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JAAS publishes studies with Adventist and world perspectives exploring the Bible, theology, history, mission and ministry to raise the level of spirituality, scholarship, and service in the world church.

JAAS is a semiannual peer-refereed academic journal. It accepts articles and book reviews exploring a wide range of topics like studies in the Bible and spirituality, historical and systematic theology, the history of ideas and philosophy, religions and their interactions, cultures and religious psychology, mission, ministry, and development work.

JAAS accepts cutting-edge articles, research notes, book reviews, thesis and dissertation abstracts written by faculty, students, and alumni of the Theological Seminary of Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies and scholars of various faith persuasions from around the world. The ideas expressed are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the thinking of the Theological Seminary of the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies.

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EDITORIAL

KENNETH BERGLAND
Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

We are happy to bring you yet another issue of *JAAS*! In this issue we move from the basic existential question "What is Man?" to the more ethical questions of how Christians should understand land and relate to the question of war filling the news of today. And we end with a discussion of Christ as Lord and King. We have given this issue the thematic title "Land, War, and Government."

We are aware that particularly the issue of war is sensitive. Believers on both sides of the frontline find support in Scripture and theology. By bringing the discussion of war to you as a reader we do not intend to take sides in the debate. The viewpoints reflect those of the authors and not the AIIAS Seminary. We still believe that it is important that we as believers discuss openly the principles and biblical rationale behind the various positions on the question of war. Dialogue can build bridges, as we hold each other accountable to the Word of God and serve the Prince of Peace.

The first article is written by Jerome Skinner and discusses the question "What is man?" as it relates to holiness and the holy one in Book I of the Psalter. The anthropological terminology of the Psalter is often related to how to live a moral life and what it means to live in a covenantal relationship with God. Skinner also explores how God's love plays an important role in Pss 3–41.

In the article by Roy Gane, we move to the question of the holy land. Through a comparative study, Gane demonstrates similarities and differences in how Israelites and ancient Near Eastern peoples viewed the relationship between themselves, their deities, and their lands. He focuses upon how the Pentateuch and Leviticus in particular present the people relative to the promised land upon which they will live. Living on holy land with a holy God implies specific regulations the people had to comply with.

In his article, Nicholas Miller explores the biblical background and historical development of the just war theory. He outlines its basic principles and discusses under what circumstances a Christian can and cannot support

war. Miller compares just war theory with other approaches such as pacifism, conscientious objection, and cooperation.

Oleg Kostyuk takes a different approach to the question of war. As a Ukranian himself reflecting on the situation in his home country, he explores the shift from pacifism to just war attitudes among Israelites. He then moves to discuss NT statements and argues that a Christian needs to take a nonviolent stance, even amid military conflict.

In the final article of this issue, Dindo Paglinawan explores the original meaning of the enthroned king in Ps 110:1 and analyzes how Jesus in the Gospel of Mark reworks and reapplies the military triumph and victorious enthronement of the psalm. Paglinawan shows how victory and enthronement for Christ are accomplished through enduring shame and humiliating death.

We hope and pray that these articles will stimulate you to further reflection. We also want to invite you to write articles and book reviews that address contemporary issues from various cultural perspectives.

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What is Man? Holiness and the Holy One in the Psalter: A Case Study of Book I of the Psalter

JEROME SKINNER
Andrews University, MICHIGAN

Abstract

This article addresses the role of anthropological terminology in Book I of the Psalter in designating the identity of God's covenantal people in relation to holiness. In the Psalter, anthropological designations are made in reference to the human body. Those designations are often depicted in relation to moral life and what it means to be in covenant relationship with God as His creation.

Discussion of God's attribute of love (e.g., *ḥesed*) clarifies the nature of holiness addressed in Ps 3–41 (Book I). Also, this article grapples with how this divine attribute plays an important role in Book I of the Psalter seen in its structural the micro-syntactical and macro-structural level of expression.

Keywords: lovingkindness (*ḥesed*), *holiness, anthropology, psalm, covenant*

1. Introduction

The subject of holiness in the Psalter represents a medley of ethical, doxological, and social declarations, imperatives, and values.[1] The voice of the Psalter describes humanity in multiple spheres of life, which can be

[1] Daniel C. Owen, *Portraits of the Righteous in the Psalms: An Exploration of the Ethics of Book I* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013); Gordon Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Song Ethically*, Studies in Theological Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

summed up as holiness. The familiar refrain, "What is man?" in Ps 8, evokes the difficulty of describing humanity in all its complexity. The intersection of moral, ritual, and communal life in the Psalter also raises the question of what it means to be human in juxtaposition to what it means to be holy.[2]

Given that many references to holiness in the Psalter modify God's name,[3] His dwelling,[4] His person,[5] His presence,[6] and other aspects of His work in human life,[7] the topic cannot be delimited solely to humanistic interests; it is suprasensible.[8] This perspective has given rise to a burgeoning field of study called "theological anthropology."[9] Marc Cortez notes that theological anthropology is a "theological reflection on the human person … as they actually exist in the world."[10] Within this perspective, the scope of holiness is relational, that is, covenantal (the covenanted-creation), representative of the *imago Dei* in conjunction with the person and work of God. Identity is not subsumed solely under biological, psychological, sociological, or economic designations[11] but is dealt with in the context of humanity's

[2] Robert D. Bell, *Theological Themes of Psalms: The Theology of the Book of Psalms* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 69–77; J. Prescott Johnson, "The Beauty of Holiness," *ATJ* 52.2 (1997): 5–15; John P. Peters, "The Hebrew Idea of Holiness," *The Biblical World* 14.5 (1899): 344–55.

[3] Pss 30:4; 33:21; 97:12; 103:1; 105:3; 106:47; 111:9; 145:21. Versification will follow *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (*BHS*) unless otherwise indicated.

[4] References here include the tent, tabernacle, Temple on earth, and the heavenly Temple: Pss 2:6; 3:4; 5:7; 11:4; 15:1; 20:6 (heaven); 24:3 (place); 43:3; 46:4; 47:8 (throne); 48:1; 65:4; 68:5; 78:54 (land); 79:1; 87:1; 93:5; 99:9 (mountain); 102:19; 134:2; 138:2. Ps 28:2 uses "inner sanctuary/holy of holies" (Heb. *dəbîr*) to refer to God's holy dwelling.

[5] Pss 22:3; 29:2; 71:22; 78:41; 89:18, 35; 96:9; 99:3, 5, 9.

[6] Ps 51:11.

[7] For example, see Pss 77:13 (God's way); 89:20 (anointing oil); 98:1 (God's saving work); and 105:42 (promise).

[8] Adolphe Gesché wrestles with this dilemma describing and critiquing the atheistic and non-biblical notions of divinity being a threat to mankind's autonomy (Adolphe Gesché, "L'identité de l'homme devant Dieu," *RTL* 29.1 [1998]: 3–28). See also Bernd Janowski, *Arguing with God: A Theological Anthropology of the Psalms*, trans. Armin Siedlecki (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013), xv–xix.

[9] Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010); Joshua R. Farris, *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology: Humans, Both Creaturely and Divine* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020); G. W. Bromiley, "Anthropology," *ISBE* 1:131–36.

[10] Cortez, *Theological Anthropology*, 5f. Previous examinations of what it means to be human included rationality, language, and culture (Philip H. Towner, "Mind/Reason," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, electronic ed., Baker Reference Library [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996], 529).

[11] Bernd Janowski, "Der ganze Mensch: Zu den Koordinaten der alttestamentlichen

origin, nature, life, and destiny. The Psalter, as a compilation of five books, portrays humanity as a unified self from the womb to the tomb and beyond.[12]

The language in the Psalter that refers to the human body (e.g., eyes, hands, heart, feet, etc.) describes varied anthropological aspects encompassing physical, psychological, and social designations in relationship to God, others, and the world.[13] These aspects are captured in poetic form. Thus, the structure, parallelism, and imagery of individual psalms and the structural import in groups and collections help advance a more robust biblical understanding of human holiness. This analysis seeks to assess one dimension of this complexity by analyzing the intersection of the lexeme, "the godly one" (Heb. *ḥasîd*), which includes the concept of holiness[14] and the thematic range of anthropological terms contained within the psalms in the Psalter addressed here (Pss 4; 12; 16; 18; 30; 31; 32; 37), using Book I as a case study.[15] This terminology includes the multifaceted nature of humanity (i.e., physical, mental, emotional, and social) and ethical designations expressing varied aspects of holiness.

Based on its etymological relationship to the noun *ḥesed* ("lovingkindness, covenant loyalty"), *ḥasîd*, can be translated actively as "one who practices *ḥesed*" (i.e., one who is loyal to the covenant).[16] Or, if taken as a passive adjective, the word can be translated as "one who is the object of divine love."[17] Both notions are present as seen in the associations between *ḥesed*

Anthropologie," *ZThK* 113 (2016): 1–28.

12 On several dimensions regarding the two, see Dermot A. Lane, "Anthropology and Eschatology," *ITQ* 61.1 (1995): 14–31.

13 Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1974), 7–79.

14 References to an important spatial arena of holiness in the Psalms include "sanctuary" (Heb. *qōdeš*; Ps 20:3 MT), "holy" (Heb. *qaḏôš*; Ps 46:5 MT), "saints" (Heb. *ḥasîd*; Ps 85:11), and "holy place" (Heb. *dəbîr*; Ps 28:2). See Jerome Skinner, "A Theology of Glory: Divine Sanctum and Service in the Psalter," in *Reading the Psalms Theologically*, eds. David M. Howard, Jr. and Andrew Schmutzer (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023), 248–60.

15 The term *ḥasîd* occurs 25 times in the Psalter. Book I (Pss 4:4; 12:2; 16:10; 18:26; 30:5; 31:24; 32:6; 37:28); Book II (Pss 43:1; 50:5; 52:11); Book III (Pss 79:2; 85:8, 9; 86:2; 89:20); Book IV (Ps 97:10); Book V (Pss 116:15; 132:9, 16; 145:10; 148:14).

16 H. Ringgren, "חָסִיד," *TDOT* 5:76. See Janowski, quoting W. Schmidt makes this point concerning what humanity is as expressed in their actions. Janowski, *Arguing with God*, 11.

17 Allen Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 1 (1–41)*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 230, 569. For an in-depth study on *ḥesed*, see Gordon R.

and the *ḥasîd* in the Psalter. The association is expressed in a relational experience concerning God's self-revelation (His attributes) and acts of covenant blessings, and the identifying marker of God's people as those whom YHWH has redeemed and covenanted with to restore His image in humanity (Gen 1:26–28; Exod 19:6).[18] In relation to holiness, biblical anthropology is relational, derivative, and subject to God's authority, example, and goal for human thriving. The semantic range of this designation and contextual aspects found in the Psalter are analyzed through this lens and understood conceptually.[19]

This study will use three analytical procedures to show the intersection of the identity of God's people seen through an anthropological lens and the description of holiness. First, this study will assess the semantic relationship between the anthropological designations of the people of God and ethical descriptions of holiness related to them. Second, this study will evaluate micro-structural considerations by considering how anthropological language functions in individual psalms within each grouping. Finally, macro-structural connections of groups in Book 1 of the Psalter (Pss 3–14; 15–24; 25–29; 30–32; 33–41) as it relates to the usage of anthropological designations that help to shape Book I of the Psalter are assessed, looking at how the covenantal identity of the people of God plays a structuring role.

2. What is Man? Anthropological Language and the Psalter

The pivotal question arises: How does one assign and define an anthropological term? The usual focus springs from the semantic corpus referring to

Clark, *The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible*, *JSOTSup* 157 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993).

[18] The semantic parallels found in poetic literature in the Bible affirm the ethical dimension in the semantic range of the term "covenant" (Heb. *bərît*; Ps 25:14). See Daniel I. Block, *The Triumph of Grace: Literary and Theological Studies in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomic Themes* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2017), 60–88; Carleen Mandolfo, *God in the Dock: Dialogic Tension in the Psalms of Lament*, *JSOTSup* 357 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 127.

[19] Commenting on the notion of a semantic field, Joze Krasovec points out that when analyzing words there is a "whole range of dimensions" that necessitate both a semantic and literary (contextual) approach (Joze Krasovec, *God's Righteousness and Justice in the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022], 2).

the whole person,[20] individual human body parts,[21] and stretches to idiomatic designations that denote the emotional, cognitive, and volitional functions and capabilities.[22] These directions are helpful, yet it is noted that in biblical anthropology, "God Himself must be the object of study, and man with this reference."[23] So, anthropological language in the biblical text orients the reader to see humanity's creatureliness in relation to humanity's Creator, YHWH. Much of the language that designates humanity in the Psalter garners its impetus from Gen 1–3,[24] but also grasps terminology from subsequent passages that engage the concepts and interests from the aforementioned chapters. For example, the introduction of death in Gen 3 shifts and shapes the human experience and expands the semantic constellations of what it now means to be human. Further, the concept of eschatology and its interests are also a part of the linguistic and theological domain of human identity in the Psalter. Thus, this analysis grapples with both the linguistic identifiers of humanity and the theological assessments and trajectories of the human experience in reference to God as Creator and, for this paper, his holiness.[25]

3. Holiness in Book I of the Psalter

Several structural groupings of Book 1 of the Psalter have been recognized, providing a narrative-like storyline to think through the larger picture to

[20] Bromiley notes four major terms, "man" (Heb. *ʾādām*), "son of man" (Heb. *ben-ʾādām*), "man in his weakness" (Heb. *ʾenôš*), and "man" [in his strength] (Heb. *ʾîš*) (Bromiley, "Anthropology," 132). To these a plethora of modifiers (participial phrases, adjectives, noun phrases) could be added.

[21] J. David Pleins, *Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary by Conceptual Category: A Student's Guide to Nouns in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 65–70.

[22] Andy L. Warren-Rothlin, "Body Idioms and the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, ed. David Firth and Philip S. Johnston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 195–212. See also Janowski, *Arguing with God*, 8–10.

[23] Bromiley, "Anthropology," 132; Janowski, *Arguing with God*, 14; Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, trans. Keith Crim (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1992), 143.

[24] Richard M. Davidson, "The Nature of the Human Being from the Beginning: Genesis 1–11," in *"What Are Human Beings that You Remember Them?,"* ed. Clinton Wahlen (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2015), 11–42; Gordon McConville, *Being Human in God's World: An Old Testament Theology of Humanity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), 1–45.

[25] The issue of holiness raises the inquiry of whether humanity can be considered holy. Psalm 143:2 states emphatically, "for no one living is righteous before you," and yet God's people are called righteous throughout the Psalter (Jerome Creach, *The Destiny of the Righteous in the Psalms* [St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2008], 2–14).

which each psalm contributes.[26] Book I comprises several groupings (Pss 3–14; 15–24; 25–29; 30–32; 33–41). Significantly, reference to the godly one is found in each of these groups.

Table 1. Anthropology and Holiness in Psalms 3–14[27]

Psalm	Parallel description to *ḥasîd*	Reference to Holiness[28]	Anthropological Language-Physical	Anthropological Language-Group[29]	Activity of the *ḥasîd*
3			Life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 3), head (v. 4), jaw (v. 8), teeth (v. 8)	Many (vv. 2–3)	
4	The one who calls (v. 4 MT)	God as the psalmist's "righteous one" (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, v. 2; "right sacrifices," v. 6)	Heart (Heb. *lēbab*; *lēb*, v. 8)	Sons of man (*bənê ʾîš*, v. 3)	Prayer (v. 2), set apart by God (v. 4)
5		Lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*, v. 8); God leads the psalmist by His righteousness (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, v. 9); God blesses the righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, v. 13)	Voice (v. 4), mouth (v. 10), inward parts (v. 10), throat (v. 10), tongues (v. 10)	Man of bloodshed (v. 7)	
6		God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*, v. 5)	Bones (v. 3), life (Heb.		

[26] Jerome Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms: An Exegetical, Intertextual, and Methodological Analysis" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2016), 252–83; O. Palmer Robertson, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2015), 53–83; Hendrik Koorevaar, *The Psalter as a Structured Theological Story with the Aid of Subscripts and Superscripts, in The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, ed. Erich Zenger, BETL 238 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 579–92; G. Barbiero, *Das erste Psalmenbuch als Einheit: Eine synchrone Analyse von Psalm 1–41*, Österreichische Biblische Studien 16 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999).

[27] Hebrew words are designated to distinguish between words where an English translation may not be clear.

[28] Bell rightly notes that there are several synonyms that indicate the identity of the righteous as well as alternative ways of referring to these persons. See Bell, *Theological Themes of Psalms*, 221–26. This list includes ethical terminology and activity of both God and humanity.

[29] There are many ethical descriptors of the wicked in these psalms. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus solely on phrases with anthropological terms and physically identifiable groups.

			nepeš, vv. 4, 5), eyes (v. 8), voice (v. 9)		
7		God commands justice (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, vv. 7, 9–10, 12, 18), upright (Heb. *Yashar*, v. 10)	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 3, 6), hands (Heb. *kaph*, v. 4), heart (vv. 10–11), kidneys (Heb. *kilyâ*, v. 10), head (v. 17)	Nations (Heb. *ʾummîm*, v. 8), community of peoples (v. 9)	
8	Creation-glory		Mouth (v. 3), feet (v. 7)	Babies (v. 3), sucklings (v. 3), man (Heb. *ʾĕnôš*, v. 5), son of man (*ben ʾadam*, v. 5)	
9/10		Justice i.e., righteous judgment (Heb. *mišpaṭ*, 9:5, 8–9; 10:4); "my just cause" (Heb. *dîn*, 9:5); humble (Heb. *ʿanî*, 9:12, 18; 10:2, 9, 12); *ʻanav* (meek, 10:17); *ebyon* (needy, 9:19)	Heart (9:2; 10:6, 11, 13, 17), feet (9:16), life (Heb. *nepeš*, 10:3), face (10:4), mouth (10:7), tongue (10:7), eyes (10:8)	Peoples (Heb. *lᵉom*, 9:9), "inhabitants of Zion" (9:12), people (Heb. *ʿam*), man (Heb. *ʾĕnôš*, 9:20–21; 10:18), orphan (10:18)	
11		Upright (Heb. *Yashar*, v. 2); the righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq* v. 3, 5, 7)	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 1, 5)	Sons of man (*bənê ʾadam*, v. 4)	
12	The faithful (adj) (v. 2)	Poor (Heb. *ʿanî*, v. 5); poor (Heb. *ebyon*, v. 5)	Lips (vv. 3–4), heart (v. 3), tongue (v. 4)	Sons of man (*bənê ʾadam*, vv. 2, 9); man (Heb. *ʾîš*, v. 3)	They vanish (v. 2)
13		God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*, v. 6);	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 3), heart (vv. 3, 6), eyes (v. 4)		
14		The righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq*; v. 5); *ʾani* (v. 6)	Heart (Heb. *lēb*, v. 1)	Sons of man (Heb. *bənê ʾadam*, v. 2); people (Heb. *ʿam*, vv. 4, 7)	

Psalms 3–14 are commonly understood as the first grouping of psalms in Book I.[30] Keywords and themes that tie Pss 3–7 to 9–14 converge in Ps 8.[31] Psalms 3–7 focus on threats to the Davidic covenant expressed in Ps 2 and hence can be examined as a small group. Psalms 9–14 focus primarily on the worldwide judgment and the destiny of the righteous and the wicked articulated in Ps 1. Vindication here is associated with YHWH's authority as covenantal Sovereign (Pss 9:7–8; 10:16–18). In Ps 8, reflections on creation mark out YHWH's sovereignty and humanity as His vice-regents. Thus the notion of what it means to be human and holy, at least in the structural view of this group expresses a focus where the broader storyline concerning holiness is covenantal. The psalmists describe God's character, the faithful's pleas, their identity, and the trajectory of their human experience in those terms.

4. Psalm 8 and Humanity[32]

Couched in this group as a hymn of praise, Ps 8 contains several parallels with other psalms concerning what it means to be human.[33] Rolf Jacobson notes that in addition to creation, another important theme in Ps 8 is royalty.[34] The attributes of kingship (majesty and glory, v. 6 MT; cf. 104:1), the activity of kingship (Hiphil of *mašal*; cf. 1 Kgs 5:1), and the domain of the exercise of royal power (works of your hands, v. 7; cf. Ps 19:2) clarify notions of the human experience that include functionality as royal ambassadors/representatives (vassals) of God. Conveyed royalty from God finds its parallel in Gen 1, which itself includes positive ethical expectations (Gen

[30] Lissa Wray Beal, "Psalms 3: History of Interpretation," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry & Writings*, eds. Tremper Longman III and Peter Enns (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 605–13; Andrew Witt, *A Voice Without End: The Role of David in Psalms 3–14* (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2021).

[31] Bruce K. Waltke, James M. Houston, and Erika Moore, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 193.

[32] In addition to the fact that it does not use the word *ḥasîd*, the structural centrality of Ps 8 accounts for being dealt with separately here first. On the theological significance of the macro-literary setting of Ps 8, see Jerome Skinner, "Judgment for the Saints: The Justice of God in Psalms 3–14," in *Searching the Scriptures: Andrews University Seminary Emerging Scholars Pay Tribute to Their Professors*, ed. Slaviša Janković (Berrien Springs, MI: Department of the Old Testament, 2017), 105–26.

[33] Janowski, *Arguing with God*, 12–14. While a full literary analysis of each psalms assessed is outside the scope of this study, structural features will be expressed as they highlight features related to the topic.

[34] Rolf Jacobson, et al., *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 120.

1:26–28). In Ps 8 identity and ethics include elements of justice (e.g., retribution, v. 3) and thus highlight an additional aspect of moral responsibility and culpability.[35] The psalm proper begins with YHWH and humanity, evoking the notion of a relationship. That relationship is expressed throughout the psalms as YHWH giving and humanity receiving.

The question "what is mankind?" is answered in part by the psalmist, who states that it is what God has done to humankind, better yet, for humankind. This can be described as theocentric anthropology. However, rather than a descriptor of activity or essence, the focus juxtaposes a series of contrasts that highlight the nature of humanity in relation to God (feeble infants and presumably strong avengers; humanity in its frail state with God's majesty evoked in His creative works). The noun translated "human being" (Heb. *ʾĕnôš*) is typically used in psalmic literature where various aspects of mortality are in view.[36] The point is that by themselves, humans are frail and subject to the vicissitudes of finitude, but when seen as God's creative work, they have dignity. Structurally, Ps 8 highlights the central concern of the collection of Pss 3–14. The intersection of anthropological interests with the descriptive concept of holiness as relational suggests that these concerns should be understood in reference to each other in a covenantal context.

5. Psalm 4

Embedded within a small grouping of Pss 3–7,[37] the thematic intersection found in Ps 4 between the accused, the accusation, and the accuser on the one hand and the appeal and Adjudicator on the other emerges from the lament's covenantal focus.[38] On the one hand, the introductory plea in v. 2

[35] From a Christian perspective, the apostle Paul notes that there is a transitory element to some facets of the Christian experience (1 Cor 13:8–10). See H. Hübner, "καταργέω *katargeō*," *EDNT* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–), 2:267–68. Other NT passages pick up on the notion of royalty and its connection to humanity (2 Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6).

[36] Pss 10:18; 90:3; 103:15; 144:3–4. Psalm 144:3 is the closest parallel to Ps 8:5 and its subsequent verse affirms this emphasis on human frailty. Cf. Job 7:17. See Gerald Wilson, *Psalms*, NIVAC 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 204.

[37] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 255; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Die Psalmen I: Psalm 1–50*, NEchtB 29 (Wurzburg: Echter, 1993), 56.

[38] For different views on the identification of this psalm, see Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 79.

carries a lexical cluster of the typical language of appeal to God as the faithful Judge and Vindicator (Heb. *qaraʾ* + *ʿanah*; cf. Pss 3:4; 118:5). On the other hand, the appeal for YHWH to be gracious (Heb. *ḥanan*; cf. Num 6:25) and the affirmation that YHWH has "made room" (Hiphil of *raḥab*) present echoes with other covenantal backgrounded texts (cf. Gen 26:22). Thus, the anthropological focus here is covenantal.

The psalm captures the nature of the accusers in anthropological language as the "sons of man." This phrase is used twice elsewhere in the Psalter to emphasize the socio-economic aspect of a human's status (Pss 49:3; 62:10).[39] They are those of high estate; those with power, which in appearance could be seen as a marker of being blessed (Deut 8:18; 2 Chr 1:11–12).[40] Thus, two powerful forces are in view, the accusers and the Adjudicator, YHWH. Also, two social statuses are in view, for the psalmist, his religious status, and for the sons of man, their economic status.[41] By designating the Lord as "God of my righteousness," the psalmist frames the relational/religious aspect in which he is pleading for God to act.[42] The repeated use of the same words, or words derived from the same root, set up a contrast between the psalmist and the accuser in terms of their activity.[43] Also, another contrasting element here is that God is the subject of three verbs (to make space,[44] to set apart, to give joy), whose connotations suggest that the psalmist is the true covenantal beneficiary of God's acts rather than the accuser and is thus designated as a godly one (vv. 2, 4, 8).

[39] Where one places their confidence is central in both of these psalms. Jacobson translates this phrase as "wealthy" (Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 81).

[40] On the topic of power and politics in anthropological perspective, see McConville, *Being Human in God's World*, 119–47.

[41] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 56. The noun *kābôd* has been understood in various ways. Longman suggests it may refer to a good reputation (Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, *TOTC* 15–16, ed. David G. Firth [Nottingham: Inter-Varisty Press, 2014], 67–68). VanGemeren suggests it is the position of the king (Willem A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, EBC 5 [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 109). Jacobson prefers to associate glory with God (Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 84–85).

[42] If the precative use of the perfect is in view here, the appeal is for God's presence. Cf. *IBHS* 30.5.4d.

[43] Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 2nd ed., WBC 19 (Nashville: Nelson, 2004), 79; Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 81.

[44] Used elsewhere, the Hiphil stem of the verb "to make wide" (Heb. *raḥab*) carries covenant elements related to human thriving in the land of promise (Exod 34:24; Deut 12:20; 19:8). See Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 731.

The parallel between v. 2 and v. 4 clarifies the description of the *ḥasîd* and suggests that "the godly one" is one who prays. The psychological nuances of these pleas express what the psalmist considers necessary for human thriving. The proclamation that God answers His appeals for grace and righteousness in life affirms righteousness as a gift. An apt translation could be, "YHWH has set apart/shown favor to His covenant fellow for Himself, YHWH hears when I call to Him."[45] This echo of the Exodus experience of YHWH making distinctions between His covenantal benefactors and the oppressor, Egypt, highlights that YHWH decides and designates the godly one as such (cf. Exod 8:18). As for the accusers, what betrays their misunderstanding is their human standing without such affirmation from YHWH. Albeit grounded in the covenant arena,[46] their request seems solely for material prosperity or benefit without the requisite relationship and ethical livelihood. They do not live out (i.e., speak) the covenanted value of showing *ḥesed*, which in this context would be faithful and fair speech to others. The internal state of love for vanity and the external action of seeking after a lie has brought reproach to the psalmist's reputation, and their words show they doubt God's *ḥesed* for the psalmist and themselves.[47]

The covenantal focus of the 'godly one' is further highlighted by the appeal for YHWH to "Lift up over us the light of Your face, O YHWH!"[48] The entreaty alludes to the Aaronic benediction here in response to what the accusers say and matches the initial appeal for YHWH to be gracious (v. 2, cf. Num 6:25). The psalmist shows this *ḥesed* to his accusers by appealing to them in a series of five imperatives to turn to YHWH and trust Him (vv. 5–6).[49]

[45] The reference here may be solely to the Davidic king, as the one who YHWH has set apart. In that case, the slander would be an act of rebellion against godly authority, which is in view in the previous psalm. See Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 31–38; Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 61; VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 109.

[46] Michael Fox, "TOB as Covenant Terminology," *BASOR* 209 (1973): 41–42. Broyles suggests this alludes to connections with pagan rituals. Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendricksons, 1999), 54. See also VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 110.

[47] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 61.

[48] If Kraus is correct that v. 7b is a continuation of what the many are saying (cf. Ps 3:3) then the language of the Aaronic benediction seems to be on account of their status. See Hans-Joachim Kraus, *A Continental Commentary: Psalms 1–59* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 149–50.

[49] Interestingly, this identical imperative is used in Ps 115:10 in connection with the house of Aaron. The parallel description "God-fearers" identified as those who are obedient to the commands of YHWH (Deut 10:12; 31:12) suggests another covenantal connection. It is interesting that in the creation narrative when God is the subject of

Craigie notes, "The adversaries should know that the one whom they accuse is one who is loved of God and therefore godly."[50]

Thus, the human whose confidence is in God's *ḥesed* rather than their status lives with the gift of an internal state of joy (Pss *16:11;[51] 21:7; 100:2), which is fundamentally associated with God's presence. This is of more value than material covenantal blessings (cf. Num 18:27; *Deut 7:13). God's gracious presence (Heb. *ḥanan*) gives the blessing of the Aaronic benediction, which evokes "peace" (Heb. *šalôm*), seen here in the human experience of trust. The godly one sleeps in the security of God's presence (cf. Ps 3:6). The godly one here is the beneficiary of God's affirmation and presence signaled in the Aaronic benediction, who prays and speaks words of encouragement even to their accusers.

