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*"vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo"*  
Colossians 3:3

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### **Introduction**

With this issue, *Kerux* ends the publishing of three issues per year (May, September, December). Beginning with the year 2016, we will publish only twice—May and December.

**THE END IN THE BEGINNING:  
A BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL CATECHISM FOR YOUNG AND OLD**

**Numbers**

James T. Dennison, Jr.

What is the next book of Moses?

Numbers

What is the name of this book in the Hebrew Bible?

*Bemidhbar* (from the Hebrew word in Num 1:1)

What does that mean?

“in the wilderness”

What does that suggest?

It captures the narrative plot of this book of 36 chapters

Is there a protological and eschatological wilderness sojourning?

Yes. The protological Israel sojourns here; the eschatological Israel sojourns later.

Who is the protological sojourner?

The Israel of old.

Who is the eschatological sojourner?

The new Israel of God.

Who is this new and eschatological Israel of God?

The Lord Jesus Christ—he is the individual and the federal Israel of God.

And he sojourned “in the wilderness”?

Yes, Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13

Why did he recapitulate the sojourn of the old Israel?

Because theirs was a failure due to sin and temptation. Jesus prevails where Israel failed—his sojourn is sinless and impervious to the temptations of the arch-rebel, Satan.

How does the “in the wilderness” narrative of the plot of the book of Numbers unfold?

First, location or setting or narrative space. The story opens at Mt. Sinai (Num 1:1 with 10:33); it unfolds through numerous settings of the 40-year sojourn in the wilderness; it concludes on the plains of Moab with Israel poised to enter the Promised Land (Num 36:13).

Second, occasion or narrative time. The story opens on the “first of the second month, in the second year” after the Exodus (Num 1:1 with Ex 40:17). Thus, the book of Leviticus takes place at Mt. Sinai in that year between Exodus and Numbers in which the tabernacle of the Lord was erected and dedicated. Numbers ends in the 40<sup>th</sup> year after the Exodus (Num 33:38 with Deut 1:3).

Third, crisis or narrative plot climax. The story peaks at the rebellion of unbelief in the first report espied about the Promised Land (Num 13-14) and God’s pledge that that generation would not enter his rest (Ps 95:8-11), but would die in the wilderness. The narrative falling action from the crisis of unbelief is a wandering in circles about the Sinai Peninsula until that generation perished “in the wilderness” (cf. Jude 5; Heb 3:15-18; 1 Cor 10:5).

What is the narrative motif of this Biblical plot?

The old and the new<sup>1</sup>

What is the significance of this “old/new” terminology?

It is based on the two censuses (numberings) found in the book: Numbers 1 and 26. These two enumerations provide the fundamental structure of the book.

How?

The book moves in transition from the death of the “old” generation (**over** 20 years of age) which came out of Egypt, rebelled “in the wilderness of Paran” (Num 12:16) because of unbelief and whose “carcasses fell” in the desert (Heb 3:17). This generation is counted in Numbers 1. The transition continues with the “new” generation (**under** 20 years of age in Numbers 1) which lives through the sojourn of the “land in between” and crosses over Jordan to the land of milk and honey. This generation is listed in Numbers

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<sup>1</sup> This language is used effectively by Dennis Olson in his 1996 Interpretation commentary on Numbers (pp. 5-6; cf. also his *Death of the Old and the Birth of the New*). Caveat: Olson takes a liberal-critical approach to the meaning of the book, i.e., it is not divinely inspired; it was not written by Moses; its origin arises a millennium later in the post-exilic age from the evolution of Jewish religion in Babylon and Persia.

26. Death to the “old” members whose “evil heart of unbelief” barred them from God’s eschatological rest. Life to the “new” members whose trust of God’s covenant promises allowed them to enter God’s Promised Land of rest with Jesus/Joshua, their captain.

What is the biblical-theological importance of this structured “old/new” paradigm?

The vertical and eschatological is present in the horizontal and historical. Faith or the lack of faith operates in the “land in between”—the interim between deliverance and permanence. For genuine believers in the wilderness land in between, the promise of God’s everlasting rest is trusted, possessed and consummated. For unbelievers in the wilderness land in between, their indifference, hatred and/or rejection of God’s gracious promises in history results in no everlasting rest (or life, John 3:16), but rather eternal destruction (Matt 25:41, 46). The life of sinners in every age of mankind’s history is lived out in the ‘wilderness’, the ‘land in between’, the horizontal locus of the old and the new.

Here is the old man by nature in the history of man’s sinful condition. To remain in this condition by nature is to remain in that evil heart of enmity and disbelief against God the Creator. The end of that sojourn is death—eternal separation from God as the wilderness generation of unbelief died in the land in between only to enter the land of eternal no-rest. But to be born anew—to be gifted with the unmerited grace of God—to be moved supernaturally by the Holy Spirit from a hard heart of unbelief to a fleshly/soft heart of faith in God the Lord and his Son, Jesus Christ, is to enter now/already into the promised heavenly rest of God with the certain assurance of consummate pleasure at his right hand forever and ever and ever. **NB:** the protological/eschatological sojourning/sojourner questions and answers above.

So Numbers tells a twofold story?

Yes—a story of rebellion against God and his covenant (by demerit) through unbelief leading to death and exclusion from his eternal rest; and a story of trusting faith in God (by unmerited grace) leading to life and inclusion in his eternal rest. And this it is even now for human life in the land in between, the land of sojourn, the land in the midst of deliverance and consummation.

What is the order and meaning of the original census (Num 1 with 2-4, 7)?

From the central tabernacle, Israel is numbered in concentric rings around the tent of meeting.

Why does the relational paradigm begin this way?

The Lord God and his tabernacle dwelling place, over which hovers his very own glory cloud, is the center of life for sojourning Israel in the wilderness.

What circle is next to the tabernacle?

The dwelling place of the priests and the sons of Aaron.

What circle surrounds them next?

The dwellings of the Levites (as a tribe).

What is the outer circle of this concentric arrangement?

The dwellings of the 12 tribes of Israel, grouped in threes from east (Judah, Issachar, Zebulun), to south (Reuben, Simeon, Gad), to west (Ephraim, Manasseh, Benjamin), to north (Dan, Asher, Naphtali). All Israel moves towards God's central glory presence through (or by means of) the Levitical and Aaronic priests. This concentricism underscored: no approach to God's holy person and presence apart from a mediator, intercessor and priestly go between.

And who is the once-for-all, the last and eschatological mediator, intercessor, priestly go between?

The Lord Jesus Christ, the ontological Son of God, who has made an end to ritual priesthood (Levitical and Aaronic) and tabernacle-temple dwellings (there is no temple where he, the glorified Son of God, dwells, Rev 21:22).

Is there any other pattern that unfolds the narrative plot of the book of Numbers?

There are two

What are they?

First, a pattern of pericopes/units alternating between narrative (chapters 1-4, 7-9, 10:11-14, 16-17, 20-27, 31-34) and legal instruction (5-6, 10:1-10, 15, 18-19, 28-30, 35-36). The reader will notice a similar alternating pattern found in the book of Leviticus (cf. <http://kerux.com/doc/3001A1.asp> ).

The second is a pattern derived from the major motif of the book—sojourning.

- A. 1:1-10:10—Israel Sojourning at Sinai
- B. 10:11-20:21—Israel Sojourning from Sinai to Kadesh
- C. 20:22-36:13—Israel Sojourning from Kadesh to the Plains of Moab

Why is the alternating narrative-legal pattern important?

It demonstrates the unified/harmonious interface between the narrative life-story of the people of God and the self-disclosure of his moral-legal life-story. In other words, the ethico-moral life of God is disclosed in the legislation appropriate to sojourning people in

a typological era. Much of this moral-legal material will be transcended and superseded by the self-disclosure of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom, in whom and with whom the typological will pass away and its fullness made clear in its eschatological aspect (which aspect is above the typological and incarnationally accomplished or completed in the eschatological Son of the eschatological arena which was ever and always the object of its typification).

In other words, the OT legal material always looks beyond itself.

Yes, to its eschatological reality in the being and life of God himself which is the atmosphere of his perfect moral-ethical nature in his eternal and infinite dimension (i.e., heaven). This is the narrative life-story of a new and transcendent order where moral-ethical categories are the mirror of the Triune God's own moral-ethical nature—and that in perfection and perpetuity. And this is true whether it is Nazarites (chapter 6), silver trumpets of assembly or celebration (10:1-10), sacrifice and offering in the land (15), duties and tithes of the Levites (18), red heifers or cleansing from contacting death (19), offerings again, feast days and sacred vows (28-30), or cities of refuge or the inheritance of females (daughters of Zelophehad, 35-36): the moral-ethical and typological are eschatologically oriented both redemptive-historically (“fullness of time”) and transcendently (heaven's arena).

What highlights from the narrative portions of Numbers do you select?

Three: the Aaronic benediction (6:22-27); the major rebellions “in the wilderness” (13-14, 16); and the Balaam material (22-24).

What is noteworthy about the Aaronic benediction?<sup>2</sup>

It is a carefully crafted poem demonstrating an increasingly rich measure of the grace of God and as such is appropriate to the blessing of the sojourning people of God in every age of redemptive history.

In what does this richness consist?

First, in being blessed by the Lord, when sinners such as we are deserve cursing. Such blessing for pilgrims between the times is all the more precious when it is pronounced by the eschatological Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ. His benediction keeps and preserves his pilgrim sons and daughters unto the eschatological end (i.e., not the midst of the times, but in the final end of the beyond times).

Second, in the blessing of God's face reflected in his undeserved grace. Here too, such blessing for pilgrims between the times is all the more precious when it shines forth from

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. the author's study here: <http://kerux.com/doc/2502A3.asp> .



the face of God the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ—the eschatological Priest full of grace upon grace. His face beams with the eschatological gift of God (Eph 2:8) for his pilgrim sons and daughters until they are finally gathered into that eschatological land where they enjoy the eternal gift of beholding him face to face.

Third, in the blessing of God’s countenance reflected in *shalom* (“peace”). Such a final permanent blessing for pilgrims between the times is all the more precious when it is pronounced by the eschatological Priest who is at once the eschatological Prince of Peace. The light of the countenance of the glorious and glorified Son of God is a permanent display of the radiance of the eschaton and his own eschatological person. Such light, such glory, such a divine God-man person speaks peace—everlasting peace, permanent, final, no-more-pilgrim-trials peace. *Shalom*—perfect *shalom* in the benediction of the perfect priest, light, Son, city of journey’s end.

What is noteworthy about the two great rebellions *bemidhbar* (“in the wilderness”) Numbers 13-14 and Numbers 16?

They are prototypical revolts against the Lord God, his servant(s) and his acts of grace towards his (ostensible) people.

What do you mean by “prototypical revolts”?

These narratives are emblematic of an attitude, a disposition of the mind and heart, an attack upon the unmerited grace of God. As such, they become the paradigm of hard-hearted (i.e., unregenerate) sinners (the “old” nature dominant) of the former era, as well as an identificational pattern of rebels against the will and word of God in the current era.

Where do you discover this paradigm?

Former era: Jude 5; 1 Cor 10:5, 10; Heb 3: 16-19; Neh 9:15-17; Pss 78:40-42, 95:16-18, 106:25-26; Isa 63:10

Present era: Jude 11; 1 Cor 10:6, 11; Heb 4:1-2, 11

How is Scripture interpreting Scripture here?

These are events with eschatological consequences. A saved/redeemed people are to mirror God the Savior. Not so with rebellion—the evil heart of unbelief—which mirrors the enemy of God, makes one a friend of the Tempter who seduces hearts in the wilderness. Even Moses is folded down temporarily into its insidious antithesis in his weakness. Such rebellion deserves destruction—merits destruction, unless grace intervenes. The beginning of rebellion against God’s promise of rest in the Promised Land ends in eschatological consequences.

How so?

Those who participated in—or, better, joined their minds and hearts to—revulsion against God’s promised rest discovered that they were permanently and eternally barred from that land of rest.

Why is their refusal of God’s promised rest labelled an “evil heart of unbelief” (Heb 3:12, KJV)?

Because they did not believe God’s word (which is evil); they did not accept God’s gracious pledge to subdue their enemies (which is evil); they did not remember the omnipotent strength of God by whose unmerited grace they had been redeemed from slavery in Egypt (which is evil). They thought and felt and believed that the God who saved them from bondage was a liar, a deceiver, an untrustworthy wretch who wanted to kill them. They, in fact, believed God was the very antithesis of himself—their enemy and destroyer. In such evil unbelief, they substituted Satan himself for the living God. And having joined the kingdom of darkness in heart, mind and soul (their whole attitude, disposition, behavior showed their alliance with the ruler of this world), they received the reality of that kingdom—eschatological and eternal death outside God’s everlasting rest. Their carcasses dropped “in the wilderness” and their souls joined the antithetical kingdom, its dread lord and the fellowship of the damned.

What significance do you find in Numbers 14:18?

This sin of rebellion “in the wilderness” was a sin against the “lovingkindness” (Hebrew, *hesed*-grace) of God. Those who despised this loving grace of God had hearts which had and did always despise the loving grace of God. Any benefits they found in the religion of Moses were temporal, external, serviceable to their own self-interest (i.e., release from slavery), not a mirror reflection of the glory of God in his heavenly dwelling place.

Who are the true sons and daughters of grace?

They are Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Miriam—possessing the end (land of the promise) in the beginning (land of the wilderness)—a permanent possession of a permanent grace, love, redemption/salvation and dwelling place.

Was the assault on Moses’ mediatorial servanthood by Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num 16) but a variation of the theme of rebellion “in the wilderness”?

Yes. Having rejected God’s word and promise (and having failed in their longing to return to Egypt, Num 14:3), they now attack God’s intercessory servant and the priesthood he mirrors.

