>87</sup> The accompanying phrase “increasing in the knowledge of God” suggests “obedience to the work of God brings further knowledge of God himself,” thereby linking the fruit of missional activity as being both new believers and growth in Christian character.<sup>88</sup>

Rosscup observes:

First, to speak as though fruit is limited to soul-winning is to be oblivious to other possibilities for fruit. The Christian who discerns the harmony within the varied scope of fruit will rightly desire a life of all-around symmetry in fruit-bearing. Secondly, however, he will see that His Lord placed paramount emphasis upon taking His message to others (Matt 28:19-20; Luke 19:10; Acts 1:8). The book of Acts goes on to record the Spirit’s acts through men with the central thrust of introducing other men to Christ, and the epistles are primarily “follow-up materials.” The Christian should realize that fruit as character

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<sup>86</sup> Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*. electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 1991), 203. In contrast Dunn sees this as nothing more than maturity. James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 72. Surprisingly, Dunn argues on one hand that elsewhere in Scripture fruit is thought of in terms of good moral character “but here it could simply denote the success of the gospel in winning more and more to belief in Christ Jesus.” Then, in the midst of his comment on Col 1:6 he argues that the term is unclear. To the contrary, the context is clear that fruit is the abundant harvest of new believers.

<sup>87</sup> Kittel et al., 3:615. In his comment on John 15:16 Carson states, “[t] his fact, and the emphasis on *going* and bearing fruit, have suggested to many commentators, probably rightly, that the fruit primarily in view in this verse is the fruit that emerges from mission, from specific ministry to which the disciples have been sent. The fruit, in short, is new converts. One purpose of election, then, is that the disciples who have been so blessed with revelation and understanding, should win others to the faith—*fruit that will last*.” Carson, 523, emphasis his.

<sup>88</sup> Melick, 204.

and fruit as witness do not exist in an either/or relationship but rather in a both/and unity.<sup>89</sup>

Diligent missional activity results in new believers and a closer relationship with God for those chosen to serve the mission.

## V. CONCLUSION

God's mission to restore creation to the blessed state it enjoyed before the Fall is a major theme that integrates the vast expanse of the Old and New Testaments. His mission was revealed, in pregnant form, in a promise He made to Abraham that through his seed all the families of earth would be blessed. As time progressed the Lord revealed additional details about the promise, and the promise passed from generation to generation. For a time the nation of Abraham's descendants, Israel, was the center of God's mission on earth. The prophets foretold that the Servant would one day bring about the fullness of the promise; he would be a light to the nations that would stream into Israel to worship the Lord.

God selects humans to be agents of his mission, an act the scriptures signify by use of the Old and New Testament words commonly translated as "election." When God appoints someone to participate in the mission that appointment brings accountability; the one chosen for mission is responsible for living in such a way that attracts unbelievers and directs their attention to God whom they praise. Godly living, then, is a critical component to effective mission service.

Peter wrote his second epistle to warn his readers about the danger of moral laxity that threatened the sanctity of the Church and the effectiveness of her testimony. Their holy lives were important in their task of proclaiming God's excellencies to the world. In this they were like the Israelites whose holiness and covenant obedience were to have attracted the nations to Israel's God.

Peter's second epistle urges them to cultivate godly character for a purpose: so that they would be effective and fruitful. When 2 Pet 1:5-11 is read with a missional hermeneutic, it becomes

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<sup>89</sup> Rosscup, 65.

plausible to understand Peter's use of the term "fruitful" as a metaphor for new believers who believe in Christ through the ministry of Christians who live godly lives. This is especially true bearing in mind Jesus' words in John 15:16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, He may give it to you."

Second Peter 1:5-11 urges Christian virtue on all believers so that they will be effective witnesses whose lives yield a bountiful harvest of new believers and that they will be richly rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ.



## BOOK REVIEWS

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***A Queer Thing Happened to America: And What a Long, Strange Trip It's Been.*** By Michael L. Brown. Concord, NC: EqualTime Books, 2011. 691 pp. Cloth, \$27.99.

After speaking at a church recently I received a glowing recommendation of this book. Thus I was anxious to read it, especially since homosexuality is such a major issue today.

Brown, a Jewish Christian who is an OT scholar with a Ph.D. from NYU, is the author of twenty books and is a powerful speaker and debater. Thus I had high expectations for this work.

Though the book is hard hitting, Brown's tone is non-hostile. He wishes to warn people about the dangers of the gay movement and he also wants to see gay people escape that lifestyle.

The title is extremely catchy. And it is descriptive. However, since the word *queer* is still seen by many as pejorative (though some homosexuals embrace the term), I would have thought that a more peaceable title would have been better in fitting with the author's stated desire to be gracious and irenic in his approach (cf. pp. 9-13, 56-57, 68-69, 74-75).

I found the book full of amazing material that reveals how far the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) movement has come. However, I also found that I was deeply disturbed by what I read and I could not take more than about an hour of reading at a time.

There are many points that jumped out at me. I will mention but a few here.

According to the Riddle Homophobia Scale, to be homophobic includes *being tolerant* of gays or even *being accepting* of them (p. 117). That is remarkable. If you not only tolerate homosexuals but even accept them and their argument that they were born this way and there is nothing wrong with their sexual orientation or practices, then you are still homophobic unless you go much further! What homosexuals want today, what they consider non-homophobic, is "support, admiration, appreciation,

and nurturance” (p. 117). If you do not admire and appreciate and support and nurture homosexuals, you are homophobic.

The homosexual community insists that it is impossible and even very dangerous for a homosexual person to attempt to stop being a homosexual (pp. 170-72; 425-26, 430-52). They completely reject the many testimonies of people who say they are now “ex-gays.”

Brown quotes from an article by Matthew Hoffman, a conservative journalist, who discusses the odd position in which psychologists and psychiatrists now find themselves. According to current psychiatric principles, if a man comes to a doctor saying he is trapped in the wrong body and wants to undergo surgery (i.e., castration) to become a woman, the therapist is to tell him that such a goal is fine, but that there will need to be a couple of years of therapy before the surgery can be scheduled (p. 270). However, if a man comes to the same counselor and says, “I feel terrible. I’m a man, but I feel attracted to other men. I want to change my sexual preference. I want to become heterosexual” (p. 471), then “the psychologist responds: ‘Oh no, absolutely not! That would be unethical. Sexual orientation is an immutable characteristic!’” (p. 471). So a person who needs surgery to change his sex is encouraged and one who wants therapy to have a wife and kids is told this is impossible and a violation of nature.

Brown gives examples of people, including the man who was permitted to play in the U.S. Women’s Open tennis championships, Dr. Renée Richards (née Richard Raskind), who had sex change surgery and who came to have lots of regrets (pp. 574-78). Brown shows real examples of how the decision to have sex a change operation has caused lots of hardship for people’s spouses and children.

The concerted effort in the public schools to promote homosexuality and gender confusion and even sex change is presented with plenty of examples (pp. 85-119).