6. Psalm 12

The Literary Structure of Psalm 12[52]

A The Righteous (*bənê ʾadam*; v. 2)
  B False Speech (v. 3)
    C Wicked Speech (vv. 4–5)
    C¹ YHWH Speech (v. 6)
  B¹ Pure Words (vv. 7–8)
A¹ The Wicked (*bənê ʾadam*; v. 9)

Nestled within the small grouping of Pss 9–14, whose keyword is "heart" (Heb. *lēb*) throughout these psalms,[53] Ps 12 continues to deal with the inner person's disposition. The focus here is on speech: the speech of the wicked

the clausal construction "to see … the good" (Heb. *raʾah* + *tov*) in its various syntactical occurrences' points to the covenantal act of God's creative work (Gen 1:10, 12; cf. Pss 104–6). It is not surprising then that throughout the Psalter when God is the subject of the verb *raʾah* in the Hiphil stem (and "good" [Heb. *tov*] being implicitly understood as a covenantal designation), covenantal themes are in view (Pss 50:23; 59:11; 60:4; *85:8).

50 Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 80.

51 The asterisk* indicates biblical verses where the word *ḥasîd* is present.

52 Structural observations in this study are only made in reference to their import in assessing anthropological concepts. A complete structural analysis of each psalm is beyond the scope of this study. For a helpful view of a fuller structural assessment, see Martin G. Klingbeil, Dragoslava Santrac, David Tasker, Jacques B. Doukhan, and Richard M. Davidson, *Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, SDA International Bible Commentary 6 (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2022).

53 Skinner, "Judgment for the Saints," 121–23.

and YHWH's speech.[54] Left out here is the speech of the *ḥasîd*; they are simply designated as those who are faithful among humanity. The same parallel of the "godly one" and the "faithful" found in Ps 31:23 suggests God's preserving and empowering work enables His followers to be designated as such. In this context, they are the opposite of the wicked ones who speak deceptively. As a class, unfaithful humankind (Heb. *ʾîš*) is characterized as bereft of holy speech.

The term "heart" here refers to human will, mind, and thoughts that inspire motives and intentions.[55] The repetition of the noun *lēb* translated as doubled-minded (lit. "with a heart and heart") portrays the unholy one. The ambiguity of their speech indicates they have two different types of "hearts." It is significant that the unholy ones are described in terms of inner dispositions and external activities without reference to God's presence. With the change from the singular "lip of smoothness" in v. 3b to the plural "all lips of smoothness," the universal perspective about human nature is brought to view. The faithful are those who speak truth (cf. Ps 15:2). Without the pure words of God setting the tone for a life of purity, holiness expressed by "the *ḥasîd*" is perceived as absent.

Verses 4–5 (MT) reveal an ABBA pattern, emphasizing the devastating power of speech:

A "**lips** of flattery"(v. 4a)
B "**tongue** speaking great boasts" (v. 4b)
B[1] "with our **tongues** we shall prevail" (v. 5a)
A[1] our **lips** are with us" (v. 5b)

The prayer that YHWH cuts off all obscurantists' smooth lips highlights the work of the covenant Judge. First, the psalmist prays that YHWH will bring to judgment the boastful words directed at YHWH Himself, evoked in the question, "Who is Lord over us?". The speech is deceptive because it posits a world of autonomous individuals impervious to judgment. The proclamation of YHWH arising ("I will arise)" used in this group affirms that He is the Judge and that judgment is a part of the human experience (Pss 3:8; 7:7; 9:20). In contrast to the limited arena of human oppressive exaltation, YHWH's universal exalted status benefits the oppressed and holds the wicked accountable. The psalmist's plea suggests that what it means to be human necessitates responsibility. Also, the oppressive and devastating

[54] VanGemeren suggests that the speech of the wicked here is a continuation of the description from Ps 11:1–3. See VanGemeren, *Psalms*, 165.

[55] Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 145.

speech has created a dangerous and vile world that necessitates YHWH securing safety for the suppliants. The adjacent psalm, Ps 13, picks up on the theme of the exaltation of the wicked. Psalm 13 ends where the faithful plead with God about the seemingly unaddressed victory of death, evil in the world, and oppressors. Second, the affirmation of YHWH's pure speech is restorative and just and the speech of the godly in some way reflects that activity. They are called the faithful and yet it is not their speech or even presence that stops the danger.[56] The godly one preserves God's pure speech.

7. The Literary Structure of Psalms 15–24[57]

Psalm 16 is a part of a larger literary grouping of Ps 15–24.[58]

A Ps 15 (Entrance Liturgy)
B Ps 16 (Song of Trust)
C Ps 17 (Prayer for Help)
D Ps 18 (Royal Psalm)
E Ps 19 (Creation/Torah Psalm)
D[1] Pss 20 and 21 (Royal Psalms)
C[1] Ps 22 (Prayer for Help)

[56] Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 154.

[57] Carissa Quinn, "Toward the Kingdom: The Shape and Message of Psalms 15–24" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of IBR, Emerging Scholarship on the Old Testament, San Antonio, TX, 2016), 9. See also Philip Sumpter, "The Coherence of Psalms 15-24," *Biblica* 94.2 (2013): 186.

[58] Skinner, "The Davidic Historical Superscriptions," 275; William Brown, "'Here Comes the Sun!' The Metaphorical Theology of Psalms 15–24," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, BETL 238, ed. Erich Zenger (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 259–77: P. D. Miller, "Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15–24," in *Neue Wege der Psalmenforschung*, Herders Biblische Studien 1, ed. K. Seybold and E. Zenger (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 127–42. See also Philip Sumpter, "The Coherence of Psalm 15–24," *Bib* 94.2 (2013): 186–209. It has been suggested that Book 1 of the Psalter can be divided into four such sub-collections, each with a single psalm of praise at its center (Pss 8; 19; 29; 38). See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 12–14. Jamie Grant proposed that Book I has been arranged chiastically.

Pss 1–14
Pss 15–24
Pss 25–41

Grant argued that the central section of Book I, Pss 15–24, highlights the opening themes of the Psalter, the Torah, and Messiah (Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, 71–119; 223–40).

B1 Ps 23 (Song of Trust)
A1 Ps 24 (Entrance Liturgy)

The chiasm above shows that along with parallels of their genre (see genre descriptions in the literary chiasm above), the thematic content also parallels each other. So, Ps 15 and Ps 24 envelop the entire literary unit, where both psalms ask the question about who may enter and dwell in the presence of YHWH (Pss 15:1; 24:3). In Pss 15–24, "the emphasis in this section of the Psalter is on godliness."[59] Just as in the previous grouping (Pss 3–14), creation is at the center in this group. However, a new element is highlighted here. The joy of Torah is central as it brings to human life a sense of direction in what it means to be human and holy. The focus on Torah brings the reader back to Pss 1 and 2 where the two ways are presented. The affirmation that "the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish" (Ps 1:6) is highlighted throughout this grouping.[60] The parallels between Pss 16 and 23 depict trust in God's faithful protection and providential guidance. These parallel psalms highlight that the nature of trust emerges from YHWH's faithfulness.

Table 2. Anthropology and Holiness in Psalms 15–24

Psalm	Parallel description to *ḥasîd*	Reference to Holiness	Anthropological Language-Physical	Anthropological Language-Group	Activity of the *ḥasîd*
15		Blameless (Heb. *tamîm*; v. 2); righteousness (Heb. *ṣedeq*; v. 2); truth (Heb. *ʾĕmet*; v. 2); those who fear YHWH (Heb. *yārēʾ* YHWH; v. 4)	Heart (v. 2), tongue (v. 3), eyes (v. 4)	Neighbor (v. 3)	
16	My life Heb. *nephes*,	"Righteous one" (Heb. *qaḏôš*; v. 3); prominent	Lips (v. 4), kidneys (v. 7), heart (v. 9),		They will not

[59] Grogan, *Psalms*, 61. Groenewald notes that "the focus upon Yahweh's Torah and obedience to his divine instruction is the hallmark of this collection" (Alphonso Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," in *The Composition of the Book of Psalms*, BETL 238, ed. Erich Zenger [Leuven: Peeters, 2010], 504–5).

[60] Pss 17:4; 18:21, 30, 32.

	v. 10)	one (Heb. *ʾaddîr*; v. 3)	flesh (Heb. *basar*, v. 9), life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 10)		see corruption (v. 10)
17		Righteousness, (Heb. *ṣedeq* v. 1, 15); upright (Heb. *yashar*; v.2); God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*; v. 7)	Lips (vv. 1, 4), mouth (v. 10), eyes (v. 11), life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 9, 13), stomach (v. 14), face (v. 15), life (Heb. *ḥay*, v. 14),	Humankind (Heb. *ʿadam*, v. 4), male (Heb. *mat*, v. 14)	
18	The blameless person (v. 26)	Righteousness (Heb. *ṣədaqâ*; v. 21); justice, i.e., righteous acts (Heb. *mišpaṭ*; v. 21, 25); blameless (Heb. *tamîm*; v. 24, 31, 33); God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*; v. 51)	Hands (vv. 1, 21, 25, 35), voice (vv. 4, 14), ears (vv. 7, 45), eyes (v. 27), feet (vv. 34, 39), arm (v. 35), ankles (v. 37)	Humble people (v. 28), nations (vv. 44, 50), people (Heb. *ʿam*, vv. 28, 44, 48), foreigners (Heb. *bənê nekar*, vv. 45, 46), person of violence (Heb. *ʾîš ḥamas*, v. 49)	YHWH reciprocates *ḥesed* to the *ḥasîd* (v. 26)
19	Creation-glory	Blameless (Heb. *tamîm* v. 8); upright (Heb. *ṭahôr*; v. 9), pure (Heb. *bar*; v. 9); pure (Heb. *ṭahôr*; v. 10) justice, i.e., righteous acts (Heb. *mišpaṭ*; v. 10), they are righteous (Heb. *ṣadaq*)	Anthropomorphic language assigned to nature (vv. 1–7), life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 8), heart (vv. 9, 15), eyes (v. 9), mouth (v. 15)		
20		YHWH saves from his sanctuary (Heb. *qodeš*; vv. 3, 7)	Heart (v. 5)		
21		God's lovingkindness (Heb. *ḥesed*; v. 8)	Heart (v. 3), lips (v. 3), head (v. 3), life (Heb. *ḥay*, v. 5)	Fruit (by analogy offspring, v. 11), sons of humankind (Heb. *bənê*	

			ʾadam, v. 11)
22	God is holy (Heb. *qadôš*; v. 4); those who fear YHWH (Heb. *yārēʾ* YHWH; v. 24, 26); humble/afflicted (Heb. *ʿanî*; v. 25), meek (Heb. *ʿanaw*; v. 27); God's righteousness is proclaimed (Heb. *ṣədaqâ*; v. 32)	Head (v. 8), womb (vv. 10, 11), mouth (v. 14), bones (v. 15), heart (vv. 15, 27), bowels (v. 15), tongue (v. 16), jaw (v. 16), hands (vv. 17, 21), feet (v. 17), life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 21, 30)	Fathers (v. 5), man (Hb. *ʾîš*, v. 7), humankind (v. 7), people (vv. 7, 32), brother (v. 23), offspring (Heb. *zeraʿ*, vv. 24, 31), clans of the nations (v. 28), nations (v. 29)
23	God leads in paths of righteousness (Heb. *ṣedeq*; v. 3); God's *ḥesed* (v. 6)	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 3), head (v. 5), life (Heb. *ḥay*, v. 6)	
24	Innocent (Heb. *naqî* v. 4); pure (Heb. *bar*; v. 4); God's righteousness (Heb. *ṣədaqâ*; v. 5)	Hands (v. 4), heart (v. 4), life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 4)	Inhabited world (Heb. *tebel*, v. 1)

8. Psalm 16[61]

As a song of trust, Psalm 16 focuses on the nature of the heritage and human destiny of the godly one. Moving from protection to provision to preservation (vv. 1–4; 5–8; 9–11). Beginning with a psychological attitude, "I trust you,"[62] the subsequent confession centers on a life-threatening crisis (v. 9) that is seen from the perspective of the promise of God's covenantal blessings (lit. "my goodness, not apart from/unto you," v. 2; cf. Deut 28:7–14) extend beyond material benefits. Holiness is brought into the picture via ritual activity. The psalm affirms that ritual practices inconsistent with the character of God are detrimental to human life and afford no acceptance.[63]

[61] Beat Weber, "Notizen zu Form, Pragmatik und Struktur von Psalm 16," *BN* 125 (2005): 25–38.

[62] Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 140.

[63] The psychological, physical, and social impact of engaging in idol worship (Heb. *nesek*,

Here, the psalmist highlights four important relational aspects of life with God where holiness was expressed where the saints are, in the land, which is the sign of God's faithfulness promised to Abraham (Gen 15). Faithful rituals bring religious and social cohesion (cf. 2 Chr 29–32), while false representations of true worship garner prophetic indictment. Another psychological facet of the godly is that they are always mindful of YHWH. They prioritize him in all their thoughts and actions by setting Him before continually (Heb. *tamîd*).

While there are clear messianic implications, the psalmist's affirmation of God's presence in the concrete expression of covenant living in society points to an eternal destiny for all the godly.[64] The godly one's covenantal heritage includes psychological well-being (v. 9) and trust that the destiny of the godly is substantively comforting in the present life (v. 11). The reality of the decaying of the body generates no weariness because God's covenantal blessings ultimately deal with the problem of death and decay. In addition, as the only anthropological body part in the Psalter as the subject of the verb "to be glad, rejoice" (Heb. *samaḥ*), the heart designates the innermost dimension of humanity and takes action in worship; it rejoices in God (Pss 33:21; 105:1–3). This aspect of holiness, doxology (i.e., worship), is part and parcel of the human response to life in the land that God blesses, living with hope beyond this life.[65] Joy in a person and not solely in circumstances impacts the whole person. The flesh, a possible synecdoche for the body, dwells securely in YHWH.

The soul (i.e., the life force) is not forsaken to Sheol. Here the nominal parallel to the "righteous one" (Heb. *nepeš*) is not given to see (i.e., experience) corruption. The parallel pointing to the experience of death suggests that the physical body is not fated to oblivion when there is a covenant relationship with YHWH. For the righteous one, the covenantal experience, even if stopped by death, is ultimately destined for eschatological hope (cf. 1 Cor 15). This was alluded to earlier as the psalmist stated that YHWH is his cup, which in other psalms points to the various aspects of human destiny (Pss 11:6; 75:8). The language from Israel's relationship with God in the

"libations") is a common theme in biblical theology. See Jacobson, *The Book of Psalms*, 179–80; Beat Weber, *Werkbuch Psalmen I: Die Psalmen 1 Bis 72* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 98.

64 Gregory V. Trull, "Views on Peter's Use of Psalm 16:8–11 in Acts 2:25–32," *BSac* 161 (2004): 194–214.

65 Pss 9:3; 34:3; 122:1.

promised land is filled with references to ethical living (land, lot [cf. Josh 15:13], boundary, inheritance) and is equated with life in YHWH.[66]

There is another dimension alluded to in this psalm that connects the human ethos, the ethical aspect of covenantal life, and eschatological hope. The psalmist says that it is in his innermost conscience (Heb. *kilyâ*, "kidneys") that God instructs him. The connection with human destiny is noted earlier in Ps 7:10, which states, "Oh, let the evil of the wicked come to an end, and may you establish the righteous—you who test (Heb. *baḥan* "examine") the minds (Heb. *lēb*) and hearts (Heb. *kilyâ*), O righteous God!"[67] Note that it is not the active work of sacrifice that assures confidence in YHWH's promise of everlasting joy, but rather submissively receiving divine guidance. For the godly one, God's counsel is efficacious when the human response is faithful and trusting that God's ways provide present and eternal hope. So, the psalmist states that with God at the center of his life he shall not be moved. This language is significant in the Psalter as it typically refers to the notion of God's judgment as King (Pss 93:1–2; 96:10).[68]

Structurally, this psalm connects back to Ps 15, giving a sense that the godly one "adheres to the example of a just supplicant" and is said to never be moved (Ps 15:5), which is affirmed in 16:8. This link connects the ethical descriptions of the one who has access to dwell in God's presence in 15:1 with the activity of setting YHWH continually before the psalmist in 16:8.[69] This statement points to proximity, and indicates "both God's protective presence and also the psalmist's obedience to the divine law.[70] The structural focus of this grouping is here noted. Godliness is associated with covenant fidelity to God's revealed will, and God functions as the divine Sovereign who counsels through His revelation what it means to be human and how to function in His holy presence. The language of the phrase "path of life" is used elsewhere to suggest ultimate destiny in ethical terms (Job

[66] Cf. Lev 27:30. See Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004), 76–99. Hossfeld and Zenger note the verbal usage in this psalm that points back to the land allotment in Israel's conquest of Canaan. See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 112.

[67] The kidneys (*kilyâ*) carry semantic overlap with the heart (*lēb*) in the Psalter (Pss 26:2; 73:21).

[68] Note in Ps 21:8 the connection of this phrase with the reference to God's *ḥesed*.

[69] Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," 506–7. Groenewald also notes the connection with the subsequent psalm as a "concretization" of Psalm 16. See Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," 508.

[70] Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 157.

8:13; Prov 2:8).[71] The connections suggest that the covenantal experience in human life encompasses both the present moment of worship, justice, culpability, and covenant fidelity, as well as a hope oriented towards a future beyond the grave.

9. Psalm 18

Given the breadth of Psalm 18, I will here only note several structural features that highlight the connection between the godly one's character and God's holiness and salvific work.[72]

A Opening praise (18:2–4)
  B YHWH's mighty rescue of the psalmist (18:5–20)
    C YHWH's help came because the psalmist was blameless (18:21–25)
      D YHWH exalts the humble but brings low the proud (18:26–30)
    C[1] YHWH is blameless, helping those who appeal to him (18:31–32)
  B[1] The psalmist's mighty defeat of his enemies with YHWH's help (18:33–46)
A[1] Closing praise (18:47–51)

Moving towards the center of the chiasm, two linking themes that pull the whole psalm together are emphasized: blamelessness (fidelity to YHWH) and deliverance (YHWH's fidelity to His character). Towards the center of the chiasm, there is a division of three smaller sections, vv. 21–25, 26–30, and 31–32 which are all tied together lexically and thematically. The *leitwort* throughout this section is "blameless" (Heb. *tamîm*, vv. 24, 26, 31).[73]

[71] In a later psalm, YHWH's saving activity in the exodus experience, that leads to life in the land, is connected to the fact that YHWH's way is holy (v. 14 [ET 77:13]). See Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," 501–11.

[72] For a more in-depth analysis of this passage, see Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 52–73; 276–79.

[73] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 68; J. Barton Payne, "תָּמִים," *TWOT* 973–74. The emphasis in the Psalter is ethical as indicated by the connection in the Psalter to the "law" (Pss 19:8; 119:1, 80), as well as the focus on the covenant fidelity (Pss 15:2; 84:12; 101:2, 6). Cf. J. P. Oliver, "תָּמִים," *NIDOTTE* 4:306–8. After investigating the semantic and thematic range of ethical terminology, Wenham concluded that "law" in the Psalter is broader than the legislative species and points to the genus of all divine revelation (Wenham, *Psalms as Torah*, 77–118).

The first strophe (vv. 21–25) expresses a chiastic structure that emphasizes the moral aspects of the psalmist's covenant fidelity.

A v. 21 (my righteousness, cleanness of hands, he returned; Heb. *ṣidqî, kəbōr yāday, šûb*)[74]
  B v. 22 (I kept; Heb. *šāmar*)
    C v. 23 (I did not turn aside; Heb. *lōʾ ʾāsîr*)[75]
  B[1] v. 24 (I kept myself; Heb. *šāmar*)
A[1] v. 25 (my righteousness, cleanness of hands, he returned; Heb. *ṣidqî, kəbōr yāday, šûb*)

The conjunction in v. 23, if taken as a marker of causation clarifies the type of righteousness the psalmist is alluding to and how he walked in fidelity.[76] Being blameless is not equivalent to being sinless, but rather, the psalmist has received YHWH's instruction and acknowledged and submitted to His authority in life as revealed in Torah and this directs his prayer.[77]

The second strophe (vv. 26–30) expresses a tight structure emphasizing reciprocity in the context of loyalty and purity.[78] This section draws attention to the fact that with the *ḥasîd* "godly one" God shows Himself loyal (Heb. *ḥasad*); with the blameless man, He shows Himself blameless. In vv. 28–30 there are three descriptions that typically deal with covenant fidelity

[74] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 68. The closest parallel to "cleanness of hands" is found in Job 22:30, where the parallel statement has to do with being innocent.

[75] In Ps 89:31–33, the two nouns "judgments" (Heb. *mišpaṭîm*) and "statutes" (Heb. *ḥuqqōt*) are used together where similar concerns of the covenant, obedience, and fidelity are tied together. The covenant emphasis is expressed elsewhere when the two nouns are used together (Deut 6:1, 2; 7:11; 30:10). The lexical connections (*sûr* + *min*) with the law of the king in Deut 17:19–20, the introduction of the poem in Deut 32 (Deut 31:29), and the *mišpaṭ* ("judgments, ordinances, rights, duties") of the king in 1 Sam 10:25 point to the royal aspect of this psalm. The possibility also exists that here there is a reference to the "pre-war" activities such as sacrifice, vows, oracular inquiries, and ritual cleanness. Cf. Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, *God is a Warrior: Studies in OT Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, 1995), 33–37.

[76] Bratcher and Reyburn commented that "in verse 22 *ordinances* and *statutes* are both synonyms of 'the ways of the Lord' in verse 21; and the verbs in verse 22 *were before me and not put away* are also synonyms of 'kept' and 'not wickedly departed from' in verse 21" (Bratcher and Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, 174). There is no indication in this psalm, contra Weiser, of a "cult of Covenant Festival," or necessity to see here a focus on "ritual aspects of the ordinances of the Covenant" (Weiser, *The Psalms*, 192).

[77] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 68–69.

[78] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 69.

in the Psalter.[79] Those three clauses invoke themes of wisdom[80] and moral courage. This section closes by refocusing on the ways of YHWH as instilling confidence,[81] protection, and benefit to those who take refuge in Him (vv. 31–32; cf. the link of vv. 31–32 with v. 3).[82]

Structurally, in Ps 17, many of the lexemes are used in the context of expectation, forward-looking and in Ps 18 those same lexemes and similar phrases are used in the context of praise looking back to how YHWH brought about answers to the pleas and hopes of Ps 17. The confidence of the psalmist in Ps 17 leads David to associate his uprightness with YHWH's keeping (Heb. *šamar*), while in Ps 18 he continues confidently stating that he has kept YHWH's ways. The parallels between Pss 18 and 19 highlight how YHWH lights up (Heb. *ʾwr*) the psalmist's way to victory. In a similar way in Ps 19, the Torah enlightens the simple with moral acuity. The godly one experiences God's Lordship in various ways, whether externally in life's complexities or internally in character development.[83]

[79] The noun "faithful" (Heb. *ḥasîd*) is used 25 times in the Psalter and out of those it is used 12 times in Davidic psalms (Pss 4:4; 12:2; 16:10; 30:5; 31:24; 32:6; 37:28; 52:11; 86:2; 145:10, 17). The noun "blameless" (Heb. *tamîm*) is used 12 times in the Psalter and out of those it is used 9 times in Davidic psalms (Pss 15:2; 19:8; 37:18; 101:2, 6). The verb "to be pure" (Heb. *barar*) is used only in this verse in the Psalter. The only other occurrence in the Niphal stem (Isa 52:11) is an imperative and may refer to moral purity. Cf. John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 372–73. The fourth colon deals with the morally crooked. In Ps 18:27b the use of the disjunctive *waw* indicating antithetical parallelism followed by the break with the noun and verb pattern of lexical correspondence of a cognate implies that reciprocation operates on a different level than moral equivalents. The pattern is used in ANE literature as well. Wilbur commented, "The blameless character of a king before his god was a common theme in royal inscriptions and prayers. Ramesses II's victory hymn states, 'O Amun, I have not transgressed your command'" (Wilbur, *Psalms*, 5:334). On the complex notion of God and deceit, see Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, 94. See also R. B. Chisholm, "Does God Deceive?," *BSac* 155 (1998): 11–28.

[80] The phrase "haughty eyes" is used in Prov 6:17 in a wisdom context.

[81] Kraus suggested that the phrase "the word of Yahweh is pure" is an oracle of victory (Kraus, *Psalms 1–59*, 18). There is some textual support for this notion. See 1 Sam 23:2; 28:6; 30:8.

[82] Kidner argued that this monotheistic proclamation points back to the Song of Moses as "part of David's inspiration for this song" (Kidner, *Psalms 1–72*, 95). This suggestion is supported by the Sinaitic theophanic references.

[83] One commentator aptly notes, "YHWH, the God who behaves ethically, also requires ethical behaviour from his followers" (Groenewald, "The Ethical Way in Psalm 16," 510).

10. Psalms 30–32: Psalms of God as Refuge and Hiding Place

The repetition of linguistic parallels, a hallmark of psalmic poems, connects a cluster of psalms (Pss 30–32; 34) dealing with the godly ones in anthropological terms. These psalms form a group of psalms that focus on God as the godly one's refuge and hiding place.[84]

Table 3. Anthropology and Holiness in Psalms 30–32

Psalm	Parallel description to *ḥasîd*	Reference to Holiness	Anthropological Language- Physical	Anthropological Language-Group	Activity of the *ḥasîd*
30	Those who make mention of YHWH's holiness	Holy (Heb. *qodeš*, v. 5)	Life (Heb. *nepeš*, v. 4); blood (Heb. *dam*, v. 10)		Singing and giving thanks to YHWH (vv. 2, 13)
31	The faithful (adj) (v. 24)	Righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq*, vv. 2, 19)	Breath (Heb. *rûaḥ*, v. 6), life (Heb. *nepeš*, vv. 8, 10, 14), feet (v. 9), eye (v. 10), stomach (Heb. *beten*, v. 10); life (Heb. *ḥay*, v. 11), bones (v. 11), heart (vv. 13, 25), tongue (v. 21), hand (vv. 6, 9, 16)	Sons of man (Heb. *bənê ʾadam*, v. 20); man (Heb. *ʾîš*, v. 21)	Loving YHWH
32	All who pray (v. 6)	God's loving-kindness (Heb. *ḥesed*; v. 10)	Breath (Heb. *rûaḥ*, v. 2), bones (v. 3), heart (v. 11)	Man (Heb. *ʾadam*, v. 2 man) (Heb. *ʾîš*)	Praying for forgiveness (v. 5)

[84] Wilson sees Ps 30 as a summative psalm forming the end of the collection Pss 23–30 that emphasizes the house of YHWH (Gerald Wilson, *Psalms Volume I*, NIVAC [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002], 514). There are several clear parallels between Ps 30 and 31 where keywords and phrases are used (Heb. *ḥsydyw* "his pious ones" 30:5; 31:24, Heb. *wʾny ʾmrty* "but I have said" 30:7; 31:25, Heb. *śmḥ* "rejoice" 30:2; 31:8, cf. 30:12, Heb. *šwʿ* "cry for help" 30:3; 31:23, Heb. *dmm* "fall silent" 30:13; 31:18). It has been noted that in "every verse of Ps 32 there are elements with keyword links to Ps 31" (author's translation) (Weber, *Werkbuch Psalmen I*, 159).

11. Psalm 30

Table 4. Structural and Linguistic Parallels in Psalm 30

Verses	Translation	Occurring throughout the Psalm	Translation	Occurring only in a Strophe
		Stanza 1 (vv. 2–8)		
vv. 2–4	Go down	*yrd*	life	*npš**
vv. 5–8	Give thanks, sing, forever	*ydh*, *zmr*, *ʿwlm*	favor	*rṣwn**
		Stanza 2 (vv. 9–13)		
vv. 9–11	Go down, give thanks	*yrd*, *ydh*	Be gracious	*ḥnn**
vv. 12–13	Give thanks, sing, forever	*ydh*, *zmr*, *ʿwlm*		

* Indicates a repeated root lexeme that only occurs in that strophe

Psalm 30, a thanksgiving psalm, vividly depicts the covenanted life through dramatic contrasts in human life cycles captured in four strophes (vv. 2–4; 5–8; 9–11; 12–13).[85] Throughout the psalm, there are contrasts dealing with time (moment-lifetime; evening-morning), feelings (anger-pleasure; weeping-cry of joy), experience (brought up, Heb. *ʿalah*/*dalah*; go down Heb. *yarad*) and worship (mourning-dancing; singing-silence). The threats of death and the joys of life traverse the scale of human experiences and the *ḥasîd* are encouraged to respond to these reversals of fortunes with praise (v. 5) and prayer (v. 11). The language in the psalms echoes again the revelatory proclamation of YHWH in Exod 34:6–7.[86] The covenantal experience of the *ḥasîd* is mediated through the contrasts expressed.[87] The threat of illness, death, and God's anger (v. 4) are associated with sorrowful mourning with sackcloth and the darkness of the evening whose lengthening shadows all evoke terror. It underscores YHWH's hidden face, which elsewhere may connote death (Ps 104:29).[88] Yet, the brevity of God's wrath is juxtaposed with a lifetime of/in/with His pleasure. The associations of dancing and

[85] Hossfeld and Zenger see a different structural focus (vv. 2–6; 7–13). See Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 186.