What about their declaration in Numbers 16:13?

Their hearts classify the land of Egypt as a “land of milk and honey”, as if that were the Promised Land from which they exited and the genuine “land of milk and honey” (Canaan) were the land of despair, drudgery and death.

So in setting their faces against Moses (and Aaron), Korah, Dathan and Abiram are setting their faces backward, toward Egypt, back to slavery and death in a idolatrous and brutal land.

Yes, their revolt is a window into their souls. They despise the promised rest of God; they despise his mighty grace and power of deliverance; they despise his servant who had mediated the covenant to them; they despise the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses. And so with contempt and hatred (“against the Lord,” 16:11), they perished in Sheol together with their families, possessions and “little ones” (16:27, 30, 33)—a foreshadowing of the hellish consequences of hatred and rebellion against the Lord and his servants—especially his covenant mediator servants.

Is this why the NT Scriptures relate these incidents?

Yes, these incidents are a narrative identification attractive to those in the present evil age—those who revolt against the Lord, his promised rest, his saving grace and his servant Mediator (the Lord Jesus Christ). They do so because of their own alliance with and allegiance to the hellish kingdom of darkness and the Satanic ruler pledged to oppose the people of God continually in their sojourn from slavery to settlement.

What more is there to say about this camp of rebels?

The use of the above narrative paradigm across the unfolding organism of redemptive history underscores the identification dynamic which always finds adherents in the external or outward “assembly of the Lord”. There are always counterfeits and frauds like hard-hearted and unbelieving Israel “in the wilderness”, as well as arrogant rebels like Korah, Dathan and Abiram attached to the community of faith (cf. the book of Jude). And they will always despise the genuine servants of God, even as they genuinely despise the eschatological Servant and Mediator of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ. In truth, they are ‘Christians’ who possess an “evil heart of unbelief”. The protological paradigm is reprised eschatologically. This should not surprise the faithful elect; it will continue until kingdom come.

What more may be said of the “old” and “new” paradigm?

The “old and the “new” paradigm unfolds recursively through redemptive history. The “old” with a heart of stone at enmity with God and with his Christ, defying the Spirit; the “new” with a heart of flesh in love with God and with his Christ, by the Spirit. And thus the paradigm places “old” and “new” over *ordo salutis* as it does *historia salutis*. The

Christocentric intrusion is the sole, gracious power of transition from the “old man” generation/era to the “new man” generation/era.

But is not Moses himself drawn into the circle of rebellion at Meribah (Num 20:1-13)?

Yes, the insidious tentacles of the kingdom of darkness snare the unsuspecting shepherd of Israel when he is disarmed (and wearied) by the whining, thirsty sojourners, only to vent his frustration (sinfully) by striking the rock for water while vaunting himself as the source of the life-giving stream (“shall **we** bring forth water for you?”—v. 20).

But was this really that serious a lapse on Moses’ part?

Yes, even as God himself rebukes him, so the Lord treats the incident as unbelief (“you have not believed me”—v. 12), Moses thus aligning himself with the preceding, unbelieving rebel sojourners. He also did not set God apart from the whining complainers and complained like they; thus, putting himself in God’s place. All of this drew glory to himself, not to God; all of which made him one with the complainers, not one with God; all of which caused him to contend with the Lord, not to be content with the Lord and his miraculous provision.

And did this have long-term consequences for Moses?

Yes, it demonstrated the imperfection of his own sinful soul and the fact that he was not the eschatological mediator of the covenant of grace. For he too needed the grace of the unmerited covenant of God and the blood of atonement to cover his sin and the perfect expression of giving glory to God always. In these, he failed at Meribah so that God barred him from entering the Promised Land.

But God did allow Moses to enter the land of rest from afar?

Yes, as one looking across the waters of separation from far off, Moses was graciously permitted to “enter in” by the eye of faith so that he could possess the eschatological land by faith even though he was denied setting his foot upon it. “By faith Moses . . .” possessed the “substance of things not seen”, typified by what his eyes did see.

Who was Balaam the son of Beor (Num 22:5)?

He was a pagan seer or soothsayer from Mesopotamia (*Aram-naharaim* or “Aram beyond the two rivers”). He is mentioned in Num 22-24, 31:8, 16; Deut 23:4, 5; Josh 13:22, 24:9, 10; Neh 13:2; Mic 6:5; 2 Pet 2:15; Jude 11; Rev 2:14. His name also appears in the Deir Alla tablet (ca. 700 B.C.) discovered in Jordan in 1967.

What is his role in the narrative?

He was invited to curse sojourning Israel by Balak, the king of Moab (Num 22:4).

Did he in fact curse Israel?

No, God would not permit him to do so; rather he blessed Israel four times over.

Why would God use a heathen seer to bless his chosen people?

To demonstrate his power over the forces of darkness and to receive glory from their mouths about the “royal priesthood” who belong to him by covenant grace and redemptive might. In this way, the Lord projects the testimony of the wicked eschatologically—they too will confess God’s glory and praise (though they will hate what they confess) when every one of their knees bow before the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ at the last/eschatological day (Phil 2:10-11). Thus, this protological blessing anticipates the eschatological blessing of the people of God.

In how many oracles does Balaam bless the Israel of God between the times?

Four: Num 23:7-10; 23:18-24; 24:3-9; 24:15-19

What redemptive historical paradigm is unfolded in these blessings?

The “already” or now blessing of God upon his people and the “not yet” or eschatological blessing of God upon his people.

Israel “in the wilderness” is “already” blessed of God four times over.

Yes, notice 23:10; 23:21-21; 24:8-9; 24:17, 19

And eschatologically?

Yes, as 24:14 emphasizes in the phrase *acharith hayyamim* or “end of the days”, i.e., the eschatological end.

And who is the instrument of ending these eschatological days?

He is one from Jacob like a star

He is one coming from Israel from afar

He has a scepter in his hand

And in his rule draws nigh the end

Who is this figure whose advent brings the blessings and the kingdom of the “last days”?

He is the royal scepter-bearer of Judah, the regal house-sitter of Jacob, the king of all kings from Israel whose advent is the beacon-star of the ages, the sovereign sojourner from afar now drawn near, whose grace and power have now crushed and will yet crush all his and his people’s enemies and adversaries. He is the Lord Jesus Christ—the blessed

and eschatological sojourner—the truly **first and last** Israel of God in whom those united to him participate in the triumphant end of their wilderness sojourn even now.

What happened to Balaam?

He received the curse of God in betraying the blessings he had pronounced on believing Israel. Joining with the fornicating unbelieving Israel at Baal-peor, he too was slain in the judgment of death which God issued through Moses (Num 25:5) upon the wicked of that evil generation (the final remnant of the evil hearts of unbelief in the wilderness sojourn). Nothing impure was to cross over Jordan and enter the heavenly country (Promised Land).

How does the book of Numbers end?

With Israel camped on the plains of Moab, poised to cross over into Beulah land (Num 36:13)

What is the biblical-theological significance of the book of Numbers?

It reveals the unfolding redemptive historical narrative of the people of God “in the wilderness” between the times of redemption and possession—redemption from bondage, possession of the land of God. In between is the wilderness of testing, faith and setting the face towards the heavenly Canaan. They are always conscious that the space they occupy in between is provisional, never permanent (temporal, not eternal). They are always a pilgrim people in this world between salvation from slavery to sin and blessed possession of the land where God dwells with them face to face. In these last days, they journey in and through the eschatological sojourner, God the Son, who incarnated the sojourn through the wilderness of this world and has emerged from the now into the eschatological not yet once and for all. Their sojourn is complete and perfected in Christ—now and not yet.

Review some of the redemptive historical details of Christ Jesus “in the wilderness”.

Jesus goes to “the wilderness” (Matt 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1).

He appears as the eschatological Sojourner “in the wilderness”.

There he is assaulted/tempted by the protological rebel (the arch-rebel)—Satan, poohbah of Hell.

The eschatological Israel of God encounters the protological anti-Israel of God.

The protological rebel tempts the eschatological non-rebel/anti-rebel to join his damned enterprise.

The eschatological Israel, obedient to his heavenly Father's revealed will, spurns the tentacles of the lord of darkness and with perseverance dispatches him with the very Word of God.

The eschatological Israel prevails "in the wilderness" where the protological Israel failed.

The eschatological Israel completes and fulfills the sojourn "in the wilderness" for all the Israel of God (Gal 6:16) of every age. For they, elect in him, are united to his "in the wilderness" obedience, righteousness, sonship, holiness, glorious triumph over the Satanic protological rebel. And in this sojourn of the eschatological Israel of God, the "wilderness" becomes the garden of God, even now. For rebellion is behind them, in the eschatological, obedient anti-rebel—"in the wilderness" and beyond.

### **Anselm on the Incarnation and Redemption<sup>1</sup>**

He acted of His own will [for our salvation, JTD]; and because His will is always good, He acted out of goodness alone. God did not need to secure man's salvation in the way He did; but human nature needed in that way to make satisfaction to God. God did not need to suffer such agony; but man needed to be reconciled through God's sufferings. God did not need to humble Himself through incarnation; but man needed to be rescued from the depth of Hell through God's incarnation. The Divine Nature did not need, and was not able, to be abased or to toil. It was necessary for human nature to do all these things [viz., to make satisfaction, to be reconciled, and to be rescued] in order to be restored to that end for which it was created. But neither human nature nor anyone other than God Himself was able to accomplish these things . . . And this remission is possible only if complete satisfaction has been made. This satisfaction ought to be such that the sinner or someone on his behalf gives to God something of his own which is not owed—something which exceeds everything that is not God.

O good Lord Jesus Christ, in this state I was neither seeking nor deliberating; but like the sun You shined forth upon me and showed me my plight. You cast off the leaden weight which was drawing me down; You removed the burden which was pushing me down; You repelled the foes who were impelling me onward, warding them off for my sake. You called me by a new name which You derived from Your name. Stooped over as I was, You stood me upright to face You, saying "Be confident, I have redeemed you and given my soul [life] for you." . . . Yes, O Lord, such was my condition, and these things You have done for me. I was in darkness because I knew nothing—not even my very self. I was on slippery footing because I was weak and prone to sin. I was on the downward road to the chaos of Hell because in our first parents I had descended from justice to injustice [or righteousness to unrighteousness, JTD] (and injustice leads down to Hell), from happiness to the misery of this life (from which one falls into eternal misery). The weight of original sin was dragging me down; the unbearable burden of God's judgment was pushing me down . . . Being thus destitute of all help, I was illumined by You and shown my condition. For while I was not yet able to know my condition You taught all these things to others on my behalf, and later You taught these same things to me even before I inquired. You cast aside the leaden weight, the unbearable burden, and the impelling foes, for You removed the sin in which I had been conceived and born, You removed also the condemnation of this sin, and You forbade evil spirits to constrain my soul. You gave me the name Christian, which derives from Your own name; through Your name I confess, and You acknowledge, that I am among the redeemed.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) is justly famous for his marvelous book *Cur Deus Homo* ("Why the God Man?"). The quotations above are a summary of that work which every Christian should read and take to heart. It is a wonderful exposition of the Biblical revelation of why God the Son had to become man, i.e., only the God-Man could pay the price of the salvation of sinners.

<sup>2</sup> "A Meditation on Human Redemption," in *Anselm of Canterbury: Volume One*, edited and translated by Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Edwin Mellen Press, 1974) 139, 142-43.



## The Messiah Has Done It: A Structural Approach to Jesus' Identity in Mark

Jeanie C. Crain

If certain principles and presumptions can be allowed to guide an interpretive approach to Mark, the almost certain conclusion will be that Mark builds progressively to Jesus' self-disclosure of himself as the Messiah (14:62).<sup>1</sup> An overarching principle must be a belief in the inspired Word of God, a position diametrically opposed to much of higher criticism's insistence that the Bible is a mere human product. As the inerrant, inspired Word of God (and indeed, as reliable historical testimony), Mark makes its own internal claim for interpretation in light of all Scripture. It contains concrete supernaturalism, prophecy fulfillment and real miracles. Wilhelm Wrede's view in *The Messianic Secret* (tr. James Clarke, 1971) that the historical Jesus never claimed to be Messiah before his death is antithetical<sup>2</sup> to the view presented here: that Jesus fulfills Messianic prophecy. The view that Jesus was a divine man but not God will also be set aside, as will any corrective Son of God Christology. Not overlooking the critical imperative to read closely Mark's specificity, the approach taken here will be that of presenting an overall structure that climactically satisfies the question of who Jesus says he is.

Of course, Mark contains pericopes (both large and small internal structures or sections) leading some to conclude the book has no overall structure (Gundry). On the other hand, many Markan scholars would consider the Caesarea Philippi episode as the central pericope and turning point of the gospel (Kevin Larsen, *Currents in Biblical Research* 3.1 [2004]: 145). "Immediately" and "the next day" can be used to identify pericopes, as can anaphoras or thrice repeated words in consecutive sentences. Other kinds of internal structure have also been advanced, such as topography/geography, theological themes, the needs of the early church, intercalation (dovetailing or interlacing with A-B-A pattern) of pericopes, sandwiches, questions, summary statements, chiasms and classical rhetorical patterns (Larsen). Particularly intriguing is Geerhardus Vos's discussion of "verily" used twice in relation—Mark 10:45 and the Lord's Supper regarding Jesus' explanation of the purpose of his death for atonement (*Kerux* 6/1 [May 1991]: 3; <http://kerux.com/doc/0601A1.asp>). James T. Dennison, Jr. suggests the following overall structure: a beginning schism with a parting of the heavens and an ending schism with the splitting of the veil of the temple in Mark 1:10 and 15:38 (*Kerux* 9/3 [December 1994]: 3-10; <http://kerux.com/doc/0903A1.asp>).