“Monogamy” in the gay community often does not mean having only one sexual partner, but instead means having one *primary* sexual partner (pp. 387-89). Thus it is not unusual for those lesbians or gays who identify themselves as couples, despite the hype, to have outside relationships. This certainly puts a different spin on same sex marriages. Brown refers to



one study by pro-gay writers that says that “roughly four in ten gay males, and over half of all lesbians, were found to be leading decidedly *unpromiscuous sex lives*” (p. 390). That means that the writers are admitting that six in ten gay men and somewhere close to half of all lesbians have *decidedly promiscuous sex lives*.

The research in this book is extensive. Unfortunately, instead of footnotes, there are endnotes. These endnotes, which are excellent, run nearly 100 pages (pp. 601-689). The book would be much more reader friendly with footnotes so that the reader could simply look at the bottom of the page on which a note appears.

There is no subject index in the book itself. It is available on a website called [aqueerthing.com](http://aqueerthing.com). While that is helpful, it is a bit of a hassle to go back and forth from a book to a website (or to print it out and have 25 loose pages).

There is very little reference to Scripture in this book. Nor could I find anywhere in which Brown explained to the reader what one must do to have everlasting life.

I believe this book should be an important resource for pastors, elders, deacons, Christian counselors, youth workers, and parents of children in public schools. I recommend it.

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***Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe.*** By Mark Driscoll & Gerry Breshears. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010. 464 pp. Cloth, \$22.99.

The positives of *Doctrine: What Christians Should Believe*, are that it is conservative, it is written in a way that is accessible to the layperson, there is an extensive scripture index in the back along with a relatively-good subject index, and the book is thorough for being such a short treatment of systematic theology.

The negatives are that it proclaims a moderate form of Lordship Salvation (For example, see p. 188, 270, 317), though this is not emphasized, it does not provide exegesis or exposition

of biblical passages, but merely proof-texting (all Scripture references are in footnotes), it tends to view all aspects of doctrine in light of soteriology, the kingdom is presented as already/not-yet (p.411-17), and Scripture is only rarely quoted in the text. Instead, Reformed scholars are often cited to prove doctrines. See also more concerns below.

I am baffled by the choice of the publisher to use the serpent from the Garden of Eden for the cover of a book that is subtitled "What Christians Should Believe." (Compare the cover with the image on p. 144.) It is hard to imagine less appropriate imagery.

Because of the breadth of topics covered in the book, I will not be able to give a review of every idea presented. The places I do discuss are chosen because of their interest for *JOTGES* readers.

The section, "Aspects of Our Humanity in the New Testament" on pages 126-30 is poor. For example, in arguing that the Bible sometimes uses *pneuma* as an equivalent for "soul" and "flesh" (p. 127), the authors cite Phlm 17 and 2 Cor 2:13 and 7:5 respectively as proof. Philemon 17 does not use the term *pneuma* or the Greek word for soul, *psuchē*, nor does the context have anything to do with either. In fact, in the whole book of Philemon, *pneuma* only appears once in the closing verse (v 25, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."), and *psuchē* doesn't appear at all in the book. Regarding using 2 Cor 2:13 and 7:5 as proof texts for the idea that the Bible equates the spirit and the flesh, they are making the assumption that because Paul's spirit can have "no rest" (due to not being able to find Timothy) and his flesh can have "no rest" (due to physical trials) they must both be the same thing.

Furthermore, when arguing for man being dichotomous, the authors make this unqualified statement: "trichotomy is rooted more in Greek philosophy than biblical exegesis" (p. 129). This statement turns reality on its head. Dichotomy is not from the Bible but is straight from Plato and Neo-Platonism and did not enter into Christian thought (outside of the Gnostics) until Augustine's rejection of the Millennium. The dichotomy of flesh and soul/spirit fit well into Augustine's Amillennialism because it played into the idea that physical = bad therefore the kingdom must not be literal. Augustine's dependence upon Plato and Plotinus is well-documented, so it is not surprising that he

borrowed this idea as well. By contrast, 1 Thess 5:23 and Heb 4:12 (along with many other Biblical passages) teach a distinction between soul and spirit.

This book also argues for two contradictory views regarding the Mosaic Law, presenting both as valid options. First, it argues that the Law of Moses is divided into three parts, Ceremonial, Civil, and Moral, and that the Christian is bound to the “moral law” (p. 198-99). Second, it argues that “the whole law is valid until its purpose is accomplished in Christ” (p. 199). The end of this section suggests the latter view is correct, but this is flatly contradicted on the previous page (second and third full paragraphs) in an *ipso facto* manner. The reader is left with no real guidance concerning which view is correct and the book ends up siding with both Paul and the Galatian Judaizers. This is a serious flaw in the book because it plays both sides of the most significant struggle in Paul’s written ministry.

On a positive note, I thoroughly enjoyed the first chapter, “Trinity: God Is.” It was encouraging and thought-provoking, and this chapter would make the book worth picking up in paperback. The second and third chapters, “Revelation: God Speaks,” and “Creation: God Makes,” were good as well. Coming from a conservative Evangelical viewpoint, it is not surprising that I could say, “Amen” to what was written here.

Overall, this book does contain some good things, but the negatives make it so that I could not be comfortable giving it to a new believer, or even one that is not thoroughly grounded. I do, however, recommend that pastors read it. It is likely that there will be some in their congregations who will read it and they should be aware of what it says, both good and bad.

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***The Popular Dictionary of Bible Prophecy: More Than 350 Terms and Concepts Defined.*** By Ron Rhodes. Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2010. 340 pp. Paper, \$14.99.

During a seminary class on eschatology I once heard a graduating student exclaim in frustration, “I just don’t know what

I believe!” Ron Rhodes has sought to solve such predicaments with this helpful and engaging dictionary for terms relating to the end times.

Equipped with a Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary, Rhodes approaches each definition alphabetically from a premillennial, pretribulational viewpoint. His book explains biblical terms (ex. *Book of Life, Lampstands, Parousia*), names (ex. *Matthew, Antichrist*), and locations (ex. *Gehenna, Patmos, Armageddon, New Jerusalem*) as well as theological words (ex. *Amillennialism, Tribulation Saints, Dispensations*) and ideas (ex. *Martyrdom During Tribulation, Regathering of Jews to Homeland, Rapture Distinct from Second Coming*). Each entry includes roughly one page of discussion with sufficient Scripture references listed. Though Rhodes is writing a dictionary and not an encyclopedia, on select terms he does find it beneficial to list various viewpoints (ex. *Overcomers, Church and Israel Distinctions, Eclectic View of Revelation*) as well as their strengths and deficiencies. This is very helpful for readers who have never interacted with differing opinions. Still, one will not walk away thinking Rhodes is anything but a premillennial, pretribulational Dispensationalist.

Some phrases require more than one page of explanation. Items like this which I found helpful include *Preterism, Millennial Temple and Sacrifices, Parables of the Kingdom*, and *Replacement Theology*. Also beneficial were the inclusion of nonbiblical terms relevant to our culture, such as *Purgatory, Nostradamus, Reincarnation*, etc.