[86] Timothy Saleska, *Psalms 1–50* (East Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2020), 495.

[87] The overlap of these contrasts has a rhythm to it. While the ebbs and flows of distress and deliverance are part of the lived experience, the faithful can "draw consolation that their own distress has a limit," and deliverance can be anticipated at some point. See Saleska, *Psalms 1–50*, 495.

[88] Wilson, *Psalms*, 517–18. It is possible that v. 8 MT is a reversal of the Aaronic benediction (Num 6:25).

singing coupled with the light of morning whose extending rays are felt like a warm joyous embrace suggest that the godly one's life is filled with moments and memories of God's *ḥesed*.

Moreover, it is death, not due to natural causes, war, or accidents, that was perceived as a sign that somewhere along the way, the covenantal relationship had been fractured or was in jeopardy. In fact, death is the backdrop against which the crisis and deliverance are framed.[89] As the notion of healing was a sign of covenant blessings, the necessity for healing suggests a covenant breach that brought sickness in its wake (cf. Pss 41:4; 103:3).[90] Consequently, the synonym and poetic metonymy for life (Heb. *dam*; cf. Gen 9:6; Lev 17:11) ironically points toward death. While death and sin reverberate from Genesis 3, there are several allusions to Gen 37, where the word *sheol* first appears in Scripture.[91] As there, in Ps 30 the threat of death is viewed as a descent into the grave. For the psalmist, it is addressed through an expression of God's *ḥesed* (cf. Pss 86:13; 103:4–8). In the face of these tensions of human existence, the psalmist's expression of confidence is that securely in YHWH's hands he cannot be shaken from trusting in YHWH's work of restoration (v. 7).[92] Indeed, the plea for grace highlights that for the psalmist, their covenant Lord was present in every experience of life wherever that fell on the spectrum of existence. The confidence of the psalmist brings forward the final contrasts captured in the beginning and ending of the psalm. In what does one rejoice? God has not allowed the enemy to rejoice (Heb. *samaḥ*, v. 2). For the godly one, who has sought compassion/grace

[89] Eriks Galenieks, *The Nature, Function, and Purpose of the term Sheol in the Torah, Prophets, and Writings: An Exegetical-Intertextual Study*, Adventist Theological Society Dissertation Series (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 2005), 330–35.

[90] Alan Kam-Yau Chan, Thomas B. Song, and Michael L. Brown, "רָפָא (*rāpāʾ* I)," *NIDOTTE* 3:1162–73.

[91] Chan et al., "רָפָא," 22–34. Keywords include *sak* "sackcloth" (Gen 37:34; Ps 30:12 MT); *yarad* "to go down" (Gen 37:35; Ps 30:4, 10), *sheol* "world of the dead" (Gen 37:35; Ps 30:4), *bakah* "to weep," *beki* "weeping" (Gen 37:35; Ps 30:6). Also, *ʿabal* "to mourn" is a synonym for *saphad* "to wail, mourn" (Gen 37:34; Ps 30:12; cf. Amos 5:16; Mic 1:8). See Arnulf Baumann, "אָבַל," *TDOT* 1:45. There are several other connections that echo the catastrophe of death connected to sin, including *ʿaphar* "dust" (death, Gen 3:19; Ps 30:10), *shakhat* "to destroy" (the flood, Gen 6:17; Ps 30:10). See John Goldingay, *Psalms Volume 1: Psalms 1–41*, BCOTWP (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 431.

[92] Several commentators see v. 7 as the structural and thematic center of the psalm. See David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1999), 183–84; Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 281.

(v. 9 MT), his praise endures forever as he has been girded[93] with joy (Heb. *śimḥâ*, v. 12). Throughout this psalm, the vocabulary of praise has a theological basis that gives direction to what it means to be godly and affirming the covenant with God, committed to a life of praise.

12. Psalm 31

Psalm 31, a lament expressed in five strophes (vv. 1–5; 6–9; 10–14; 15–21; 22–25), has the largest concentration of anthropological terms in the central strophe. The psalm alternates between thankful testimonies of salvation (vv. 6–9; 15–21) and retrospective wrestling's with guilt and hope-filled pleas (vv. 1–5; 10–14; 22–25).[94]

Strophic Structure of Psalm 31

A vv. 1–5 Pleas for deliverance
B vv. 6–9 Testimony of salvation with rejoicing
- I trust in YHWH
- I will rejoice and be glad in your *ḥesed*

C vv. 10–14 Reflection of guilt
B[1] vv. 15–21 Testimony of salvation with plea
- I trust in YHWH
- Save me by your *ḥesed*

A[1] vv. 22–25 Rejoicing in deliverance
- He has wondrously shown His *ḥesed*

The verbal parallels between A, A[1] and B, B[1] serve to highlight the central strophe's significance (vv. 10–14).[95] The repetition of the verb "to become weak" (Heb. *ʿašaš*) in the central section, coupled with at least 6 anthropological terms, highlights the perception of the feebleness and frailty of humanity. The description of physical weakness, social reproach, and being an object of intended violence serve as a reminder that the godly one is subject to all the bad experiences resident in a sinful world. This fact only makes the appeal for deliverance in the first two strophes and the proclamation of the answered plea in the last two strophes all the more noteworthy. When the godly one is at their weakest then YHWH's strength is seen in its fullness.

93 Mark F. Rooker, "אָזַר," *NIDOTTE* 1:344.

94 Weber, *Werkbuch Psalmen I*, 150.

95 The repeated verbs include to be ashamed (*bwš*; vv. 2, 18), to trust (*bṭḥ*; vv. 7, 15), to take refuge (*ḥsh*; vv. 2, 20), to save (*yšʿ*; vv. 3, 17), to rescue (*nṣl*; vv. 3, 16).

The cognate of *ḥasîd*, *ḥesed*, is found on both sides of the central strophe. The covenantal focus again is highlighted in an allusion to the Aaronic benediction (v. 17) as well as several parallels with the covenant speech found in Deuteronomy 31 as well as with Psalm 18.[96] The allusions to this passage, where God states that His people would break the covenant and He would hide His face (cf. Ps 30:7), may be the background for the psalmist's introductory formulaic language of taking refuge in YHWH and pleading not to become ashamed (cf. Pss 25:2, 20; 71:1). If this is the case, then the weakness may be due to a covenant breach. The psalmist's plea again appeals to the Aaronic benediction, requesting that YHWH "make His face shine" upon His servant (v. 17a), and continues the theme that godliness is not innate but necessitates the blessing of YHWH.[97]

13. Psalm 32

In this wisdom psalm,[98] the godly one is one whose sins are covered, whose transgressions are lifted up (from him), and against whom God does not impute/count against them iniquity (vv. 1–2). Typically, when these three words for sin are used together, God is in view as bringing atonement.[99] The covenant element is further developed by David's use of these words in regard to himself (v. 5; cf. Ps 51). It evokes his theological rootedness in YHWH's character of restoring broken sinful humans.[100] The happy/blessed one is the beneficiary of God's activity. Affirming this direction of intention, in v. 10 the godly one is the one who trusts in God and God's *ḥesed* surrounds him (Exod 34:6, 7a). These allusions to Exod 34 are key to understanding the relationship between the covenant Lordship of YHWH expressed in His *ḥesed* and those covenanted to Him experiencing His atoning activity. The anthropological focus here is on humanity in general. The passive participles in v. 1 are the antecedents to the noun human (Heb. *ʾadam*),

[96] Be strong and courageous (v. 25; cf. Deut 31:23); "to hide the face" (Hi. of *satar* + *pane*, v. 21; cf. Deut 31:17, 18; cf. Ps 10:11; 13:2; 22:25). Several other parallels with Psalm 18 (which also parallels Deuteronomy 31) also highlight the frailty of humanity. Both psalms utilize images of security (*ṣûrî* ["my rock," 18:3, 47; 31:4], yšʿ ["victory"], and *məpālṭî* ["deliverance and salvation," 18:3, 4, 47, 49; 31:2, 17]), and identify a source of antagonism, *ʾōyēḇ* ("enemy," 18:3, 49; 31:9).

[97] Skinner, "The Historical Superscriptions of Davidic Psalms," 57–61.

[98] Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 265–66.

[99] Exod 34:6–7; Lev 16:21; Job 13:23; Pss 32:1–5; 51:1–3; Isa 59:12–16.

[100] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 203.

which lends itself towards an all-inclusive perspective.[101] The focus on humanity continues, but this time describes the impact of living in non-covenantal ways (i.e., repentance, humility) in what is hyperbolic language. The poetic line "my bones wasted away" depicts the interior pain that came from groaning (mental anguish).

The corrective to this dilemma is that YHWH gives wise counsel, instructs, and teaches the godly, encouraging them to accept His instruction so they may live with joy and thanksgiving. Exodus 34 connects the covenant lordship and attributes of atoning activity in the person of YHWH. This is alluded to in Ps 32:10, where the psalmist states that the one who trusts in YHWH (His person), *ḥesed* (His attribute) surrounds him. The godly are also called the righteous and the upright of heart. This is a strong indication that moral life is imputed and imparted in ways that have physical and psychological benefits for the godly one.

14. Psalm 37

As the final psalm that references the godly one in Book I of the Psalter, Ps 37 is a fusion of all the previous references to the godly in the aforementioned psalms. The psalm concentrates on the twin themes in Psalms 1 and 2, the two ways and the judgment of the godly and wicked. The strong emphasis on inheriting and dwelling in the land highlights the societal blessings of covenant fidelity (vv. 3, 9, 11, 22, 29, 34). Another feature of this psalm is a catalog of ethical dispositions and actions of the righteous (Heb. *ṣaddîq*; vv. 6, 16, 17, 21, 29, 30). Two main points are highlighted. First, it mentions that it is God who generates the activity of the righteous (v. 6) and that it is He who upholds them (v. 17). Their salvation is from Him (v. 39). Second, many of the actions of the righteous are things prayed for in previous psalms that reference the *ḥasîd* (e.g., vv. 21, 26 the righteous are gracious, Pss 4:2; 30:9; 31:10). This summative psalm on the godly one thus structurally serves as a summative statement on what it means to be human in the way of God in contrast to the way of the wicked. The anthropological elements of humanity are the same (physical, mental, emotional, social); how those elements function in life depends on the covenantal relationship one has with YHWH. The way one chooses as their ethical experience.

[101] Hossfeld and Zenger, *Die Psalmen I*, 203.

15. Conclusion

In conclusion, the *ḥasîd* are those YHWH has set apart for Himself (Ps 4:4), whose lives He preserves (31:24; 37:28; 97:10), who do not see corruption (16:10, Messianic), who are faithful (31:24), who make a covenant with YHWH (50:5), who are His people (85:9), who are the children of Israel (148:14), who love YHWH (97:10), and who will have psychological well-being, societal blessings, hope in times of distress, and future hope that impacts present life. Holiness is not innate for the godly one, it is a gift of YHWH intended for human thriving, which in its essence means reflecting the character of God in the selfless care for "the other."

The semantic relationships analyzed in these psalms have evidenced that in descriptions of biblical anthropology, the language of holiness informs the language that describes human life and vice versa. Moreover, micro-structural considerations express how structured readings of these psalms highlight aspects of human holiness in relationship to God and His work in the world. Finally, the macro-structural connections create a narrative reading that provides a systematic theology of human identity, as repeated words, phrases, and concepts in psalm groupings and collections give an aerial view of the subject matter. The editorial placement of these psalms seems to indicate that the God of *ḥesed* and the *ḥasîd* are a central theme of the Psalter.

The summative conclusion is that holiness is both a divine attribute and a human experience. What it means to be holy can only be an identity marker in relation to what it means to be in a covenant relationship with YHWH. Holiness in its relational context is thus a gift to be accepted as well as an impetus for understanding humanity's origin, nature, life, and destiny.

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Holy Land for Holy Israelite People in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context

ROY E. GANE
Andrews University, MICHIGAN

Abstract

There are several ways in which Israelites and other ancient Near Eastern peoples shared similar understandings of the relationships between themselves, their deities, and their lands. However, the Pentateuch instructs YHWH's holy Israelite people how to live in a special covenant connection with Him that profoundly affects how they view, treat, and live on the land that He gives them. Comparison and contrast between the Pentateuch (especially Leviticus) and other ancient Near Eastern texts show the unique aspects of the YHWH-human-land relationships.

Keywords: land, holy, sabbatical, Jubilee, Leviticus, covenant, ancient Near East

1. Introduction

The Torah (Pentateuch) teaches God's holy Israelite people how they should relate to, treat, and live on the holy land that He gives them.[1] The biblical instructions accord with some practices of other ancient Near Eastern (ANE)

[1] This article expands on an invited paper titled "Care for Holy Land According to Leviticus" that was presented in a session of the "Old Testament Backgrounds and Ancient Near East Section" on November 15, 2012 at the annual national meeting of the *Evangelical Theological Society* in Milwaukee, Minnesota, USA.

peoples. However, the Torah also shows unique aspects and implications of the connection between the Israelite deity YHWH and His land and people.

The present essay explores the connection between the Israelites and the land that God gave them in selective contextual comparison and contrast with other ANE texts.[2] This comparison, which highlights the uniqueness of the biblical instructions, will primarily focus on the book of Leviticus (including the reason why the Jubilee began on the Day of Atonement). The investigation will address the following subtopics:

1. Divine sovereignty over people and land
2. Holy land
3. Benefits to land under divine rule
4. Human response to divine benefits
5. Sabbaths of the land
6. Jubilee year
7. Lack of divine need for human service
8. Consequences of divine displeasure affecting land
9. Cessation of divine displeasure affecting land

2. Divine Sovereignty Over People and Land

ANE peoples believed that deities ruled them and their lands. For example, an Egyptian text known as "The Great Hymn to Osiris" contains praise for Horus, the divine son of Osiris:

> The crown placed firmly on his head,
> He counts the land as his possession,
> Sky, earth are under his command,
> Mankind is entrusted to him,
> Commoners, nobles, sunfolk.
> Egypt and the far-off lands,
> What Aten encircles is under his care,
> Northwind, river, flood,
> Tree of life, all plants.[3]

[2] On the contextual comparison and contrast approach, see, e.g., K. Lawson Younger, Jr., "The 'Contextual Method': Some West Semitic Reflections," in *The Context of Scripture*, vol. 3 of *Archival Documents from the Biblical World*, ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (Leiden: Brill, 2003), xxxvii–xlii.

[3] "The Great Hymn to Osiris," trans. Miriam Lichtheim (*COS* = *The Context of Scripture* [William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., eds.; 3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 2003] 1.26:42;

In *Enūma Elish*, the Babylonian "Epic of Creation," Marduk's victory over chaos and establishment of order through creation gives him authority to assign locations of gods and humans and to establish ways in which the latter should serve the former.[4]

Israelites also believed in divine sovereignty. As the Creator, their deity YHWH possessed the right to assign territories to nations, including Israel, His special portion (Deut 32:6–9). Unlike Marduk, YHWH did not assign other deities to lordship over various parts of the cosmos. YHWH owned the Israelites' land and benevolently ruled them as His privileged tenants, who were safe and secure in their dependent relationship with Him (Lev 25:23; Num 23:21).[5] As the ultimate owner, the Lord had the right to require portions of harvests as firstfruits offerings (Exod 23:19; 34:26; Lev 23:10–20; Deut 18:4) from His Israelite tenants and to make stipulations concerning the use of the land. Such requirements included leaving some of their harvests for the poor and immigrants to glean (Lev 19:9–10; 23:22; Deut 24:20), sabbatical year fallows, and release in the Jubilee year (see below).

God's gift to them of the very good, fertile land (Deut 8:7–10) gave evidence of His beneficent covenant relationship with them.[6] In fact, the land was a member of a tripartite covenant relationship between God, His chosen Israelite people, and the land that He gave them to use.[7] However, it was not a covenant between equals but a suzerainty covenant/treaty that the superior sovereign YHWH gave to the Israelites.[8] This covenant was unique.

cf. "The Famine Stela," transl. Miriam Lichtheim, *COS* 1.53:131–32).

4 "Epic of Creation," trans. Benjamin R. Foster (*COS* 1.111:398–402).

5 Cf. Douglas J. Moo and Jonathan A. Moo, *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World*, Biblical Theology for Life (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 96; Christopher J. H. Wright, *God's People in God's Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 64. Regarding the Israelites' dependence on God, as shown by His gift of the land to them, cf. Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity: 2004), 85–86.

6 Wright, Old Testament Ethics, 88.

7 Daniel I. Block points out that the land of Israel was formally integrated into this covenant by a ritual (Deut 27:2–8) when the Israelites first entered the land and inscribed YHWH's Torah on large plastered stones that belonged to the land (Daniel I. Block, *Covenant: The Framework of God's Grand Plan of Redemption* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021], 258–59). Cf. Wright's triangular diagram of the relationship between God, Israel, and their land, within and reflecting the larger relationship between God, all of humanity, and the whole earth (Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 183).

8 For a concise introduction to the Old Testament covenants in relation to ANE treaties, see John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context: A Survey of Parallels between Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Library of Biblical Interpretation

ANE texts show no evidence that any other deity made a covenant/treaty with a nation.

Another basis for YHWH's rule over the Israelites and their land made divine-human-land connections tighter than elsewhere in the ANE: Their divine Lord had brought them from Egypt to give them the land of Canaan (Lev 25:38) that He had promised to them (e.g., Exod 3:8, 17; 12:25).

3. Holy Land

Outside Israel, lands contained holy places, such as temples. In Mesopotamia, temples of the gods were located in cities, which had patron deities and were viewed as holy to some extent because they were believed to be founded by the gods. Nation states developed from such cities, and the people of Babylon believed that their god Marduk ruled the world from their city. However, it does not appear that entire lands were called holy in Akkadian literature,[9] except in some myths.[10]

In Egypt, cities were regarded as made by and for the gods. Each Egyptian city belonged to a deity, and the state was made up of deities and temples that owned the land.[11] So, it seems that national territories could be viewed as holy in an extended sense.

According to the Bible, Israel had only one authorized central holy sanctuary/temple of YHWH, where He resided among His people (e.g., Exod 25:8; 29:44; 40:33–35) and from which He was believed to rule the world (e.g., Ps 24:1; 93:1; 96:10–13).[12] Jerusalem, the national capital, became the

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 95–109.

9 *CAD = The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, 25 vols. (Oriental Institute: Chicago, 1956–) 13:146–147 under *qasûdu*, "holy," and 13:294–95 under *quddusûu*, "holy."

10 The Ugaritic myth of "Dawn and Dusk," otherwise known as "The Birth of the Gracious and Beautiful Gods," describes how the god *ʾIlu* banished his wives and sons to *mdbr qdsû*, which Dennis Pardee tentatively renders "the holy steppe-land" ("Dawn and Dusk," trans. Dennis Pardee [*COS* 1.87:282, line 65], but see Pardee's note on this line). In *Enuœma Elish*, Marduk was formed "In the midst of holy Apsu" ("Epic of Creation," *COS* 1.111:392, Tablet 1, line 82), and later "He made Ea, Enlil, and Anu dwell in their holy places" ("Epic of Creation," *COS* 1.111:399, Tablet 4, line 146).

11 John H. Walton, Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006, 2018), 254–56.

12 Archaeologists have found remains of other temples in Israel, including a temple at Arad in Judah and the temple built at Dan in the north for idolatrous worship by Jeroboam I. But these temples were not authorized by YHWH.

permanent location of the temple (e.g., 1 Kgs 6–8). So, only Jerusalem was the holy city in that sense (Joel 4:17 [Eng. 3:17]; Dan 9:24), although it was not regarded as founded by the deity.[13] Several pieces of evidence indicate that the entire territory of Israel was holy land (Zech 2:16 [Eng. v. 12]),[14] although the Pentateuch does not explicitly refer to the whole land as holy:[15]

(1) YHWH dwelt in the land (Exod 15:17; Num 35:34), so it was a holy place.[16]

(2) The Lord, who gave the Israelites a unique covenant that was holy because a deity gave it to them, gave them the land of Canaan as their dwelling place. In accordance with this covenant, they were to be a unique people in that all of them were to be holy, emulating divine holiness by living according to the Lord's principles (Lev 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:26).

(3) The Lord called the Israelites to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod 19:6 ESV). Thus, the whole land in which they dwelt was viewed as an extension of the sanctuary, to which all of them were connected as "priests" in a broad sense, although only Aaron and his descendants were authorized to officiate in the cult.[17]

(4) Immoral behaviors could "defile" not only the people who did them (Lev 18:20, 23, 24, 30) but also the land (vv. 25, 27, 28), implying that the land too, was supposed to be holy and therefore kept pure.

(5) The land was to benefit from holy Sabbath years of rest, just as the people were to rest on the holy Sabbath day (Exod 23:10–12; Lev 25:1–7, 11–12; cf. 23:3; see further below).

13 Cf. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 256. But YHWH created/founded the entire world (e.g., Gen 1–2; Ps 24:2; 89:12–13 [Eng. vv. 11–12]; Jer 10:12).

14 Cf. Ps 78:54 if גְּבוּל refers to the territory of the land here (so, e.g., ESV, CEB, NIV 2011, NET Bible).

15 Some pieces of land could be holy in a sense: an Israelite could consecrate a field to the Lord (Lev 27:16–23); Deut 23:15 (Eng. v. 14) states that (the area of) an Israelite war camp must be treated as holy; and Ezek 45:1–4; 48:8–12, 14 specifies a holy district for the ideal temple and its priests.

16 Charles Randall Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor: An Old Testament Theology of the Jubilee" (PhD diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2019), 172.

17 Joosten observes another connection between the land, the people, and the sanctuary: "In fact, the land, and the camp which prefigures it in important aspects, is viewed as an extension of the sanctuary. The Israelites, each of whom has received a holding of landed property, are pictured as asylants having found refuge on temple lands. In consequence, they have to honour the divine owner and Lord of the land, through their gifts and through observance of his laws" (Jan Joosten, *People and Land in the*

4. Benefits to Land under Divine Rule

ANE peoples believed that their gods provided benefits of nature, including favorable agricultural conditions, that were necessary for survival and prosperity. For example, "The Great Hymn to Osiris" from Egypt expresses adoration of Osiris:

> Plants sprout by his wish,
> Earth grows its food for him.…
>
> He [Geb] placed this land into his hand,
> Its water, its wind,
> Its plants, all its cattle.[18]

"The Marduk Prophecy" from Mesopotamia predicts well-being under the god Ningirsu that is comprehensive, including not only agricultural and economic prosperity, but also social order and ethical rectitude that impact quality of life in the land:

> ÔNingirsu∏ will rule. The rivers will carry fish. The fields and plains will be full of yield. The grass of winter (will last) to summer. The grass of summer will last to winter. The harvest of the land will thrive. The marketplace will prosper. He will set evil aright. He will clear up the disturbed. He will illumine evil. The clouds will be continually present. Brother will love his brother. A son will fear his father as if he were a god. Mother [...] daughter. The bride will marry. She will fear her husband. He will be compassionate toward the people. The man will regularly pay his taxes. That prince will [rule all] the lands.[19]

Leviticus agrees that the deity provides well-being, but the deity is YHWH rather than Ningirsu. Notice the similar literary construction in Lev 26:5: "Your threshing season will last until the grape harvest, and the grape harvest will last until planting time" (CEB here and in subsequent biblical quotations).

The covenant blessings of Lev 26:3–13 exemplify comprehensive well-being in the Promised Land for those who are loyal to the Lord. These

Holiness Code, VTSup 67 [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 198; cf. 196–97).

18 "The Great Hymn to Osiris," *COS* 1.26:41–42. cf. "The Famine Stela," *COS* 1.53:131–32.

19 "The Marduk Prophecy," trans. Tremper Longman III (*COS* 1.149:481, lines iii 1′–20′); cf. "To Nanshe," trans. Wolfgang Heimpel (*COS* 1.162:526, lines 11–15); "Ritual and Prayer to Ishtar of Nineveh," trans. Billie Jean Collins (*COS* 1.65:164, §7).

blessings feature agricultural prosperity (vv. 4–5, 10), peace and safety from human and animal enemies (vv. 5b–8), population growth (v. 9), and divine covenant presence (vv. 11–12).[20]

5. Human Response to Divine Benefits

ANE people were expected to be grateful to the deities who provided for them on their land. The "Great Hymn to Osiris" continues:

> Everybody jubilates,
> Hearts are glad, breasts rejoice,
> Everyone exults,
> All extol his goodness:
> How pleasant is his love for us,
> His kindness overwhelms the hearts,
> Love of him is great in all.[21]

People expressed gratitude to their gods in tangible ways. Thus, the Hittites performed the *purulli* festival in the cult of the Storm-god of Heaven when the land thrived.[22] Indeed, gods obliged humans to perform service in order to continue receiving divine blessings. In *Enūma Elish*, Marduk commands humans to build temples for their deities and sustain them with food offerings. Those people who remember the ways of Marduk and revere him will be safe and their land will prosper.[23]

The Sumerian "Nanshe Hymn" (c. 2100–2000 BC) attests divine requirements not only for cultic service, but also for ethical behavior. Persons who depended on the temple of the goddess Nanshe for their livelihood were judged at the New Year according to their adherence to Nanshe's rules throughout the previous year.[24]

YHWH gave His people opportunities for voluntary expressions of gratitude, such as donating materials and labor for the construction of His sanctuary (Exod 35) and presenting thanksgiving offerings (Lev 7:12–15). He also required offerings that acknowledged His sustaining power on behalf of His people, including agricultural tithes (27:30), "firstfruits" offerings of

[20] Cf. Lev 25:18–19.

[21] "The Great Hymn to Osiris," *COS* 1.26:42.

[22] "The Storm-God and the Serpent (Illuyanka)," trans. Gary Beckman (*COS* 1.56:150, lines A i 1–8).

[23] "Epic of Creation," *COS* 1.111:402.

[24] "To Nanshe," *COS* 1.162:526–31.

the land's produce (23:10–11, 16–17, 20), the "bread of the Presence" that acknowledged His provision of food as Israel's Creator-in-Residence (24:5–9; see below), and sacrifices at harvest festivals (chap. 23; Num 28–29).

The Lord also gave the Israelites many other laws to regulate their lives, especially their interactions with other people, in accordance with His character of holiness, which includes justice, kindness, and generosity.[25] For example, as mentioned above, He commanded His people to leave some produce of their harvests for the poor and immigrants. Thus, God's people were to share His bounty with others.

Some of God's laws directly concerned care for the land of Israel (Lev 25; see below) and crops and trees grown on it (Lev 19:19, 23–25; cf. Deut 20:19–20; 22:9). However, His interest in the land was not only for its ecological well-being; His people's treatment of the land that He gave them would reflect their attitude toward Him and whether or not they acknowledged that the land ultimately belonged to Him, and therefore was holy. Would the holy people take care of YHWH's gift of the use of the holy land entrusted to them and worship Him with gifts gratefully offered from the produce of the land (e.g., Exod 23:16, 19; Lev 2:14–16; 23:10–21; Deut 26:1–15)? Would they honor His benevolent rule over them on their land by following His wise and beneficial instructions in all areas of their lives so that other peoples would be drawn to them and thereby to Him (Deut 4:5–8; Isa 2:2–4; Mic 4:1–3)?[26]

The Lord's Israelite people, by their faithfulness or unfaithfulness to Him throughout their generations, could profoundly affect the duration of their enjoyment of the bountiful land that He had given to them, ideally forever (e.g., Deut 11:18–21).[27] For one thing, if they obeyed God's commandment to honor their parents, they could "long endure on the land" (Exod 20:12 NJPS; cf. Deut 5:16), not merely in terms of individual longevity, but as a people, to whom the commandment is addressed.[28] But progressive

[25] See, e.g., Roy E. Gane, Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017).

[26] On YHWH's relationship to the land and Israel's consequent responsibilities, cf. Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus 19–40*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2016), 120.

[27] Cf. Herbert C. Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land, and Afterlife—A Biblical Complex," *HUCA* 44 (1973): 50.