In chapter 1, Mark presents Jesus as "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," associated with prophecy and called "the Lord," identifying him as one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (vv. 1, 3, 8). Early in Mark, readers find themselves concerned with God's vertical intrusion into linear history. In verses 10 and 11, the writer records of Jesus' baptism that the heavens are torn open, the Spirit descends and a voice from heaven declares, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well

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<sup>1</sup> The tone and direction of much of this paper finds inspiration in Geerhardus Vos, *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus: The Modern Debate about the Messianic Consciousness*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 1978).

<sup>2</sup> Although familiar with most of these scholars, I have most recently found James S. Gidley's review of Robert Gundry's *Mark* useful—"Just the Facts, Mark, Just the Facts." *Kerux* 12/2 (September 1997): 32-62; <http://kerux.com/doc/1202R1.asp>.

pleased.” After the temptation, Jesus comes into Galilee “proclaiming the good news of God and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near’” (vv. 14-15); thus linking Jesus’ identity to eschatological purpose in redemptive history (J. T. Dennison, *Kerux* 9/3 [December 1994]: 3-10). Geerhardus Vos describes eschatology as prescribing “to the world-process a definite goal such as cannot be attained by it in the natural course of events, but will be brought about catastrophically through a divine interposition, and which, when once attained, bears the stamp of eternity” (*Self-Disclosure*, 19). Jesus’ divine identity shows itself in his authority while preaching in the Capernaum synagogue (v. 22), as well as in the healing of the man with the unclean spirit, which calls him first “Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?” and then declares, “I know who you are, the Holy One of God” (v. 24). The Son of Man “has authority to forgive sins on earth” in relation to the healing of a paralytic (2:10). The same Son of Man declares, “the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath” (2:28). In chapter 3, “Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, ‘You are the Son of God!’” (v. 11). Clearly, the supernatural recognizes the supernatural.

In addition to the “Holy One of God,” chapters 2 and 3 add the titles “Son of Man” and “Son of God” (2:10; 3:11). A vast scholarship has grown from intensive investigation into the origins and meanings of these titles, much of it simply settling on discussions of dimensionality, some preferring the earthly and linear while others lean to the vertical and heavenly. R. V. Peace has argued for a progressive Christological enlightenment of the disciples in the writer’s focus on the titles of teacher, prophet, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of David, Son of God (Larsen, 149). The present work follows Mark’s unfolding revelation of Jesus as Messiah in the work of redemptive history. Chapter 2 metaphorically describes this revelation in its bridegroom parable:

Jesus said to them, “The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day” (vv. 19-20).

In the redemptive plan, a parallel exists between the bridegroom’s being taken away (death) and the Passover Lamb. In “The Structure of Joel,” Lena Lee makes a connection between prophetic fulfillment with respect to “last days” and the eschatological advent of Christ. She reminds her readers that New Testament writers considered themselves to be living in such “last days” (*Kerux* 7/3 [December 1992]: 4-24; <http://kerux.com/doc/0703A1.asp>). This insight helps readers to make sense of the apocalyptic chapter 13 in Mark. The bridegroom connotatively suggests a wedding, this associated with the long-awaited “day of the Lord”. Chapter 4 now relates several parables concerning the coming of the Kingdom of God, three of these connected with organic seed and growth process.

In context with the healing of the Gerasene demoniac in chapter 5, Jesus is called “Son of the Most High God” (v. 7). Many of Jesus’ contemporaries (the Sadducees, for example) did not believe in angels or spirits, including demons; a modern mindset of some prefers to explain them away by science, discounting the supernatural altogether. In Mark, Jesus proclaims God’s kingdom and casts out demons, heals disease and sickness, and raises the dead—all signs and expressions, not merely of the supernatural, but of God’s kingdom now present in the Messiah. The parables describe a kingdom, both present and future. As chapter 4 demonstrates, Jesus’ divine command controls the natural world; chapter 5 presents his mastery over life and death. Jairus comes to Jesus begging him to heal his twelve-year-old daughter, who is at the point of death; Jesus, however,

preoccupies himself with the woman who has touched his clothing, hoping to be healed from twelve years of hemorrhaging. The two stories connect in the issue of blood, the young daughter at menstrual age, and the older woman, in danger of bleeding to death. Readers will remember chapter 4 ends with a question about faith: “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?” (v. 40). Jesus tells the hemorrhagic woman in chapter 5 that her faith has made her well (v. 34). Jairus’ daughter, now dead, is raised to life by Jesus in an amazing and miraculous show of his power over death itself (v. 42).

Kingdom-work builds in chapter 6, with the twelve disciples being sent out in pairs, given authority over demons, and with power to heal the sick (vv. 6-13). Jesus has been rejected in his hometown, his power impeded only by the people’s unbelief, with their choice to look for answers in the biological man, “the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and... his sisters” (v. 3). The question of identity comes to focus again in King Herod, who has heard from some that Jesus is Elijah or a prophet from old, with Herod himself thinking he is John the Baptist whom he has beheaded come back to life (vv. 14-16). The irony should not be missed: failing to see the supernatural Jesus, Herod yet can believe in a ghost—John come back from the dead. Mark, unlike Matthew, expresses doubt in the question of Jesus’ identity through Herod, not John himself. Mark leaves for the record his earlier testimony that Jesus is the prophesized one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (1:8). Chapter 6 dovetails the account of Jesus’ stilling of the storm with an account now of his walking on the sea and his disciples thinking they are seeing a ghost (v. 49)! Once again, a preference for natural explanation gets in the way of recognizing the supernatural. These are the same disciples who have been present at the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand (vv. 30-44). Chapter 6 ends with Jesus’ continued miraculous healings.

Chapter 7 serves as a pivotal, transitional chapter. Jesus explains why human beings reject the supernatural: “You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition” (v. 8). In contrast, however, the Syrophoenician woman is content to receive just the crumbs of Jesus’ feeding; she is rewarded by returning home to find Jesus has cast out the demon from her daughter. The chapter ends with the continuing signs of Messianic event: the curing of the deaf followed by the astonishment of the people (vv. 31-37).

Structurally, some have viewed chapter 8 as a turning point in Mark’s presentation of Jesus, looking to Peter’s, “You are the Messiah,” as justification (v. 29)—this confession elicited from him by Jesus’ question, “Who do you say I am?” Important as the declaration is, however, it quickly becomes obvious that Peter has in mind an earthly and political messiah (v. 33). Jesus has just told him clearly the purpose of eschatological Messiahship, a purpose Peter rejects: “the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again” (v. 31). Jesus reprimands Peter’s opposition to this reality saying, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things” (v. 33). Mark ends the chapter with an eschatological note: “The Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” In present time, the Messiah must suffer, be rejected, and killed; he will, however, rise in three days to return “in the glory of his Father with the holy angels” (v. 38).

The transfiguration in chapter 9 brings together the three-fold official function of the Messiah as prophet, priest and king. From the beginning, Mark has declared Jesus to be involved in establishing the kingdom of God, with the miracles serving as signs and the parables describing

that kingdom. Peter, James and John, once again, think in earthly terms and talk about erecting three dwellings on earth, one for Elijah, Moses and one for Jesus. This is after they have personally seen the in-breaking heavenly voice and heard God say, “This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!” (v. 7). Asked to tell no one what they have seen until after Jesus has risen, they ponder the possible meanings of the statement (v. 10). Ironically, the disciples can only argue about who will be greatest (vv. 33-37). Mark now returns to the motif of belief in the episode of the healing of a boy with an unclean spirit, an act the disciples have not been able to accomplish due to a lack of faith; the father of the boy, on the other hand, prays for help to believe (vv. 18, 23-24). Jesus now, again, foretells his impending death (v. 31).

Chapter 10 returns to teaching, talking about divorce, the difficulty of entering the kingdom of God and the miraculous act in the healing of blind Bartimaeus, who hails Jesus as “Son of David” (vv. 46-52). Jesus foretells his death and resurrection for a third time (vv. 32-34). Gaining, perhaps, a glimmer of coming glory, James and John ask for a place in glory at Jesus’ right and left hand only to be told by Jesus that the privilege is not one he can grant. At this point, Jesus reveals his full Messianic purpose: “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (v. 45). Geerhardus Vos remarks that the Lord’s comment upon his death as a saving transaction is enhanced by occurring only here and at the institution of the Supper. Vos also indicates that the argument that Jesus became aware of his death only progressively becomes silenced in the face of the inner awareness and confession of Messianic purpose (*Kerux* 6/1 [May 1991]: 3-15).

Chapter 11 records Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, where he is hailed by the people as coming in the name of the Lord, heralding, they think, the coming kingdom of David (v. 9-10). Much like Peter, they will reject the idea of a suffering and dying Messiah. The chapter contains a judgment on the temple for not bearing fruit, this symbolized in the cursing of the fig tree, full of leaves but absent of any early taskh<sup>3</sup> or early budding of fruit, thus indicating the fig will not bear fruit even within its season (vv. 12-14). The religious leaders of the temple ask about the authority of Jesus only to have Jesus ask them about the authority of John, whether of earth or heaven (v. 30). Afraid of the crowds, the religious leaders will not answer, and Jesus tells them he will not answer them as to his own authority (v. 33). Verse 31 makes clear the issue is, once again, that of faith.

Well into his last week, Jesus finds himself hounded by Pharisees, who attempt to ensnare him in some form of sedition, but Jesus tells them to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, in the case of the civil toll tax, then adds, and give to God what is God’s (12:15-17). Just prior to this, Jesus has spoken a parable about wicked tenants, making clear the people’s rejection of the “beloved son” (vv. 1-12). Geerhardus Vos understands the full significance of the parable: “Absolute destruction befalls the husbandmen as the penalty for rejecting the Son; no sooner is the Son introduced and cast out than the whole process of God’s dealing with the theocracy reaches its termination” (*Self-Disclosure*, 161). Jesus turns to the Sadducees, who believe in neither angels, spirits or resurrection, and answers their question about which husband of seven a woman will be given when she is raised from the dead (vv. 18-27). Jesus reveals their earthly, materialistic viewpoint when he tells them they do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. He goes on to say, “He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong” (v. 27). Jesus has already

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<sup>3</sup> The word means “immature fruit”.

confirmed the resurrection, noting that the raised dead “will be like angels in heaven” (v. 25). The earthly, materialistic vision will never allow itself to see such power and glory, but the reply of Jesus has this group foiled. The scribes now step up to ask Jesus what commandment takes priority. Jesus repeats for them the Shema, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one,” then tells them, “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength;” and finally, completes his answer with, the “second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (vv. 29-31). Succinctly, Jesus provides an exemplary interface of the vertical and horizontal, the heavenly God and earthly created beings.

Jesus continues to show the scribes their mistaken emphasis upon the earthly by asking them how they can say “the Messiah is the son of David? [when] David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.”’ Jesus declares the biological son of the Messiah to be inferior, while the Messiah as Lord of his kingdom includes David as his subject (vv. 35-36). As Geerhardus Vos concludes, “‘David’s Son’ is used here in the technical sense of a Messianic title” (*Self-Disclosure*, 164). Vos knows that the Pharisees understand the Messiah as David’s heir and as one moving in the national-political sphere. Jesus holds to “a higher, supra-political plane, the plane of the world to come...” where “Lord of David” means “lordship over David” (*ibid.*, 165). The chapter ends with an example of genuine worship in the poor widow, who gives everything she has to God.

The full import of a Messianic consciousness as both present and future discloses itself in the apocalyptic chapter 13. Vos says Jesus makes “a formal distinction between Jesus Himself as such, and Jesus as the Son of Man” in Mark 8:38 (*ibid.*, 83), where he has talked about “the adulterous and sinful generation” and a time when the Son of Man comes in the glory of his Father. Chapter 12 has dramatically signaled Jesus’ own rejection; chapter 13 describes his departure from the temple. Mark 13 injects Jesus’ words about the coming destruction of the temple (vv. 1-8), talks about persecution (vv. 9-13), the desolating sacrilege and attempts that will be made to lead astray the elect (vv. 14-22). It then addresses the future coming of the “the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven” (vv. 26-27). Vos explains: “Jesus speaks of this future manifestation as His ‘coming’”, by which he means “He would appear in the adequacy of His Messianic character” (*ibid.*). The chapter returns to the lesson of the fig tree (vv. 28-30) and the need for watchfulness as that future day, known only by the Father, “approaches” (vv. 32-37).

Jesus’ actions in leaving the temple (speaking of its destruction and a coming future) lead directly into the actual climatic chapter 14, where, before the council, he is asked by the high priest whether he is “the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One” (v. 61). Jesus not only accepts the title but speaks to its fulfillment in a future when people “will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven” (v. 62). Vos remarks on an important difference between the Son of man in Daniel and the Son of Man described here in Mark: in Daniel, “the Ancient of Days, before whom the Son of man is made to appear” conducts the “eschatological judgment”, whereas here in Mark, the Son of Man does the conducting (*ibid.*, 232). As Vos notes, both the passage in Daniel and the echo here in Mark convey an “atmosphere of the supernatural” in “a theophany-like coming” often referred to as the Parousia (*ibid.*, 233). In his chapter, “The Son of God (Continued)”, Vos understands the accusation of blasphemy levelled by the high priest as laying in Jesus’ “claim to be the Son of God” (*ibid.*, 175). He elucidates his point: “He carried His Messianic Son of God claim to a point where the implied identification with God rendered it

blasphemous” (*ibid.*). Jesus’ “I am” becomes significantly memorable and final because Jesus himself settles the question of his Messiahship (v. 62). Here, Mark reaches a climax and resolution to the question of the identity of Jesus: it is the moment of greatest excitement, greatest tension; everything else in Mark happens as a result of the climax: the story has moved from Peter’s earthly and politically-oriented messiah in Mark 8:29, to Jesus’ clear revelation of his full Messianic office in bringing about the kingdom of God.