Free Grace readers will be encouraged that Rhodes includes within his entry for the *Gospel of John* the fact that the term believe occurs around 100 times and is the purpose for John’s writing (p. 158). Also, when discussing the *Judgment Seat of Christ*, eternal security is stressed along with the Bema’s correct purpose, which is the believer’s reception or loss of rewards (p. 163). While some readers may disagree with his definition for *Repentance* (“to change one’s mind,” yet also carrying the idea of “changing one’s way of life” p. 256), Rhodes follows both Jesus’ and the Apostle John’s examples in keeping this term out of his entry for *Eternal Life* (p. 90). While Rhodes does take the approach that *all* Christians will reign with Christ (see *Reign with Christ*, p. 252), when discussing *Overcomers* he nonetheless

communicates that the Scriptural instructions to “overcome” do not allow for a loss of eternal life but rather of rewards at the Bema (pp. 218-219).

His bibliography includes over fifty works, most of which are written by well-known Premillennial Dispensationalists, and serves as a great source for further study. Rhodes’s work is recommended both for your personal library as well as to be given as a gift!

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***Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming The Gospel as Good News.*** By Darrell L. Bock. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2010. 146 pp. Paper, \$16.99.

I’ve known the author since he was one of my professors in the doctoral program at Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). In the late 1990s he and I had a public discussion in front of about 150 DTS students on the topic of this book.

Bock has the ability to clearly communicate the prevailing views of Evangelical scholars on just about any topic, the gospel included. This work has only a handful of footnotes and only two citing an author other than Bock himself (p. 13 fn. 6, p. 84 fn. 5). That shows that this is not being put forth for scholars but for laypeople and for Bible college and seminary students. However, his words reflect what is seen repeatedly in the current scholarly literature about salvation and the gospel. He easily could have quoted scores of scholars who agree with him. That makes this very helpful since it is a primer on what current scholarship thinks about salvation and the gospel.

Pastor Rick Warren in the foreword says, “Darrell [Bock] demonstrates that the real gospel encompasses far more than just a transaction for sin, or a therapy for self, or a transportation to heaven. The gospel is transforming! It transforms everything about us, in us, around us, and for us. It does what we could have never done for ourselves” (p. vii).

Similarly three of the endorsers mention “the transformative power” of the gospel (Ed Blum, p. i), the “connect[ion] the gospel

and the cross [have] with the life of discipleship” (Timothy George, p. ii), and “the nature of the gospel as the fullness of life in the Spirit for everyday Christians” (Michael J. Wilkins, p. ii).

Though Bock does not believe that the gospel only concerns “a transaction for sin,” or “transportation to heaven” as Warren rightly notes, he does believe that in order to make it to heaven one must yield his life to Christ and must experience a transformed life (see, for example, pp. 98, 104, 106, 125-132).

*JOTGES* readers would be especially interested in Chap. 6, “Embracing the Gospel: Repentance and Faith” (pp. 89-110). The proper response, that is, the saving response, to the gospel requires both repentance and faith, he says. There must be a “change of direction that comes with the response to the gospel” (p. 89). He says that repentance is a change of mind “about God and our relationship with Him..., rethinking the way we relate and respond to God..., and it can also touch on how we relate to others,” (p. 92), which he calls the “ethical impact” of the call to repent (pp. 92-93).

It should be no surprise that when Bock discusses what faith is, it is not simply believing, but includes an openness to God and to being led by Him. “Faith...is not static. That is, we do not have faith in a moment; it is an ongoing state...*faith is not a one-time act*; it keeps going. When we equate faith with belief, we are talking about an ongoing faith, not merely a moment of intellectual assent. This why trust, or reliance, is better a synonym than belief. This faith means that we are open to God and responsive to Him. *Without that responsiveness, faith is not faith*” (p. 98, emphases added).

A few pages later he adds, “However, this faith is not merely an act in a moment; it is an orientation that opens us up to respond to God and be led by Him. It leads us into following His path, because we trust Him (Eph 2:10)” (p. 104). And again two pages later he repeats, “Faith is not a mere act taken in a moment; it is a fresh orientation of responsiveness to God” (p. 106).

The concluding chapter starts with a discussion of Luke 15 and especially the parable of the prodigal son, which Bock says “is misnamed.” He says that, “It really is about the Compassionate Father” (p. 130). He says, “This dynamic [God’s love of us causing us to love Him in return] explains *how Jesus*

*could teach that the way to eternal life was to love God with all our being. Faith in God means entry into His love that causes us to love and respond to Him in return”* (p. 130).

This is a sophisticated presentation of Lordship Salvation. Yet it is explained in a very irenic way. Bock’s discussion lacks some of the harsher tones found in some presentations of Lordship Salvation.

As an example of the irenic tone, Bock ends the concluding chapter with a discussion of Luke 7:36-50 and the sinful woman who was so grateful to have been forgiven by Jesus. He then gives what he calls “a modern version of Jesus’ story” (p. 132). A couple cannot pay their mortgage and are about to lose their home. The lender calls them in and “asks where the payments are, and you tell him you cannot pay.” But then “he reaches into his desk and begins to write. He hands you the mortgage and a check...He has just paid your [entire] mortgage. You are free to go with the house now fully yours. Undeserved, your debt is paid. Now if that happened, I bet you’d be grateful to the lender. In fact, I bet you’d be willing to tell others about your great lender” (p. 132).

The last illustration does not say anything about the ongoing nature of faith, about the need to love God in return, about the change in direction needed, etc. Is Bock contradicting himself? While one could understand the closing discussion in that way, a more balanced understanding is that Bock expects the reader to remember all that he has said and discussed about repentance and faith and responsiveness to God until this point. For Bock everlasting life is a gift of God’s grace *and* it is something that is only received as one continues to love God with his whole being until death. While that is confusing, it is an accurate reflection of the current state of theological scholarship.

I recommend this book. It is well worth reading and having.

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***Getting the Reformation Wrong: Correcting Some Misunderstandings.*** By James R. Payton Jr. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010. 272 pp. Paper, \$23.00.

The Reformation is clearly a key movement in Church History. Yet, it is often one of the most misunderstood movements as well. This book goes a long way toward helping correct some of those misunderstandings.

The way of “Getting the Reformation Wrong” that Payton most often discusses is seeing the Renaissance and Reformation as counter movements. The Renaissance in fact paved the way for the Reformation through the growing distrust of the oppressive Catholic Church (not Christ), and the introduction of humanism. Because the term *humanism* has later been used to describe some anti-Christian movements, people have read this idea into the humanism of the Renaissance. But this is anachronistic. Humanism, to those of the Renaissance, was simply the study of humanities, and was set in contrast to scholasticism. This contrast included (but was not limited to) the ideas of Scripture versus Aristotle, and winning people through winsomeness versus trying first to appear clever by tearing down opponents. To express this latter difference, Payton refers to Erasmus’s perspective that, “truth is not distilled at high temperature” (p. 98).

Calvin, Zwingli, Melancthon, Bucer, and Oecolampadius were all humanists who opposed scholasticism. Luther was trained under the scholastic method (all of the Catholic officials were) and had trouble completely breaking free from it, but he too repudiated scholasticism. For example, Payton quotes Luther as saying, “I think I have sufficiently shown from their own writings that scholastic theology is nothing else than ignorance of the truth and a stumbling block in comparison with Scripture” (p. 196, quoted from Martin Luther, *Against Latomus 1521*, in Tappert, *Selected Writings of Martin Luther: 1517-1520*, pp. 197-98).