[28] Brichto, "Kin, Cult, Land, and Afterlife," 30–31. Brichto goes on to suggest that the fifth commandment of the Decalogue primarily calls for respect for parents after they have died, involving "protection from disloyalty or impiety," which specifically could include giving parents proper burials and appropriately allocating their property (31).

weakening of their society, moral fiber, and courage due to departure from dependence on God and His practical principles could lay the Israelites open to foreign invasion and oppression that would disrupt their benefit from agriculture on their land, which provided the food supply that enabled them to survive and flourish (e.g., Lev 26:17, 25–26, 29, 32; Deut 28:25, 30b–31, 33, 48–57; cf. Judg 6:1–6, and see further below on the punishment of exile).

6. Sabbaths of the Land

ANE texts mention fallow periods for agricultural land. A Hittite text, "The Storm God at Liḫ˙zina," includes the broken sentence: "In the fallow land the […] of things/words is/are weak."[29] In the Ugaritic calendar, "the ending of one [seven-year] cycle without a harvest was believed to bring on a seven-year cycle of plenty."[30] An Assyrian text speaks of the "(month in which) Šamas establishes the freedom and repose of the soil (i.e., the time of year when no crops are grown)."[31] Here the sun-god determines the fallow period as part of the yearly agricultural cycle.

The God of Israel called for regular fallow years:

> For six years you should plant crops on your land and gather in its produce. But in the seventh year you should leave it alone and undisturbed so that the poor among your people may eat. What they leave behind, the wild animals may eat. You should do the same with your vineyard and your olive trees (Exod 23:10–11).

Here the fallow period skips an entire annual cycle of agriculture every seventh year for a humanitarian purpose.[32] It is only fair that those who do the work of sowing should reap the results. But in the seventh year, there is no sowing and therefore anyone can eat what comes up by itself—for exam-

No doubt the intent of the commandment includes this aspect. However, comparison with laws against mistreatment of living parents in the Pentateuch (Exod 21:15, 17; Lev 20:9; Deut 21:18–21) seems to indicate that respect for them while they are alive is at least as important.

29 "The Storm God at Liḫ˙zina," trans. Billie Jean Collins (*COS* 1.69:172).

30 Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature: A Comprehensive Translation of the Poetic and Prose Texts* (Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1949), 5, cited by Michael Lefebvre, "Theology and Economics in the Biblical Year of Jubilee, *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* 2.1 (2015): 33.

31 *CAD* 4:313, citing *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur verschiedenen Inhalts* 218 A iii 15 and 22 (Astrolabe B).

32 Cf. the benefit of weekly Sabbath rest for humans and animals in the next verse (v. 12).

ple, from kernels spilled during the previous harvest—when the land returns to its original state and its yield is provided only by the Creator.

The connection with Creation is indicated by the parallel between the sabbatical year in Exod 23:10–11 and weekly Sabbath rest in the next verse (v. 12). The sacred weekly Sabbath commemorates God's cessation/rest when He completed His work of creating the world (Gen 2:2–3; Exod 20:11; 31:17, etc.). This parallel implies that the sabbatical year, like the weekly seventh-day Sabbath, is holy time that reminds human beings that God is the Creator of them and the good earth on which they dwell. So they are dependent on and accountable to Him.

Leviticus 25:2–7 expands on the law of the sabbatical year for the land in Exod 23:10–11.[33] Here the Lord specifies that the cyclical fallow requirement would apply only in the Promised Land. Perhaps unlike the fallow prescribed in Exod 23:10–11, the fallow according to Lev 25 would be simultaneous for all farmers, as shown by the fact that the national Jubilee would follow a certain number of sabbatical years (vv. 8–10). The fact that this seventh year is a sabbath "to the Lord" (vv. 2, 4) indicates that it is holy time. So does the descriptor שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן, "a special sabbath rest" (v. 4), which elsewhere is applied to the holy weekly Sabbath (Exod 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3) and the Day of Atonement sabbath (Lev 16:31; 23:32)—the two S/sabbaths when cessation from *all* work was required. There is no evidence of such a regular, simultaneous, holy fallow period elsewhere in the ANE.

Leviticus 25 clarifies that in the sabbatical year, landowners and their households would live from day to day on what grew by itself, but they should not carry out systematic sowing, pruning, or harvesting because the sabbatical would be "a year of special rest for the land" (v. 5). This rest allowed the soil to recover its depleted nutrients, likely as only part of a more extensive necessary practice of fallowing that could involve alternating usage of fields.[34] The rest for the land would also provide rest for the farmers by suspending agricultural labor for a theological reason during the sacred time, temporarily returning the nation to subsistence gathering of food. This would not cause undue hardship because the people also would have been able to store food before the sabbatical year.

Why this return to a primitive way of life on the bountiful Promised Land? There could be several reasons:

[33] On this expansion, see Wright, *God's People*, 145–47; John S. Bergsma, *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran: A History of Interpretation*, VTSup 115 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 48–50.

[34] David C. Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan: Agricultural Life in the Early Iron Age*, SWBA 3 (Sheffield: Almond, 1985), 194–95, 200–202.

(1) The sabbatical year would honor God as the Creator of all, as an extension of the weekly Sabbath.

(2) Living off the land without tilling it would be a reminder of the original, ideal life in the garden of Eden, before the curse of sin (Gen 2–3), and a foretaste of life in a restored earth (cf. Rev 21–22).

(3) Return to gathering what God provided, reminiscent of the Israelites' life in the wilderness (Exod 16), would reinforce their dependence on Him, leading them to contemplate their present experience in light of His past provision.

(4) The sabbatical would allow people to recover from demanding agricultural work and give them time for other activities with their families, just as the weekly Sabbath would do on a much smaller scale.

(5) The sabbatical would be egalitarian in the sense that everyone—rich or poor, socially advantaged or marginalized, human or animal (including both domestic and wild animals)—would be free to help themselves to the natural produce of the land as if ownership of land parcels did not exist. This could be a healthy corrective to greed, elitism, and entitlement at the expense of others.

7. Jubilee year

This section of the present article begins with a discussion of the biblical text before turning to ANE analogues. The primary legislation regarding the Jubilee year appears in Lev 25:8–55, with some additional implications of Jubilee releases in 27:17–18, 20–24; Num 36:3–9. Leviticus 25 introduces the Jubilee year in vv. 8–12:

> You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall give you forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the loud trumpet on the tenth day of the seventh month. On the Day of Atonement you shall sound the trumpet throughout all your land. And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you, when each of you shall return to his property and each of you shall return to his clan. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; in it you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of itself nor gather the grapes from the undressed vines. For it is a jubilee. It shall be holy to you. You may eat the produce of the field (ESV).

The Jubilee involves several elements, to which verses 8–12 refer.[35] First, it was a holy year that culminated a cyclical super-sabbatical period of 7 × 7 years. Second, as during a sabbatical year, the Israelites were to leave the land fallow, not sowing or reaping crops. Third, the Jubilee called for Israelites to return portions of ancestral land to their original owners. Fourth, it required the people to release any Israelite bonded workers so that they could return to their clans. Fifth, the holy year was to be proclaimed by a trumpet on the Day of Atonement.[36] The rest of Leviticus 25 provides more information regarding the second, third, and fourth of these elements and also instructions concerning redemption of land and persons (vv. 24–27, 29–33, 48–52, 54), as well as encouragment to help those in need, including by not charging them interest on (non-commercial) loans (vv. 35–37).[37]

Art Lindsley contradicts five common misconceptions about the Jubilee in Leviticus 25. It does not (1) involve forgiveness of debt, or (2) entail a redistribution of wealth, or (3) show that there are no permanent rights to private property, or (4) lead to equality of income, or (5) apply to all people (only to the Israelites).[38]

The Jubilee legislation of Leviticus 25 is complex, and the scholarly literature concerning its details is vast.[39] Here we can only briefly highlight some aspects of the elements of the Jubilee listed above.

1. Holy year culminating a cyclical super-sabbatical period of 7 × 7 years. Scholars debate whether the Jubilee 50th year after 49 years is concurrent with the seventh sabbatical year, i.e., year 49, by inclusive reckoning,[40] or whether

35 Cf. Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 443.

36 The Hebrew term יוֹבֵל, "Jubilee" (Lev 25:10) can also refer to a ram (Josh 6:5—"horn of the ram") or a ram's horn trumpet (a kind of שׁוֹפָר; Josh 6:4, 6, 8, 13). So it seems clear that the name of the "Jubilee" year of remission is derived from the word for a trumpet that announces it.

37 Details of redemption and interest are beyond the scope of the present article.

38 Art Lindsley, "Five Myths About Jubilee," Institute for Faith, Work & Economics, 2012, https://tifwe.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Five-Myths-About-Jubilee-Lindsley.pdf. Also Michael A. Harbin recognizes that nothing in Lev 25 indicates remission of debt or redistribution of wealth in the Jubilee year ("Jubilee and Social Justice," *JETS* 54.4 [2011]: 691, 696, 698).

39 Some especially helpful recent or fairly recent treatments, which contain references to many other publications on the Jubilee, include those of Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor"; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, AB 3B (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2162–71; Bergsma, *The Jubilee from Leviticus to Qumran*.

40 E.g., Lefebvre, "Theology and Economics," 34–35; Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 143–47.

the Jubilee followed the seventh sabbatical year as a separate 50th year.[41] We cannot engage that debate here, but either way, the timing of the Jubilee greatly emphasizes the holy sabbatical (seven) pattern correlating with its sanctity as consecrated time (vv. 10, 12) because the Jubilee comes at the end of seven sabbatical year cycles, called in Hebrew "seventh sabbaths [שַׁבְּתֹת] of years" (v. 8, so NKJV and NASB 1995, but rendered by ESV as "seven weeks of years").[42]

There were ANE parallels to releases of land and bonded workers (see below). However, none of them were established by deities or cyclical, occurring at regular, pre-set intervals.

2. Fallow year. As mentioned above, there are no ANE parallels to the regular, simultaneous, holy fallow periods that the Israelites were to observe. Leviticus 25:20–22 answers a question that the Israelites likely could ask regarding the fallow requirement in v. 11–12:

> Suppose you ask, "What will we eat in the seventh year if we don't plant or gather our crops then?" I will send my blessing on you in the sixth year so that it will make enough produce for three years. You can plant again in the eighth year and eat food from the previous year's produce until the ninth year. Until its produce comes, you will eat the food from the previous year.

Here in the instructions for the Jubilee year, the sixth year would belong to the seventh sabbatical year cycle. The fact that Lev 25 addresses this issue in the context of the Jubilee, rather than earlier in the instructions for the sabbatical year (vv. 1–7), could be taken to support the view that the Jubilee fiftieth year follows the seventh sabbatical year, so that there would be a special problem of two consecutive fallow years.

In any case, the Israelites would need to depend on God's promise of a special blessing so that the harvest of the sixth year would produce enough for three years.[43] This would "require faith in *God's providence* as the one

[41] In which case the Jubilee year was both the 50th year of one Jubilee cycle and the first year of the following cycle (cf. the Festival of Weeks on the 50th day, the first day of the following week, after seven weeks; Lev 23:15–16). E.g., Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 1999, 2166, 2250; cf. 2181–83; Bergsma, *The Jubilee*, 88–90; Roy Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 432–34. For rejection of theories in addition to those described here (concurrent with 49th year or consecutive 50th year), see Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2250; Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 143.

[42] On the Jubilee as the climax of the Sabbath spectrum, see Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 127–30.

[43] Cf. Norman C. Habel, *The Land is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies*, Overtures to Biblical

who could command blessing in the natural order."[44] Meeting this test of faith would expand the trust that the Israelites had to exercise in the wilderness, when God provided a double portion of manna on the sixth day of every week to free them from collecting it on the Sabbath (Exod 16:5, 22–30).[45]

3. Returned portions of ancestral land to their original owners. The Jubilee law reinforced the fact that YHWH was the ultimate owner of all land, which was "crown property." He allocated a piece of agricultural land to each Israelite family, which had the right to utilize it, but not to permanently sell it (Lev 25:23; cf. Num 26 [esp. vv. 53–56]; Num 34; Josh 13–19).[46] This was the basis of Israelite property rights: "Land holdings were the allotments of the divine giver, and therefore were held in trust from God."[47] The Jubilee release was to maintain the egalitarian distribution of ancestral agricultural land that He had set up.

If someone experienced difficulty maintaining a livelihood for himself and his family, other Israelites were to help him and not take advantage of his vulnerable situation (Lev 25:35–37). If he had to sell the use of some or all of his land (i.e., lease it) so that he and his family could survive and/or so that he could pay off indebtedness that he had incurred, he had a right to redeem it, i.e., buy it back, if he could. Alternatively, a relative of his could redeem it, presumably for his own use, but thereby keep it in their extended

Theology (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 104.

44 Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 209 (emphasis original).

45 Cf. the Joseph story (Gen 41), in which bountiful harvests provided for following lean years (Calum Carmichael, "The Sabbatical/Jubilee Cycle and the Seven-Year Famine in Egypt," *Bib* 80 [1999]: 228–30).

46 This rule did not apply to houses in walled cities, except in cities of Levites that were their inheritance in place of agricultural territory (Lev 25:29–34). Leviticus 27:16–25 regulates another kind of transaction: dedication of land to the sanctuary, including effects of the Jubilee release on varieties of such transfers. Numbers 36 protects inheritance of land within the tribe with the rule that women who inherit ancestral property must marry within their own tribes so that the land would not go to another tribe in the Jubilee year.

47 Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 90. Here Wright points out that Naboth was correct when he told Ahab that he had no right to exchange or sell his ancestral land to Ahab (1 Kgs 21:2–3) because God actually owned it and he only "held it in trust from the Lord for the benefit of his family." Wright further observes that on the global level, "The right of all to *use* the resources of the earth seems to be morally prior to the right of any to *own* them for exclusive enjoyment" (Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 148; emphasis original).

family (vv. 24–27).[48] If resources for such redemption were lacking, the land would revert to the original owner at the Jubilee year, when he could have a new start (Lev 25:10, 13, 15–16, 28).[49]

4. Released Israelite bonded workers so that they could return to their clans. If someone who had to sell the use of his land during hard times additionally had to sell himself as a servant in order to survive (not sold into debt slavery),[50] he would regain his freedom and be reunited with his extended family at the Jubilee year (vv. 10, 39–41, 47, 54), when he would reclaim his land, on which he could make an independent living.[51]

John S. Bergsma points out that the Jubilee instructions in Lev 25 address people in a "tribal, agrarian, subsistence economy" that existed in ancient Israel before the period of the monarchy and continued into the monarchic period in rural areas.[52] The Jubilee legislation primarily served the purpose

48 On redemption of real property to keep it in the extended family, see, e.g., Raymond Westbrook, *Property and the Family in Biblical Law*, JSOTSup 113 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 58–63; Geoffrey Parsons Miller, "Property," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Law*, ed. Brent A. Strawn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2:178–79.

49 It is possible that until the Jubilee, the owner could continue to work the land as a tenant farmer, giving an agreed amount of the harvest to the individual who had leased the land (Harbin, "Jubilee and Social Justice," 694; cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2204–5).

50 Cf. Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 191.

51 See Gane, *Old Testament Law*, 290–91 on this kind of "famine servitude," which differs from debt slavery, from which the slaves were to be freed after six years of service (Deut 15:12; cf. Exod 21:2). According to Lev 25:48–52, an Israelite who sold himself in famine servitude to a foreigner would have the right to redeem himself or be redeemed by a relative, if possible, before the Jubilee year. Raymond Westbrook mistakenly regarded the Jubilee as providing release of debts, which in normal human business terms would be impractical because the release was cyclical and predictable and therefore would dry up credit (Raymond Westbrook, "Social Justice in the Ancient Near East," in *The Shared Tradition*, vol. 1 of *Law from the Tigris to the Tiber: The Writings of Raymond Westbrook*, ed. Bruce Wells and Rachel Magdalene [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2009], 159; but see Deut 15:9–10, which directly addresses this problem in the context of the seventh year debt release). Lefebvre also interprets the Jubilee as release from indebtedness and consequent debt-slavery (LeFebvre, "Theology and Economics," 38–39, 42–43, 49–50).

52 See, e.g., John S. Bergsma, "The Year of Jubilee and the Ancient Israelite Economy," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 59 (2017): 156–60; Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 36–41. On ancient Israelite agriculture, which occupied and supported most Israelites, see Oded Borowski, "Seasons, Crops, and Water in the Land of the Bible," in *Behind the Scenes of the Old Testament: Cultural, Social, and Historical Contexts*, ed. Jonathan S. Greer, John W. Hilber, and John H. Walton (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 414–15. For a summary of the challenges of subsistence agriculture in the land

of preserving "the *identity* and *integrity* of the Israelite extended family."[53] Additionally, the Jubilee incorporated the land "into sacred cycles of rest and worship" and protected Israelites "from oppressive and demeaning labor."[54]

Elements of the Jubilee were well known in the wider ANE.[55] Bergsma summarizes these:

> (1) the promulgation of "freedom" proclamations involving release of slaves, debts, and land (Lev 25:10), (2) the dedication of certain populations and regions as servants (slaves) of a particular god (Lev 25:42); (3) the observance of special festivals in the seventh month involving temple purgation, re-assertion of the rule of the patron deity, and acts of (at least symbolic) social justice (Lev 25:9–10); (4) the practice of fallowing fields (Lev 25:4); (5) the inalienability in principle of ancestral land, with its corollary—redemption laws (Lev 25:23–55); (6) the use of a calendar based on multiples of seven and fifty (7 × 7 + 1) (Lev 25:8–10).[56]

In Mesopotamia, the Akkadian term *andurārum*, which is the cognate of the Hebrew term דְּרוֹר, "liberty" that describes the Jubilee (Lev 25:10; cf. Isa 61:1; Jer 34:8, 15, 17), refers to release of a person or thing (e.g., land) from an obligation. If the obligation was debt, such a release could free persons from debt slavery so that they would be reunified with their families.[57]

Another Akkadian term for a release was *mišarum*, which was a general royal decree that benefitted certain classes of people (not including, e.g., house-born slaves) through provisions that could include canceling debts

of Israel and the strategies, labor force, and social relations necessary to meet them, see Hopkins, *The Highlands*, 265–75.

53 Bergsma, "The Year of Jubilee," 161.

54 Bergsma, "The Year of Jubilee," 162.

55 Westbrook, Property and the Family in Biblical Law, 48.

56 Bergsma, *The Jubilee*, 50–51; cf. details on these ancient Near Eastern antecedents of the Jubilee legislation in pp. 19–37. Bergsma also discusses a parallel between Lev 25 and the practice of Egyptian, Anatolian, and Mesopotamian kings to dedicate holy temple cities to the service of gods. This gave its citizens special rights (called *kidinnutu* in Akkadian), freeing them from future civil obligations (including taxes), slavery, and confiscation of property. Like the people of such a temple city, the Israelites were completely devoted to God as His sacred servants (Exod 19:6), so they had the ongoing right not to be sold as slaves (Lev 25:42) and their holy land could not be permanently sold (Lev 25:23; Bergsma, *The Jubilee*, 27–30, 51).

57 See, e.g., Bergsma, *The Jubilee*, 22–23 on the decrees of Entemena, king of Lagash (ca. 2400 BC) and Lipit-Ishtar (ca. 1934–1924 BC), king of Isin; cf. p. 26 for royal proclamations of *andurāru(m)* at Nuzi.

(which could include back taxes), which resulted in the release of debt-slaves and return of land that had been seized to pay debt, along with various other economic reforms.[58]

However, there were key differences between the Mesopotamian releases and that of the biblical Jubilee. First, the Mesopotamian releases were enacted by monarchs, but "Leviticus 25 puts the responsibility on individual Israelites."[59] Second, the Mesopotamian releases targetted certain segments of society, but the Jubilee was broadly applicable to the entire society of Israelites.[60] Third, the Mesopotamian releases were ad hoc and unpredictable, initiated by human kings at their discretion, typically at the beginnings of their reigns (i.e., once per generation), or at other times to solve pressing economic problems. Kings issued such decrees when they felt that it was their religious duty to show that they were rulers of justice by promoting social stability through addressing problems of enslavement of debtors or loss of their land.[61]

By comparison, the deity YHWH demonstrated the justice of His theocratic rule by initiating the Jubilee as a regular, cyclical institution to permanently ensure that His people, who in their early history had no king, would have the opportunity to enjoy independent life with their families on their own agricultural land at least for a time every generation.[62] Their right to a parcel of land and its return to them after a time, if they lost the usage of it, was not based on human economics or politics, but on God's allotment of this property to them.[63]

58 Westbrook, *Property and Family*, 44–46; Westbrook, "Social Justice in the Ancient Near East," 151–56; Bergsma, *The Jubilee*, 22–26. There are two extant texts of such decrees by Ammisaduqa (1646–1626 BC) and Samsuiluna (1749–1712 BC).

59 Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 41.

60 Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 41.

61 Westbrook, *Property and Family*, 45–47; Westbrook, "Social Justice in the Ancient Near East," 156–58; cf. Lefebvre, "Theology and Economics," 35–36. Cf. King Zedekiah's agreement with the people of Jerusalem to proclaim liberty (דְּרוֹר), to the effect that all Hebrew slaves should be freed (Jer 34:8–9).

62 Cf., e.g., Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 41.

63 Extended discussion of other issues concerning the Jubilee, such as the dating of the Lev 25 legislation, whether it was practical or utopian, and whether it was actually observed at any point in ancient Israelite history are beyond the scope of the present article. Regarding the authorship of the Jubilee legislation, Breland points out: "Leviticus 27 offers a powerful argument against the popular position that Leviticus 25 is the invention of post-exilic priests attempting to make a land grab. Why would priests write laws that allowed for land to be redeemed once it was ceded to the control of the priests?" (Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 203). The Israelite Jubilee likely

5. Proclaimed by a trumpet on the Day of Atonement. Exceptionally, the Jubilee year is to begin on the tenth day of a month (the seventh month), which is the Day of Atonement, rather than on the first day of the month. Scholars have suggested several reasons for or implications of the Jubilee commencing on the Day of Atonement:

(1) The trumpet signal for the Jubilee is on the tenth day of the month in order to not confuse it with the trumpet signal on the first day of the month (Lev 23:24).[64] However, this does not explain why the Jubilee signal should come specifically on the Day of Atonement, rather than on another day, such as the second, third, or fourth day of the month.

(2) "A 'holy' year (*wĕqiddaštem*, v. 10) would be initiated only after the sanctuary and, symbolically, the people and land have been purged of their impurities."[65]

(3) The economic release of the Jubilee is "a divine gift flowing from the atonement" made on the Day of Atonement.[66] This atonement provides "release from the bondage of sin as well as the bondage of poverty and indebtedness."[67] However, the Jubilee does not release debts or

originated before the Israelite monarchy because Lev 25 prescribes no role for a king. See Bergsma, *The Jubilee*, 297 for some biblical references to the Jubilee as law that was meant to be practiced. Regarding practicality, suffice it to say that Jeremiah 34 "shows that the 'impracticality' of the instructions in Deut. 15, as well as Lev. 25, was not inherent. These social-justice measures could be implemented if the people chose to unselfishly help their needy kinsmen, as Walter Houston has recognized: 'The impracticality is not a matter of physical impossibility but of motivation'" (Gane, *Old Testament Law*, 293, citing Walter J. Houston, *Contending for Justice: Ideologies and Theologies of Social Justice in the Old Testament*, LHBOTS 428 [London: T&T Clark, 2006], 194).

64 Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2164.

65 Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2164.

66 Lefebvre, "Theology and Economics," 43. Lefebvre maintains that the fact "that the release took place on the Day of Atonement is the key theological anchor for the economic redemptions provided" (Lefebvre, "Theology and Economics," 44).

67 Lefebvre, "Theology and Economics," 45; cf. p. 48; cf. Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 40–41, 150–51; Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East,* Publications of the Perry Foundation for Biblical Research in The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Jerusalem and Minneapolis: Magnes and Fortress, 1995), 208–12. Weinfeld cites an Ugaritic parallel to spiritual release on the Day of Atonement in a ritual ceremony (KTU 1.40) to provide the people of Ugarit, including the king and queen, and foreigners who dwell there, with release (*mšr*, apparently equivalent to Akkadian *mišarum*, which referred to a royal decree of freedom from debts, etc.), i.e., expiation, from their sins (Weinfeld, *Social Jsutice*, 212–14). Milgrom refers to the similar allegorical view of Philo (Philo, *de Congressu*, 107–8): The Day of Atonement "celeb-

necessarily free people from poverty, although the poor who had fallen into "famine servitude" would be released. Nevertheless, the spiritual-economic connection based on the idea of release can be supported by the meaning of the Hebrew Piel of כ-פ-ר (e.g., Lev 4:20, 26, 31; 16:6, 11, 16; commonly translated "make atonement"), which is "effect removal."[68] Such removal/expiation on the Day of Atonement provided moral purification of the people resulting from the purgation of YHWH's sanctuary (v. 30), not initial forgiveness such as YHWH granted at other times (e.g., Lev 4:20, 26, 31).[69]

(4) The pairing of spiritual and physical releases serves as a reminder of maintaining a right relationship with the Lord, their master, who provides for them.[70]

(5) The Jubilee on the Day of Atonement "taught faith in God's providence, a faith that was motivated by the memory of the Exodus redemption."[71]

(6) The remedies for sin on the Day of Atonement and for resulting economic problems at the Jubilee beginning on that day demonstrates that sin corrupts economics, creating imbalance.[72]

(7) The Jubilee on the Day of Atonement, which remedies the curse of sin, "makes Israel long for and look to the day when God will reverse the curse and restore mankind to its proper relationship with the Lord and with the land."[73]

We can suggest (in this and the following paragraphs) a major additional reason that is related to some of the above points and also to ANE practices. The announcement of the Jubilee year on the annual festival of the tenth day of the seventh month with blasts (תְּרוּעָה) of a ram's horn trumpet (שׁוֹפַר; Lev 25:9) parallels that of the annual festival that occurs on the first day of the same month, the Festival of Trumpets. At that time, blasts (תְּרוּעָה), pre-

rates the liberation (*dĕrôr*) of the body and soul" (Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2164).

68 William K. Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 29. The noun כִּפֻּרִים, "atonement," on the "day of atonement" (Lev 25:9) is derived from the same root כ-פ-ר.

69 Roy Gane, Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 233–35, 274–77.

70 Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 151.

71 Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 131.

72 Lefebvre, "Theology and Economics," 49.

73 Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 151.

sumably of such a trumpet (although it is not specified), proclaim a memorial/remembrance (זִכָּרוֹן; 23:24; cf. Num 29:1).

Usage of similar terminology elsewhere indicates that the תְּרוּעָה blasts on the first day of the seventh month would signal remembrance of the Israelites by YHWH, i.e., as a special annual reminder of the divine-human relationship that benefitted God's people.[74] The word תְּרוּעָה can refer either to trumpet blasts or shouts.[75] The function of תְּרוּעָה that fits the context of Num 23:24 is the one expressed by Balaam when he declared regarding God in relation to the Israelites: "He has not beheld misfortune in Jacob, nor has he seen trouble in Israel. The LORD their God is with them, and the shout [תְּרוּעָה] of a king is among them" (Num 23:21 ESV; word in brackets supplied). Here the king is YHWH, who is with His people and acclaimed by their shouts. So it makes sense that the תְּרוּעָה blasts on the first day of the seventh month signal remembrance of the Israelites by YHWH *as their king*.[76]

If so, what could additional תְּרוּעָה blasts ten days later on the Jubilee Day of Atonement signal? If YHWH's kingship already has been commemorated on the first day of the month, could the Day of Atonement have anything more to do with His sovereign rule? Yes. After the coronation of a king, he exercises his authority and demonstrates his character by carrying out justice and rewarding those who are loyal to him while punishing the disloyal.[77]

This is what happened when human ANE kings began their reigns and served as the judges of their people, as evidenced by proclamations of

74 Such תְּרוּעָה blasts could be used as signals for the Israelites in the wilderness to break camp and set out, resuming their journey (Num 10:5-6). They could also be used as war signals (Hiphil of *r-w-'*, verb from the same root as the noun תְּרוּעָה) "so that you may be remembered [Niphal of *z-k-r*] by the LORD your God and be saved from your enemies" (v. 9; word in brackets supplied). Blasts that are not called תְּרוּעָה were to be blown at festivals and beginnings of months over sacrifices as "a reminder [זִכָּרוֹן] of you before your God" (v. 10 ESV; word in brackets supplied). However, the context of Lev 23:24 does not concern setting out on a journey or warfare.

75 See *DCH* 8:677–78.

76 Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 401–2. Milgrom interprets the תְּרוּעָה on the first day of the seventh month as petitioning God for rain during the following agricultural year (Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2018).