Chapter 14 builds to a point of necessity, where the full force of personal and official title can no longer be avoided: a plot has been hatched to kill Jesus (vv. 1-2, 10-11); he has been anointed in preparation for his death by an unknown woman, who will be forever remembered, although nameless (vv. 3-9). Jesus has spent the Passover with his disciples, telling them “the Son of Man goes as it is written [prophetically] of him” (vv. 12-21); a Supper of Remembrance has been instituted (vv. 22-25); Jesus has acknowledged in Gethsemane “The hour [of betrayal] has come” (v. 41); Jesus is betrayed (vv. 43-51) and appears before the council (vv. 53-65); and he has been denied by his own (vv. 26-31, 66-72).

The final chapters exist to complete what has to happen: Jesus appears before Pilate (vv. 1-5); Pilate hands him over to be crucified (vv. 6-15); the soldiers mock Jesus (vv. 16-20); Jesus is crucified (vv. 21-32); he dies (vv. 33-41); he is entombed (vv. 42-47). So much happens—and so quickly! Jesus does not reply to Pilate’s question about whether he is King of the Jews, although the inscription on the cross declares him so (v. 26)—the title describing a Davidic, political Messiah (v. 2). Jesus’ silence makes clear he is not this expected mortal king. Mark, along with Matthew, provides a startling fact to explain why Jesus is crucified: “For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over” (v. 10). The real reason why Jesus has been rejected exists in the chief priests’ breaking their own commandment not to envy; they are guilty of envying Jesus, who is Messiah, fully fulfilling his official role of priest, prophet and king. Pilate, too, exposes his own political ambition of satisfying the people in order to avoid any complications for his own political office (v. 15).

Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, is pressed into carrying the cross. James T. Dennison, in “A Mini-Markan Sandwich”, identifies in Mark 15:21 “a tiny cameo of the entire gospel—the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1).” He points to the pronominal brackets—him in verses 20 and 22—and explains that they show Simon sandwiched between an about-to-die Jesus, as Jesus is sandwiched between two about-to-die criminals. Simon is also bracketed with the cross. Jesus’ substitutionary death becomes the gospel: “It is the mission of Christ in Mark’s gospel ‘to give his life a ransom for many’” (Mark 10:45) (*Kerux* 24/2 [September 2009]: 3-11; <http://kerux.com/doc/2402A1.asp>). The centurion at the foot of the cross, who has observed everything—the mockery, Jesus’ cry in echo of the Messianic Psalm 22, the tearing of the temple veil from top to bottom—knows who Jesus is: “Truly this man was God’s Son!” (vv. 33-39). Dennison makes the point: this is the same proclamation made when the heavens were split at Jordan, the same witness “the voice accompanied with the dove gave forth—‘This is my Son.’ Now that proclamation—that witness—that testimony—that Jesus is the Son of God will be carried by the church” (*Kerux* 9/3 [December 1994]: 7; <http://kerux.com/doc/0903.asp>). The centurion has corrected Peter’s earthly understanding of Jesus’ Messiahship, confessing that this Messiah is, indeed, the Son of God (8:29). This is not a new revelation: Jesus has already declared his identity to the high priest. As Dennison has said, the confession does mark a turn in history—the close of the era of the temple and dawn of the age of the kingdom of the crucified yet risen Son of God.

The final chapter serves as Mark's dénouement; readers find themselves left to contemplate all that has happened and invited to think about it. With the Sabbath over and the sun risen, "Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome" bring spices to the tomb with which to anoint the body of Jesus (v. 1). They discover that the burial stone has been rolled away from the mouth of the tomb (v. 4). They enter the tomb and see a young man dressed in white sitting on the right and they are alarmed (v. 5). The young man tells them not to be alarmed, that they are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, that he was crucified. He then informs them: "He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him" (v. 6). "Raised" echoes Jesus' earlier remark to the Sadducees about the dead being raised (12:26). They flee from the tomb in terror and amazement and say nothing to anyone "for they were afraid" (v. 8).

This shorter ending of Mark concludes decisively, anchoring itself firmly into everything that has come before. The ransom has been given (10:45). Jesus has said in 14:28: "after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." The fear of the women has a precedence in the fear of Jesus' disciples and followers on the road to Jerusalem: "They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid," this coming just before the third prediction of Jesus' death and resurrection (10:32). The fear of the women may also be framed in relation to Mark 3:22-30. Jewish leaders, with preparatory "revelation of the kingdom of God,... [who] had witnessed its special manifestation in the miraculous work of Jesus through the agency of the Holy Spirit," who had been given access to "indisputable evidence," attributed it, not "to the Prince of Life," but to the "Prince of Demons": they chose to call "good," "evil," committing an unforgiveable eschatological sin (Benjamin J. Swinburnson, "The Eschatological Sin: The Blasphemy Against the Holy Spirit in Mark 3:29." *Kerux* 28/1 [May 2013]: 17-22; <http://kerux.com/doc/2801A4.asp> ). To the words, "He has been raised," these women reacted in silence to overwhelming mystery (16:8). Mark does not try to tell what happened to Jesus, what it meant to rise, what changes he underwent; he does conclude with a message from the young man in white: "tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you" (v. 7).

Jesus in his own self-consciousness declares himself definitively in his final cry from the cross: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (15:34). This is his final Messianic proclamation and it is a victorious acclamation. These words surely must have evoked recognition in the hearts of some of those who knew their Scriptures: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1). Jesus has fulfilled his vows and Psalm 22 proclaims his dominion: "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations" (Ps 22: 27-28). The people of the world will know Jesus has completed his Messianic purpose: "All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—those who cannot keep themselves alive. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!" (Ps 22:29-31).

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## A Review of Robert Jewett on Romans<sup>1</sup>

### Part 2: Romans 9-12<sup>2</sup>

Scott F. Sanborn

#### Romans 9

Jewett recognizes individual elements in Romans 9 that are exegetically incisive and stimulate biblical-theological reflection. One of these is his comment that Paul's prayer to be accursed for his brethren reminds us of the prayer of Moses to be accursed in exchange for the nation (Exod. 32:31-33). He also strongly argues that "Christ, who is God overall" (Rom. 9:5) is Paul's affirmation of the deity of Christ! This shows Jewett's honesty to let the evidence point where it may.

Another of Jewett's insights is that Paul's reference to "glory" (Rom. 9:4) looks back to the glorification of God's church in Rom. 8:18, 30. And we might add that the adoption (Rom. 9:4) harkens back to the adoption of the sons of God of the new age (Rom. 8:15, 23). Respecting the future, Paul speaks of Christ's church as those who look forward to eschatological glory, the adoption of sons. It is this glory and adoption (now semi-realized) that Paul says was promised to Israel. It was promised to Israel by anticipation. The gifts and calling of God given her in previous redemptive history (Rom. 9:4) anticipated the future. In this way, the future was promised to her.

We might expand on this. First in broad strokes, Paul has spoken of the new age in Christ's Spirit (Rom. 8) surpassing the age of the law (Rom. 7). (See our discussion in part 1 of this review and the "but now" of Rom. 8:1.) As we suggested in part 1 of this review, this distinction between the two eras is tied to the greater manifestation of justification in the new era (Rom. 8:1 with 8: 31-39). Justification is more fully manifested in that those things once considered covenantal curses for God's people (8:35) are so no longer (Rom. 8:31, "who can be against us").<sup>3</sup> All of this is because of Christ's resurrection and the "newness" of this age of the Spirit (Rom. 7:6).

We can now extend this in an eschatological direction. This greater manifestation of justification brought with it a greater outpouring of the Spirit. Intertestamental Judaism (following the OT prophets) saw the eschatological age being supremely the age of the Spirit. Thus, we believe Paul considered this present age of the Spirit (in relative contrast to the age of the law, Rom. 8:2, 14-15) to be *semi-eschatological*.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006. 1140pp. Cloth. ISBN: 978-0-8006-6084-0. \$90.00.

<sup>2</sup> This second part is a continuation of Scott F. Sanborn, *A Review of Robert Jewett on Romans, Part 1: Romans 1-8*, K:JNWTs 29/3 (December 2014):17-42, available here: <http://kerux.com/doc/2903A6.asp>.

<sup>3</sup> I have elsewhere referred to this as "semi-eschatological justification" because this manifestation is a new semi-realized *manifestation* of God's justifying act, given to the believer by faith alone, which justification will be fully manifested at the end of the world. In other words, the present manifestation of justification in the new age is a semi-realized expression of the full manifestation of justification that takes place at the eschaton.



Paul's theme of adoption in Rom. 9:4 further underscores the semi-eschatological nature of the now time. It does so by its connection to the new exodus. As we have seen, for Paul, the interconnected themes of glory and adoption (Rom. 9:4) implies that the eschatological promises of adoption (Rom. 8:15, 23) belonged to Israel. That is, God promised Israel that she would participate in the future eschatological adoption through an eschatological exodus. Yes, these promises of adoption were put in terms of a new exodus. Remember that God called Israel "my son" in the first exodus; so in the future they will be called sons of the living God (Rom. 9:26). This is the fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy of a future eschatological exodus (Hosea 1:10, 2:23) in which he will once again bring her into the wilderness (Hosea 2:14) and speak kindly to her. And thus, Paul speaks of God's present semi-eschatological mercy in the words of the first exodus (Rom. 9:15-18).

Thus, the quandary of Rom. 9:4 might be considered in this light (by way of anticipation); if the new exodus has come why is Israel not participating in it? The answer: not all who are of Israel according to the flesh are of Israel according to the Spirit. Not all who are descendent from Abraham are his true sons. Thus, they are not all *God's* sons. And only those chosen by God will receive adoption in the Spirit.

Only those who are true sons will participate in the true exodus. In our view, the theme of election (to sonship) that runs throughout chapter 9 is not simply a rehearsal of the general doctrine of election. It is more than that. Every instance of election that Paul rehearses in Rom. 9:6-18 anticipated the new exodus. That is, the elections of the patriarchal period and the first exodus looked forward to the greater manifestation of election found in the new exodus. That which was supernatural in the old era anticipated the greater manifestation of supernaturalism in the new. The old was fulfilled in the new.

Unfortunately, Jewett does not develop Rom. 9 in terms of the arrival of the new exodus. In our opinion, he misses the centrality of the coming of the new exodus in Christ. And it is this new exodus that brings the election of Jew and Gentile alike. They alike will be called "sons of the living God" (Rom. 9:24).

As a result Jewett misses how the OT patriarchal narrative embodies and anticipates the future eschatological exodus. That is, the electing mercy of this new exodus fulfills the elections of the patriarchal period and the first exodus. As we see it, Paul does not simply present these OT cases of election as examples reinforcing present election. More profoundly for Paul, these elections anticipated (redemptive-historically) the election of Jew and Gentile together in Christ. As a result, the fulfillment of the present time surpasses its former anticipations.

How then does the present time surpass the former administrations? The key is found in their fulfillment. It is in the equal calling of Jew and Gentile alike that Paul highlights in Rom. 9:24. This synchronizes historically with the calling of Christ's resurrection (Rom. 4:17 with 4:24-25), which we believe lies behind it. The resurrection of Christ was the greatest revelation of supernaturalism in redemptive history. So also, the new exodus more fully reveals God's supernatural calling of sinners in Christ. While the elections of the former era were manifested in the call of the Spirit, they still took place mainly among the earthly descendants of Abraham. (The first exodus itself focused its election on Abraham's physical descendants). But in the new age, the

supernatural work of *calling* is revealed even more powerfully in that *election now takes place completely irrespective of the flesh*. That is, on a regular basis, election shows no favoritism to the physical descendants of Abraham. Thus, none need become Jews outwardly in order to participate in the blessings of the new age. In this way, Romans 9 is a test case in how Paul interpreted the OT in terms of anticipation and fulfillment.

This fits with the theme of the justification of God's name that we discussed in part 1 of this review. NT scholars have pointed out that this chapter has elements that remind us of a theodicy, the justification of God. We suggest something similar here, but with this modification. Theodicy is often thought to be a response to the problem of evil. While, the justification of God deals with the question of God's faithfulness to his promises of redemption, something grander is behind it. Prior to this (and apart from sin) nature already revealed an eschatological goal to history (Rom. 1:18-32). It was this goal that humanity rebelled against, bringing sin and judgment. Only then were the promises of redemption necessary if God were to bring sinners into this forfeited eschatological blessedness.

Thus, the glorification of God's name as an eschatological goal already existed before evil was in the world. This was the "glory" which humanity ultimately rebelled against in Adam (Rom. 2:7; 1:23; 5:12, 16). This would have eventually meant the judgment of all (1:32; 5:16) had not God freely chosen to save an elect people, bringing them to eschatological blessedness. In the former era of redemptive history, God chose to have his people among the seed of Abraham—nation of Israel. That nation was his visible church and so he made promises to them of redemption and the coming eschatological kingdom. The question now before Paul is, if everyone in Israel is not coming to Christ, has God been *untrue* to his promises to save Israel? Has God kept his eschatological promises? Thus, Paul states that "it is not as though the word of God has failed" (9:6). Paul then rehearses patriarchal elections to argue that at the present time (as before), God has not chosen everyone among the physical seed of Abraham. Thus, if some Jews reject Christ, this is not an indication that God's eschatological promises have failed. Those who fail to keep their promises are unjust, but God has not failed to keep his promises. He is not unjust. And Paul proves this by the fact that the way his word is fulfilled must be in accordance with the way he has spoken in the past: "For he says to Moses" (9:15); and "for the scripture says to Pharaoh" (9:17). And the word spoken is, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy" (9:15). That is, not everyone among Israel is chosen to salvation. Thus, the fact that only some Jews are coming to Christ is no indication that God has unjustly broken his promises. Instead, God is calling a remnant of Jews now (9:24), and this fulfills his word. In fact, that prophetic word includes the Gentiles as well (9:24).