According to Payton, the failure of the Reformation (he sees successes as well) is that Protestantism has been fragmented due to the post-reformers abandoning the humanist model in favor of the scholastic model (pp. 190-210, 256-58). The infighting and incivility that resulted from this change became a reproach. Payton’s desire for unity is apparent in this discussion.



From page 127 to 131, however, Payton abandons his gracious and even tone. Forgetting his own expressed desire to see Protestantism less divided and more civil, he launches into a vitriolic diatribe against the idea of justification through what he calls in this section, “solitary faith.” During this section, Payton begins using quote marks diminutively, uses the popular pejoratives “cheap grace” and “easy-believism” (p. 130), and even goes so far as to compare justification by simple faith with the selling of indulgences, labeling those who hold to it “contemporary Tetzels.” He does this offering no Biblical evidence for his view other than to quote Matt 10:22 without context. Overall, this book is evenhanded, gracious, and scholarly. These few pages are an exception. They are so far below the quality of this work that they could not have been more conspicuous if they were replaced with a string of profanity.

However, even this chapter (other than this particular section) is quite valuable. In it he shows that what Luther, Calvin, Bucer, Melancthon, and Zwingli meant by *sola fide* was not really *faith alone*. Convincing quotes from each of these Reformers show that they all taught that without works a believer could not hope to escape the lake of fire. Luther and Calvin, at least, could also be quoted to show that justification really *is* by faith alone apart from works. But they were either inconsistent or they abandoned this later in life (in response to the Jesuit’s charges of Antinomianism). Because of this, it would probably be helpful for us to not look to the Reformers for confirmation of Free Grace, but to Scripture alone.

Payton clearly wants the Reformers to be seen positively and this does hinder his objectivity at times. There is no mention of any of the anti-Semitism prevalent in Luther and the tyrannical practices of Calvin in Geneva are not directly connected to him in this book. Even in his chapter, “How the Anabaptists Fit In,” where he discusses the execution of Felix Manz for requesting to be baptized, and makes a passing reference to others who had been executed for the same reason, he seems to come close to excusing it when he says: “Undeniably this was an extreme response to what they had done. The reaction indicates, though, how radical the step [of requesting baptism] was which these Anabaptists had taken in the estimation of some responsible civic leaders in that day...How could such a sentence be passed?”

(...) [B]ecause repudiation of the paedobaptism practiced universally within the church for many centuries with a call for an adult baptism constituted a radical (from *radix*, Latin for 'root') attack on society, cutting on its roots as then constituted and accepted (p. 164)." This seems to me like an attempt to downplay an atrocity. Far stronger language is reserved for those who share John 3:16 than for those who burned Christians at the stake. This kind of trap is easy to fall into when we let our theology (his is clearly Reformed) to some extent drive our view of history.

Overall, this book is excellent. The negative aspects of it, though significant, are limited to only a few pages' discussion. From it I learned a great deal about the connection between the Renaissance and the Reformation, and gained a better understanding of how the Post-Reformers descended so far into legalism (though this was not within the book's scope). I highly recommend this book for those who are grounded in the Free Grace message, though I would not recommend it to those who are new to the faith.

**Grant Hawley**

Pastor

Grace Bible Church

Allen, Texas

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***Preaching and Teaching the Last Things: Old Testament Eschatology for the Life of the Church.*** By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011. 186 pp. Paper, \$12.99.

A brief 163 pages followed by indexes, Walt Kaiser's latest guide purposes to help preachers explore Old Testament eschatology with their congregations. Published by Baker Academic (the more scholarly wing of Baker Publishing Group) the book could easily be used as a supplement to a seminary preaching class. The majority of endnotes, included in the back of the book, cite mainly scholarly journals and commentaries.

Kaiser has divided the subject of Old Testament eschatology into six parts: Resurrection of Mortals, the Abrahamic Covenant, a Messianic King, the Day of the Lord, the Great Tribulation, and the Millennial Rule and Eternal State. Each

part contains two or three Old Testament passages intended for preaching. Kaiser's stated goal is to help the pastor present to his congregation several expository rather than topical messages. What is the point, Kaiser asks, of reciting verse after verse to prove one's case or to teach a topic if the audience is uninformed of the context surrounding each? This is a very good question.

Along with sermon helps and a teaching outline, each of the 15 or so passages chosen by Kaiser come with a brief six or seven page commentary. I found these comments interesting extremely helpful. Bits of scholarly information pop up every now and then, such as a short but detailed history of the Schools of Antioch and Alexandria and their respective methods used to interpret, among other things, the Messianic Psalms (ps. 64-66). The time-strapped pastor or interested layman will find informed excursions such as these an added bonus.

An author index, subject index, and scripture index are all included, something uncommon but extremely helpful as well.

While terms such as *supercessionism* and *replacement theology* are quickly discussed and rightly discounted, Kaiser does not feel the need to use the term *Progressive Dispensationalism* anywhere in the book. I found this interesting since such so much of his own understanding (historic premillennialism) matches this latest category. In fact, several times it appears relevant to the discussion, especially when Kaiser uses the terms *inaugurated eschatology* and *already/not yet*, two buzzwords used by Progressive Dispensationalists themselves. Kaiser's discussion of Peter's use of Joel 2 in Acts 2 comes immediately to mind (pp. 79-82).

In short, I found the book helpful and would recommend it to anyone with an understanding of Progressive Dispensationalism already in place.

**Shawn Leach**

Pastor

Minneola Community Church

Minneola, Kansas

***Philippians. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. By Gordon D. Fee.*** Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1999. 204 pp. Paper, \$17.00.

This commentary, though written for a popular audience, and though lacking extensive mention of the Greek, reveals great depth of insight by Fee. One senses that he is merely sharing a small fraction about what he knows about Philippians.

The introduction is fantastic. Do not skip it, thinking you will move on to the good stuff. Note, for example, this gem, which comes at the end of Fee's discussion of Paul's use of the OT in Philippians: "To put it bluntly, we may rightly assume that these early Gentile believers knew the Old Testament—their only Bible!—infinitely better than most Christians do today" (p. 23). And under the heading "Opposition and Suffering" he makes this great point: "Opposition and suffering probably lie behind a further—seldom noted—major motif in the letter: Paul's repeated emphasis on the believer's sure future with its eschatological triumph" (p. 29). Fee does not adopt a Free Grace understanding of the letter. So for him the "eschatological triumph" is what he calls "final salvation" (e.g., p. 104). And though it says here (and on pp. 104-105) that the believer's future is sure, he likely means that it is sure as long as the readers continue to follow Christ's example of suffering.

*JOTGES* readers may be a bit disturbed by the vagueness in Fee's discussion of passages dealing with "a good work" (Phil 1:6), "work[ing] out your own salvation (Phil 2:12), "attain[ing] to the resurrection of the dead" (Phil 3:11), and "seek[ing] the fruit that abounds to your account" (Phil 4:17). Fee says of the good work of Phil 1:6 that it might be the financial gifts of the Philippians, but "more likely, however, it refers to God's *good work* of salvation itself" (p. 48, italics his). Of Phil 2:12 he says, "This is therefore not a text dealing with individual salvation but an ethical text dealing with the outworking of salvation in the believing community for the sake of the world" (p. 104). Another example of ambiguity is Fee's explanation of Phil 3:11, "Conformity to Christ's *death* in the present, made possible because of the power of Christ's *resurrection* in the present, will be followed by our own *resurrection from [among] the dead* at the end. But the way Paul says it is a bit puzzling: *somehow* it seems to imply doubt" (p. 150, italics his). Though Fee goes on

to explain why Paul seems to introduce doubt, his explanation itself is puzzling (pp. 150-51).