77 Breland observes that the trumpet blasts on the first day of the seventh month "recalled Yahweh's theophany at Sinai which was accompanied by the sound of a loud trumpet (Exod 19:13, 16). The Jubilee trumpet continued this Sinai motif" (Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 149). The awesome manner of YHWH's theophany at Mt. Sinai emphasized His sovereignty over His Israelite people, who were accountable for obeying the covenant stipulations that He proclaimed there.

release (see above) and actions toward toward their loyal and disloyal subjects. A striking biblical example of such actions is the commencement of Solomon's reign. After his coronation, Solomon carried out his father's (David's) last will (1 Kgs 2:1–9) by executing Joab and Shimei (vv. 28–46a), and he also executed his brother Adonijah (vv. 22–25) and banished Abiathar the priest (vv. 26–27). Then "the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon" (1 Kgs 2:46b). It is one thing to be proclaimed king and it is another to effectively consolidate power and carry out the sovereign will. This is not automatic; it is a process.[78]

A similar pattern appears in Babylonian religion. During the Babylonian New Year (Akītu) Festival of Spring in the first eleven or twelve days of the month of Nisannu, the first month of the year, a convocation of the city gods of the Babylonian kingdom (represented by their idols or cult symbols) determined that Marduk, the city-god of Babylon, would be supreme and hailed him as their king on day 8. On day 11, there was a second determination of destinies by the gods, of whom Marduk was king, that showed the fate of the land of Babylon and its people during the coming year.[79] So proclamation of divine kingship was followed by a kind of divine judgment.

Paralleling this pattern, Marduk gave the human king the symbolic tablet of destinies at the second determination of destinies and established this king as the supreme ruler of Babylon.[80] After the assembly of gods had proclaimed a good destiny for the human king, his servants pledged their loyalty to him, just as the gods had given their allegiance to Marduk.[81] Textual evidence suggests that when a king's sovereignty was affirmed at the New Year, officials and vassals "praise the king, kiss his feet, roll in dust before him, and having presented gifts to him, abdicate their offices, after which

[78] For comparison between treatment of loyal and disloyal subjects by David and Solomon in 1 Kgs 2 and YHWH's treatment of loyal and disloyal people, as evidenced on the Day of Atonement (see below), see Gane, *Cult and Character*, 344–54.

[79] Julye Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival: Religious Continuity and Royal Legitimation in Mesopotamia*, Gorgias Dissertations 2, Near Eastern Studies 2 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2004), 89–90; cf. Karel van der Toorn, "Form and Function of the New Year Festival in Babylonia and Israel," in *Congress Volume: Leuven, 1989,* ed. J. A. Emerton, VTSup 43 (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 4. For an overall outline of the major events of the festival, see Mark E. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 1993), 438–39. For a more detailed description of the events, as reconstructed from ancient cuneiform texts, see Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival*, 46–106.

[80] Bidmead, The Akitu Festival, 90.

[81] Van der Toorn, "Form and Function," 3; cf. p. 5.

the king, seated on his throne, reappoints them to their offices."[82] So (re-)establishment of human kingship was followed by a kind of judgment in which the king rewarded those who were loyal to him and demonstrated humility.

The Day of Atonement (Lev 16) was Israel's judgment day, when accountability to YHWH's sovereignty was demonstrated. First, YHWH's justice in treatment of His people was vindicated by the ritual purgation of His sanctuary from forgiven sins of His loyal people, for which He bore judicial responsibility, and from rebellious sins of disloyal people, who remained condemned. Second, the Lord's people were to show their humble loyalty to Him by practicing self-denial and abstaining from work, i.e., keeping a sabbath (Lev 16:29, 31; 23:27–32). Those who did this received the benefit of moral purity that was gained for them by the vindication of God as the divine Judge who had forgiven them (Lev 16:30). Those who failed to show loyalty in these ways were condemned (23:29–30).[83]

The Jubilee Day of Atonement expanded on YHWH's role as the divine king and judge of His people. There was a proclamation of liberty that manifested His justice by resetting Israelite society in terms of Israelite ancestral land tenure and the status of disadvantaged Israelites who had lost their freedom. This Jubilee resetting to an earlier ideal state correlates with the resetting of the Lord's sanctuary on the Day of Atonement to its pristine purity at the time of its initial consecration (Lev 8). This is most clearly shown by the stated result of the high priest sprinkling blood seven times on the outer altar on the Day of Atonement: He would thereby "purify it and consecrate [i.e., reconsecrate] it from the physical ritual impurities of the Israelites" (Lev 16:19; trans. Roy E. Gane).

YHWH's authority in returning people to their land and clans would remind all Israelites that He had given them their freedom and land in the first place when He brought them from Egypt to Canaan. The fallow of the land would remind them of the land before they had settled on it and started to work it. These observances would reinforce their memory that He was their redeemer and the ultimate owner of the land, so they were accountable

[82] Simo Parpola, "The Assyrian Cabinet," in *Vom Alten Orient zum Alten Testament. Festschrift für Wolfram Freiherrn von Soden zum 85. Geburtstag am 19. Juni 1993*, AOAT 240, ed. Manfried Dietrich and Oswald Loretz (Kevelaer and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Butzon & Bercker and Neukirchener, 1995), 393, cited by Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival*, 91.

[83] See Gane, *Cult and Character*, 305–23. Compare the rabbinic idea of judgment at the New Year (*Mishnah,* Rosh Hashanah 1:2; *Babylonian Talmud,* Rosh Hashanah 16a–b; *Jerusalem Talmud,* Rosh Hashanah 1:3).

to Him for how they treated each other. As He had freed them, so they should free one another, and those who fell into hard times and lost their freedom could have hope for liberty in the future. As He gave them Sabbath rest, so they should give sabbatical rest to the land.

The Jubilee also expanded on the Day of Atonement test of loyalty to YHWH. There were two requirements for the people on the Day of Atonement: practicing self-denial and keeping a sabbath of rest. For the Jubilee, there were three requirements: observing a sabbatical of rest from agricultural labor and thereby allowing the land to rest, releasing land, and releasing bonded servants. Would the Israelites faithfully keep these commandments, or not?

As mentioned above, the cyclical return of Israelites to their ancestral properties and the fallow of the land would remind them of their past entrance into the land at the beginning of their history with God there. Somewhat analogous to this celebration of renewal by commemorating initial entry were the cyclical Mesopotamian *akītu* festivals, including the annual Babylonian New Year Festival of Spring. These festivals celebrated renewal by reenacting the past mythical entrances of gods into their cities.

In Babylon, for example, the idol of Marduk, accompanied by those of other deities, were conveyed in a spectacular procession to an *akītu* temple outside the city, where they remained for a couple of days and nights. Then they were brought back into the city.[84] Mark Cohen has suggested that the reason for taking gods out of a city to an *akītu* temple was to bring them back in, thereby reenacting the mythological original entrance of the city's chief god (Marduk in this case).[85] Another, complementary interpretation is that the *akītu* house outside a city represented chaos, while the city symbolized order.[86]

Such a Mesopotamian event differed from the Israelite Jubilee in that it took place every year, rather than every half century, and it celebrated the entrance of a deity into a city, rather than God bringing His people into their land. But both the Mesopotamian and Israelite commemorations would powerfully remind people of their relationship to the deity who controlled their dwelling place.

84 Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival*, 94–101.

85 Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars*, 404, 440; Mark E. Cohen, *Festivals and Calendars of the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2015), 400. For celebration of YHWH's entrance into his city, see Ps 24:7–10.

86 Bidmead, *The Akitu Festival*, 118–19.

8. Lack of Divine Need for Human Service

Ancient Near Eastern peoples thought their deities really needed their service, including offerings of food from the land they worked. Therefore, the Hittite Emperor Mursŭili II attempted to persuade the gods to remove a plague from his land for the reason that decimation of their human servants would cause them suffering.[87]

In the old Babylonian epic Atraḫasis, deities became hungry and thirsty when a great flood wiped out the human population. Consequently, they crowded around like flies when they smelled the sacrifice of Atraḫasis after the flood.[88] The relationship between humans and gods was symbiotic.

YHWH instructed the Israelites to build Him a sanctuary (Exod 25:8), but He did not need it as a shelter for Himself (1 Kgs 8:27). Rather, His people needed Him to dwell among them (Exod 33:12–17). He required food offerings (Num 28:2), but He was not dependent on them as His sustenance (Ps 50:12–13). Most of the food offered to Him went up from the outer altar of burnt offering in the form of smoke as a pleasing aroma to Him (e.g., Lev 1:9; cf. Gen 8:20–21), but it did not nourish Him.

The "bread of the Presence" was exceptional in that it was a presentation offering placed on the golden table in the outer apartment of the tabernacle. Nevertheless, the ritual by which the bread was renewed (Lev 24:5–9) showed that the Lord did not really need human food. First, new bread was placed only once per week (v. 8), unlike the twice daily presentation offerings by which non-Israelites fed their gods. Second, and more significantly, the Lord gave all the week-old bread to the priests (v. 9). Third, and most importantly, when the priests received the bread, He received the frankincense that was offered with it as His token portion (v. 7).[89] This showed that the frankincense was all he utilized; He did not in some sense consume the bread first and then assign it to the priests.[90]

The twelve loaves of the "bread of the Presence" represented a "permanent covenant" between God and the Israelite tribes, and it was changed every Sabbath (Lev 24:5–6, 8). The Sabbath celebrated God's Creatorship (Gen 2:2–3; Exod 20:9–11; 31:16–17) and also represented the covenant bet-

87 "Plague Prayers of Mursŭili II," trans. Gary Beckman (*COS* 1.60:159).

88 W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-Ḫasīs: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1969, repr. 1999), 98–99 (Atra-Ḫasīs III v 30–36). Cf. Gen 8:20–21, where YHWH smells Noah's sacrifice, but there is no indication that the deity is hungry.

89 Presumably by a priest burning the frankincense (cf. Lev 2:2, 9, 16; 6:15 [Hebrew v. 8]).

90 Roy Gane, "'Bread of the Presence' and Creator-in-Residence," *VT* 42 (1992): 179–203.

ween God and Israel (Exod 31:16). So the token offering of bread, which was basic food, not only denied that the Lord needed humans to feed Him; it taught exactly the opposite: He was the Creator-in-Residence, who promised to provide food for His covenant people in the land that He was giving them.[91] His relationship with them was not symbiotic. Rather, they were totally dependent on His care.

9. Consequences of Divine Displeasure Affecting Land

In the ancient Near Eastern world-view, all went well as long as a deity kept providing for his/her land so that the humans who worked it prospered and reciprocated by serving the god(dess). However, the dynamic balance could be upset if either the divine or the human party failed to perform properly. This could precipitate dire consequences for the land and its people.
A number of "disappearing god texts" exemplify such problems with Hittite deities.[92] One Hittite text describes how agricultural fertility languished when Telipinu, a Storm-god, became angry and vacated his post of responsibility for the land.[93]

The "Plague Prayers of Mursŭili II" identify human bloodshed as the cause of an epidemic in the land of the Hittites, by which the gods caused many of its people to perish. Mursŭili, a Hittite emperor, believed that the devastating plague was punishment for a wrongful killing committed by his father, Šuppiluliuma I, and others. Mursŭili says that earlier, during the reign of Šuppiluliuma, the land of Ḫatti prospered.

> [Humans], cows, and sheep became numerous in his time…. But later you came, O gods, [my lords], and have now taken vengeance on my father for this affair of Tudḫaliya the Younger. My father [died] because of the blood of Tudḫaliya. And the princes, the noblemen, the commanders of the thousands, and the officers who went over [to my father] also

91 Roy Gane, "Bread of the Presence," 179–203.

92 "In the Hittite view, the operation of the universe required that each deity and human conscientiously perform his or her proper function within the whole. Calamity manifested in some sector of the cosmos was an indication that the god or goddess responsible for it had become angry and had abandoned his or her post" (introduction to "The Wrath of Telipinu" by Gary Beckman [*COS* 1.57:151]).

93 "The Wrath of Telipinu," trans. Gary Beckman (*COS* 1.57:151).

> died because of [thisaffair]. This same affair also affected the (entire) and of Ḫatti, and [Ḫatti] began to perish because of [this] affair.[94]

In the Pentateuch, YHWH's covenant stipulations clearly specified what His Israelite people were to do in order to maintain a healthy relationship with Him so that He would bless them in the land that He ruled. His laws comprised a wholistic, integrated system.[95] Persistent departure from any part of this system by the Israelites could build up momentum that would have negative consequences for the land and the people's relationship to it.

Some laws in Leviticus concern *physical ritual* impurities originating from carcasses, genital flows, and scaly skin disease (chaps. 12–15; cf. 11:24–28, 31–40; 21:1–4, 11; Num 19, etc.), which were not to defile the holy sphere of God centered at the sanctuary (Lev 15:31; cf. Num 5:1–4). These could be remedied by ritual means. However, the latter part of Leviticus, commonly called the "Holiness Code" (chap. 17 on), warns against *moral* defilement of the holy land by transgressions such as sexual immorality and idolatry. Those who committed them could not receive expiation through ritual, but were subject to punishment by their human community and/or God Himself (Lev 18, 20; cf. Num 35:30–34).[96] Furthermore, defilement of the land would ultimately lead to exile.[97] Leviticus 18 warns that if God's people would defile the land by violating the prohibitions against sexual immorality and idolatrous Molech worship in this chapter, the land would vomit them out "just as it vomited out the nations that were before you" (v. 28; cf. 20:22–24).[98]

In Num 35, murder also defiles the land where the Lord dwells:

> You may not pollute the land in which you live, for the blood pollutes the land. There can be no recovery for the land from the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. You will not make

[94] "Plague Prayers of Mursŭili II," *COS* 1.60:156–57.

[95] Cf. Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 209–10 regarding the wholistic approach to physical health in pentateuchal law.

[96] The ritual in Deut 21:1–9 absolves the community of responsibility for an unsolved murder, but this does not benefit the murderer.

[97] On differences between remediable ritual impurities and irremediable moral impurities, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, AB 3A (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1326; Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), especially 21–31; Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2005), 139–53.

[98] On the reason for inclusion of Molech worship here (v. 21) along with sexual immorality, see Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers*, 321.

> the land in which you live unclean, the land in the middle of which I reside, for I the Lord reside among the Israelites (vv. 33–34).[99]

The blessings and curses in Lev 26 outline trajectories resulting from loyal obedience to the Lord's covenant stipulations versus disloyal disobedience. The chapter is introduced by reiteration of some crucial principles: prohibition of idolatry and the requirements to keep the Lord's sabbaths and reverence His sanctuary (vv. 1–2). His sabbaths, which acknowledge His lordship over the people and land, would primarily refer to the weekly Sabbath (repeating 19:30), but in the context of chapter 26 could also extend to the septennial sabbaths for the land (cf. Lev 25:1–8).[100]

The blessings in Lev 26:3–13 for those who obeyed God, which we mentioned earlier, have a lot to do with the land. So do the curses for the disobedient (vv. 14–39). Possessing God's gift of territory was not enough; His people needed His care of the land (Deut 11:12), including His conditional blessing of rains at proper times that He provided, for its agricultural productivity so that they could thrive and survive (vv. 10–15; cf. Lev 26:4–5). "The abundance and fruitfulness of the land is not to be taken for granted but is always to be a source of thanksgiving to God. It is a gift, not a given."[101]

In Lev 26, the Lord warns that among other punishments, "I will destroy your prideful power. I will turn your sky to iron and your land to bronze so that your strength will be spent for no reason: your land will not produce its yield, and the trees of the land won't produce their fruit" (vv. 19–20). Thus, the sky would block any rain from reaching earth, so that the land would dry up and become as hard as metal.[102]

The curses of Lev 26 escalate in severity, culminating in exile from the land, especially for sins of idolatry and other forms of false worship (vv. 30–

[99] According to Deut 21:22–23, leaving the corpse of a criminal exposed (thereby shamed and shown to be cursed by God by hanging his body up on a tree after he is executed) overnight also defiles the land.

[100] Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2278, 2285.

[101] Douglas J. Moo and Jonathan A. Moo, *Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World*, Biblical Theology for Life (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 91.

[102] Deuteronomy 28:23 reverses the metals, with heavens as bronze and earth as iron. Similarly, curses in the succession treaty of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon warn that the gods will "make your ground like iron (so that) nothing can sprout from it. Just as rain does not fall from a brazen heaven so may rain and dew not come upon your fields and meadows" (S. Parpola and K. Watanabe, eds., *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* [Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988], 51).

31) and failure to observe the legislation regarding the land that is strategically placed in the preceding chapter (chap. 25).[103] The Lord serves notice:

> I will personally devastate the land so much that your enemies who resettle it will be astonished by it. I will scatter you among the nations. I will unsheathe my sword against you. Your land will be devastated and your cities will be ruins. At that time, while it is devastated and you are in enemy territory, the land will enjoy its sabbaths. At that time, the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. During the whole time it is devastated, it will have the rest it didn't have during the sabbaths you lived in it (Lev 26:32–35).

Thus, "If the people deplete the land by failing to grant its sabbatical respites, they will be deleted from it. It is as if the exhausted land heaves a mighty sigh of relief and settles down to a long nap to recover from its sleep deficit."[104]

Lest anyone suppose that God didn't mean what He said in Lev 26, the third to last verse in the Hebrew Bible, 2 Chr 36:21, interprets the Babylonian exile as fulfillment of the curse in Lev 26: "The land finally enjoyed [verb רצה] its sabbath rest. For as long as it lay empty, it rested, until seventy years were completed."[105] Due to the fact that the Israelites had not observed

[103] On juxtaposition of the two chapters to form the climax of the "Holiness Code," see Wright, *God's People*, 149–51.

[104] Gane, Leviticus, Numbers, 454.

[105] Cf. Jer 25:8–12; 29:10. NJPS translates 2 Chr 36:21: "until the land paid back [verb רצה] its sabbaths." However, NJPS renders the same verb רצה in Lev 26:34, which 2 Chr 36:21 quotes, as "shall … make up for." Gary A. Anderson maintains the interpretation of the verb רצה as "repay/repaid" in both verses (Gary A. Anderson, *Sin: A History* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009], 78; cf. Anderson's discussion of רצה in Isa 40:2 in "How Does Almsgiving Purge Sins?" in *Hebrew in the Second Temple Period: The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and of Other Contemporary Sources*, ed. Steven E. Fassberg, Moshe Bar-Asher, and Ruth A. Clements, STDJ 108 [Leiden: Brill, 2013], 5–6). Both "enjoy/take pleasure in" and "repay/restore" are possible meanings of the verb (or verbs from two homophonous roots) רצה. See Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm, eds., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, trans. and ed. under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill: 1994–1999) 3:1281–82; David J. A. Clines, ed., *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 9 vols. (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 1993–2014) 7:540–41; cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2323, referring to the meanings "appease," "complete," and "accept" in payment. However, it seems clear that in Lev 26:34 and 2 Chr 36:21, the land is the beneficiary of its sabbath rest (as animals and humans benefit from rest in Exod 23:12), with the resting of the land emphasized by repetition in Lev 26:35. Thus, the land enjoys (in the sense of benefitting from) its sabbaths, rather than repaying them (cf. Lev 26:34 LXX; 2 Chr 36:21,

sabbatical years implies that they also have neglected the related Jubilee years.[106]

Why would sabbatical years of the land, an ecological observance, be so crucial? As pointed out above, these years were holy time, just as weekly Sabbath days were holy time. By allowing the land to rest, God's people would acknowledge His lordship as its Creator and Redeemer, just as weekly Sabbath rest from work reminded them that they belonged to Him, their Creator and Redeemer (Exod 20:1–2, 8–11; 31:12–17; Deut 5:12–15). If they failed to observe the cyclical fallow years that the Lord required of them as His tenants, they would commit sacrilege by profaning holy time and would insult God by taking the land for granted as if His lordship did not exist and they were its sole owners. Lacking a sense of obligation to God, they would exploit it and live on it as they pleased. The Lord's final remedy for such insubordination would be exile from the land.

Eugene Carpenter aptly summarizes:

> Ecology was a theological issue in Israel, and not to take it seriously was a theological failure, a sin against the Creator/Redeemer, and derivatively a sin against the environment itself, which God created to "serve" humankind. When these rules concerning the land were not observed, the land did not fulfill its ecological function and it could not fully render its blessings on the people.[107]

There was another factor. Keeping sabbatical years required the Israelites to have faith that God would provide for them every seventh year, and even more at the Jubilee year (see above). If they lacked this faith, they could not permanently stay in the land. The land was for people of faith.

10. Cessation of Divine Displeasure Affecting Land

A common ancient Near Eastern remedy for divine displeasure was performance of rituals. This approach worked with Telipinu, who subsequently returned home and paid attention to his land.[108] However, the plague during the reign of Mursŭili II persisted despite rituals to expiate bloodshed that were performed by his father and also by himself, and despite the fact

and Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27*, 2323 on Lev 26:34: "the *justice* of God decrees that Israel must repay the land for its lost sabbaticals" [emphasis original]).

106 Breland, "The Year of the Lord's Favor," 214.

107 Carpenter, *Exodus 19–40*, 120 on Exod 23:10–11.

108 "The Wrath of Telipinu," *COS* 1.57:152–3.

that the perpetrators of the crime were all dead. Therefore, the emperor was motivated to plead with the gods through prayer, in which he tried to reason with them and promised additional ritual, "with reparation and propitiatory gift on behalf of the land."[109]

An Israelite acquainted with YHWH's Torah would not be surprised that Mursŭili II had a frustrating experience. In pentateuchal law, no rituals, gifts, or ransom could expiate for murder, which defiled the land (see above). According to Num 35:33, only the execution of the murderer for his crime purges the land. This explains why there was a three-year famine in the land of Israel during the reign of David because of the ethnic cleansing that King Saul had carried out against the Gibeonites (2 Sam 21:1–2). Saul was already dead. However, like the father of Mursŭili, he had not been executed for murder. Therefore, the effect of his crime outlived him, so that God made punishment fall on the land, which afflicted its inhabitants. The deity connected the moral and natural domains, so that a cause in the former had an effect in the latter. Only the deaths of some of Saul's descendants, who continued his identity, could suffice to purge the land (vv. 3–10, 13). After that, "God responded to prayers for the land" (v. 14).[110]

In Lev 26, no ritual could free the Israelites from the national punishment of exile. Nevertheless, the Lord promises that if His exiled people would confess their iniquity and that of their fathers, humbling themselves and accepting their guilt, He would remember His covenant with their ancestors, and He would remember the land (vv. 40–42). The remedy of last resort was simply amazing grace.

Why was the Lord so determined to gain the loyalty of Israel? He intended to bless the community of Abraham's descendants in their land as they accepted and implemented divine principles that were for their benefit (Deut 10:12–13) and that reflected His holy character (Lev 19:2). In this way, He would reveal the comprehensive spiritual, social, physical, and economic advantages of His rule so that other peoples would choose to follow Him and receive His blessings as well (cf. Gen 12:2–3; 22:17–18; Deut 4:6–8). In this sense, the purpose of all His laws was missiological.

11. Conclusion

Texts from the ANE indicate symbiotic relationships between deities,

[109] "Plague Prayers of Mursûili II," *COS* 1.60:157.

[110] Cf. Carrie Rhodes, "Theodicy and Execution for Expiation in 2 Samuel 21:1–14" (MA thesis, Andrews University, 2010).

people, and land. A deity could rule a land and its inhabitants, who worked the land, benefited from its fertility, and gave offerings to the deity. This dynamic balance could be upset if the deity did not provide fertility for some reason, such as the possibility that human actions had offended him/her.

Leviticus attests to a similar conceptual framework, but with important modifications. First, although YHWH required offerings, He was not dependent on them as His sustenance. Second, the Lord tightened connections between Himself and His people and land, which was holy (see above).

The Israelites were accountable to the Lord for maintaining the holiness of their land, which was affected by their physical treatment of it and lifestyle on it. Physical treatment was to include allowing the land to rest during holy sabbatical and jubilee years. "Thus, the environment itself should not be overworked and abused, but rather periodically given the opportunity to glorify God by returning to a state of restful communion."[111] Holy lifestyle required obedience to the Lord's commands, which expressed principles in radical contrast to those followed by the former inhabitants of Canaan. If the Israelites failed to treat the land as holy or if they defiled it by unholy conduct, they would jeopardize the divine blessing of its productivity for their benefit or even their right to use it at all.

YHWH is the Creator of all, so everything that human beings "own," including land and all that comes from it, is ultimately a gift from Him (cf. Deut 8:18). In this sense, the whole world is holy land. Consequently, God's people should act responsibly with the resources that He has given them to manage, even if they do not live in the land of Israel.[112]

Human beings should show love for God by emulating His love for and care of His creation.[113] We should consider long-term effects on human and non-human forms of life that the Lord has made, rather than exploiting land and its resources for their own benefit even if this causes harm to the environment that they share with all living things.[114] Instead of seeing their good

[111] Bergsma, "The Year of Jubilee," 162.

[112] The New Testament no longer treats the land of Israel as holy territory in the sense of continuing to play a special theological role in God's redemptive purpose. This purpose is achieved in Christ, who binds all believers in Him and in fellowship (involving social and economic responsibilities) with each other within His new covenant (Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 187–98).

[113] Jay Sklar, *Leviticus: The Lord's Holy People Living Out His Holy Character*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2023), 685–86.

[114] Stephen Dunbar, L. James Gibson, and Humberto M. Rasi, eds., *Entrusted: Christians*

management as entitling them to hoard for themselves (compare Luke 12:15–21), God's people should view the divinely enabled blessings of their success as an opportunity and responsibility to share with others, thereby emulating God's justice and mercy, so that they too can survive and enjoy independent living.[115]

Leviticus 25 repeatedly refers to a needy person as "your brother" (vv. 25, 35–36, 39, 47), i.e., fellow Israelite, thereby emphasizing that such an individual is not merely an "other" person, but one with whom there is a bond of mutuality and in whom there should be vested interest. What is good for your brother is good for you because you belong together and share life within the same group, the well-being of which impacts you, so investing in your brother is investing not only in your brother, but also in yourself (cf. Lev 19:18b—"you shall love your neighbor as yourself").[116] This does not mean that we are to act from selfish self-interest, but it is helpful additional motivation to do the right thing.

Several elements of the biblical sabbatical and Jubilee years are well attested in the ancient Near East. These include fallow periods, and releases of land and bonded workers by royal decrees. However, unlike the Jubilee, the ANE releases were not established by deities or cyclical.

We have found that connections between the annual Israelite Day of Atonement and the 50th year Jubilee, which was to commence on the Day of Atonement, shed light on both the Day of Atonement and the Jubilee.

and Environmental Care (Mexico: Adventus, International University Publishers, 2013). On sustainability and restraint in the use of land and its resources, see Moo and Moo, *Creation Care*, 93–95.

115 Cf. Harbin, "Jubilee and Social Justice," 699; Gane, *Old Testament Law*, 282–87, 290–95, 307; Roy E. Gane, "Social Justice," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Law*, ed. Pamela Barmash (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 22–27. Regarding types of Jubilee benefits applicable to modern life, recognizing that "the exact provisions of the Jubilee are not appropriate to a modern economy and society no longer based on subsistence agriculture," see Bergsma, "The Year of Jubilee," 162–64. Here Bergsma observes that two kinds of benefits of the Jubilee are widely recognized today: the right to freedom from oppressive working conditions and concern for the environment. However, "concern for the integrity and identity of the extended family is sorely neglected" (Bergsma, "The Year of Jubilee," 163). See Sklar, *Leviticus*, 707 on economic and social ways in which the Jubilee laws were designed to strengthen families, including extended families. On economic, social, and theological Jubilee principles and their modern application, see also Wright's "paradigmatic" interpretation of the Jubilee (Wright, *Old Testament Ethics*, 207–9).

116 Lev 19:34 extends this principle to the non-Israelite immigrant, who is one's neighbor in the broader sense of a fellow human being (cf. Luke 10:29–37).

Both of these were times of renewal for resetting the covenant relationship between YHWH and His Israelite people to an ideal state, with vindication for YHWH and moral purity for the people on the annual Day of Atonement and additional restoration of land and liberty on the ultimate Day of Atonement at the Jubilee. Both the Day of Atonement and the Jubilee were times of judgment when YHWH demonstrated His justice and tested the loyalty of the Israelites, thereby exercising His supreme sovereignty over His holy people and their holy land for the continuation of their well-being.[117]

[117] This essay has significant implications for modern practical applications and eschatology, but exploration of these are beyond the scope of this study.

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A History of Christian Attitudes Toward Just War Theory and Combatancy

NICHOLAS P. MILLER
Andrews University, MICHIGAN
Washington Adventist University, MARYLAND

Abstract

The basic premise of Christian just war theory, a development of just war theory from the ancient world, is that, in a fallen world, war is sometimes necessary to protect innocent people or to defend against aggression. It is held, however, that such war should be undertaken only as a last resort and with a clear and just *cause*. The theory also sets out guidelines for the *conduct* of war, emphasizing the need to minimize harm to non-combatants and to avoid the use of excessive force. The Scriptural backgrounds of this theory are reviewed, then the history of the church is examined, to look at the waxing and waning of just war theory, and its interaction with other approaches, such as pacifism, conscientious objection, and conscientious cooperation. It is argued that, while the Christian ideal is one of peace-making and reconciliation, in this fallen world, the use of force is sometimes necessary to restrain evil and protect the innocent. Christians make their contributions best by working for peace and healing, and should do so at every opportunity. But Scripture teaches that God has ordained the state as His minister to use force to protect good and restrain evil. Christian citizens may at times find themselves needing to speak and witness to, and at certain times act in support of, the appropriate and just use of that force.