Paul even shows that God's choice of election is just per se, and not simply because it accords with his word. That is, the word itself is just. This is made most clear in Paul's discussion of the nature of the Creator and the creature (9:19-22), bringing us back to the created order of Rom. 1:18ff.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the justification of God's name and truth is grounded in his revelation in creation and OT redemption. But it is most fully answered in the saving work of Christ, in which both Jew and Gentile are now being called in him (9:22 with 9:23-26). God's right to have patience with vessels

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<sup>4</sup> Paul's argument in Rom. 9:19-22 is grounded in creation (the Creator/creature distinction), even if it also reflects on God's creation of Israel as his own (Isa. 64:7-12). If the later is also involved, then Paul is now (as we certainly think is the case) distinguishing one elect group in Israel from those rejected in Israel.

of wrath is even revealed in nature (9:20-22). And Paul moves from this right of God to the reason he exercised it redemptive-historically—to be merciful to some of these vessels. The fact that they are from among both Jews and Gentiles emphasizes its purely merciful character, based on no distinguishing marks in the vessels chosen.

The very fact that all of this comes to its apex in the saving work of Christ in the present time indicates that the work of Christ ultimately justifies God's name. That is, the justifying work of Christ justifies the name of God as we have seen earlier in this letter (e.g., see our comments on Rom. 2:24 in part 1 of this review, together with a consideration of Rom. 3:4-6 and 3:25-26).

Let us now put together the theme of the new exodus with the justification of God's name. This connection is found in one of Paul's quotes from the first exodus, now projected into the new exodus: "To demonstrate my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (Rom. 9:17). The demonstration of God's power (associated with Christ's resurrection, Rom. 1:16; 4:21, 24) will proclaim God's name in all the earth, thus justifying God's name. It is this new exodus in Christ's resurrection power (in which God calls Jew and Gentile alike) that justifies God's name. It shows that God is faithful to his word. The objector was implying that "God is not faithful to his eschatological word if not all Israel is coming to faith in Christ." But God has overcome this objection in Christ, center of the new exodus. In him, he has fulfilled the prophetic word. That word is fulfilled by Christ's most supreme supernatural resurrection and call in the new exodus. And this supreme call takes place when God justifies both Jews and Gentiles irrespective of fleshly descent. It shows no favoritism toward human descent or effort. It represents God acting freely and willingly in his choice of some for mercy and not others. In it, God's power and God's name alone is glorified in Christ.

In much of this chapter, Paul laid out how this fulfillment was embodied in OT narrative history—how Christ was embodied in that story—how God justified his name there. Yeah, this history participated in the new exodus before the time. That is how it pointed ahead to its greater fulfillment. All this brings the glory (9:23) that was promised Israel from the beginning (9:4), for only in God's final glorification in Christ is she glorified. Thus, eschatology and the justification of God's name in Christ are throughout Romans 9 as they are throughout this epistle.

Jewett sees little of this. Interestingly, he includes the new covenant among the promises made to Israel. This by implication would point in the direction we are suggesting. Further, Jewett comments on the importance of the rhetorical questions in the diatribe of Rom. 9. Unfortunately, however, he does not develop the eschatological justification of God's name, which is semi-realized now in Christ. In fact, he makes a brief comment that suggests he misses the flow of the argument that moves in this direction. That is, he states that the electing distinctions Paul makes are not those within the covenant people, but represent a *general* divine distinction between God's people and the wicked. We admit that Paul's discussions (of the patriarchal period) look out toward the general distinction between people. In fact, his whole discussion of election is grounded in the prior fact that God has the right to distinguish between sinners *per se*, a fact that is most fully revealed in the new exodus. However, Paul uses this general distinction between sinners *per se* as the basis for his argument for God's election within Israel. And this election within Israel thereby looks ahead to the general distinctions between people *per se* that are especially revealed in the new exodus.

It is only when we get to the semi-eschatological justification of God's name in the new exodus that we find God's electing grace distinguishing within people *per se* on a consistent basis, that is, amongst Jew and Gentile alike. We find the same in Rom. 4:25-29. The semi-eschatological declaration of God's righteousness effects God's equal covenant union with Jews and Gentiles (3:29). Thus, once we see the equal union of the Gentiles with God, we know that God has justified his name, semi-eschatologically.

On another point, Jewett rightly notes that when Paul speaks of willing or running (9:16) this alludes to the Jew who is trying to keep the law. We would clarify this to say that it *also*, though not exclusively, alludes to the Jews attempting to obey the law. As we will see in Rom. 9:33-10:12 (also argued by Jewett), many Jews thought they could bring the Messianic kingdom by their obedience to the law. Thus, we think that Paul is anticipating this here. It is not by willing or running that the Jews will bring the new exodus. As a result, such willing and running will not bring that same benefit to them personally. At the same time, if Paul is alluding to the Jews here (without excluding its universal associations), this would reinforce our point that Paul is highlighting God's rejection of many in Israel, those who are only of Israel according to the flesh.<sup>5</sup> That is, he is rejecting those Jews who think that the attainment of the future age and their own participation in it is by works.

While we believe this is Paul's focus in Rom. 9:6-22, we want to emphasize that this election within *visible* Israel points to an election between various people *per se* (9:23-24). Just as God calls people *out of* the Jews, he also calls people *out of* the Gentiles. He is distinguishing people *within* the Gentile world by electing grace alone. This implies that God distinguishes between the elect and the reprobate that are among all humanity *per se*. In other words, the supernatural nature of election and calling discussed in Rom. 9:6-22 is most fully manifested in the election and calling of Rom. 9:23-24. As we have noted, Rom. 9:6-22 is an embodied anticipation of what is more fully manifested in the new exodus (Rom. 9:23-24). The anticipation must have the same essential nature as the fulfillment; otherwise, it would not be an anticipation. Therefore, everything that Rom. 9:6-22 says about the inability of the Jews (before or after the law) is true of the present calling of Gentiles. Salvation is not by any person's willing or running (whether Jew or Gentile), but of God's mercy alone. It thus excludes all human works or effort. They are all excluded as a means of obtaining divine favor.

On the other side of the coin, Jewett accepts that divine hardening is a part of the biblical tradition. But one of his comments *may* suggest that he believes that the traditional Augustinian view of election and reprobation (as articulated by Gottschalk, Calvin, etc.) is tyrannical. We on the other hand, believe that all we have suggested on this chapter supports that view. The coming of the new exodus is purely by God's supernatural work, not human efforts. Thus, the participation of individuals in that new exodus is completely supernatural. It does not come by human efforts or merits. Paul clearly shows this by teaching that the present calling of Jews and Gentiles is the full

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<sup>5</sup> It is correct that Rom. 9:15-17 distinguishes the Gentile Pharaoh from the Jewish people (a universal distinction, here between Jew and Gentile), but again Paul places this in an argument that is also meant to show God's right of electing and reprobating whom he will, even among the Jews. It is their hardening (v. 22) that forms the basis of the calling of Jews and Gentiles alike (9:23-24). This discussion therefore has a redemptive-historical thrust that presses to the semi-eschatological exodus.

manifestation of the election and calling in previous redemptive history. And this is a calling and election that distinguishes one Jew from another and one Gentile from another purely by God's choice and election (9:23-24).

The Augustinian view simply articulates this supernatural character of calling in the life of the individual. In so doing, it does not make God a tyrant who unconditionally damns people who are not worthy of damnation. To make this clear with respect to reprobation, the Augustinian view distinguishes between preterition and damnation. In preterition, God considers all sinners as one mass deserving damnation (Rom. 5:12-21). As such, there is nothing in any one of them which would incline him to show favor to one and not another. Thus, he unconditionally chooses one to salvation and leaves another. Since the choice of the one to salvation is unconditional, it follows that not choosing the other to salvation is also unconditional. That is, leaving the other in a state already deserving damnation is unconditional. For if God were to use some criteria in the ones left as a basis of leaving them in that state, he would find that same sinful criteria in the ones he chose to salvation. Then he would have to leave the ones he chose to salvation in that same damnable state. Thus, in preterition, God leaves some sinners in the state which they deserve (as opposed to choosing them to salvation) unconditionally. However, they are not originally in that state unconditionally. They are in it based on the sin of Adam (Rom. 5:12, 16-18) and their personal sins. Thus, when God finally damns them, he does this on the basis of these sins. That is, he damns them on a condition. In this sense, their damnation is conditional. To sum up, the reprobate are left to be among the damnable unconditionally, but they are damned conditionally.

Jewett does not see this. As we will see in Rom. 11, Jewett believes in a form of universal salvation. He already suggests this on Rom. 9:24-26 when he alludes to Elizabeth Johnson's view that Paul's language includes Gentiles rather than excluding unbelieving Jews. However, if Paul taught (as we will argue) that some are damned (cf. Rom. 2:5, 8-9), then the new exodus implies that God's calling and election must be completely supernatural. It cannot be conditioned on any good choice or action in human beings. This cannot be the case, if its opposite (God's choice of who to leave in a state of damnation) is not also unconditional. Thus, the supreme supernatural character of the new exodus undergirds and supports the Augustinian view of election and reprobation, and cannot be fully grasped when it is denied.

To sum up, the eschatological thrust of Rom. 9: 6-26 supports the Augustinian view of grace and election. This is because eschatology is eminently supernatural. It is brought by God's will and power alone, and it involves the coming of the heavenly, supernatural dimension. When it is semi-realized in the present, this represents the most supreme expression of supernaturalism in the present era. Thus, every anticipation of eschatological grace in the present must have the same nature as its final eschatological expression. Eschatological supernaturalism implies Augustinianism supernaturalism. To put it in terms of Paul's narrative, eschatology is Augustinian supernaturalism come to its own.

Now we will briefly trace out this eschatological thrust from Rom. 9:25-29. Here we find that Paul is still dealing with Israel's rejection. Jewett loosely divides these verses into a chiasm, vv. 25-26 (Gentiles) and vv. 27-29 (Jews), "although both categories are developed in an inclusive manner" (p. 589). However, we would affirm more clearly that following upon vv. 23-24 (dealing with Jews and Gentiles), vv. 25-26 speak of both Jews and Gentiles receiving mercy. The passage is not

simply a proof text that Gentiles come in. It reveals (in continuity with 9:15-17) that a new exodus has arrived. This suggests a fulfillment for both Jews and Gentiles. As for the Jews, they have become like the Gentiles, That is, they are “not my people” similar to the way that the nation of Israel was described as “not my people” in the exile. Thus, when the remnant of Jews is saved, they are saved as “not my people”. Therefore, their salvation, together with the Gentiles can be described as a salvation in which those who were not my people have become my people, sons of the living God (Rom. 9:25-26).

As a result, vv. 27-29 are not simply the Jews as opposed to the Gentiles of vv. 25-26. Instead, vv. 27-29 describe the Jewish nation as a whole (though Jewett may not deny this reference) and the fact that it only has an elect remnant arising from it. That is, these verses remind us that not all who are of Israel are true Israel (9:6), not only in the past but also in the semi-realized eschatological present.

When it comes to the remnant theme, Jewett believes that the focus is on the positive use of the remnant. Thus, he does not translate the verse as “only the remnant will be saved” (v. 27). Instead, he believes that it positively affirms “the remnant will be saved”. We may certainly agree that salvation is a positive thing. However, Jewett (with his Universalist view), may be downplaying the negative side of this electing coin. (Certainly by the end of history in Rom. 11, he denies it altogether). However, if Paul’s exposition here continues over the earlier discussion (Rom. 9:6-22), then it suggests something negative too, “they are *not* all Israel who are from Israel (9:6; emphasis added). Only in this way, can it continue to answer the dilemma we have suggested, if Christ is the Messiah why do not all the Jews believe in him? It is precisely this fact (*not* all Jews are called) that has brought into question God’s faithfulness to his promises (9:6). It is this that Paul has answered with his portrayal of unconditional election in redemptive-history culminating in its full flowering in Christ’s calling in the present semi-eschatological age.

### **Romans 9:30-10:21**

In his discussion of Israel’s desire to attain righteousness (Rom. 9: 31-32), Jewett rightly critiques E. P. Sanders and Heikki Raisanen. Jewett notes that they wrongly exclude “works” from Israel’s error, only making it to mean “not faith in Christ”. Here we believe that Jewett is correct. Sanders and Raisanen construct a Paul who only critiqued the Jews for not having faith in Christ. And, on this construal, Paul was not criticizing the Jews for seeking salvation by works. Jewett, on the other hand, gives “works” its obvious *denotation*. Unfortunately, however, we do not believe he gives “works” their proper *connotation*. That is, he steps back on what works entailed for Judaism, tipping his hat to Sanders. If asked, did Jews believe they were placing God under obligation by their works? Jewett would answer, “No”. However, once Jewett says this, he is assuming that Jews only viewed works within the context of covenant grace. How is this significantly different from Sanders, for whom works functioned within the covenant? That is, if Jewett excludes “merit” (putting God under obligation) from works, then works only function as a gracious covenant badge.

We do believe this is a serious problem for Jewett. At the same time, Jewett does include one function of “works” not highlighted by Sanders. That is, according to Jewett, the Jews believed that their works would usher in the Messianic kingdom. For Jewett this means that Jewish works

function within the context of covenant grace to bring the messianic age. That is, Jews believed that their works (even though wrought by God's grace) were God's instrument for bringing the future messianic kingdom. While most of Jewett's quotes on this subject are in the Romans 10 section of his commentary, the issue is also relevant for the whole discussion from Rom. 9:30-10:12. Among other references, Jewett notes Rabbi Levi who stated that "[i]f Israel kept the Sabbath properly even for a single day, the Son of David would come" (p. 627, from Midrash *Exod. Rab.* 25.12).