Fee does not evidence understanding of the Bema and of the concept of eternal rewards (though he does mention “eschatological reward” several times, but in each case he seems to be talking about “final salvation,” not special rewards that only some believers receive). However, one who understands these things can find much helpful information in this commentary. Fee does have a great grasp of what Paul is talking about; he simply can’t put it all together since he lacks the proper framework.

I highly recommend this commentary.

**Robert N. Wilkin**

Editor

*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*  
Corinth, Texas

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***Not Reformed at All: Medievalism in “Reformed” Churches.*** By John W. Robbins and Sean Gerety. Univoi, TN: The Trinity Foundation, 2004. 180 pp. Paper, \$9.95.

Not Reformed at All is a polemical work intended for Reformed Presbyterians. In it, Robbins and Gerety show that Douglas Wilson is not in keeping with Reformed Theology in regard to their view of justification by faith alone. Wilson has abandoned the idea entirely in favor of justification through baptism and works. Robbins and Gerety lament that this view is tolerated in Reformed Presbyterian circles and call for a return to the faith of the Westminster confession.

Robbins and Gerety are coming from a viewpoint that is decidedly Reformed, but they do focus quite a bit on Justification being by faith alone apart from works. This is, of course, undercut by their adherence to Perseverance of the Saints. But sometimes for long stretches they sound like they are teaching Free Grace. It was good to see some resistance from Reformed writers to the blatant works salvation that is becoming more accepted in Protestantism and especially in traditionally Reformed circles. However, this book does stop short of truly teaching that eternal life is a free gift received through faith alone *with no fine print*.

While reading the book, I felt as if I was intruding into a private conversation. This book would indeed be valuable to a Reformed Presbyterian concerned with the direction of the denomination. But most *JOTGES* readers would, like me, find that they are not part of the intended audience.

**Grant Hawley**

Pastor

Grace Bible Church

Allen, Texas

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*1 Corinthians. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. By Alan F. Johnson.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004. 343 pp. Paper, \$19.00.

This commentary on Paul's first (canonical) epistle to the Corinthians is somewhere between a devotional commentary and a technical commentary. Greek words are rarely mentioned. Yet illustrations are fairly rare in this work.

Johnson writes in an easy to follow manner. This work reads more like the transcript of sermons than it does like a technical discussion. *JOTGES* readers will surely appreciate this feature of the commentary.

The author's treatment of passages related the Free Grace position show that he does not hold strongly either to Free Grace or to Lordship Salvation. For example, concerning 1 Cor 3:5-15 Johnson says, "Certainly they are not rewarded with salvation for their labor, since salvation is a gift of God's grace, but perhaps they will be rewarded with some form of praise from the Lord (3:14; 4:5)" (p. 72). His discussion of 1 Cor 9:24-27 follows the same path (cf. pp. 149-52). Yet in his discussion of 1 Cor 6:9-11 (pp. 95-98) he implies that professing Christians guilty of repeated offenses will go to hell ("will not share in the kingdom of God," p. 98). Similarly he says regarding 1 Cor 5:5, "Such unrepentant offenders must learn the folly of the world's snare and have their *sinful nature* [italics his] destroyed through repentance *so that their lives may be saved at the return of Christ*" (p. 90, italics added).

Johnson seems comfortable explaining each passage as he sees it, even if his discussion doesn't seem to link up with what

he says elsewhere. In other words, he doesn't seem to have a theological axe to grind.

I especially appreciated his brief discussion of 1 Cor 3:1-4 (p. 71).

Also well worth noting is his discussion of 1 Corinthians 15. After noting that he has been to many funerals where the preacher fails even to mention the resurrection of the dead, Johnson makes this interesting point: "For many years I have asked my evangelical theology students whether they believe in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Almost all unhesitatingly put up their hands. But then when I ask if they believe that Jesus is 100 percent human right now as well as divine, almost no hands go up. What has happened? I believe they cannot conceive of Jesus as now existing in a new human form (body); instead they think of him as some sort of disembodied spirit, even after the resurrection" (p. 280).

He then adds, "Faulty thinking about the resurrection has invaded the modern mainstream church, even among evangelicals" (p. 280). He follows that statement with this quote by Bynum, "Although opinion polls tell us that most Americans believe in heaven, it is clear that the resurrection of the body is a doctrine that causes acute embarrassment, even in mainstream Christianity" (p. 280).

I recommend this commentary.

**Robert N. Wilkin**

Editor

*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*

Corinth, Texas

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***The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor.***  
By Larry V. Crutchfield. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991. 236 pp. Library binding, \$49.00; paper, \$25.00.

In this book Crutchfield has put together a thorough survey of Darby's views on Dispensationalism and compared and contrasted them with both C. I. Scofield and normative Dispensationalism. It contains good descriptions of the views of Darby, Scofield, and normative Dispensationalism, and excellent charts on different aspects of those views.

The conclusion Crutchfield has come to, and which is well defended, is that Scofield probably was not directly influenced much theologically by Darby. Darby's system of dispensations was very different from Scofield's. Likewise, Darby's system is completely built upon the concept of the particular government of God, while Scofield lacked this emphasis. Instead of adopting Darby's theology, Scofield likely adopted only Darby's hermeneutics (of consistent literal interpretation) and developed his own system of dispensations, and his own theology. Crutchfield notes that those who seek to paint Scofield as a clone of Darby have, for the most part, either been ignorant of their works or ungraciously seeking to connect Scofield with separatism.

Darby's writings can be quite abstruse. Often he was merely making notes and not writing for others to be able to understand what he has written. *The Origins of Dispensationalism*, then, has the added value in that to some degree it distills Darby's writings for consumption.

This work is well done and is a valuable for those who have a particular interest in either the history of Dispensationalism or the theologies of Darby and Scofield. However, the focus is probably too specified to be of wide interest to *JOTGES* readers.

**Grant Hawley**

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Allen, Texas

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***Images of Salvation in the New Testament.*** By Brenda B. Colijn. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010. 335 pp. Paper, \$25.00.

Having seen and been impressed by an article I had read by her previously, I was very interested to see what Colijn would have to say about images of salvation in the NT. I was not disappointed.

She is professor of Biblical interpretation and theology at Ashland (OH) Theological Seminary, an Arminian school. She says she is a member of an Anabaptist Brethren church (pp. 24, 288).