Keywords: Christian just war theory, pacifism, conscientious objection, war and peace, crusade, holy war, defensive war

1. Introduction to Christian Just War Theory

Just war theory is a set of principles and criteria used to determine whether a war is morally justifiable. As a theory and practice, it pre-exists Christianity, having its roots in Greek, Roman, and Hebraic thought. In the West, however, just war thought comes as modified and mediated through a variety of Christian thinkers, scholars, and jurists. After the time of Constantine in the fourth century, Christians began to have ongoing influence in state circles and began to think deliberately about the morality of war. In the fourth and fifth centuries AD, Ambrose of Milan and Augustine of Hippo sought to reconcile the principles of Christian morality with the realities of warfare. Theologians after Augustine developed the theory, including Thomas Aquinas, Hugo Grotius, and, in the modern world, Reinhold Niebuhr. More recent expressions of just war theory include the United Nations Charter, which outlines the principles of the use of force in international relations, and various international treaties and conventions, all of which have, to some degree, been influenced by this history of religious thought.

The basic premise of Christian just war theory is that, in a fallen world, war is sometimes necessary to protect innocent people or to defend against aggression, but that it should be undertaken only as a last resort and with a clear and just *cause*. The theory also sets out guidelines for the *conduct* of war, emphasizing the need to minimize harm to non-combatants and to avoid the use of excessive force.

Key elements of Christian just war theory generally include some version of the following elements:[1]

1. Just cause: A war must be fought for a just cause, such as defending against an aggressor or protecting innocent people from harm.
2. Legitimate authority: A war must be declared by a legitimate authority, such as a government or an international organization.
3. Right intention: A war must be fought with the intention of achieving a just and peaceful outcome, rather than for selfish or malicious reasons.
4. Probability of success: A war must have a reasonable chance of success in achieving its goals, in order to avoid unnecessary loss of life and resources.

[1] James Turner Johnson, *Can Modern War Be Just?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 18–29.

5. Proportionality: The harm caused by a war must be proportional to the good that is being achieved, in order to avoid excessive or unnecessary destruction.
6. Discrimination: Combatants must distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, and take care to minimize harm to non-combatants.

Some have argued, especially Protestants in the pacifist or peace-church tradition, that just war theory is a product of post-Constantinian theological reflection made necessary by the shift of the morphing of Christianity into the civil empire of Christendom. As such, they argue that it is a product of heretical Christianity rather than an expression of the genuine thing. True Christians and Christianity, they argue, are fully non-violent and pacifist.

As we write this, the complexities of Christians and the question of the just war concept are being exhibited in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Both countries are ostensibly Christian in national identity. Both have expressed moral and even Christian reasons for their role in the conflict. The leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church has essentially blessed the invasion as a kind of holy war against the liberalism and secularism of the West—sentiments frequently echoed by Vladimir Putin, the Russian president. Putin views himself as something of a successor of St. Vladimir, the ruler of Rus, who is said to have founded the Russian Orthodox Church in 988 AD. For their part, the Ukrainian Orthodox have separated themselves from the Russian Orthodox Church, with more than 400 Ukrainian clerics calling for church leaders in Ukraine to declare the pro-war views of the Russian patriarch as heresy. Ukrainian president Volodymyr has a Jewish identity and frequently casts the war in moral terms. Despite their claims, it is hard to believe that, at an objective level, both sides to the conflict are truly in a position of justice, whatever their subjective views might be.[2]

To those in the pacifist tradition, this picture of competing moral and spiritual claims is the expected outcome of any attempt to invoke just war theory. Such efforts, they argue, will merely lead religious groups to wrap their patriotic and national allegiances in the sanctity of religion. This will result, it is asserted, to terrible crimes in the name of religion and schisms within bodies of faith that straddle conflicting countries. If this picture is true, then what use is just war theory? It would be better to leave any moral

[2] The religious views and divide in the Orthodox Church over the Ukrainian war can be found here: https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/18/world/europe/ukraine-war-russian-orthodox-church.html.

justification of violence alone and seek only to promote peace. Surely, this is the only appropriate role, it is argued, for those that claim to be followers and disciples of the Prince of Peace.

This argument assumes that the Bible teaches, at least for Christians, the complete abstention from violence, direct and indirect. This position of non-violence is generally known as pacifism. Some pacifists will allow that the secular state may use force to restrain and punish evil, but Christians should not participate in such efforts. In addition to pacifist and just war positions, another approach to war considered by Christian thinkers is that of the holy war or crusade, where the war is directed and overseen by command of God. Fallen into disfavor in modern times, it was a position of some influence during the middle ages, that saw a series of "Christian" crusades to the middle east and Jerusalem.

2. Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace

As Yale historian Roland Bainton puts it, "broadly speaking, three attitudes to war and peace were to appear in the Christian ethic: pacifism, just war, and the crusade." He then goes on to assert that these positions "chronologically … emerged in just this order" within the church.[3] Bainton's categories expresss the Christian ethic in terms of a corporate view of the state and not necessarily that of the individual Christian. It is possible to think of individual Christians as acknowledging the correctness of one or more of these categories, for instance, that the state may engage in just war, yet to view themselves as holding personally to a different view, e.g., pacifism.

In addition to the three corporate positions set out above, it is possible to see three personal ethical positions held by many Christians: pacifism/non-cooperative conscientious objection, combatancy (at least insofar as a war is just), and conscientious, non-combatant cooperation. The last would involve a willingness to serve one's country in non-combat roles but in positions supporting and aiding those in combatant roles. This could include service as a medic, supply officer, or engineer, or perhaps to participate as an experimental subject in the testing of chemical or biological weapon materials.[4]

[3] Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960), 14–15.

[4] Zoltan Szallos-Farkas, "Military Service and Just War: An Historical Overview," in Frank Hasel, Barna Magyarosi, and Stefan Höschele, eds., *Adventists and Military Service* (Madrid: Safeliz, 2019), 116; and on participation in testing, something Adventists did in the post-World War II United States, see chapter 12 by Michael F. Younker in

The pacifist insists that the only position fully consistent with the teachings of Christ would be that of non-cooperative conscientious objection.[5] There is certainly some evidence to support this view, ranging from the teachings of Christ on peace, to the attitude and teachings of the early church, which contain some strong expositions on the desirability of pacifism.

It also seems true that the church only began promoting military involvement as a public good for Christians starting with the reign of Constantine—when Christianity was made a formal part of the Roman Empire. Once it was part of the political framework of society, Christian leaders had to adapt the church's theology, it is argued, to allow the empire to defend itself from its enemies. Now that the civil leaders were "Christians," at least of some sort, surely it was acceptable for Christian members to participate under their oversight in the armed forces.

This embrace of just war, especially as articulated by Augustine, later morphed into the promotion of holy war, as seen in the Crusades. Such wars were where Christian leaders and soldiers could now embark on aggressive wars to fulfill the will of God, including spreading the church of Christ in the Holy Land. And thus is completed, the argument goes, the descent and fall of the church from its primitive, peaceful spiritual prosperity, to the fallen harlot who works with the dragon to use civil coercion to advance its spiritual agenda.[6]

This story creates an attractive narrative, and there are true elements within it. However, historical evidence suggests that it is not the whole story. Indeed, it overlooks important factors that are needed to create a balanced and coherent approach by Christians today to the state and the use of force. In our discussion, we will take into account both the three corporate approaches to war—pacifism, just war, and crusade—as well as the individual categories—pacifism, combatancy, and conscientious cooperation—

the same volume.

5 Indeed, this is the position that appears to have been taken by many of the contributors to and editors of the volume *Adventists and Military Service*, cited in the previous footnote.

6 This narrative is most robustly promoted by theologians and historians in the anabaptist, pacifist tradition, such as John Howard Yoder in his *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009), 42–57. But some Adventists, including a curious coalition of progressives and conservatives, have also been proposing this position in recent years, including in the *Adventists and Military Service* book in footnote 4, as well as in Barry W. Bussey, ed., *Should I Fight? Essays on Conscientious Objection and the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Belleville, Ontario: Guardian Books, 2011).

where appropriate. These categories are related and overlap but need to be distinguished in certain places.

3. Biblical Backgrounds—War and the Use of Force in the Bible

If one is persuaded that the Bible forbids all use of deadly force, except by direct command of God, then the just war discussion is over before it can even begin. Likewise, if Christ brought into being an ethic that forbids believers from any use of force or violence, then there can be no Christian theory of just war. All use of force, by definition, must be wrong and thus unjust. What follows is a brief overview of a biblically conservative reading of Scripture that allowed biblically committed believers throughout history to support the use of force in certain circumstances.

3.1 Old Testament Roots: Just War Woots in the Moral Government of God

3.2.1 Thou Shalt not Kill—Exodus 20:13

The first scriptural text to deal with killing is not the earliest, but is the most famous and, thus the most influential.[7] Many Christians believe that the Sixth Commandment, read straightforwardly and literally, forbids the killing of any human under any circumstances. What can be clearer, they argue, than "Thou shalt not kill" (Exod 20:13)?[8] But what most of these Christians overlook is that underlying the word kill found in English translations, like the King James Version, is the Hebrew verb רצח (*rṣḥ*). This word is used consistently throughout the Bible for unlawful killings, such as murder, manslaughter, and even accidental killings (Num 35:11; Judg 20:4; Hos 6:9).

However, *rṣḥ* is not the term used in another category of killings that might be called lawful or justified killings. These would include at least some killings in war, capital punishment carried out by the community, sacrifices commanded by God, or actions taken in self-defense (Gen 22:10; Num 31:17). These use a variety of other words, including שחט (*šḥt*)—used to describe Abraham's intended slaying of Isaac (Gen 22:10)—but not *rṣḥ*. This distinction helps make some sense of Abraham's apparently impossible dilemma with Isaac. As difficult as it was, he was asked to commit the ritual

[7] See the chapter by Jiří Moskala, in Hasel, Magyarosi, and Höschele, *Adventists and Military Service*, chapter 1.

[8] All biblical quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from the King James Version.

sacrifice of *šḥt*, but not asked to violate God's other command against committing the murder of *rṣḥ*.

There are words used as catch-all phrases that include both lawful and unlawful killings, such as הרג (*hrg*). If the Sixth Commandment was intended to outlaw all killings of persons, then one of these words would have been more appropriately used. The King James Version use of "kill" is thus not the best translation of Exodus. Other versions get closer to the real meaning with "murder," such as the English Standard Version, the New International Version, and the New King James Version. Even this does not capture the full meaning of the text, as *rṣḥ* also includes reckless behavior that endangers the lives of others, even if death is not intended. The western legal concept and word "manslaughter" would capture these concepts. "Thou shalt not act in a way to endanger or threaten innocent human life" is perhaps a more accurate, though lengthier way of saying it.

3.2.2 God's Moral Government and Divine Killings

This verbal distinction between the unlawful killings of *rṣḥ* and the other kinds of killings that are not absolutely forbidden is helpful in understanding God's role in killings throughout the Bible, and in the final judgment. If the Sixth Commandment applies to all killings, then why is God exempt from it? Adventists teach that the law is as sacred as God Himself, because it is an expression of who He is, the principles of His character expressed in words. If this is so, how can God violate it? Some attempt to avoid this conundrum by saying that God does not kill, that sin destroys itself in the end. But this argument does not answer the interim deaths and killings that the Bible depicts God as carrying out in biblical history, such as in the story of the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, or the plagues of Egypt.

Again, it is not safe to say, as some do, that, as God created life, He can take it. Such an argument would allow God to take it for any purpose, reason, or no reason. But the Bible does not portray God as acting in this way. To the contrary, Abraham's famous bargaining with God over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah shows that Abraham believed that God would, and should, only destroy and use violence if it was justified by principles of righteousness and justice.

As he began his famous bargaining with God over saving the cities for the sake of the righteous in them, Abraham asked, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" (Gen 18:25). He did not have the view of God, often promoted by the Calvinists, that whatever God might choose to do is just, merely because He is God. Rather, Abraham argued that God could

not, should not, use force and violence without proper justification. God was the creator and ruler of the Universe, yes; but His was a government governed by moral principles that could be discerned, appreciated, and even argued for by human beings.

Placing God under the principles of righteousness and justice of His own nature had the effect of both elevating and confining human action. Elevating it, in that humans could be expected to also approach questions of life and death with the principles of justice and righteousness that God uses. But confining it, by preventing arbitrary and capricious use of force. Might simply does not make right, but might must be directed by right.

It was this philosophy that directed Abraham to come to the aid of his captured nephew Lot and his neighbors in launching an armed rescue mission to free them from local chieftains who had launched a war against the king of Sodom (Gen 14:1–16).

In commenting on this foray, where Abraham "smote … and pursued" the enemy, and "the king of Elam was slain," Ellen G. White wrote that Abraham had been a man of peace, shunning strife as much as possible. But in rescuing Lot, and smiting his captors, "Abraham had not only performed a great service for the country but had proved himself a man of valor. It was seen that righteousness is not cowardice, and that Abraham's religion made him courageous in maintaining the right and defending the oppressed."[9]

Abraham's righteous use of force to rescue and protect the innocent is only one in a number of incidents in which God approves of the use of force by His people in the Old Testament. Some attempt to limit the influence of these by positing that they were carried out under a theocracy by the direct command of God, and can find no parallel since the end of Israel's theocracy. But this view is only part of the story, and does not take into account the general legal standards for the use of force that Moses communicated to the people.

In Deuteronomy, seeking out whether an entire Israelite city had apostatized and gone after other gods, God instructed that "you shall inquire and make search and ask diligently." If it is determined after this investigation that the charges are true, then "you shall surely put the inhabitants of that city to the sword" (Deut 13:14–15). Similarly, in the case of the killer who fled to the city of refuge to escape retribution, there would need to be a trial where it was decided if the death was accidental or purposeful. If accidental, the accused would live in the city till the death of the high priest,

[9] Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1890), 134.

and then could return home. If purposeful, however, he would be executed as a murdered. It was "the congregation" who would "judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood" (Num 35:24). An accused murdered could only be executed "on the evidence of witnesses," of which there must be two or more (Num 35:30).

If all use of the sword was only by direct command of God, the Israelites would not have needed general injunctions such as those discussed above. We know that there were a number of executions and killings where there is no hint of a special command of God, but neither is there any indication that the killing was wrong or problematic (see, for instance, 2 Sam 4:9–12; 1 Kgs 2:31–34). Also, even so-called holy wars typically had what we would call moral, or ethical, or even legal justification. The Deut 13 passage discussed above above envisioned a kind of holy war, punishing those that went after other gods, but would only be pursued after careful investigation and proof of the rebellion.

3.2.3 Holy Wars and Civil Wrongs

Some influential commentators on war and peace have proposed that the Old Testament "holy wars" of Israel needed no other justification than the command of God, and that these then served as the basis for "holy wars" during the Christian era, such as those of Constantine and during the era of the Crusades. This view suggests that "holy wars" have no other justification than the command of God, whose command alone justifies the violence and death of war.[10] These views tend to overlook the fact that while the OT wars may have been commanded by God, they were not without a human, moral, justificatory basis.

As God explains in Lev 18, "Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out from before you; And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land vomiteth out her inhabitants." (18:24–25). The sins listed in Leviticus include widespread sexual immorality, violence, and even child sacrifice. The civil nature of these wrongs is highlighted by the fact that God enjoins on Israel that not only must the children of Israel not do these wrongs, but also the strangers sojourning among them (Lev 18:26).

So yes, holy wars were initiated at the command of God, but not just over spiritual matters, but over genuine civil wrongs and immoralities that

[10] Yoder, *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, 105–12; Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace*, 44–48.

harmed others, such as Abraham's attack on the kings of Sodom (Gen 14:8–17), and the attack by the Israelite tribes on Benjamin for failing to bring the murderers of the concubine to justice (Judg 20:4–20). Some of the Old Testament wars were not perhaps "just" in the sense that a nation could justify them purely on grounds of national interest or defense. Yet they were "just" in view of bringing punishment and limitation on unjust acts by certain tribes or groups, against people that threatened, or even breached, the peace and safety of their own or surrounding communities. This proportionate and targeted punishment of unjust acts causing signficiant temporal harms and wrongs to life, liberty or property is distinguished from Crusade-like holy wars, which would broadly target groups for heresies, false worship, and other spiritual wrongs.

3.3 New Testament: Christ and the Two Kingdoms

Pacifist commentators argue that, with the coming of Christ, the Old Testament structure of holy/just wars comes to an end, and a new period of lamb-like peace, at least for the Christian, is ushered in. Certainly, there are some texts that appear to point in this direction: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God" (Matt 5:9); "Ye have heard that it was said, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth,' but I say unto you, resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on the thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt 5:38–39); "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight" (John 18:36).

There are other texts, however, that make it appear that Christ is not undoing the Old Testament allowances for self-defense and the just use of the sword by the state. These would include His commendation of the faith of the Roman centurion He encountered, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matt 8:10; Luke 7:9). In His encounters with the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery, and with the rich young ruler, we know that Christ was not shy or unwilling to point out the shortcomings or need for reform of people He loved, cared for, and was trying to spiritually reach.

Had the centurion's profession disqualified him from a life of true faith, would Christ have been unwilling to point this out? His silence on this point is not an isolated incident, but part of a pattern in which the New Testament approaches the issues of soldiers and their faith (Luke 3:14). John the Baptist urges soldiers to be honest and not to extort money, and Paul baptized the centurion Cornelius and his family without a recorded word about his profession as a soldier (Acts 10:22–48).

And while Christ commanded Peter not to wield the sword on His behalf against His captors (John 18:10–11), He also directed His followers on mission trips "that [he] hath none, let him sell his cloak, and buy a sword." The disciples respond by saying that they had "two swords," and "He said unto them, it is enough" (Luke 22:36–38). Two swords among twelve men would be entirely inadequate to take on even a small contingent of Roman soldiers; but they could be useful to defend themselves against wild animals and roving thieves or brigands.

And it is that distinction between personal self-defense against evil-doers, versus using force to advance the ideals of the kingdom of God, that is the most likely way of understanding these two potentially conflicting series of texts. Christ gives the hermeneutic for interpreting these passages when the Pharisees confront Him about His attitude towards Caesar. Asking Him if it was "lawful to give tribute to Caesar," Christ asked them for a coin. Noting that it had Caesar's picture on it, Christ made His famous proclamation that we are to "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's" (Matt 22:17–22).

In this world, the kingdom of God, Christ clearly stated, was not to be advanced by the sword or civil force. When the Jews and Romans came to take Christ, to question His role, authority, and kingdom, He clearly rebuked Peter for resorting to physical force, and declared to Pilate that His followers would not fight on behalf of advancing the spiritual truths of the kingdom. He was the prince of peace, His kingdom was the way of peace, and it could only be advanced through peaceful methods. While it seems He would allow His followers to defend themselves against lawless brigands and thieves, as strongly impled in Luke 22, He would not use force to defend His spiritual claims against duly constituted civil authority.

On the other hand, in their roles as subjects of Caesar's kingdom, they had duties to pay taxes (which supported the Roman occupying army), help soldiers carry their loads if asked (indeed, even further than asked, Matt 5:41), or even preserve their own lives and those of their friends if attacked by evil-doers, as allowed for in the Hebrew Scriptures (Exod 22:2–3). Christ's command about His followers carrying swords only makes sense in that context (Luke 22:36).

Later in the New Testament, the use of the sword by the state, to punish evil and reward good, is actually viewed as so much part of the divine plan that civil magistrates are described as διάκονος (*diakonos*)—the same word used for deacons, or ministers, in the Christian church. Most translations render this, appropriately, "minister of God." "For he is a *minister of God* to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not

the sword in vain: for he is a *minister of God*, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil" (Rom 13:4 ESV, emphasis mine).

The population of the early church mostly came from communities on the outskirts of Roman political and military power and mostly among non-citizens (which made up about 90% of the residents of Roman territories). While non-citizens could join the auxilia units of the Roman army, these were generally voluntary units, and thus early Christians did not face the question of compelled military service.[11] Rather, they had the option of opportunistic, voluntary military service, tempted by upward mobility or to gain Roman citizenship.[12]

Military service, even if not forbidden by Christian teaching, was evidently not a pathway where the Christian mission of spreading the gospel through teaching, preaching, and healing could be most ideally advanced. One can imagine why it would not be promoted by the church to young people as an ideal career path for a growing Christian.

But neither was military imagery shunned by early Christian leaders and teachers. On the contrary, the New Testament draws in a number of places on military imagery and ethos to communicate truths of the Christian life: "breastplate of faith and hope, and helmet of salvation" (1 Thess 5:8); "fellow soldier" (Phil 2:25; Phlm 1–2); "put on the whole armor of God" (Eph 6:10); "No soldier on service gets entangled in civilian pursuits" (2 Tim 2:3–6). These are just a few examples.

The soldiers that were drawn to the church were not, in Scripture, discouraged from military service. The ambivalence towards military service found in the New Testament is illustrated by an extra-biblical, but first-century text on church order that held that a Christian should not join the army, but that a soldier could join the Church, and remain a soldier.[13]

4. Early Church—Proclamation and Praxis

Some have argued that the early church was uniformly pacifist until very nearly the end of the second century, at which point some members began to deviate and participate in the military. It was this deviation, it is argued,

11 Duncan B. Campbell, *Roman Auxiliary Forts 27 BC–AD 378* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2009).

12 Phillip Wynn, *Augustine on War and Military Service* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 38–39.

13 Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 133.

that forced Christian theologians such as Tertullian and Origin to begin to write against military service to explicitly defend the pacifism that had ruled the church until that point.[14]

A pacifist position, however, does not seem to fairly acknowledge even the Scriptural facts discussed above, where soldiers were commended for their faithfulness, and even allowed into the church, without any mention of ceasing their professions. Further, historical evidence tells us that a meaningful number of Christians must have been in the Roman army by at least the mid-2nd century.

It was from just after then, in about 172 AD that the story of the "thundering legion" derives from an expedition of Marcus Aurelius. His army was fighting the Germans, and the Roman water supply became exhausted, threatening their survival. A frustrated emperor, the story goes, turned to the Christians in his ranks, and asked for them to pray for rain. They did, and rain allegedly came. The story is quite widely attested to in both Christian and pagan literature, each claiming that it was their own gods, or God, that did the miracle.[15]

For our purposes, the interesting feature of the telling of the story in Christian literature, some of which dates to just a decade or two after the event, is that the authors never explain why there were such a large number of Christians in the army. Indeed, some portrayals indicate there were "numerous" Christians, enough for the emperor to recognize as a meaningful group and call upon. The early Christian authors "were not surprised by the presence of Christians in the [army] ranks nor did they think their congregations and readers would be."[16] Yet, when one looks for evidence in the early church of a Christian attitude which assumes the evil nature of war and the evil motives behind war, there is much available.[17] The difficulty of telling a single story of Christian attitudes toward war and military service is this very ambiguity and seeming contradiction. Rather than an early church tradition on the military, it is probably better to speak in terms of traditions.

[14] Yoder, *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, 48–50; Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War*, 66–69; Szallos-Farkas, "Military Service and Just War," 88–96 ("Christians during the 2nd and 3rd century essentially did not participate in military service. Hence, early Christianity was pacifist and non-violent.")

[15] Despina Iosif, *Early Christian Attitudes to War, Violence and Military Service* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2013), 61–67.

[16] Iosif, *Early Christian Attitudes to War*, 66.

[17] C. John Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War* (New York: Seabury, 1982), 49–160.

The involvement in the army continued into the third century AD, as there are many stories of Christian martyrs in the army. This especially occurred during times of Christian persecution, where the Roman religion was more severely enforced on the ranks. Again, though, it shows that Christians who were faithful and unwilling to worship Caesar or the Roman gods were still willing and able to serve in the army, until their religious loyalty was challenged.[18]

Clement of Alexandria, writing towards the end of the second century, found the notion of a Christian soldier to be common-place and unremarkable enough to include in a general statement of how Christianity changed a man. It changed his attitude and values, though not necessarily his profession or vocation. His advice to new Christians included to "continue to be a farmer if you were a farmer ... but know God while farming; continue to be a shipping enthusiast but call on your heavenly oarsman. In case the revelation of truth comes to you while you are on [military] campaign, then pay attention to the general who orders what is right."[19]

There were important voices towards the end of the second century that began to vocally challenge and question military service. But the question is whether this was in response to new and wider outbreaks of Christian military involvement; or whether it might reflect a changing philosophy within Christianity, which was moving towards a more dualistic, spiritualized version that unduly dismissed the importance of the material world and its attendant necessities like keeping the peace from evildoers. There is evidence to suggest that the latter might be the better explanation.

The three most prominent voices that began writing at the end of the 2nd century against military service were Origen, Cyprian, and Tertullian. It is claimed that "they all said the same thing with regard to war and military service.... They were all pacifists."[20] But this statement is only partially true. Its exception gives insight into a larger pattern that this pacifism was part of a creeping dualistic spiritualization that was beginning to significantly impact Christianity.

[18] John Helgeland, Robert J. Daly, and J. Patout Burns, *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 56–66 ("The Military Martyrs"); Christopher Holdsworth, "'An Airier Aristocracy': The Saints at War (The Prothero Lecture)," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, 6 (1996): 103–22.

[19] Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 10.100, 3.10–11, quoted in Iosif, *Early Christian Attitudes*, 71.

[20] Yoder, *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, 49.

All three scholars were steeped in Greek dualism, with Origen believing in the spiritual pre-existence of all souls and the highest interpretation of Scripture being the spiritual, allegorical meaning. Cyprian viewed baptism as having sacramental, saving efficacy, and the Genesis days of creation as representing 1,000 years. Both views tend to spiritualize or make symbolic the physical and the literal. But it is perhaps Tertullian who is key to understanding this move towards pacifism. He shows a change in his thought on the topic, moving from an apparent acknowledgement and acceptance of Christian soldiers, to a complete repudiation of military service or the use of force for Christians, especially during his Montanist-connected years, where he moves into a more thorough-going dualism.[21]

The difference between earlier and later writings is quite incontestable, as a comparison of representative quotes will show. In his *Apology* addressed to the emperor in the late 190s, Tertullian avers that Christians pray for "security to the empire; for protections to the imperial house; for brave armies." But Christians did not stop with prayer but involved themselves in the life of the empire, including civic duties and roles, including the army. We have "filled every place among you—cities, islands, fortresses, towns, market-places, the very camp, tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum—we have left nothing to you but the temples of your gods." Leaving no doubt that the camp, tribes, and companies refers to military service, Tertullian later says that "we sail with you, and fight with you, and till the ground with you."[22]

A decade and a half later, Tertullian sounds quite a different tone. In his *Treatise on Idolatry* he asks whether a Christian can become a soldier, or whether a soldier who becomes a Christian can stay a soldier. Departing from earlier Christian tradition, he strongly answers no in both instances. Even if a Christian is merely a rank-and-file soldier, without obligation to participate in camp sacrifices, Tertullian says he cannot stay a soldier:

> There can be no compatibility between the divine and the human sacrament (military oath), the standard of Christ and the standard of the devil, the camp of light, and the camp of darkness. One soul cannot serve two masters—God and Caesar.... The Lord, in subsequently disarming Peter

[21] George Kalantiz, *Caesar and the Lamb: Early Christian Attitudes on War and Military Service* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 98–100.

[22] Tertullian, *Apol.* 30.4, 37.3, 42.2, 3. See also Tertullian, *Mart.* 3. For a discussion of these passages see Helgeland, Daly, and Burns, *Christians and the Military*, 21–22 and Harnack, *Militia Christi*, 54–59.

> disarmed every soldier. No uniform is lawful among us if it is designated for an unlawful action.[23]

Tertullian takes a similar absolutist position in his later published *Treatise on the Crown*. In that work, he tells the story of a Christian soldier who refuses to wear the "idolatrous laurel-crown" that victorious legions wore. He has his military rank stripped from him, and suffers martyrdom for his convictions.

In telling the story, Tertullian reveals that Christians are a part of the ranks of the military, but in his view, the only faithful Christian was the one who was martyred. "He alone brave among so many soldier-brethren, he alone a Christian." Yes, there were those that identified as Christians in the military, Tertullian would have said, but they were such in name only. The faithful ones either left or were martyred.[24]

Ironically, those that insist that the early church forbade all military involvement are actually defending the position of that portion of the early church that was most aggressively moving into a body/soul dualism. They over-emphasized the spiritual at the expense of the bodily and material. Whilst he opposed the gnostic and Marcionite dualists, Tertullian himself embraced an ascetism that flowed from a suspicion of the material world, including the desires of human bodies. This anti-materialism can perhaps be most clearly seen in his movement towards downplaying and eventually asking if marriage is not superseded in the age of the church, and as not for the truly spiritual, certainly as to second marriages for widowers, and perhaps even for first marriages.[25]

Ironically, Tertullian is the one who famously wrote "what indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church?"[26] It would seem that in vowing to not use pagan philosophies and ideas that he became all the more unaware of his capture by the Greek, dualist thought of his day that he apparently mistook for just "the way things are."