We believe Jewett is correct to point this out in the context of Paul's discussion of Rom. 9:30-10:12. If this is the case, why can Jewett not see that this entails a Jewish view of merit? According to this view, the Jews could bring the ultimate ground of salvation by their obedience. For Paul, that which brings the messianic kingdom brings the ultimate ground of all salvation. This is a perversion of the Mosaic covenant of grace. In that covenant, Israel's Spirit wrought obedience could never bring the ground of salvation. Israel's Spirit wrought obedience was only a means of God bringing blessing as opposed to curse in the land.<sup>6</sup> This typified the coming of the kingdom by Christ's merits, but it was not meritorious. Types are not the reality. Once one says that Israel's obedience could have brought in the kingdom of God, they are claiming it could have brought in the ground of salvation throughout redemptive history. Thus, if one claims this they are viewing works meritoriously.

There are others who wrongly assert that merit was the ground of Israel's retention of the land. And this is a serious error. Our view that Israel's obedience was the means of retaining the land does not logically lead to their false conclusion that this retention came by merit. However, the Jewish view that Israel's obedience to the law could bring in the kingdom necessarily entails the view that Israel could merit. This is because the coming of the kingdom is the ground of salvation in a way that the retention of the land is not. For Israel's retention of the land was grounded in God's prior justifying grace administered in the Mosaic covenant. This in turn was grounded in the future death and resurrection of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 10:4). But if Israel could bring in the kingdom by her obedience, she would circumvent the death and resurrection of Christ and undermine the ground of all salvation. This Israel could not do.

The Jewish view that Israel could actually bring the kingdom by her obedience was absolutizing the fact that Israel's obedience was a gracious means of her retaining a gracious gift (the land blessings). Jewett does not recognize that Israel absolutized the law in this way, and thus he denies that works (as used by Paul) entails placing God under obligation.

At the same time, we believe that Jewett is on the right track when he points to Israel's belief that she could bring in the messianic age by her obedience to the law.<sup>7</sup> How would we substantiate this claim? We point to Paul's repeated use of the phrase "he who believes in him will not be put to shame" (Rom. 9:33; 10:11), a quotation from Isaiah 28:16. This is a fulfillment of the prophetic

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<sup>6</sup> This in addition to the fact that Israel's Spirit wrought obedience was (by grace) a means of their continually laying up for themselves treasures in heaven, which they even experienced before the time in their pilgrimage on earth (as it is also in the NT, Matt. 6:20).

<sup>7</sup> Of course, as noted above, we would emphasize unlike Jewett that this involves Israel's erroneous view that the messianic age comes through Israel's "merit".

promises, a fulfillment in the messianic age. In the messianic age God's people will not be put to shame like they were in Israel's exile. Isaiah is projecting a prophetic reversal of Israel's exilic shame, a reversal that takes place in the messianic age.

And Paul says that age has arrived. Paul makes this plain when he quotes Isaiah. But he also suggests the same when he follows the quote ("whoever believes in him will not be put to shame") with the words "for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches to all who call on him" (Rom. 10:12). This is a clear reference to the present messianic age; for under the Mosaic covenant there was a distinction between Jew and Greek. The Jew was especially set forward as a member of God's visible covenant people. If a Greek was to participate equally, he would need to be circumcised, and both male and female would need to participate in the sacrificial system. That is, they would need to become Jews. Only with the commencement of Christ's resurrection are Jews and Gentiles equal participants in the worship of God. This is another indication that the promise "he who believes in him will not be put to shame" has its fullest significance in the messianic age. Paul has his eyes on that new reality in Christ.

At the same time, this promise (not being put to shame) is not simply a promise of Gentile inclusion in the messianic age. It is also given to believing Jews in the messianic age. They are given a fuller manifestation of God's justifying verdict than their forefathers. They are not put to shame even in the way that their believing fathers (think of Daniel, Dan. 9:8) were during the exile. God's justifying verdict (which is essentially the same under the Mosaic covenant and the messianic age) is more fully manifested in the messianic age. It is more completely displayed in the present triumph of Christ, in which he is Lord of all, richly blessing all who call on him. The manifestation of his covenant curses in the exile has been reversed in the present time. It has been reversed in Christ's bearing the curse, satisfying it historically, and being raised from the dead. This entails blessing to the nations. Thus, this historical accomplishment is manifested more fully now in the historical experience of God's people. That is why the Jewish Paul can be separated from the land of Israel, and it is not a curse to him. Paul can wander among the nations, suffering hardship, all the while proclaiming more loudly than any OT prophet, "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God to all who believe, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

How does this support the idea that Israel was seeking to bring the messianic age by her obedience to the law? It is because Israel was seeking this messianic age of no more shame by works. That which God gave his people in 9:33 (the messianic age of no more shame) is what Israel sought by "works" (9:31-32). A careful look at the movement from Rom. 9:30-33 helps reinforce this point. The phrase "he who believes in him will not be disappointed" refers back to the "righteousness" which the Gentiles attained (9:30). What the Gentiles did not seek "righteousness" (9:30), they have received by not being put to shame (9:33). They received the righteous messianic kingdom. It is this righteousness that the Jews sought by a law of works (9:31-32).

Thus, when Paul says that Israel was pursuing righteousness (the same attained by the Gentiles), we must interpret this to mean that Israel was seeking the righteousness of the messianic age. But unlike believing Gentiles, Israel did not pursue "righteousness" by faith. Instead, they sought it by works, as if they could bring the righteousness of the kingdom by their works. In other words, Israel strove to bring the messianic age (the age of no more shame) into history by her merits.



In accordance with this analysis, we would suggest that Jewett is correct insofar as he points out this element of Israel's orientation. This also shows that E. P. Sanders is shortsighted in focusing attention on "covenantal nomism", which deals with the entrance requirements of individuals in a continuous covenant community. That is, Sanders shortchanges the historical focus of Israel's law obedience in seeking to bring the messianic age. It thus also shortchanges Paul's redemptive historical response in Christ. We believe that this is true not only of Sanders, but also of many of his orthodox opponents. They respond to Sanders by suggesting that Paul's view of individual justification involves the imputation of Christ's righteousness to individuals and is at odds with Israel's meritorious view of personal salvation. While we agree with Sanders's opponents on these points, we believe the question Paul is dealing with is broader. It has a historical, eschatological orientation that further supports the Reformation's teaching on justification. Paul is primarily taking on Israel's view of obedience to the law as the means of bringing the messianic kingdom. In our view (unlike Jewett), we believe this entails Israel's belief that she can merit the coming kingdom by her obedience. And for Paul, this Jewish view would entail the faulty conclusion that one's personal participation in this salvation is also grounded in one's own merits.

Why is this the implication? Because for Paul the salvation of individuals throughout time is grounded in the same event that brings the kingdom. For Paul, this is the Christ event. This is at odds with unbelieving Israel's belief that her merits would be the ground of the coming kingdom. For Paul, this Jewish view would imply that those same merits were the ground of their own personal salvation. For both these things (the coming kingdom and their individual salvation) must have the same ground, either that of grace or works.

At least Jewett recognizes that Israel sought to bring the messianic kingdom by her obedience to the law (though he denies its meritorious nature). Jewett then states (on Rom. 10:6-8) that this Jewish view violates the "Deuteronomic strictures against assuming that divine actions could be manipulated by the righteousness and holiness of the nation" (p. 627). Deuteronomy implies that the Messiah is present; he does not come by the obedience of others to the law.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, Jewett continues to sow the seeds of his universalism with his comments on Rom. 10:11. According to Jewett, Paul is not teaching that only some have their shame removed. That is, those without shame do not stand over against others who are still ashamed. Jewett then quips that this is not to be interpreted in light of centuries of self-serving theology. How can Jewett say this in the face of Paul's clear argument that the Jews have not attained (9:31) to the status of no more shame (9:33)? Obviously, Paul has left many of the Jews under wrath (9:28-29) and shame (9:33) because that is where they have left themselves by their unbelief. Those who have been delivered from this shame only have this deliverance through the unconditional mercy of God. And they are to desire the salvation of all those outside of Christ as Paul did in his mission (Rom. 10: 14-15; 11:13-14). Instead, it appears that Jewett's exegesis is self-serving, serving his reputation amidst the present establishment of "inclusiveness". In this, he is not really serving those outside of Christ, as their good lies in their salvation, not their pacification. Nor is he serving his true interests which are found in the glory of God.

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<sup>8</sup>If the reader would like to consider the reviewer's further thoughts on these verses (Rom. 10:1-10), she can see my review of Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith: A Review*, K:JNWTS 26/2 (2011): 8-29, especially pp. 20-26, with the heading Deuteronomy 30:12-14, available here: <http://kerux.com/doc/2602A2.asp>.

Now we come to Rom. 10:13-21. Our contention that Rom. 10:11-12 deals most fully with the new age in Christ is further supported by the eschatological associations of Rom. 10:13-21. Verses 12 and 13 help us see this by linking vv. 13-21 with the previous verses. “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord” (v. 13) suggests the transition from v. 12 to vv. 14-21. This phrase refers back to v. 12 where there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. Thus, “whoever” calls—not just Jew, but also Gentile. Then v. 14 contains the hook word “call”, asking “How shall they call upon him whom they have not heard?” (Interestingly, Jewett finds synonymous parallelism in vv. 14-15.) Then, starting in v. 15, Paul presents six quotes from the Hebrew Bible, four of which are from Isaiah and have clear eschatological references (Isa. 52:7; 53:1; 65:1, 2). In light of these eschatological quotes, we believe Paul also finds eschatological projections embodied in the other two texts (Ps. 19:4; Deut. 32:21). Paul’s first Isaiah quotation is taken from a passage with the words “your God reigns” (Isa. 52:7), which underscores its eschatological associations. Paul does not quote these words, but we are not of the interpretive opinion that he thereby intentionally means to say that this aspect of the quote has not been fulfilled. Instead, as with most authors who quote a short section of another text, he intends to allude to the whole text, even the words he has not quoted. This is not to deny that he intends to emphasize the words he quotes rather than the others not quoted. But he does not intend to take the words quoted out of their context—especially their time reference, here the eschatological future (now semi-realized for Paul). This point is reinforced by the following consideration. Paul claims that what Isaiah foretold was happening now in his own ministry. But what if someone were to object?—“Paul, Isaiah is not referring to your ministry because he is talking about someone preaching that the eschatological reign of God has come, and that still awaits the future.” It would be a weak argument if Paul were to reply, well, the eschatological reign has not arrived but Isaiah is still talking about my preaching. Only by believing (as he did) that the eschatological reign had been semi-realized now, could he defend his use of this quotation.

How do these quotes concerning this kingdom age fit with Paul’s overall argument in Rom. 9-11? When Paul speaks of Israel’s rejection (10:19-21), he is not saying that every Jew has rejected Christ. This is plain from the fact that this preaching has brought salvation to both Jew and Greek (10:12). Thus, these passages suggest that Israel as a whole has rejected Christ. That is, “they did not all heed the glad tidings” (10:16), but some did. Again, that not all Jews have rejected is underscored in 10:21-11:1. After reemphasizing Israel’s corporate rejection of Christ (10:21), Paul asks, “God has not rejected his people, has he?” (11:1). Paul then denies this emphatically, noting himself as an example of a Jew who has come.

In this way, Rom. 10:14-21 clearly set us up for Rom. 11. And it does so with one other theme, the inclusion of the Gentiles to make Israel jealous (10:19). This is a significant theme in Rom. 11 (vv. 11, 14) in that it plays a part in the mutual interaction of the salvation of the Jews and the Gentiles. Here again, we see Paul’s eschatology at work. For this universal extension of mercy to both Jews and Gentiles can only play itself out in the semi-eschatological age, now arrived in Christ.

## **Romans 11**

When speaking of Israel’s election, Jewett states that it is the status (not quality) of Israel’s election that is in view. At the same time, he discusses the OT background of God’s gracious election. To

us, this seems to include the quality of Israel's election. Thus, it seems that both the status and quality of Israel's election is in view.

Jewett claims that the election of Israel here refers to God's election of all in Israel, even those who reject the gospel. He looks back to Rom. 11:25 and 29 and Rom. 9:4-5 for this interpretation. He insightfully sees a connection between the "gifts" of the "gifts and calling of God" (Rom. 11:29) and those benefits given to Israel in Rom. 9:4-5. We do not deny that in light of Rom. 9:4-5, Paul suggests a visible external calling and election of Israel as a whole. However, Paul is clear in Rom. 9 that not all who are of Israel are of Israel (9:6). There is a real internal calling and true eternal election of an elect remnant from the broader nation of Israel. In Rom. 11, the irrevocable gifts and calling of visible Israel (11:29) are fulfilled in the Jewish remnant of those internally called by the Spirit (Rom. 9:24-26).

Jewett, on the other hand, argues for universal Jewish salvation. However, this is clearly against what Paul says earlier in Romans 2:7-8, at least on the actual (and not merely hypothetical) interpretation of that passage (advocated also by Jewett). For Paul says that there will be wrath and indignation on all who do evil, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Thus, wrath will really (and not just hypothetically) come on some Jews. In addition, Paul clearly says that some are prepared for destruction (Rom. 9:22).

These passages from Romans should suffice. However, here we take an aside to note the continuity of the early church on this point. If Paul taught universal Jewish salvation, this was missed by one of his traveling companions, namely, Mark. For Mark claims that Jesus said of Judas Iscariot that it would have been good for him if he had not been born (Mark 14:21, see also Matt. 26:24). This is not consistent with Jewett's claim of universal Jewish salvation for it suggests that Judas will not receive salvation. The passage is so strong that it even implies that Judas did not experience mere non-existence after death (as taught by Jehovah's Witnesses). This is because Jesus is claiming for Judas a torment that extends after death.