In the book she clearly and repeatedly indicates a position most all Arminians hold, that everlasting life can be lost by



failure to persevere in faith and good works. Commenting on the sealing of the Holy Spirit Colijn says, “The seal of ownership is not an unconditional guarantee of final redemption, however” (p. 152). When discussing apostasy the author indicates, “Final salvation is conditional upon the exercise of an obedient faith that trusts in God’s promise to the very end” (p. 308). Speaking of believers in the Book of Revelation she writes, “For believers in Revelation, salvation entails martyrdom. The narrative of Revelation unpacks Jesus’ teaching that one must lose one’s life to save it (Mk 10:35 and parallels). Receiving eternal life may require sacrifice of mortal life. As in the Synoptic apocalypses, it is the one who endures to the end who will be saved (Mk 13:13 and parallels)” (p. 290).

The author begins the chapter entitled “Call to Endurance” with a quip about a sign she saw in the parking lot of a Catholic Church. It read “St. Peter’s Park & Ride.” Commenting on that sign she says, “Some of us may wish that salvation were that easy. We could get our ticket at conversion and get on the bus. Then, to borrow from the old Greyhound commercials, we could sit back, relax and leave the driving to Jesus” (p. 288).

For further examples of statements denying eternal security, see pp. 23, 129 (“loss of eternal life”), 136, 289, 291, 304.

Note, however, this comment about salvation in Paul, “Believers’ good works will be evaluated at the judgment, but those works *by themselves* [emphasis added] will not determine their salvation...Enduring contributions to the church [1 Cor 3:14-15] will be rewarded, but the lack of such contributions is not grounds for condemnation” (p. 135). What precisely Colijn means by that is not clear. Telling are the italicized words *by themselves*. In her view works play a role in what she calls *final salvation*, but they are not the only factor. For example, martyrdom for Jesus’ sake would seemingly cause God to overlook a dearth of good works (see quote above). On the very next page after Colijn makes this statement about works by themselves not determining one’s final salvation, she says, “Although God’s provision of future salvation is assured, believers must persevere in order to enter it” (p. 136). Evidently the provision for everlasting life, but not the life itself, is assured.

Frankly I find clear and unambiguous statements by authors to be very refreshing. That is what I like about the writing of

Colijn. For the most part, her statements are clear and easy to follow.

Additionally, since she holds to the Arminian position, she actually understands many texts and images just as *JOTGES* readers do, except, of course, for the fact that what she sees at stake is eternal destiny, not eternal reward. But she can be read through a Free Grace lens to great benefit.

I guarantee that I will borrow this clever saying from Colijn: “We do not invite Jesus in our lives; he invites us into his” (p. 314). Of course, what she means is that Jesus invites us into His life of obedience and following Him on the path of suffering. But her statement itself is beautiful and it wonderfully captures verses like John 3:16; 5:24; 6:35, 37, 39, 47; 11:25-26; 14:6.

Concerning Eph 2:8-9 Colijn says that salvation, not faith, is the gift of God (p. 140).

Her discussion of election (chap. 10) is outstanding. I particularly appreciated her discussion of Acts 13:46, 48. She writes, “The context of Acts 13:48 seems to militate against reading *tetagmenoi* [typically translated, “as many as been appointed”] as a divine passive...A clear contrast is drawn between the Jews who ‘reject’ the word and the Gentiles who ‘were glad and praised the word of the Lord’ (Acts 13:48)...The emphasis on human volition for both Jews and Gentiles makes it unlikely that the narrator would say in Acts 13:48 that God had pre-determined who would believe. The best translation of Acts 13:48 might be something like ‘as many as were positioned for eternal life became believers.’ This rendering opts for the passive (suggested by *ēsan tetagmenoi*) but makes room for the confluence of divine and human agency (the preaching of the gospel and the receptivity of the audience) that is suggested by the context” (p. 225).

Interestingly Colijn comments on the Free Grace position, saying in a footnote, “The position advocated by some evangelicals in the 1990s that one can be saved by believing in Jesus as savior without submitting to Jesus as Lord is an example of straining out gnats and swallowing camels. While it is important to defend the centrality of faith in conversion, we must not do so at the expense of the nature of salvation itself” (p. 314 fn 2).

She comments that “the predominant tense of *sōzō* in Paul’s letters is future” (p. 134). She fails to defend this with a statement of how many times *sōzō* is used by Paul in the present, past, and future. Her first example is a place where the verb is not found at all. She mentions Rom 13:11, “salvation [*sōteria*, a noun] is nearer to us now than when we became believers” (p. 134). Of course, she doesn’t see that as referring to the Rapture. She also cites 1 Thess 1:10, “Paul tells the Thessalonians that Jesus, who himself was rescued from death, will rescue them from ‘the wrath that is coming’” (p. 134). Since she doesn’t see that as referring to the Rapture either, it fuels her Lordship Salvation position.

I highly recommend this book in spite of the author’s Lordship Salvation stance.

**Robert N. Wilkin**

Editor

*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*

Corinth, Texas

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***Acts. Reformed Expository Commentary.*** By Derek W.H. Thomas. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011. 784pp. Cloth, \$39.99.

This commentary is a practical exposition of Acts and does not seek to be an exegetical commentary. According to the Series Introduction, this commentary sets out to accomplish several goals: 1) To be a “faithful, inspiring, and useful” commentary for “pastors, teachers, Bible study leaders, and many others” (p. xi). 2) To remain true to the Westminster Confession and catechisms (p. xii). 3) To be scholarly without being academic (p. xii). 4) To look at the Bible through a *redemptive-historical* perspective (p. xii). 5) To renew “confidence in the clarity and power of Scripture” (p. xiii). These are certainly broad goals. In simplest terms, it seeks to bring Reformed tradition to professional and nonprofessional ministers alike, and to show that the Scripture not only teaches this view but is clear in doing so. This last point is where this commentary comes up short, but this is not the result of faulty presentation but faulty theology. If Scripture in fact does not teach Reformed tradition, then

it cannot be expected that this commentary will show that it clearly does teach it.

Regarding its intention to be accessible by people from all stages of instruction and avoid being “academic,” for the most part, it accomplishes its goal and this could be considered one of its strengths, though there is certainly some unnecessary academic language. For example, Thomas goes to Latin “they were to be ‘witnesses’ (Latin *martus*)” (p. 9) for his assertion that being “witnesses” in Acts 1:8 includes being “willing to suffer to the death for this witness to the truth (thus, *martyr*)” (p. 9). I’m not sure why he refers to Latin instead of the original, when the Greek word is transliterated the same as the Latin “*martus*.” I found this very strange, especially since he references Greek earlier on the page. However, I did find this commentary to be quite readable and any terms used that are not part of common language were clearly and simply defined in the text. There are not many footnotes per page, usually between zero and three.

Also, I was pleased to find no pejorative language or unkind words directed toward people with differing views. His disagreements with doctrines are limited to the doctrines themselves.

The theology of the commentary is consistently Reformed Presbyterian. Thomas argues for the doctrine of Temporary Faith (p. 230-32), infant baptism (p. 50), Unconditional Election (p. 375), Perseverance of the Saints (p. 232) and other Reformed doctrines. One tough text for the Reformed view of election, Acts 13:46, was skipped entirely (p. 374), and others are simply dismissed without giving a good reason to do so. For example, regarding Acts 1:7, Thomas states, “It is possible to construe Jesus’ reply to suggest that he does not deny a future purpose for Israel and the disciples are simply not privy to its timing. However, the text quite certainly indicates that in saying that he intends them to go ‘to the end of the earth,’ Jesus clearly intends the focus of the kingdom to be away from Jerusalem” (p. 10). Certainly Dispensationalists would agree that Jesus wants the disciples to soon extend their evangelical focus to the whole world, but nowhere does Thomas demonstrate what about Jesus’ statement about taking the gospel to the world means that the kingdom won’t be restored to Israel.