Christian dualism was susceptible of the extremes of pacifism and disregard of defense of bodily integrity; but it could also be shaped into a reason for using force in the cause of spiritual truth and advancement; whether it be as Christian magistrates punishing the flesh of heretics to save their

[23] Tertullian, *Idol.* 19, in Helgeland, Daly, and Burns, *Christians and the Military*, 22–23.

[24] Tertullian, *Cor.*, ch. 1, in Helgeland, Daly, and Burns, *Christians and the Military*, 25–26.

[25] Tertullian, *Exh. cast.*, "Ch. IX – Second Marriage a Species of Adultery. Marriage Itself Impugned as akin to Adultery" (https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0405.htm).

[26] Tertullian, *Praescr*. 7.

eternal souls, or the Christian soldier pursuing the infidel or pagan to advance the kingdom of God on earth. Thus, after the "conversion" of the empire under Constantine, it was simple enough to switch the teaching of the church from one of pacifism to militarism, on behalf of both the empire and the church. Underscoring the pervasive dualism was the fact that at the time that the majority of the church adopted militarism, the main opponents of it, and the keepers of pacifism, were monks who abandoned the idea of family life and lived as ascetics in desert monasteries.[27]

5. Augustine to Aquinas and the Rise of Holy War

Augustine is at times referred to as the originator of Christian just war theory, but this is to overstate the matter. As we have seen above, there were Old Testament antecedents, as well as thinkers of the Greco-Roman world, including Aristotle and Cicero, who provided the framework from which Augustine drew. But Augustine was also preceded in his application of these ideas in a Christian framework by Ambrose of Milan, who he viewed as his mentor and even spiritual father.[28]

Ambrose had been the pretorian prefect of Northern Italy before being made Bishop, and he was thus well positioned to combine the military ideas of Stoicism with principles from the Old Testament. He insisted that war must only be conducted for the just cause of maintaining peace, and clerics themselves, including monks and priests, must not participate.[29] With his gift for systematic exposition, and in the face of an imploding Roman empire, Augustine built on Ambrose's foundation. He believed that war defending against aggression or protecting innocent people could be just, but that it should only be waged under certain conditions. These included being declared by a legitimate authority, with the intention of restoring peace, with the use of force proportional to the harm being inflicted, and the sparing of non-combatants as much as possible.[30]

Less commented on in the literature discussing Augustine's views of just war are his views of the millennium and treatment of heretics. It was his developing views in these areas that caused the church's views on just war to veer into an ominous and ultimately destructive direction. Earlier in his

27 Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 85, 89.
28 Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 89–91.
29 Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 89–91.
30 Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 95–98.

life, Augustine had been both a premillennialist and opposed to the use of force in dealing with heretics. But both these views changed over time.

In his dispute with the Donatist sect, Augustine famously changed his position on the use of force with the heretic. After becoming frustrated with the Donatists' refusal to listen to reason and persuasion, he argued that their persuasion threshold would be lowered by the use of punishment and force. He cited Christ's parable of the wedding feast, where it was said of the recalcitrant guests, "compel them to come in." In his view, this served as a precedent for the use of force and punishment against heretics, so they might more easily change their minds and pursue eternal things.[31]

He also shifted from a premillennial view of the thousand years of Revelation, which envisioned Christ's kingdom being set up upon His second Advent, to an amillennial view. This latter view held that the church was working to set up Christ's kingdom in this world now. These two points, that force could be used to persuade heretics, and that Christ's kingdom was meant to be part of the here and now, meant that the stage was set for just war to be not only concerned with temporal peace and justice, but also with spiritual and heavenly values.

Augustine himself appears not to have used the term "holy war," or connected his just war principles with his approach to the millennium or heretics. But the principles were now in place that would justify church leaders encouraging civil authorities to carry out not merely just wars aimed at preserving the peace, but supposedly holy wars, with purposes of advancing the spiritual kingdom of God in the temporal world.

In the centuries following Augustine, his use of Christ's words "compel them to come in" were cited with increasing frequency to justify the use of force against heretics, and then eventually against Muslims in the Crusades. There was a transitional period where the new barbarian tribes that had displaced the Roman empire made the use of force a necessary element of survival in the absence of the *pax romana*. The newly Christianized barbarian chiefs and leaders found it easy to claim "Jesus as the new Yahweh of hosts."[32]

Whether protecting one's town against Viking raids or barbarians from the east, the use of private force in self-defense by these Christian rulers was seen as a necessity, one made more noble by wrapping the struggle in a religious identity. Even religious leaders and bishops were drawn into battle,

[31] Augustine, *Letter 173* (AD 416), pars. 2, 10 (viewed at https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102173.htm).

[32] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 103.

despite Augustine's earlier injunctions against this.[33] But the real shift was the implementation of Augustine's own logic that civil force could be acceptable, even sanctified, when based not merely on principles of civil justice, but to further religious and spiritual aims. This led to the acceptance of the so-called holy war, the medieval manifestation being the crusades of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries.[34]

The crusades were not to force the conversion of the infidel and pagan. Augustine and later Thomas Aquinas generally limited the use of force for spiritual punishment against the heretic, the Christian believer who had fallen away. Rather, the crusade was ostensibly an attempt to safeguard the trips of Christian pilgrims to the holy sites of Jerusalem, which were allegedly being made difficult to access by their Muslim rulers. But the reasoning extended beyond the just war tradition, as the justification was based on religious and spiritual goals. The religious nature of the crusade became even more apparent when it was used against "heretical" groups within Europe itself, such as the Cathars and Albigenses.[35]

The use of force for spiritual, as opposed to civil, purposes, was affirmed by the next great thinker in the Christian just war tradition, Thomas Aquinas. Writing in the middle of the period of the crusades, Aquinas reaffirmed Augustine's view that civil force could be used for spiritual ends, especially against heretics who corrupted the Christian faith. He famously compared heretics to forgers of money, who under the civil laws, faced the death penalty. He argued as "it was a much graver matter to corrupt the faith that quickens the soul, than to forge money, which supports temporal life ... much more reason is there for heretics, as soon as they are convicted of heresy, to be not only excommunicated but even put to death."[36]

Unsurprisingly, the crusades abroad (and at home) soon became matched with the institution of the inquisition, which persisted in Europe long beyond the period of the crusades. These uses of force for religious, rather than civil purposes, mainly ended only in the nineteenth century under the scrutiny and opposition of Protestant tolerance and Enlightenment reason. Yet neither Protestantism nor the Enlightenment rejected the underlying framework of just war theory, but rather expanded and refined it. Par-

[33] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 103–5.

[34] Yoder, *Christain Attitudes to War*, 109–12.

[35] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 114–15.

[36] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, vol. II-II, Question 11, Article 3 (quoted from https://www.newadvent.org/summa/3011.htm#article3.)

ticularly, they joined the parallel currents that focused, or at least emphasized, either the just cause behind a war, or the justice of the methods used to pursue the war.

6. Reformation and the Wars of Religion

Martin Luther, a main fountainhead of the reformation, had a teaching of the two kingdoms that led him to separate the church from civil concerns and force; but at the same time allowed that the civil ruler was God's minister to keep temporal peace and safety, by force if necessary.[37] But he strongly rejected the idea of the crusade, or holy war. He taught that Christians were not to advance the kingdom of God against the Turks through the use of arms. He wrote that the papacy, "undertook to fight against the Turk in the name of Christ, and taught and incited men to do this, as though our people were an army of Christians against the Turks, who were enemies of Christ. This is absolutely contrary to Christ's doctrine and name."[38]

He did allow, however, Christian princes to defend their territories against the unjust invasion of the Turks. But this use of force must be consistent with just war principles, not that of holy crusade. And if individual soldiers thought the princes cause and war was unjust, they should refuse to serve.[39]

Luther's position about not using force on behalf of the gospel was tested as the Protestant princes of Germany came under threat from their Catholic fellows and emperor. He eventually acknowledged the legitimacy of magistrates and their subjects bearing arms to *defend* both territory and consciences from outsiders seeking to control both. But even then, he retained the medieval tradition that clergy themselves should abstain from the use of force.[40]

Calvin had a somewhat more theocratic tendency than Luther, and was responsible for Geneva, a kind of Protestant island surrounded by a number of Catholic territories. He and his followers rather quickly developed the notion of the inferior magistrate who could hold accountable, through arms if necessary, princes and kings who overstepped the bounds of true religion and sought to infringe conscience.[41]

37 Nicholas Miller, *500 Years of Protest and Liberty* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 2016), 30–31.

38 Martin Luther, *On War Against the Turk*, vol. 46 in *Luther's Works,* 164–65.

39 Martin Luther, *Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved*, vol. 46 in *Luther's Works*, 130.

40 Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 138–39.

41 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.20.31.

So in theory, both Luther and Calvin rejected religious wars of aggression, the crusading template of the Middle Ages. But in practice, it became at times difficult to determine where a defense war ended, and a crusading war began. Did Protestants have the right to recover lands taken by Catholics in offensive wars of religion? The Huguenots and Waldenses thought so, as they fought campaigns to recover their ancestral lands and valleys; the Puritans and Cromwell fought the king and his army in England, eventually executing him in the name of their righteous cause; and the Thirty Years War on the continent, largely in Germany, was known as a central part of the wars of religion, with the belligerents mostly divided along denominational lines.[42]

Out of all the religious groups, it was really only the radical reformers, the Anabaptists and their kin that stayed, mostly, out of the fray. Even they are complicated, as the apocalyptic branch of the Anabaptists engaged in holy war, most notably at the City of Munster. But the main body of the Anabaptists not only foreswore war and violence, but also believed that they should avoid all possible involvement in civil matters that touched on force, including serving in the magistracy, military, or police force. Their scruples extended to oath-taking for civil purposes, or even acknowledging social hierarchy by tipping one's hat to a social superior.[43]

Anabaptism was the source of the pacifist, peace-church movement in the west, a tradition that has been carried on by the Quakers, Mennonites, Amish, and other heirs of the radical reformation. One might think that early Adventists would find their roots in the radical, Anabaptists tradition of pacifism. But in her account of these events, church founder Ellen G. White has little to say about the Anabaptists—just a bit about Menno Simons—and does not touch meaningfully on their pacifism. She does, however, speak in laudatory terms of some of the Protestant and proto-Protestant leaders who fought in defense of their faith.

She writes of the Bohemian leader Ziska, "one of the ablest generals of his age," being "raised up" to oppose the papal crusade against the Hussites. Under Ziska, who is described as "trusting in the help of God," faithful protestants "withstood the mightiest armies that could be brought against them. Again and again the emperor invaded Bohemia, only to be repulsed."[44]

[42] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 142–50.

[43] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes*, 153–56.

[44] Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1888), 116.

She likewise speaks glowingly of Gustavus II, king of Sweden, who came to the aid of the Protestant German states during the Thirty Years War. "It was from Sweden," she notes, "that deliverance came to Germany in her terrible struggle against the papal armies" at a time when "the religion and liberty of Christendom were on the point of being trodden out." Despite possessing only "slender means and a small army," Gustavus moved forward in the "faith that God, whose cause he was undertaking, would sustain him." It was this knowledge that "urged him forward to become the defender of Protestantism."[45] It is hard to read these passages and not see some level of agreement with Luther, Calvin, and Grotius, at least on the point that force can appropriately be used to defend one's home and conscience against aggressors.

7. Hugo Grotius and the Development of Modern Just War Theory

The life and teachings of Hugo Grotius reveals the value to the world of those Christians who have viewed just war as a legitimate concept and possibility. He was one of the early modern voices to put the new Protestant view on the use of force into a clearer context and teaching. Grotius was a Dutch jurist, theologian, and scholar. Writing in the early 1600s, Grotius is considered one of the founding fathers of modern international law and his works on just war theory helped to shape the development of this field. Less well known in today's world are the theological foundations of his work. Grotius was a follower of the Dutch theologian Jacobus, or James, Arminius, who popularized free will anthropology in Western Protestant thought.

Grotius took the insights of Arminius regarding human free will and divine benevolence and applied them to the ongoing question of the atonement and why Christ died. He articulated a construct known as the moral government of God, where God oversaw a universal government, governed by principles of justice and equity, that needed to be upheld for the universe to exist with peace and harmony. These principles were not only part of God's nature, but also imbued into His creation, where they could be uncovered and understood, at least in part, by human beings. Grotius based his theory of just war on these principles of natural law, which he believed were universally applicable and could be used to guide human behavior in

[45] Ellen G. White, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* (Basle: Imprimerie Polyglotte, 1886), 191–92.

matters of war and peace. He believed that wars could be justifiable under certain circumstances, but only if they met certain criteria.[46]

Grotius outlined his just war theory in his major work, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (*On the Law of War and Peace*), which was published in 1625.[47] In this work, Grotius laid out a set of criteria that a war must meet in order to be considered just. One of the key criteria in his theory is that a war must be fought for a just *civil* cause, such as to defend against aggression or to protect innocent people from harm. This excluded wars being fought for religious causes or purposes. He also believed that a war must be authorized by a legitimate civil authority, such as a government or a recognized international organization.[48]

Another basis for the theory of just war as articulated by Grotius is the idea that wars should be fought only as a last resort, and that they must be conducted in a way that is justifiable and ethical. His work, though grounded in a Protestant, natural law outlook, has had a significant impact on the development of international law. His ideas continue to be studied and debated by scholars and policymakers today. The ideas of Grotius continue to inform the important moral and policy debates, even in the age of nuclear bombs and drone strikes.[49]

8. Ellen G. White on the Just Use of Force

In addition to her comments on the just use of force in European wars of religion quoted above, Ellen G. White showed in her own life a practical acceptance of the need for force to thwart evil in this sinful, fallen world. In 1879, she and her husband James led a wagon train from Texas to Colorado, which involved a passage through Indian Territory. The party appears to have been made up of Adventist members. In a letter to her children, Ellen G. White describes how Sabbath was kept by the group.

But along with the description of Sabbath-keeping was a less expected recounting of the reliance on weapons by the group. "We have to be very

[46] Nicholas P. Miller, *The Reformation and the Remnant: The Reformers Speak to Today's Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2016), 39–40.

[47] Originally published as *De iure belli ac pacis libri tres*, Paris: Buon, 1625; a recent English translation being *The Rights of War and Peace*, Books I–III, ed. Richard Tuck (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2005).

[48] Hugo Grotius, "Rights of War and Peace," II.1.1-II.1.7; as discussed in Yoder, *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, 39, 107.

[49] Freiberger, Erich, "Just War Theory and the Ethics of Drone Warfare," *E-International Relations*, July 18 2013.

well armed," White wrote, "in passing through the Indian territory. We have our wagons brought up in a circle, then our horses are placed within the circle. We have two men to watch. They are relieved every two hours. *They carry their guns upon their shoulders*. We have less fears from Indians than from white men who employ the Indians to make a stampede among the horses and mules and ponies."[50] It is instructive that when Ellen and James White was the closest they ever came to being a civil authority—a leader of a wagon train in the "wild west"—that they saw no problem with being prepared to repel evil with the use of force.

When it came to the Christian and military service, Ellen G. White, along with other Adventist leaders sought to gain noncombatancy exceptions for Adventist believers during the Civil War. They perceived a conflict between military service and the commands of God, as no allowance was made for Sabbath observance in the military during the Civil War. Also, the commands of officers may not always follow principles of fairness and justice. Ellen G. White saw that "*In the army they cannot obey the truth and at the same time obey the requirements of their officers.* There would be a continual violation of conscience."[51]

This comment was made in the context of voluntary military service. But interestingly, in opposing military service in the Civil War, Ellen G. White did not cite the Sixth Commandment, the one against murder, in opposing mili-tary service during the Civil War. James White did mention both the Sabbath and Murder commandment in an editorial. But he believed that in a draft situation, the "government assumes the responsibility of the violation of the law of God, and it would be madness to resist. He who would resist until, in the administration of military law, he was shot down, goes too far, we think, in taking the responsibility of suicide."[52]

Ellen G. White seems to have agreed with her husband James about avoiding war when possible, but not opposing an involuntary draft. When she was in Europe, she noted that faithful Adventist young people who were required to serve in the military, and that their service was both notable and exceptional, as they "had tokens of honor for faithfulness in their

[50] Ellen G. White, Letter 20a, 1879 (found at https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/3488.1) (emphasis supplied).

[51] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 361–62 (emphasis supplied).

[52] James White, "The Nation," *Review and Herald,* August 12, 1862.

work" from their regiments. Again, she noted that "these did not go from choice, but because the laws of their nation required this."[53]

White was still alive when World War I broke out, and the challenges facing Adventists in Europe were brought to her attention by her son Willie White. He told her about the draft laws in various countries, where some Adventists had been pressed into military service. He said that some Adventists believed that those who had been "forced into the Army would have done wrong to submit to military service. They think it would have been better for them to have refused to bear arms, even if they knew that as a result of their refusal they would be made to stand up in line to be shot." Her response was pragmatic and telling. "I do not think they ought to do that, I think they ought to stand to their duty as long as time lasts."[54]

Her position on matters of the draft and use of arms differed from that of the historic peace churches, which generally embraced a thorough-going pacifism, whatever the costs or sacrifices. Her position might be better described as one of a pragmatic conscientious objection, or even cooperation when necessary, rather than principled opposition to any and all use of force or arms. This position is a necessary corollary to a just war outlook, as a principled objection to any and all use of force or violence makes a just war position impossible, practically if not theoretically.

9. Christian Just War Influence in the Modern Era

Given the horrors of war in the twentieth, and now also the twenty-first, centuries, one may question the value or restraining influence of Christian just war outlooks and theories. They arguably do not appear to have halted the human drive for conquest, bloodshed, and barbarism. And yet, we do not really know the horrors that may have been faced if these ideas had not been present. To insist that an absolute pacifism is the only appropriate way for a Christian to engage public and political policy would have undermined an important source of ideas for the Geneva Convention, the Nuremberg Trials, and the United Nations.

The list of positive contributions by Christian just war theory to our world in the last century includes the following:

[53] Ellen G. White, Uncopied Letter 23, written from Basel, Switzerland, Sept. 2, 1886 (viewed at https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/766.143.)

[54] Willie C. White to Guy Dail, May 26, 1915, cited in Arthur White, *Ellen G. White: The Later Elmshaven Years: 1905–1915* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 427.

1. **Nuremberg Trials and War Crimes Prosecution**: The principles of just war theory played a crucial role in shaping the legal framework for prosecuting war crimes and crimes against humanity after World War II. The Nuremberg Trials, in particular, emphasized the idea that individuals could be held accountable for their actions during wartime, even if they were following orders. Similar tribunals have operated for war crimes in relation to the former Yugoslavia and the Rwandan genocide. These efforts reflected the Christian emphasis on individual responsibility and the principle of proportionality in the use of force.[55]
2. **Nuclear Weapons Debate**: Christian just war theory has informed discussions surrounding the morality and ethical implications of nuclear weapons. Many Christian leaders and theologians have questioned the proportionality and indiscriminate nature of nuclear warfare, raising concerns about the principles of discrimination and noncombatant immunity. These discussions have influenced the development of international law regarding the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons.[56]
3. **Humanitarian Intervention**: Just war theory has influenced debates on humanitarian intervention, particularly during conflicts such as the genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia. The principle of just cause has been invoked to argue for intervention when gross human rights violations occur within a state. Christian thinkers have contributed to discussions on the responsibility to protect, and the conditions under which military force can be justified to prevent or halt mass atrocities.[57]
4. **Conscientious Objection**: Christian just war theory has also spurred conscientious objection to military service. These movements have influenced public discourse on the morality of war and led to legal provisions for conscientious objection in many countries.[58]

[55] Mark J. Osiel, Obeying Orders: Atrocity, Military Discipline, and the Law of War (London: Routledge, 2017), 1–4.

[56] Paul Ramsey & John H. Hallowell, *War and the Christian Conscience: How Shall Modern War Be Conducted Justly?* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1961), 63–75.

[57] Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace*; John Paul II, *The Splendor of Truth: Veritatis Splendor* (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993); Brendan Simms and D. J. B. Trim, eds., *Humanitarian intervention: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[58] John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 76–85.

5. **Ethical Considerations in Military Operations**: Christian just war theory has influenced military ethics and the conduct of warfare. Principles such as proportionality, discrimination, and the preservation of non-combatant immunity have been integrated into military doctrines and rules of engagement. The ethical reflections derived from just war theory have guided military decision-making processes, emphasizing the moral responsibility to minimize harm and uphold human dignity during armed conflicts.[59]

When Christ declared "blessed are the peacemakers," He was declaring a goal and an ideal, but not necessarily describing all the options for achieving that goal in a fallen and sinful world. Paul's reference to rulers who wield the sword to restrain evil and protect good as "servants" or "ministers" of God makes this point well enough. The limited use of force to restrain violent evil may at times be the best pathway forward to having more peace, and not less.

One can believe, based on New Testament teaching, that Christians should, wherever possible, avoid military, combatant service, and use instead their skills to heal, uplift, and mend. The conscientious objector tradition of the Adventist church is an important, and somewhat sidelined teaching, that needs new life breathed into it. But surely this can be done without removing the Christian and Adventist voice from a place of influence and guidance in the foreign policy and military deliberations of nations, where it can be heard.

To deny any possibility of the just use of force would be to deprive the world of a restraining and moderating influence of Christian and moral insight that has helped minimize violence—and maximize peace and justice—in a world more and more desperately in need of both. It is also to make very strange, peculiar and even contradictory one of the final images we have of "the Prince of Peace" in the Bible—astride a war steed, with a sword to "strike down the nations," and a rod of iron with which to "rule them" (Rev 19:11–15).

It is true that this force is used against Satan and his minions, but this would include his human followers, in what would be the last, final, and fully justified holy war and crusade, the kind that God, in His infinite wisdom and justice, reserves for Himself. But this vivid picture reveals that peace, in a fallen world, is ultimately the result of the fair, timely, and just use of force—not of its complete rejection or absence. But as Christians, the

[59] Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 203–12.

pathway of peace should be our primary and ideal calling, as we seek to be voices of conscience and care for those who do wield power to protect good and defend against evil.

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Defending Your Freedom: New Testament Ethics of Christians in Military Activities

OLEG KOSTYUK

AdventHealth University, Florida

Abstract

The article explores the ethical dilemma faced by Ukrainian Christians amidst military conflict, drawing from biblical perspectives to reconcile emotional support for defense with the NT vision. It examines some OT narratives of warfare and conquest, highlighting shifts from pacifism to just war attitudes among Israelites.

Analysis of key NT passages, such as John the Baptist's counsel to soldiers and Jesus' interactions with crowds and disciples, offers insights into Christian conduct in times of conflict. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, perceived by followers as triumphal, challenges conventional military expectations, emphasizing peace and spiritual renewal over violent conquest. Additionally, Jesus' arrest underscores his rejection of worldly military strategies, promoting self-sacrifice over armed resistance. Paul's metaphor of a "good soldier of Christ" in 2 Timothy suggests suffering alongside Christ as a defining aspect of Christian service.

The article concludes that allegiance to Jesus entails aligning with his nonviolent example, even amidst military conflict. Through biblical analysis, it navigates the tension between supporting homeland defense and adhering to the NT vision of peace. Drawing insights from both the Old and New Testaments offers a nuanced understanding of how Christians can approach military service in light of NT's ethical vision.

Keywords: Military, New Testament, Jesus, Army, Land, Defense, Triumphal Entry, Feeding of the Five Thousand, Soldier

1. Introduction

Ukrainians are generally considered a peaceful nation. In 2014–2015, however, a conflict between Russia and Ukraine following Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territories presented an acute dilemma: to defend the country's borders or to let the land be taken away. The Christian community became divided between "the hawks and the doves."[1] Some Christians were strongly advocating for standing up, picking up arms, and defending the land, while others were standing on the side of peaceful resolution, even at the cost of losing their land and maybe even losing their freedom.

In 2015, the Ukrainian nation was able to experience the reality of surrender and defense. When the Crimean Peninsula was annexed, the government was not prepared for the invasion, so the invader did not meet resistance. In the case of the invasion of Eastern Ukraine, however, the nation took the stand and tried to defend the land. That operation had a toll on thousands of lives.[2]

Then, on February 24, 2022, another attack on Ukrainian territories by the Russian government led to an obvious action of military defense. This time, the majority of Christian communities were united in their support of the Ukrainian army. When the Russian army entered the cities of Bucha, Irpin, and the cities of southeastern Ukraine, Ukrainian Christians who lived in Ukraine and around the world were united in their vision: Ukrainians need to stand against evil aggression.[3]

[1] The translator of Adolf Harnack's *Militia Christi* makes a remark about doves and hawks in relationship to the scholars who defend pacifism or militarism of the early Christian church. The "hawks" are advocating for the necessity of defending the country and its freedom. The "doves," in their turn, take the stand of peaceful surrender. See Adolf von Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries*, trans. David Mclnnes Gracie (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 17.

[2] According to OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) as of June 3, 2015, 6,454 people (both military and civilians) have been documented as killed in the conflict zone and 16,146 as wounded (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Ukraine: Situation Update No. 3 as of 5 June 2015" [June 5, 2015]).

[3] According to OCHA: "From 24 February 2022, which marked the start of the large-scale armed attack by the Russian Federation, to 14 May 2023, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 23,821 civilian casualties in the country: 8,836 killed and 14,985 injured" (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Ukraine: Civilian Casualty Update 15 May 2023" [May 15, 2023]).

Amid these military developments, Ukrainian Christians were becoming more explicit in using military language in their sermons, presentations, and written documents. This military language sounds harsh and, at times, uncomfortable to the ear of those who have not experienced the war firsthand. Yet, this language is not harsh enough for those whose homes are destroyed and who are displaced due to military aggression. The dilemma is more acute than ever before: what should Christians do when their homeland is being attacked?

This article is in an attempt to turn towards the NT to allow it to reveal its ethical vision towards the question of defending the "homeland." I, the author of this article, am a Ukrainian who does not live in Ukraine and who was not in Ukraine when the war began. But I experienced this war when I traveled to Ukraine after the war started, and we are actively involved in helping civilians to evacuate affected territories. I am also a NT scholar, which is why this article will try to reconcile my emotional support of the Ukrainian army and the NT vision for the defense of the homeland.

This study will consist of two steps. First, I will briefly survey some cases of military activities and defending the land and freedom in the OT. Second, I will analyze critical passages in the NT that relate to the issue of military service.

2. Military in the Old Testament

Nowadays, it is a consensus to sympathize and be on the side of a person or a nation that is under attack and in the position of defending themselves. While reading the OT: we sympathize with the Israelites who left Egypt because they were oppressed (enslaved people) and we continue to sympathize with them even when they attack and wipe out people, such as Amorites (Deut 2:33–34) and seven more nations "mightier and more numerous than Israel" (Deut 7:1–2; 13:15–16).[4] The argument in defense of Israelites is often derived from Deut 9:5, "because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is dispossessing them before you, in order to fulfill the promise that the LORD made on oath to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." According to the text, here are two elements that justify

[4] This pattern is commonly observed in today's world as well. The powers often hide their military and political agendas under the cover of defending people, defending democracy, and defending freedom. However, instead of defending, they send troops that destroy other nations, with thousands of lives lost.

this "just war." First, the opponents of the Israelites are labeled as wicked. Second, this is how the "promised land" is repossessed.

In the short span of 40 years, the nation of Israel turned from the "doves" to the "hawks." Bainton argues that there are three attitudes toward war and peace in Christian ethics: pacifism, the just war, and the crusade.[5] His description of the attitudes toward war best describes the situation that becomes evident in the OT. The two last attitudes, the just war and the crusade, presuppose some active military units. The just war is often treated as means of defending yourself or a valuable land, and it requires an army, but not necessarily a regular one.[6] The crusade is an attack that assumes a professional army.[7] The Israelites went from pacifists (Exod 14:14) to the just war (Deut 20:1–4; Josh 6) and, finally, to the crusade (1 Sam 15:3; Josh 10:40). The three attitudes are also present in the historical development of Christianity.[8]

During the monarchy, the reality of a professional army had become more acute. Solomon had a regular standing army with 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen (1 Kgs 10:26). After the division between Israel and Judah, the regular army became a norm. Judah and Israel became aggressors and defenders of the land and their freedom.[9] There is, however, an impression that God did not want Israel to be in the attitude of the "crusaders." In 2 Sam 24, when David sought to increase the tribal militia by conducting a census, God was greatly displeased.