We believe this is clear from Jesus' statement about Judas, "it would have been good for him not to have been born". At the very least, logically, Jesus' statement about Judas implies that the evil consequences he is to experience from his betrayal must outweigh the good he experienced in his life. And this could only be said if he were to experience greater evils after death. If he had simply been annihilated at death, the good he had experienced during his life would presumably have outweighed the evil he experienced in death. For this evil would have only been momentary, leading to his non-existence. The non-existent do not exist to experience either good or evil. Thus, a Judas Iscariot who only experiences non-existence at death presumably experienced more goodness than evil. And it was better for him to be born than not be born.

We might then ask if the momentary suffering Judas experienced from visible remorse and hanging himself was worse than all the good he experienced in his life. If these sufferings were only temporal (and were not anticipations of eternal suffering), it seems unlikely. Viewed from this point of view (entailing no further judgment), they were shorter in duration than his many years of receiving rain from heaven, together with gladness (Acts 14:17) even that mixed with sorrows. Thus, to make sense of Jesus' words, we must appeal to the sufferings Judas will experience after death. These torments cannot be metaphorical; therefore, Jesus' description of them as eternal must

also be real (Mark 9:47-48) When one offends against an eternal, just and benevolent God, the just consequence is eternal punishment and abandonment. Therefore, the condemnation of Judas disproves the universal salvation of the Jews. Otherwise, Mark taught a different message than the apostle Paul, with whom he traveled. Even those who deny Markan authorship to Mark's gospel must account for its witness to the worldview of early Christianity. This simply provides another testimony to that which is clear from the very epistle of Romans itself (2:7-8; 9:22).

Next, Jewett argues for the absolute salvation of every single Gentile as well as every single Jew. That is, he argues for unrestricted Universalism. He teaches that this is the indisputable conclusion of Paul's statement, "God has turned all over to disobedience in order that he may have mercy on all" (Rom. 11:32). Jewett contends this is indisputable in spite of its difficulties for systematic theology. However, we would claim that this is not only problematic for systematic theology (in which we seek to compare Paul with other NT authors), but it is also problematic for Paul's argument in the epistle to the Romans itself. We have already pointed to Rom. 2:7-8 for some Jews being condemned, but the same passage also teaches that some Gentiles will be condemned. Further, Rom. 9 clearly teaches that Esau and Pharaoh are not chosen for salvation (9:11-13, 17), but prepared for destruction (9:22). How is it that just two chapters later, we are told that Paul's statement about the salvation of all means the absolute universal salvation of every single human being in history? Instead, there is every reason to take this statement clearly in harmony with the letter, that is, to the effect that salvation will extend to people within all nations. That is, God will save all, namely Jews and Gentiles. He will not simply save the Jews nor simply save the Gentiles. Thus, all includes all groups. But this does not mean that he will save every single individual in each of those groups, i.e., every single Jew and every single Gentile. That is an unjustifiable inference from the passage. And it flies directly in the face of the context (Rom. 9-11), in which it is clear that there are those chosen and called out from among the Jews and from among the Gentiles (Rom. 9:23-26). (See further our analysis of Rom. 9 above.)

Some NT scholars will claim that we cannot argue this way, that is, we cannot put together Paul's statements as propositions to determine their consistency. Following Daniel Patte, they believe that Paul's statements represent core convictions that Paul expresses with these statements and our job is to find the core convictions of those statements, not to determine the coherency of the statements themselves. Certainly, Patte and his followers have mythological assumptions with Claude Levi Strauss who lies behind such claims.

We will only note here that if Jewett were to adopt this procedure of interpretation, then he would not be able to appeal to the universal statements in Paul ("all" etc.) to make his own point. For these statements only work together if Paul has some consistency in his argument. However, if consistency is to be sought in these statements (following Jewett), then we (like him) can argue from statements within the letter. That is, there is every reason to consider the consistency of Paul's "all" statements (noted by Jewett) with other statements in Romans, especially those so closely related, as are passages dealing with the nature of judgment and election. Without this procedure, the exegete is left with arbitrary criteria for determining the content of Paul's convictions. And in many cases, this arbitrary criteria leads one to see in Paul a person with the same convictions as those of the exegete (a la Schweitzer's criticism).

Jewett does not profess to follow Patte's method and may even agree with some of our methodological points above. Nonetheless, he does read himself and the modern Ecumenical movement into Paul when he attributes thorough Universalism to the apostle.

What then do we do with "the rest were hardened" (Rom. 11:7), for afterward we are told that they are not hardened to the point of complete abandonment (11:11)? Does this represent a shift from the selection of an elect remnant to the salvation of every single Jewish person in history or at least at some future point in history? Here we believe that Paul is contrasting those elect Jews who are presently regenerated with those who are now hardened, but will yet believe in Christ in the future. That is, he is contrasting present Jewish Christians (11:1-7; not explicitly described as moved to jealousy by Gentile conversion) to those future Jews that will be moved to jealousy and salvation by the conversion of the Gentiles (11:11, 14). Does this fit with Paul's mission to go to the Jews first (the first group of Jews coming prior to Gentile conversion) and also to the Gentiles? After this, Paul looks to a secondary fruit of his mission to the Gentiles—that those Jews hardened when they first heard the message of Christ will now come (moved to jealousy). This does not imply that this later group of Jews includes each and every Jew. It certainly could not include those already dead. But neither does it include every single Jew at some future point in history. For after making this rhetorical move, Paul speaks of this secondary goal of his Gentile ministry. That is, "if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save *some* of them" (11:14; emphasis mine). That is, Paul speaks of his goal of saving some among the hardened Jews, moving them to jealousy by the conversion of the Gentiles. Paul anticipates "some" Jews coming as a result of this, not all. Paul is not simply saying "some" because he thinks some will be saved by his ministry, while all the rest will be saved by the addition of all other ministries to the Gentiles. Certainly Paul does not exclude Jews being converted via other ministries to the Gentiles (though even these would be under his ministry as the apostle to the Gentiles). But he implies that the salvation of "some" Jews (moved to jealousy by the conversion of the Gentiles) is all that is sufficient to make up their "acceptance" (11:15) and "life from the dead" (which Jewett rightly sees as the resurrection).

Their acceptance does not await the conversion of every single living Jew at some future point. Only a further conversion of some Jews in the future, who, when added to those presently converted will make up the fullness of the Jews (Rom. 11:12, 15). These also add up to make "all Israel" (11:26). Thus, the "fullness" (Greek, *pleroma*) of the Jews (11:12) amounts to the elect within Israel at Christ's return. This is parallel to the "fullness" (*pleroma*) of the Gentiles (11:25), which is made up of all the elect from among the Gentiles, gathered together at Christ's return.

What we have seen so far suggests that Paul is not referring to the conversion of all Israelites living during a particular future period. Further, this view does not fit with the argument we have seen so far in Rom. 9-10, which deals with an elect remnant among Jews and Gentiles. This situation was anticipated in OT narratives (Rom. 9:6-22) and accords with semi-eschatological justification in the now time (Rom. 9:30-10:12).

Nor should we immediately presuppose that this is what is taught in Rom. 11:26. Every other place where Paul and other NT authors quote the OT prophets, they imply that those prophecies have been fulfilled now (at Christ's first coming) and/or not yet—looking to the future eschaton. That is, they do not look to a future (but not yet realized) fulfillment that is to take place on this earth

before Christ returns. And this is the way that many implicitly interpret Rom. 11:26-27, using it to refer to a future mass conversion of Jews in this age before Christ returns. Thankfully, Jewett does not go in this direction, but allots the passage to Christ's second coming. And here we agree, though perhaps Christ's first coming should not be excluded. However, then Jewett goes on to describe it as referring to the universal salvation of all Jews without exception at the resurrection. Here we have parted company.

To briefly round out our argument for 11:25-32, we note a few points. First, as noted by other NT scholars, "a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" does not necessarily mean that there will be a time in world history when the hardening in part is removed, leading to the mass conversion of Israel. The "until" sometimes simply emphasizes the state that occurs prior to the point envisioned. It does not focus on something new after this point. Thus, Paul's point would be the partial hardening that remains on Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles. Further, the point envisioned (immediately after the last of the Gentiles is converted) is the second coming of Christ. Israel is hardened in part up to this point, i.e., up to the second coming. This leaves no time for a mass conversion of Jews. If there is any reversal implied after the "until", it is simply that what is then manifest as Israel will no longer be hardened in part. At that time all will be revealed for what it is. There will be no more distinction between visible Israel and the true Israel among them. All Israel will now be identified as all elect Jews and they will all be saved. The promises given to Israel will now find fruition in them.

Second, we suggest that those Jews who are enemies now (11:28) are those who have been hardened (11:7). The gifts and calling of God (11:29) are still theirs collectively in the sense that God promises to save some of them. Thus, we do not believe that 11:28 teaches that every Israelite is eternally beloved by God and will be saved. Instead, within its context, 11:28 should be interpreted in light of the some to be saved (11:14) out of the hardened group (11:7). Also, "all Israel" (coming on the heels of the fullness of the Gentiles, 11:25) should be interpreted in this same way, as the totality of a previous remnant. If so, this same perspective naturally flows into 11:28 as well. In addition, Romans 11:28 must be interpreted in the light of v. 31, which unfolds it. And v. 31 refers to the salvation of some in Israel. This can be seen from the fact that it picks up the argument of 11:11, which deals with the salvation of "some" within Israel (11:14). Therefore, we conclude that Romans 11, consistently interpreted, refers to the salvation of a remnant within Israel, parallel to the salvation of a remnant of the Gentiles. To argue for Universalism from this passage (as Jewett does) amounts to a foreign imposition on this text as well as on the rest of the letter to the Romans.

After making his Universalist claim, Jewett makes a suggestion that can be separated from this claim. He suggests that Paul's statement of the salvation of all (namely Jews and Gentiles) has relation to Paul's proposed Spanish mission. In Jewett's view, Paul is dealing with Jewish and Gentile factions within the church. He is connecting this with the weak and strong in contention in Rom. 14. Here he may be going beyond the evidence. Still, his suggestion is that each group may view the conversion of people from the other group as a threat to their position. That is, the conversion of Jews may increase the Jewish faction in the church and make life more difficult for the Gentiles and vice versa. Paul's argument works against this point of view by showing that the conversion of all serves the benefit of all.

On the last section, Jewett makes a few connections with Greco-Roman literature. First, he notes that the connection between depth and riches (“Oh, the depth of the riches”, 11:33) is also found in the story of Odysseus. Second, Jewett explores statements in the Stoics about creation that are similar to Paul’s statement “from him and through him and to him are all things”.

Jewett makes a theological claim about each of these things in Paul. First, he claims that these “riches” in Paul are the riches of the new age, noting Rom. 2:4, but especially Rom. 9:23; 11:12, 17. Here we think Jewett is correct. We would suggest that Paul is speaking about the eternal riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God that is his from eternity. And God has now invited his people into the fullness of these riches now, semi-eschatologically in Christ.

Second, Jewett thinks that the language “of him, and to him, and through him are all things” refers primarily to redemption (in distinction from the Stoics). We would agree with Jewett on the emphasis, but underscore that Paul has the creation in the background to this revelation of the new creation. The eschatological revelation displayed in creation (Rom. 1) teaches that all things are from God. That is why people are supposed to be thankful. And it reveals that all things are to God—eschatologically. (Idolaters believe that God’s gifts are merited by their efforts—through human merit and unto one’s own personal glory.). The God-centered eschatological revelation which the nations rejected in nature has now been accomplished and given to them by God’s mercy. This reversal of their worship (from the creature to the Creator) must also bring to them a reversal of their perspective on creation; otherwise, they would continue to be the idolaters of Rom. 1. They now recognize that creation comes only by God’s gracious gift, and not truly of their merits. And in him (through him), they live and move and have their being (Acts 17:28). As such, it is unto God for his eschatological glory.

The new creation (through redemption) is analogous to the first creation. The new creation (after the fall) is in no sense by merit, but all of God’s mercy, through God’s grace, and unto God’s eschatological glory—in Christ Jesus. In this way, Paul’s language in Rom. 11:36 refers both to the first creation and the new creation in Christ.

The flow of Rom. 11 leads us to this conclusion. The salvation and eschatological glory of the saints is not based on human merits or national identity. God shows this in the back and forth manner in which he has mercy on Jews, then Gentiles, then again on Jews. All of this is a revelation of the riches of his grace in the new era, which goes beyond the old with its focus on one nation. Now we have a revelation of riches surpassing the former era, one in which God more fully exalts his grace in Christ and brings universal salvation to the nations, though not Universalism. And he does this by saving an elect remnant in Israel, sending them to the nations, so that he might unite Gentiles to the heavenly riches of the olive tree above. In turn, the riches of the Gentiles lead to eschatological jealousy in the Jews who are now grafted back into that same semi-eschatological tree by grace. In this way, he brings in the eschatological fullness of the Jews and of the Gentiles to the glory of the eschatological Christ, who is God over *all* (Rom. 9:5).

We might now ask: does Paul see this mimetically reflected in his own apostolic ministry? Does Paul not hope that his present mission to the Gentiles will abound in riches (the collection) to the Jerusalem saints (Rom. 15:25-32), leading to jealousy and further salvation among the Jews? And he brings the offering before going to Spain. Thus, does Paul see this as potentially storing up

spiritual riches for his mission to Spain (bringing further riches for the Gentiles)? This simply raises a few questions between the relation of Rom. 11 and Paul's mission to Spain that Jewett continually asks, and adds to it the offering to Jerusalem. There is still room for more thinking on these redemptive-historical issues—more riches to come forth from his word.