Perhaps the weakest portion of the book is his treatment of Temporary Faith which comes in his discussion of Simon

Magus (Acts 8:13-24). While acknowledging that the Bible does say that Simon “believed” (Acts 8:13), he then seeks to undercut this by labeling it “temporary faith” as opposed to “*saving* faith” (p. 230, italics his). He refers to three evidences to support his conclusion that Simon’s was unregenerate, “First, there was no sign of Simon’s repentance...Second, Simon’s offer of money to the apostles so that he might purchase their ability to bestow the Holy Spirit on others...Third, there was Peter’s assessment of Simon Magus” (p. 229-230). The first two dismiss the clear statement that “Simon Himself also believed” based solely upon a prior commitment to Reformed Theology. Concerning the third point, he quotes J.B. Philips’s rendering of Acts 8:20, “To hell with you and your money!” and I. Howard Marshall’s approval of the translation as “precisely what the Greek says,” yet no mention of the Greek or any defense of that translation is given (no word meaning “hell” appears in the Greek, nor is that Peter’s intention).

In defense of the doctrine of Temporary Faith, Thomas offers very little by way of Biblical evidence. Instead he quotes from Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (p. 231). This quote is an illustration of the Reformed view of Heb 6:4-6, an illustration that Thomas rightly calls “terrifying” (p. 230). This section of the commentary is clearly intended to invoke fear of hellfire among his audience and no words of comfort are offered but rather a solemn warning: “In light of the possibility of a false profession of faith, we need to examine our own hearts on a regular basis. We should ask ourselves whether our faith is genuine and vital. We need to ensure that we are trusting in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation and discern whether fruits of repentance are in evidence” (p. 232). This is a pastoral nightmare, and falls far short of the stated goal to be “inspiring.”

Another weak point is where Thomas relegates Peter’s powerful statement concerning the believers’ freedom from the heavy burden of the law in Acts 15:10-12 to only the ceremonial aspects of the law. It was not the ceremonial aspects of the law about which Peter says, “Now, therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” (Acts 15:10). His evidence was that some Jews had to travel far to offer sacrifices (p. 414). But the Jews had much less trouble with the ceremonial aspects of

the law than they did with the moral aspects. Furthermore, two of the most famous passages regarding freedom from law in the New Testament focus specifically on moral aspects of the law (the Ten Commandments in 2 Corinthians 3 and “You shall not covet” in Romans 7). In addition, nothing in the text supports the idea that Peter meant only the ceremonial aspects of the law, nor does Thomas offer any evidence other than to offer Eph 6:1 as a proof text that Paul was placing the church under the Decalogue (p. 413).

One more weak point is in dealing with the passage on the Philippian Jailer. When commenting on Paul’s answer to the question “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” namely, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:30-31), Thomas casts aside Paul’s answer by saying, “The answer to this question about the way of salvation is not uniform in Scripture. Sometimes the answer is: ‘Repent and believe (Mark 1:15). On other occasions it is simply: ‘Repent!’ (Matt 3:2; Acts 2:38; 17:30). And then again, on some occasions, as here, it is: ‘Believe!’ (John 3:16). In truth, neither faith nor repentance can exist apart from the other” (p. 468). In this one short paragraph, he did away with the simplicity not only of Acts 16:31, but also John 3:16 and by implication every other passage that gives only “Believe!” as the answer to that question. In this view, the Gospel of John would be insufficient regarding its stated purpose (20:31) because the word *repent* never appears.

Overall, this commentary is full of strong and controversial statements given without any significant support. Clear and simple statements are read away or cast aside in favor of Reformed tradition. And while it was written with a practical focus, if practically applied the reader will find only insecurity about whether or not his faith is “temporary,” judgmentalism toward others, and legalistic attempts at obedience with the hope of maybe being finally justified. I also did not find any significant additions to theological discussion, but rather restatements of the Reformed Theology’s standard interpretations. I cannot recommend this book.

**Grant Hawley**

Pastor

Grace Bible Church

Allen, TX

***Transforming Conversion: Rethinking the Language and Contours of Christian Initiation.*** By Gordon T. Smith. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 208 pp. Paper, \$22.00.

As in most evangelical books on salvation or conversion today, the author argues that salvation does not occur at a point in time (cf. pp. 146, 203). He calls the idea that there is some “bare minimum” a person must do to be saved “a minimalist approach.” That approach, he says, “has led to the emphasis on the idea of a punctiliar [point in time] conversion, which is not consistent with either the biblical witness or the actual experience of Christians” (p. 112).

In this book he is “not looking for a minimalist response to the question: not what must we do to be spared the horrors of hell? but rather what must we do to know the transforming grace of God? We are looking for a good beginning, an experience of the justifying grace that is integrated with the purposes of God for our lives” (p. 112). He argues here that to be saved one must submit and be reformed.

This leads him to a discussion of Acts 2:38, which he says is “the paradigmatic [primary example] text in Acts on conversion” (p. 113). He argues that both turning from sins and submitting to water baptism are necessary in order for a person to be converted (pp. 113-25). He calls repentance “this radical turning” (p. 124) and says, “[Peter in Acts 2:38] is not preaching a different gospel from that of Paul when he responds with ‘Repent and be baptized’ rather than ‘Have faith in God’” (p. 125). Of course, Paul never answered the question *what must I do to be saved* with “Have faith in God.” And Peter was not asked “What must we do to be saved?” but rather “What must we do?” The Jews who asked Peter that in Acts 2:37 were already believers and born again. Their concern was not salvation, but escaping the terrible guilt they now felt since they realized they had a part in crucifying the Messiah.

The author wishes to distinguish between conversion and salvation, though he says that they are “intimately linked.” Conversion he says “is a human *response* to the saving initiative of God.” Salvation, he says “is the work of God” (p. 4). In his view we should not speak of when we were “saved,” as though salvation was some past event only, but instead we should think more about where we are in the process of conversion (see pp. 1-19),

since conversion is an ongoing human response to God's saving initiative that requires not merely initial repentance and water baptism, but ongoing turning from sin and obedience to God.

Smith says this of evangelism: "Evangelism is, at its heart, a call and an invitation to enter into this covenant relationship and into a life—evident most obviously in the liturgical rhythms of the church—of grace filled with the reign of Christ *and continually in alignment with the reign*" (p. 132). Later he says concisely, "There is no conversion until and unless we learn obedience" (p. 203).

I do not know Smith's church affiliation. I couldn't find where he mentions that.

I recommend this book for those wishing a thorough library dealing with Lordship/works salvation.

**Robert N. Wilkin**

Editor

*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*

Corinth, Texas

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***Crave: Wanting So Much More of God.*** By Chris Tomlinson. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2010. 218 pp. Paper, \$13.99.