## **Romans 12**

“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship” (Rom. 12:1) Jewett's comments on Romans 12-16 contain numerous and interesting historical observations, insights into the horizontal relationships within the church and connections between these chapters and Paul's plans for a mission to Spain. Jewett also makes some connections between these chapters and the earlier theological content of the epistle, but this is where he mostly falls short. Admittedly, he is not alone among interpreters here. Recognizing how these chapters flow out of the previous material is a difficult matter for interpreters, including the present reviewer.

However, we are given a key that begins to unlock the door in Rom. 12:1. When we recognize the redemptive-historical nature of the mercies of God found earlier in the epistle, we can begin to follow this insight into chapters 12-16. That is, as we have seen, in its most effusive sense, the mercy articulated by Paul is the mercy that has brought the new age of the kingdom of God. This mercy is the greater manifestation of God's mercy found in the new exodus (Rom. 9:15). This is the mercy of God that has brought the semi-eschatological age in redemptive history. It is a greater manifestation of mercy than that displayed during the period of the law. As a result, the suffering that was previously a manifestation of God's anger in Palestine is no longer a manifestation of condemnation for those in Christ (Rom. 8:1, 32ff.). Thus, Paul may travel throughout the Gentile world, suffer for the gospel, and not be ashamed (Rom. 1:16-17; 9:33; 10:11). This mercy brings the era in which God is the God of Gentiles as well as Jews (Rom. 3:29; 9:23-26). Thus, in the historical accomplishment of Christ's life, death and resurrection, we have gone beyond the former era (Rom. 4:9-25; 5:20-21 with 6:14; 7:5-6 with 8:1 and 8:31-39, etc.). As such, Rom. 12:1 speaks of the mercy that has brought the church more fully into the heavenly places in union with Christ. It is that present manifestation of God's mercy that has given God's people greater access to the heavenly presence of God (Rom. 5:2 seen in light of the greater hope of the new age—expressed in the relative contrast of Rom. 8 to Rom. 7:7-25)—all in king Jesus.

As we see it, both the horizontal and the vertical aspects of this semi-realized eschatology are Paul's presupposition for his exhortations in Rom. 12-16. Jewett helps us with some of the horizontal points at times. And his historical insights can be used to expand these. But only once (to our reckoning) does he touch on the vertical aspects of this eschatological realization in Christ (see his comments on Rom. 15:9-11 on the praise of the church together with the angels in heaven). We believe this vertical aspect of eschatology is critical for interpreting Paul's paranesis, including that in Romans 12-16.

This paranesis begins with Paul's exhortation to give oneself as a living sacrifice. The sacrifice given in Christ (and in union with his sacrifice) takes place in heaven, before the throne of God. It is thus to be “acceptable to God” in Christ. It is “acceptable” in his presence just like his will (v. 2). Its heavenly nature is reinforced by the fact that it is contrasted to being conformed to “this



world” (v. 2). In this vertical heavenly union, God brings himself to Christian believers just as they are brought before God. That is, he actively accepts them in Christ. They sup in his house. There they are sacrifices well pleasing to God. God takes pleasure in them.

This may have implications for the horizontal relationships among Christians and for the mission to Spain (as Jewett suggests), but we must first begin with the vertical semi-eschatological relation in Christ. To understand Paul aright, we must start from heaven, in union with Paul’s risen Savior and king. When the church finds herself there, as the fulfillment of the prophetic promises, then she understands how to relate to one another and to the world.

If we start from Paul’s heavenly perspective, then we can consider Jewett’s suggestion that this sacrifice involves self-sacrifice for one another in the Christian church, especially the selfless love of Jew and Gentile for one another in Christ (cf. Rom. 11). Further, Jewett implies that this self-sacrifice is important for the sacrifice that has to be made for the Spanish mission. As all are united together in Christ, they may be united in the cause of sending Paul to Spain.

If these insights are correct, this would help explain (to us) the relationship between Paul’s message in Romans and his biography—his mission to Spain. That is, Paul’s gospel of the semi-eschatological righteousness of God (presented to the Romans) is intimately tied to his mission to the Gentiles. This would further support our suggestion that when Paul articulates the righteousness of God in Romans he is not simply discussing justification as it has always been imputed to saints, but he is highlighting the greater manifestation of that righteousness that has dawned with the new age in Christ. As a result of this, we have a transcendent inheritance and kingdom not centered in Palestine, but one which everyone throughout the whole world may presently enter by faith in Christ. Paul is thus a living embodiment of that transcendent risen Christ—present to the nations. Through him, they may see and hear Christ, whom Paul simply represents as an ambassador.

Even though we find this transcendent eschatological perspective here, we agree with Jewett that “reasonable” sacrifice is a better option for translation than “spiritual” sacrifice in 12:1. And this is not inconsequential, as it sets up the rest of the chapter in which the saints are to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind”. Thus, they are not to “think” more highly of themselves than they ought to think (v. 3). In accordance with this, they are not to adopt a haughty frame of “mind” (v. 16a). Romans 12, verses 3 and 16 are at least thematically related and surround the discussion of the body (vv. 4-8) and several of the exhortations flowing out of that discussion (vv. 9-15). Here Paul exhorts every Christian not to “think more highly of himself than he ought to think” (v. 3) and not to be “haughty in mind” (v. 16). This flows out of Paul’s exposition in the previous chapters, coming to a crescendo in Rom. 11:34-36, “For who has known the mind of the Lord?” What everyone has comes from God’s grace and thus they give thanks to God, not to themselves. They are to exalt in the grace of God, not in their attainments. It is God who “has allotted to each a measure of faith” (12:3). And Paul places himself in this paradigm. It is only “through the grace given to me” (12:3) that he can say these things.

In this way, Paul and the church are conformed to the humility of Christ, as his body. (The body language should here lead us to Christ—his body, once humiliated and now in heaven). He who had humility of mind exhorts them (through his apostle) to “associate with the lowly” (12:16). The

next clause in this verse (“Do not be wise in your own estimation”) indicates that we are being reminded of Rom. 12:34, in which no one is wise enough to be God’s counselor. Thus, once again, these statements flow out of Paul’s exposition in Rom. 1-11.

In other words, this perspective flows from the new heavenly identity they have in Christ. As we noted, Paul implies this from the beginning when he states that the renewing of the mind involves not being conformed to “this world” (v. 2). Christians are united together in heavenly places. And they have been placed there by God’s mercy, not by their own merits. Thus, they cannot boast. They are humble servants. They are in the heavenly presence of God, where no one can boast—and that by grace, not by works.

This perspective is strengthened by the historical perspective of eschatology that Paul articulated in these earlier chapters (e.g., Rom. 9:33-10:12). Just as Israel’s righteousness could not bring the age of the kingdom, that age did not arrive because of any sinner’s merits. That age arrived only because of God’s work in Christ. Thus, no one can boast for possessing its blessings. They did not bring them historically; these benefits are merely a gift of mercy.

This humility of self-sacrifice is then the present expression of the heavenly life in the midst of this suffering world. As such, Paul implies that it is union with Christ’s self-sacrifice; otherwise, it would not be acceptable to God. In light of that, Paul is not ashamed, as he suffers in union with Christ for the sake of the gospel, giving up himself as an offering unto God.

Christians are to be transformed into this transcendent heavenly perspective, in union with the sufferings of Christ. And perhaps in this way, they are to identify with Paul in his mission to the Gentiles. They are thus encouraged to give of themselves for the Spanish mission. On this latter point, Jewett may have an insight (though more proof may be needed).

At the same time, we think Jewett overstates his point when he claims that this transformation is corporate, not individual. We think he is right to point out that it is not merely individual, a tendency that has led to an overly introspective approach to this verse. The discussion of the body of Christ (12:4-8) certainly articulates this corporate dimension. However, we do not think it can be divorced from the transformation of the individuals who make up the corporate body. This is made clear by the fact that the body is made up of individuals who use their unique gifts for the building up of the body (12:4-8). Further, only because no individual can boast before God (Rom. 3:19) is it true that members in the church cannot boast one over against the other. And only by the individuals giving up themselves as a living sacrifice, can the corporate body that they make up give itself in service to Paul’s mission to Spain.

As noted, Jewett suggests that corporate harmony and love in the church is necessary for their effective support of Paul’s mission. This may suggest one reason for his seeking their mutual edification. But we must add a twist here. To our mind, the corporate element is dependent on the vertical and horizontal shift in redemptive history. This is brought out in the fact that all in the church, Jew and Gentile alike, are equal possessors of the heavenly life in Christ. By God’s mercy, all the church is exalted in Christ as his body (Rom 12:4-5). And thus, the gifts that each individual has are for the building up of the whole body (Rom. 12:5-8). Since every member is exalted in heaven in union with Christ, possessing gifts in him, believers are to treat one another as such.

And as such they are to use their gifts in service to them and thus to the whole church. As a result, we believe that the heavenly perspective of Paul in this epistle is fundamental to horizontal relationships in the church. And thus, the “body” must also be Christologically focused. The church is the body because she is united to the risen body of Christ. Here we differ with Jewett, who states that the emphasis of the term “body” is horizontal.

At the same time, we are happy to find Jewett teaching that the language of body here is metaphorical, not realistic. This affirmation is all the more interesting since Jewett seeks to bring Protestants and Roman Catholics (who teach a realistic union) together whenever possible. But perhaps because Jewett thinks the emphasis is on the horizontal, he does not intend to affirm a metaphorical union between Christ and believers (as opposed to a realistic one).

Jewett makes a few salutary remarks about Rom. 12:9-21. He is right to point out that these verses are not just a random set of exhortations. Jewett makes some suggestions about the structure of some of these verses, including a chiasm. We might add that there are two lead words that frame verses 9-21, “evil” and “good”. “Evil” is repeated again in the phrase “Never pay back evil for evil” (v. 17), which is expanded in verse 21, “overcome evil with good”. This suggests that vv. 9-21 contain two subsections, vv. 9-16 and vv. 17-21. The first section (vv. 9-15), on some readings, also contains a series of couplets, which would further unite them. All this to say that Paul’s exhortations are not a random set of moral exhortations, but are arranged together as an expression of the new semi-eschatological life the church now has in Christ.

We also note some individual observations Jewett gives on these verses, the first which does not seem to accord with his purely horizontal eschatology. He recognizes that hope for Paul is focused on the eschaton, not on surviving a particular persecution or something else in this world (12:12). On verse 19, he suggests that leaving place for God’s wrath is the opposite of what those in Rom. 1 did, for those in Rom. 1 usurp God’s place in (presumably) cursing one another in judgment. This may shed light on Rom. 12:21, “do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good”. (Remember “evil” and “good” are key words here framing vv. 9-21). Is Paul here showing that the eschatological reversal of Rom. 3-11 has reversed the life of those who once rejected the “good” of glory, honor and immortality (Rom. 2:7, 1: 21, 23) and were “inventors of evil” (1:30)? Instead, they are now to “overcome evil with good” (12:21).

## Book Review

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Jefferson White, *The Political Theory of Christ and its Creation of Our World*. 371pp. Paper. ISBN: 978-1512277951. \$19.95.

This is a book which will not be much noticed; but it deserves to be much noticed. It is a penetrating exposition of the paganization of the modern (especially American) world—a paganization which has also infected the church with its Pelagian tentacles and its god-in-our-image postmodernism. Liberalism—religious/theological and political—is ever pagan, ever totalitarian, ever tyrannical, as genuine (not *faux*) Christians are beginning to realize. Even so-called conservative and libertarian Christians are infected with the disease because so many of them are aspiring tyrants, control freaks, authoritarians and even liberty-ans of the almighty independent self.

White has crafted the narrative of this nascent and emerging paganism in America from its birth in post-Civil War legal theory, to its canonization in the infamous New Deal of FDR and its application in the Alinsky radicals of the contemporary scene. Each of these deviants from the divine order of true separation of powers (God and Caesar, Mt. 22:21) is a God-hater and thus a hater of the people of God (as is all paganism). Our author traces the story from OT and NT revelation which sets God over against pagan state-religion oneness (a truly radical antithesis)—i.e., separation of church and state as the distinction of Creator and creature. He moves to the story of the Christian church standing courageously athwart the omnipotent tyrannical state, especially as that narrative flows out of the Protestant Reformation. But then, the downgrade, as the scions of elitism in the Enlightened West twisted every aspect of Christian culture into a post-Christian wax-nose (all the while claiming that they were the REAL ‘Christians’—of course!!) to fulfill their depraved lust for power!, power!, absolute power!! over every soul in the universe.

Once upon a time politically, the U.S. Constitution was a bastion against this bare faced tyranny. No more; the Constitution has been reimaged in the likeness of the (pagan) lawyers, judges and legal theorists who control and deconstruct that historic document with their own agendas (and do they ever have agendas, as we are learning daily). Once upon a time religiously, the Word of God was a bastion against this same bare faced tyranny. No more; the Bible is increasingly an unknown book (just try to get people to study it seriously—not pop fluff narcissism which has passed for ‘bible study’ for fifty plus coffee-klatch years) in a culture which ridicules it and destroys any who attempt to believe it or abide by its tenets. “No Tolerance for (Real) Christianity” is the new religion of the 21<sup>st</sup> century liberal and every pagan soul is a soldier in that battle to destroy that which holds up the mirror to his or her depraved and brutal heart. White is particularly good here in tracing the extremism of the Left in the interest of destroying the truth of the Word of God—notably since the dawn of the Age of Aquarius and the sexual revolution with its tawdry, ugly and un-natural absolutization of the genital. James Davison Hunter, David Horowitz and others have

revealed this mega-shift. Add Jefferson White to that number with particular thanks for the meticulous work his footnotes display in the judicial and legal arena.

At the end of this well-written volume, we cry, “Lord have mercy!”, as we pray, “even so Lord Jesus, come quickly!”

—James T. Dennison, Jr.