In many ways, *Crave* is rather refreshing. It is written with a combination of compassionate exhortation and honest internal dialogue. In it, Tomlinson recounts several awkward experiences that he has floundered through seeking to live obediently but struggling with fears and conflicting desires. The result is that we can easily relate to him in all of these situations and share in his struggles and desire for obedience. I actually found it quite difficult to be objective about the book because Tomlinson is so likable that I really wanted to like his book.

Chris Tomlinson is a businessman, not a pastor or theologian, and his theology is hard to discern from the book itself. He does, however, quote often from John Piper (about as often as every other author combined) and also quotes or references Francis Chan (*Crazy Love*), A. W. Tozer (*The Knowledge of the Holy*), Donald Miller (*Blue Like Jazz*), and C. S. Lewis (*Mere Christianity*). In an endnote, he singles out John Piper's ministry as especially valuable to him, stating, "The mission of John



Piper's ministry, *Desiring God*, is particularly appealing to my spiritual affections. It states, "We exist to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ" (Chapter 10, n 30). Yet, even with Tomlinson's very honest descriptions of his struggles, I did not find any of the lack of assurance inherent in the ministries of Piper and Chan, nor did I find any influence of their works-salvation or works-assurance in this book. Tomlinson uses desire for walking closer with God as motivation to obedience, not fear of hellfire.

In one paragraph, which is one sentence that goes on and on (seemingly purposeful, see below), Tomlinson seems to strongly support grace. He says, "You likely know what grace is all about, that it is favor from God that we don't deserve, so I won't belabor the point that grace is free, and that we can't earn grace, and that grace plus anything is no longer grace, and that salvation by faith through grace means that salvation is a gift from God irrespective of any good work we've ever done, and that the righteousness we have before God is credited to us because of Jesus' death on the cross on our behalf" (p. 123).

You may have noticed an odd statement in that paragraph, though, that might reveal the influence of Piper on Tomlinson, namely "salvation by faith through grace." This oddly reverses the statement from Eph 2:8 "by grace you have been saved through faith." It could be simply a mistake. But even if it is, this may show that Tomlinson has bought into the idea of faith as something that follows regeneration, and he has thus reversed the Biblical order of things in his mind. Yet, even so, this sentence shows that he sees salvation not as a works transaction, but a gracious act of God.

I have to admit that I was a little bothered by one thing he did with this paragraph. This is because he goes on later to say, "You may have even quickly skipped over the paragraph about grace because you've heard it all before" (p. 123, referring back to the quoted paragraph above). People tend to gloss over rambling sentences that start out with, "You likely know..." and it seems like Tomlinson was trying to set the reader up for a gut-shot by writing it that way. It is a good point to make that it is easy to gloss over important truths, but the method here seemed unnervingly slick. And if you are going to write in such a way that intentionally makes people lose interest and skip a

paragraph, could you at least not do it with the one paragraph in the book that clearly presents salvation (regeneration in this context) as a free gift apart from works?

The charm of this book can also be a negative. For example, his humble and honest internal dialogue makes the book accessible, but it is also self-defeating in a way because it comes short of expressing the power of the indwelling Christ we experience in those times when we are living by faith. While Tomlinson does not at all give the impression that he considers himself to have “arrived” spiritually, it would be easy to come away thinking that a divided mind is all we can expect at the best of times.

He says things like, “I’ve tried to produce this kind of love on my own” (p. 91), with a strong implication that this is the wrong way to go about it. But he comes short of saying that Jesus can produce that kind of love (love for those it is difficult for us to love) in us. While he is clear that legalism isn’t the answer, he falls short of expressing that Christ *is* the answer.

The value of *Crave* is that it raises a lot of questions about the way we go about things in a way that is both rare and effective (not many people are willing to be as transparent as Tomlinson). The down side is that it fails to adequately point us to the answer—Jesus.

I recommend this book for its refreshing honesty and helpful assessment of many things that hinder our sanctification.

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***Darwin on Trial.*** 3rd edition. By Phillip E. Johnson. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010. 247 pp. Cloth, \$17.00.

The first edition of this work came out twenty years ago in 1991. This twentieth anniversary edition contains a new foreword called, “a new introduction” on the cover, by Michael Behe which in itself is fantastic (pp. 9-17). Behe explains why a law professor, Johnson, is not out of his depth to discuss Darwin’s theory of origins. In fact, Behe argues that someone like Johnson is perfect for the task: ‘When a large theory such

as evolution cuts across many disciplines, no one can claim to be expert in all of the evidence. Rather, the evidence is much better evaluated by a generalist trained to evaluate the logic of arguments and the assumptions lying behind them, as Johnson himself was exquisitely qualified to do” (p. 11). Johnson himself makes the same case (see p. 32).

Johnson does not argue for a young earth or for the inerrancy of Scripture or anything of the kind: “I am not a defender of creation-science, and in fact I am not concerned in this book with addressing any conflicts between the Biblical accounts and the scientific evidence” (p. 33).

What Johnson does do is attack the logic and the philosophical underpinnings of a Darwinian view of origins: “The argument of *Darwin on Trial* is that we know a great deal less than has been claimed. In particular, we do not know how the immensely complex organ systems of plants and animals could have been created by mindless and purposeless natural processes, as Darwinists say they must have been. Darwinian theory attributes biological complexity to the accumulation of adaptive micromutations by natural selection, but the creative power of this hypothetical mechanism has never been demonstrated, and the fossil evidence is inconsistent with the claim that biological creation occurred in that way. The philosophically important part of Darwinian theory—its mechanism for creating complex things that did not exist before—is therefore not really part of empirical science at all, but rather a deduction from naturalistic philosophy” (p. 191).

Johnson in the epilogue also states his primary purpose: “My primary goal in writing *Darwin on Trial* was to legitimate the assertion of a theistic worldview in the secular universities” (p. 199). I believe that he succeeded in a marvelous way.

Over and over again in this book Johnson shows how evolutionists routinely turn an argument on its head and argue for what is either illogical or what is often contradicted by the evidence they cite. This book is filled with wonderful points and outstanding quotes.

As far back as 1975 I was speaking in college classrooms defending the creationist viewpoint versus Darwinism. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from a leading school of biology (U. C. Irvine). I was trained in Darwinism in college.

However, I found in this book many fantastic arguments and observations that I wish I had known 35 years ago.

Johnson basically shows that Darwinism is not only not scientifically sound, but it is anti-scientific. Darwinism has for years ignored or glossed over all the evidence that contradicts it. However, change is in the air. The last line of Johnson's book is powerful and telling: The spectacle will be fascinating, and the battle will go on for a long time. But in the end reality will win" (p. 204).

*JOTGES* readers will likely see parallels between the evolution-creation debate and the Lordship Salvation-Free Grace debate. I often found myself thinking that the abuse and ridicule heaped on creationists by Darwinian evolutionists is similar to the abuse and ridicule heaped on Free Grace proponents by Lordship Salvation advocates. And similarly I found myself applying the last line of Johnson's book to the debate about everlasting life: in the end reality will win.

I highly recommend this book. I think it should be required reading for every Christian high school student, especially those attending public schools. And for those of us who have already graduated from high school and Darwinian indoctrination, it is high time we learned the truth about Darwinism.

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