5 Roland Herbert Bainton also goes on to say that this is also a historical development. The church up to Constantine was pacifist. Then due to the invasions of the Barbarians the church adhered to the idea of the just war and in the Middle Ages Christians embraced crusades. See Roland Herbert Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-Evaluation* (New York: Abingdon, 1960), 14.

6 See Robert M. Good, "The Just War in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 104.3 (1985).

7 See Jonathan Simon Christopher Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (London: Athlone Press, 1987); Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome A.D. 66–70* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

8 See also perhaps one of the best edited books of current Christian thinking on issues of war and peace where the questions of just war, nonviolence, Christian realist, and church historical views are presented: Paul Copan, ed., *War, Peace, and Violence: Four Christian Views*, *Spectrum Multiview Books* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2022).

9 For more on the development of the military and the war and peace in the ancient Israel see Carly L. Crouch, *War and Ethics in the Ancient Near East: Military Violence in Light of Cosmology and History*, BZAW 407 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 84–96.

In the middle of all these conflicts, one promise of Isaiah the prophet to Judah was serving as a hope of the future, "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa 2:4, cf. Mic 4:3). The hopes expressed in Isa 2:2–4 and Mic 4:1–4 is clear; there will be no need for the regular army and any type of army. The soldiers will become farmers again, just as it was in the very beginning before the tower of Babel.[10] Universal peace will be established and instead of learning the craft of war, people will be learning the ways of YHWH.

3. Military in the New Testament

Military personnel is frequently mentioned in the NT.[11] The main terms that describe military personnel are soldier (στρατιώτης), a centurion (ἑκατοντάρχης), and military tribune or commander (χιλίαρχος). It is clear that the NT does not support violence. On the contrary, it speaks against it.[12] Whenever violence is presented in the NT, Jesus and his followers are its victims. Early Christians resorted to pacifism, continuing the legacy of Jesus and His followers.[13] The sectarian character of the NT community adds to the pacifist

10 Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, WBC 32 (Waco, TX: Word, 1984), 37.

11 References to soldiers (στρατιώτης) can be found in Matt 8:9; 27:27; 28:12; Mark 15:16; Luke 3:14; 7:8; 23:36; John 19:2, 23–25, 32, 34; Acts 10:7; 12:4, 6, 18; 21:32, 35; 23:23, 31–32, 42; 28:16; 2 Tim 2:3. References to fellow soldiers (συστρατιώτης) can be found in Phil 2:25 and Phlm 2. Reference to centurions (ἑκατοντάρχης) can be found in Matt 8:5, 8, 13; 27:54; Mark 15:39, 44–45; Luke 7:2, 6; 23:47; Acts 10:1, 22; 21:32; 22:25, 26; 23:17, 23; 27:1, 6, 11, 31, 43. Reference to tribunes (χιλίαρχος) can be found in Mark 6:21; Acts 21:31–33, 37; 22:24, 26–29; 23:10, 15, 17–19, 22; 25:23; Rev 6:15; 19:18.

12 Matt 5:9, 38–39; 26:52; John 14:27; Rom 12:18; 14:19; 15:33; 1 Cor 14:33; 2 Cor 10:3–4; Jas 4:1–2; 1 Peter 3:9.

13 David Hunter, analyzing recent trends in the research on early Christians and military service, states that up until 1990 it has been a general consensus in regards to the conclusion on violence and military service: "1) that the early Christians who addressed the matter directly during the first three centuries, most notably Tertullian and Origen, condemned warfare and military service on grounds that were essentially 'pacifist,' that is, out of an aversion to bloodshed; 2) that, at least from the end of the second century, some Christians participated in the military and that the number continued to grow throughout the third century; 3) that, by the end of the fourth century, a "just war ethic" had developed (largely the work of Ambrose and Augustine), which met the need for a Christian accommodation to a changed political and social situation" (David G. Hunter, "A Decade of Research on Early Christians and Military Service," *RelSRev* 18.2 [1992]: 87).

tendencies.[14] When there is not much power, it is easier to resort to pacifism. In addition to that, the early church, filled with eschatological expectations, was awaiting the soon-coming redemption of Israel (Acts 1:6). The NT authors express their attitude against violence.[15]

Yet, the agents of violence, soldiers, were not asked to abandon their vocation.[16] The preliminary conclusion that we can come to is that the NT does not condemn military service. Yet it will be just an argument from silence. Therefore, a thorough survey is necessary in order to establish this assumption. I will analyze five passages, and after their analysis, we might be able to come closer to the NT vision of military defense of the land.

3.1 John the Baptist and the Soldiers: Luke 3:14

In Luke 3:14, John the Baptist encourages a group of soldiers to be fair, do not "violently shake money" (διασείσητε) from anyone, do not harass (συκοφαντέω) anyone, but start being content (ἀρκεῖσθε) with your ration-money (ὀψωνίοις)[17] which was not much at all.[18] Bovon argues, standing on the shoulders of Scheider, that in Luke's theological thinking, these soldiers were likely the Gentiles.[19] It is hard to agree with Bovon since it is unlikely that the Roman soldiers would go to listen to a desert prophet. I agree with

[14] I agree with Lawson who, quoting Johnson, suggests, "[a] sect is a religious group that rejects the social environment in which it exists" (Ronald Lawson, "Onward Christian Soldiers? Seventh-day Adventists and the Issue of Military Service," *RRelRes* 37.3 [1996]: 194).

[15] It is impossible to find a passage in the NT in support of violence in the Gospels or Pauline letters. Richard Hays also states that "[t]here is not a syllable in the Pauline letters that can be cited in support of Christians employing violence" (Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* [San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996], 331).

[16] The argument can go as follows: if Jesus's followers are called to avoid violence, why didn't John the Baptist instruct the soldiers to leave the military when they came to him repentantly seeking guidance (Luke 3:10–14)? This would have been the perfect opportunity for John to express such a belief if he held it.

[17] The term ὀψώνιον refers to a military ration that was provisioned (BDAG, s.v. "ὀψώνιον").

[18] James Jeffers states that the salary of the regular Roman soldiers was between 225 and 300 denarii a year, while the auxiliary troops were paid only 100 denarii (James S. Jeffers, *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999], 176).

[19] François Bovon, *Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1–9:50*, trans. Christine M. Thomas, Hermeneia 63A (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2002), 124 n. 44.

Nolland that the soldiers here were, most likely, Jewish,[20] or at least the auxiliaries. A few elements testify to that: (1) the soldiers are coupled with tax collectors who were Jewish (Luke 3:12–13), and they were most likely employed to protect tax collectors; (2) John the Baptist talks about the money with them, so we can conclude that they were police who were, perhaps, protecting the tax collectors; (3) in Luke 3:8 John the Baptist introduces his speech referring to the children of Abraham. Therefore, these Jewish soldiers were serving Rome and, perhaps, were also tasked to control the situation if there was a revolutionary outbreak.[21]

The soldiers here are not asked to abandon their craft but should stop exercising their authority to extort money from others. The behavior of soldiers was destroying the community; they were exploiting and manipulating others to their advantage. The message of John is directed towards the community; he aims to improve the community by asking regular folk to "share their tunic" (Luke 3:8), tax collectors to stop collecting more taxes than needed (Luke 3:13), and finally, the soldiers are commanded to stop extorting others (Luke 3:14). These instructions represent different social strata, highlighting that John's message was directed at the Jewish community, which needed reform in preparation for the eschatological age heralded by Jesus.

In the Luke-Acts framework, this community plays a vital role. In Luke 3, John the Baptist is trying to form a better society, in Luke 4, Jesus, in His inaugural speech, announces the new age; and in Acts 2, we see the community led by the Holy Spirit. In a world where war is an everyday reality, Luke-Acts present a counter-cultural message, advocating for non-violent methods and emphasizing the necessity of a world free from coercion and oppression.

However, the interaction between community and soldiers in this context, especially regarding warfare and the defense of one's homeland, requires further nuance. These Jewish soldiers were not defending their homeland in the traditional sense but were serving the Roman authority, maintaining order rather than engaging in battlefield combat, similar to modern police forces. This distinction complicates discussions on "just war" or homeland defense. If these soldiers were serving Rome, their role would contrast sharply with groups like the Sicarii, who actively resisted Roman rule. Therefore, Israel was not a typical war zone; instead, these soldiers

[20] John Nolland, *Luke*, WBC 35 (Waco, TX: Word, 1989), 150.

[21] Andrew J. Schoenfeld, "Sons of Israel in Caesar's Service: Jewish Soldiers in the Roman Military," *Shofar* 24.3 (2006).

were maintaining internal order under Roman occupation, highlighting the complexity of their role and the broader implications for understanding justice and violence in this context.

3.2 Feeding of the Five Thousand: Mark 6:35–44 and Parallels

The feeding of the five thousand is a story recorded in all four Gospels. Scholars view the miracle in Mark in juxtaposition to the preceding passage that describes the feast that took place in Herod's palace (Mark 6:14–29).[22] Some see a contest between Herod and Jesus for a royal title in this.[23] The story is also often considered in connection with the OT stories of feeding in the wilderness (Exod 16; Pss 78:18–30; 105:40) and the feeding miracles of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kgs 17:8–16; 2 Kgs 4:1–7, 42–44) and is pointing to the messianic meal.[24] While these observations are valid and deserve close attention, I propose that the story also has numerous military allusions and sheds additional light on our understanding of the followers of Jesus in the military service.

There are a few indicators that point out the elements pertaining to the military in the story: (1) five thousand men (Mark 6:44); (2) Jesus "commands" (ἐπιτάσσω) the disciples and the crowd (Mark 6:39); and (3) the five thousand are divided into hundreds and fifties (Mark 6:40).

3.2.1 5,000 Men

The Gospel authors emphasize the exact number of the people who were fed, πεντακισχίλιοι ἄνδρες. The text does not refer to 5,000 persons but actual men; Matt 14:21 states that the number is "without women and children."[25]

[22] See William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 227; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia 62 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2007), 324.

[23] Gabriella Gelardini, "The Contest for a Royal Title: Herod Versus Jesus in the Gospel According to Mark (6,14–29; 15,6–15)," *Annali di storia dell'esegesi* 28.2 (2011), 93–106.

[24] Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 1989), 336; Lane, *Gospel According to Mark*, 232.

[25] The presence of women and children, as indicated by the child bringing the loaves and fishes, contradicts the notion of an all-male assembly akin to a legion. Instead, it suggests that the count of 5,000 refers to men in addition to women and children, which does not align with the idea of an organized army. However, despite this inclusivity, the author, Mark, still singles out 5,000 men, potentially on a literary level, arguing for the symbolism of a legion, emphasizing the scale of the miracle and Jesus's role as a

Thiering tries to solve the riddle of numerology and proposes that the 5,000 reflects the Jewish multitude in opposition to the Gentile multitude in the case of feeding 4,000 (Mark 8), while the remaining baskets refer to 12 apostles in Mark 6 and 7 deacons in Mark 8.[26] These conclusions are too speculative and are perhaps influenced by ecclesiological thinking.

I, however, propose to look at this number as the number of soldiers in one legion. Between the first century BC and the first century AD the number of soldiers in the legion was changing from 4,800 to 5,280,[27] Jeffers estimates a legion consisting of 6,000 soldiers.[28] Historians and scholars disagree on the number of soldiers in the legion. This variability reflects the historical uncertainty about the sizes of legions, which likely persisted when the Gospels were written. Thus, 5,000 could have been a conventional figure used to describe a legion.

After establishing that 5,000 could refer to the legion, we need to point out that it was the general's responsibility to feed and provide for the army.[29] In Mark 6:41–42 Jesus provides for all 5,000 men. Therefore, Jesus acts as a general who feeds His "legion." This miracle provoked strong aspirations among the 5,000, but Jesus dismisses this "legion."

3.2.2 Jesus Commands (ἐπιτάσσω)

In Mark 6:39 Jesus commands (ἐπιτάσσω) the multitudes to sit down. The word ἐπιτάσσω is used ten times in the NT. In all cases, it has a very strong connotation. Jesus "commands" the unclean spirits (Mark 1:27; 9:25; Luke 4:36; 8:31). Jesus commands the wind and the waves, and they obey him (Luke 8:25). The king "commands" the executioner to bring John's head (Mark 6:27). Ananias commands "those who stood by him" to strike Paul on the mouth (Acts 23:2). Paul in Phlm 8 states that he is "bold enough in Christ to command." Therefore, in the NT the word ἐπιτάσσω is used to express a command with authority as that of a general to his soldiers. Jesus commands the demons and nature, but He also commands the multitudes here.

provider akin to a general.

26 Barbara E. Thiering, "Breaking of Bread and Harvest in Mark's Gospel," *NovT* 12.1 (1970): 4–5.

27 *DNTB*, s.v. "Roman Military".

28 Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World of the New Testament*, 174.

29 Jeffers, *Greco-Roman World of the New Testament*, 176–77.

Josephus also uses the word ἐπιτάσσω when he talks about the army and specifies that the Assyrians demanded (ἐπιτάσσω) tribute from the Sodomite kings in *Ant.* 1:172–73. King Eglon demanded (ἐπιτάσσω) the Israelites to pay tribute to him (*Ant.* 5:186, 199). There are many other passages in Josephus where he utilizes the term in describing the commands of the authority of the kings to the soldiers, to the captives, or to the ones who were subordinate to him.[30]

Philo, the master of allegory, uses the term when describing how the mind "imposes violent and mischievous commands on both soul and body" (*Alleg. Interp.* 3:80). Elsewhere, he talks about how the soul gives the commands that need to be obeyed (*Cher.* 115). In other passages, Philo also talks about allegories of mind, reason, or soul commanding (*Names* 1:226, 254; *Dreams* 1:56; *Abr.* 1:74).[31] Therefore, Philo takes the term and applies it to personal and philosophical matters.

First Clement 20:3 ascribes the commands over the sun, the moon, and the choir of stars to God. Clement also writes about the "prefects or tribunes or centurions or captains of fifty and so forth," stating that they "execute the commands given by the emperor and the commanders" (1 Clem. 37:3). Other Apostolic Fathers also present the idea of authoritative commanding in reference to the subordinate relationship.[32]

After a short survey of the term ἐπιτάσσω, it is evident that the term is most of the time used in reference to the subordinate relationship of the king and those who are under their authority. In the Gospels, the term is frequently ascribed to Jesus since his authority is promoted and demonstrated. Therefore, the term has military nuance and presupposes Jesus' authority as general or king (Messiah).

30 The word ἐπιτάσσω is used 41 times by Josephus in his writings. A survey of the usage of the word suggests that it was primarily used in reference to the command of the superiors (*Ant.* 7:99; 8:58, 147; 9:241, 259; 10:82; 10:123, 155; 11:45, 61; *J.W.* 1:89, 154, 465; 2:195; 6:131; *Ag. Ap.* 1:120).

31 The word is used 17 times by Philo and is often used in reference to the commands directed to one's body. Therefore, Philo allegorizes the meaning of the authoritative command and applies it to describe how these authoritative commands can manipulate a person's life (*Alleg. Interp.* 3:80; *Cher.* 1:115; *Migrat* 1:8; *Names* 1:226, 254; *Dreams* 1:56; *Abr.* 1:74, 228; *Joseph* 1:135, 152; *Moses* 1:37; *Prob.* 1:22, 30, 101, 104; *Legat.* 1:259).

32 The majority of cases of the use of term ἐπιτάσσω in Apostolic Fathers presuppose subordinate relationships (Did. 4:10; Barn. 6:18; 19:7; Herm. Vis. 81:4; 82:1).

3.2.3 Ranks, in the Hundreds and the Fifties

Jesus commanded the multitudes to sit by numbers, in hundreds and the fifties (Mark 6:40). Lane observes the green grass mentioned in v. 39 as reminiscent of Ezek 34:26, 29, and Ps 23:1 as well as ranking in hundreds and fifties as reminiscent of Exod 18:21.[33] Though popular, this interpretation still needs to be completed, perhaps, due to the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls after Lane's commentary.

Collins highlights notable similarities between the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) and Mark 6:40.[34] The *Damascus Document* and the *Rule of the Community* suggest that the DSS community had to be organized in groups of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens (CD 13:1–2; 1QS 2:21–23). An even more striking reading is found in the *War Scroll,* where the community is described as organized with banners and their standards waiting to fight against the wicked (1QM 3:13–4:4). The organization also follows the same pattern, "the name of the chief of the *hundred* and the names of the chiefs of his tens. And on the banner of the *fifty* they shall write, 'Ended…'" (1QM 4:3, emphasis mine).

Guelich emphasizes the probability of the Qumran community borrowing the organization from Exod 18:21.[35] However, they could also have borrowed it from the military organization of their time. In addition, in Qumran writings, this organization is closely associated with the military structure. Therefore, the organization of hundreds and fifties in Mark 6:40 indeed resembles the pattern seen in the scrolls of the community and is related to military service.

As was highlighted earlier, Clement also writes about the "prefects or tribunes or centurions [captains of hundreds] or captains of fifty and so forth" (1 Clem. 37:3). The division in hundreds and fifties are here also clearly related to the military.

To sum up, three elements highlight the military tones of the feeding of the five thousand. First, 5,000 is the number of soldiers in the Roman legion, so Jesus here is a general of the legion; He provides for His legion and supports the legion. Second, the word "command" (ἐπιτάσσω) was used primarily to describe the command that carried strong authority. It was often used to describe the relationship between the king or general and their subordi-

33 Lane, *Gospel According to Mark*, 229.

34 Collins, *Mark*, 324–25.

35 Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, 341.

nates. Third, the division of the multitudes in the hundreds and fifties strikingly resembles the division of a military unit in the DSS writings and 1 Clement as well as the military camp in Exod 18:21.

Let us take a look at this event from the point of view of one of those 5,000 men. Jesus and His disciples just fed that man, and he felt that Jesus would be instrumental as they would establish the kingdom with a sword and with sweat. He even just pledged his allegiance to Jesus, his general. Contrary to his expectations, instead of marching to Jerusalem with this newly formed legion, he sees Jesus forcing (ἀναγκάζω) His disciples into the boat and sending him away, along with the multitudes (ἀπολύω) (v. 45). Then he sees Jesus going into the mountain by Himself to pray (v. 46).

3.3 The Triumphal Entry: Matthew 21:1–11

The pericope on the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is often titled "triumphant" in our Bibles. It is impossible not to recognize the royal motive in this passage. Many interpreters highlight the significance and the peculiarities of the Matthean recollection as (1) the fulfillment of the OT quotations and (2) the introduction of the new elements, such as the healing of the "blind and the lame" in v. 14.[36]

Jesus is identified as the Son of David (υἱὸς Δαυίδ) in Matt 21:9.[37] In the story preceding the triumphal entry, the two blind men in Jericho cry out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" (Matt 20:30). After the blind men experienced the "compassion" of Jesus and "their eyes received sight, they followed him" (Matt 20:34), they became a part of the great Galilean entourage of Jesus, the Son of David. They joined the restoration movement of Israel as "soldiers" join their general. Even this announcement of Jesus as the Son of David brings to memory a description of David as "a mighty man of valor, a man of war" (1 Sam 16:18).

When Jesus was on a donkey moving to Jerusalem, all the people who went ahead of Him and who were following Him also cried out "Hosanna

[36] Hagner and Luz give more differences between the parallel stories in the Gospels. For more, see Donald Alfred Hagner, *Matthew*, WBC 33A (Waco, TX: Word, 1993), 591–93; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28: A Commentary*, Hermeneia 61C (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2005), 4–6.

[37] Matthew is especially eager to let the reader know that Jesus is connected with David. He begins his Gospel with the genealogy of Jesus where he clearly states and presents allusions to Jesus as the Son of David. Such as the number of Generations, fourteen, that can also be the numeric value of the name דוד = 4+6+4.

[save us] to the Son of David!" (Matt 21:9). The military expectations of Jesus's entourage are evident.

Jesus entered Jerusalem right before the Passover. It was the time when the Roman government was especially concerned with Jewish freedom aspirations.[38] The Roman soldiers were present in Jerusalem to ensure the *Pax Romana*. Therefore, it is probable that the great multitude that followed Jesus into Jerusalem perceived themselves as "soldiers" following a powerful military man. The association of Jesus with David further bolsters this point. David, renowned as the man after God's heart (1 Sam 13:14), was also known as a warrior. Consequently, David was ineligible to construct the Temple (1 Chr 28:3). Thus, the crowd may have assumed Jesus to be a warrior figure. However, Jesus, contrary to this expectation, immediately undertook the "reformation" of the Temple upon entering Jerusalem.

In vv. 4–5 Jesus fulfills the OT (Zech 9:9) by entering Jerusalem on a meek animal, a donkey. R. T. France beautifully describes Jesus as "victorious and yet meek, and his triumph is received rather than won ('vindicated and saved'). He rides a donkey rather than a war horse, and his kingdom will be one of peace rather than of coercion."[39]

Even though Jesus entered Jerusalem on a meek animal, the people of Jerusalem were "shaken" (σείω) (v. 10). They did not know much about Jesus since, according to the narrative of the Synoptic Gospels, this was the first time Jesus entered Jerusalem as an adult. The Jerusalemites did not readily receive Jesus.[40] In his interpretation of v. 10, Hagner did not acknowledge the threat that the people of Jerusalem had probably felt from observing the entrance of Jesus.[41] France, however, rightfully comments that the commo-

[38] Josephus testifies that Archelaus, Herod the Great's son and vassal of Rome, slaughtered a number of Jews who were protesting in the Temple (*J.W.* 2:10–13; *Ant.* 17:204–205). Sometime later the Roman procurator Ventidius Cumanus slaughtered a great number of the Jews who were gathered in Jerusalem for the festival. According to *Jewish Antiquities* 20,000 people died (*Ant.* 20:106–12).

[39] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew,* NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 777.

[40] Kinman compares the "triumphal entry" with *parousia* in the Roman empire and states that the city that did not receive the triumphant with readiness would be punished (Brent Kinman, "Parousia, Jesus' 'a-Triumphal' Entry, and the Fate of Jerusalem (Luke 19:28–44)," *JBL* 118.2 [1999]: 280–84, esp. 283).

[41] Hagner presupposes that people probably had heard the reports about Jesus from Galilee, but he does not emphasize the seriousness of Jesus's entrance with His Galilean entourage and the effect that it had on the people of Jerusalem (See Hagner, *Matthew*, 596).

tion filled those in Jerusalem with fear.[42] After all, the Galilean crowd, people from the northern province, with Jesus as their leader, posed a real threat to the Judeans and their peace. The entourage of Jesus could have also been perceived as a military unit ready to strike against the Romans and the Jerusalemites.

Jesus's "triumphal entry" also follows a spatial development. He approaches Jerusalem (vv. 1–9), He enters Jerusalem (vv. 10–11), then the Temple (12–16), and He leaves the city. These elements resemble the element of the conquest, but a different type of conquest. Jesus aims not to free people from their oppressors, the Romans. His purpose is to heal the very heart of the Jewish community, the Temple.

After cleansing the Temple, Jesus invites the blind and the lame, those who were mercilessly excluded, into the Temple and heals them.[43] After this, Jesus simply leaves the city. The Galilean entourage of Jesus is also dismissed. Like in the story of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus highlights the nature of His "military campaign." Those who followed Jesus were concerned with issues of this world; they were willing to die for the purpose of defending their land and their freedom. Jesus, however, touched on the very issue of the community and aimed to edify it. In Matthew Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and here again we see how Jesus is fulfilling the law as the Hebrew Bible by humbly entering Jerusalem on a donkey and cleansing the heart of the religious life, the Temple. Those who regarded Jesus as their messiah and leader were taken aback when their expectations of conquest were shattered once again. Jesus rejects and renounces military strategies and pursuits, leaving pacifism as the only viable option.

3.4 The Arrest of Jesus: John 18:1–11

The arrest of Jesus is a pericope that presents a collision of two "military" powers. Judas previously pledged his allegiance to Jesus, he was one of the disciples. In John 18, however, Judas joins the military power of the world that seeks violence. John 18:3 states, "Judas, having received (λαβὼν) a cohort of soldiers (σπεῖραν) and some assistants (ὑπηρέτας) from the chief priests

42 France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 781.

43 This text is perhaps an echo of 2 Sam 5:6–8. Jebusites were so confident that David and his people would not be able to conquer the city that they had the blind and the lame defend their city. The city was conquered. But perhaps because of the humiliating action of Jebusites the text of 2 Sam 5:8 says, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house." In fact, the word "house," *bait*, that is used here can also mean "the temple" which is often called *habait*.

and the Pharisees, went there with torches, lamps, and weapons (ὅπλων)." Judas previously, during the Last Supper, went into the night (John 13:30). A rejection and abandonment of the light, Jesus (John 8:12), leads into the world and darkness that cannot comprehend Jesus (John 1:5). George Beasley-Murray, basing his argument on Bultmann, argues that it is very unlikely that the military cohort would be entrusted to a Jewish civilian.[44] I, however, suggest that Judas was put in charge of the soldiers, and the term λαβών, in this case, presents an idea of "taking in hand."[45] The theological implication of this is apparent. Once you leave the light and walk into the darkness, you start living the evil model of conquest.

Ernst Haenchen opines that this Roman-Jewish company consisted of around 800 men, and that the high priest and Pilate arranged the arrest.[46] Due to the friendly relationship between the high priest and Pilate, it is likely that the cohort would be dispatched to deal with Jesus.

Jesus's activities were interpreted as rebellious and were perceived as a threat by the ruling powers. The disciples also perceived Jesus as the one who would lead them in the rebellion as a king leads their soldiers. Instead of resistance, however, Jesus meets his destiny with dignity. Along with Beasley-Murray and Haenchen,[47] I also see how Jesus's statement "I am" (ἐγώ εἰμι) in John 18:5 points the reader back to Jesus's ἐγώ εἰμι statements (cf. 6:20; 8:28, 54), where He associates Himself with YHWH. After all, Jesus is the revelation of the Father in John. Thence, the dramatic reaction of the soldiers: when they heard Him say these words, "they drew back and fell to the ground" (ἀπῆλθον εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω καὶ ἔπεσαν χαμαί) (John 18:6).[48]

The expression of Jesus's power is evident in John 18:6. However, Jesus does not exercise His power in order to stop His oppressors. He even dismisses His potential army, His disciples (John 18:8). Jesus is the king and the general who does not want to lose the lives of His "soldiers" but tries to save their lives (John 18:9). This model is contrary to the model of the rulers of this world. The rulers count for nothing the lives of their soldiers. The governors send them anywhere, hiding their evil agendas under the cover

44 George Raymond Beasley-Murray, *John*, 2nd ed., WBC 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1999), 322.

45 BDAG, s.v. "λαμβάνω."

46 Ernst Haenchen, *John: A Commentary on the Gospel of John, Chapters 7–21*, trans. Robert W. Funk, Hermeneia 64B (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 164–65.

47 Beasley-Murray, *John*, 322, Haenchen, *John*, 165.

48 Even though some argue that this cannot be true since Roman soldiers could not even understand the significance of the statement. However, it is important to bear in mind that the Gospels is a combination of history and theology. Here, therefore, this is seen very clearly.

of the "greater good." Jesus's example, on the contrary, is the example of a "ruler" who willingly and with dignity goes to death in place of others; He saves the lives of others.

Peter's eyes and ears seemed to be closed when Jesus faced the soldiers who were arresting Him. Instead of recognizing the power of Jesus, instead of hearing Jesus's command to be dismissed, Peter, a faithful soldier, uses his short sword (μάχαιρα) to protect Jesus (John 18:10). The final words of Jesus during the arrest should ring in the ears of Christian community throughout centuries, "Put your sword into its sheath" (John 18:11). Jesus does not need a military to defend Him. Jesus does not want His "soldiers" to cut the "ears" of others in their attempt to protect Him.

In John 18:1–11 we are confronted with the disciples' misunderstanding of Jesus's mission and His campaign. Jesus's disciples did not fully embrace the "military" rules of Jesus.

3.5 Good Soldier of Christ: 2 Tim 2:3[49]

Paul knew the power of metaphors, and he masterfully used them throughout his epistles.[50] In 2 Tim 2:3 Paul encourages Timothy to "share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." Philip Towner argues that the theme of sharing in suffering (συγκακοπαθέω) is the main theme of the letter.[51] It is true, since the theme occurs in other verses (1:8; 2:9; 4:5). But it is the metaphor that Paul employs to explain this suffering that is striking. Paul encourages Timothy to suffer as a soldier of Christ Jesus (στρατιώτης Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ). Even though it is not explicitly stated how this metaphor is applied, coming back to the analysis of our previous passages, we see that the life of

[49] Along with Johnson I argue that Paul was the author of the so-called *Pastoral Epistles* (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus). Luke Timothy Johnson presents a number of criteria that support Pauline authorship in Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 55–90. Johnson's position is acknowledged by prominent Pauline scholars such as N. T. Wright, who also argues for Pauline authorship of 2 Timothy (see N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 2013], 80).

[50] Only in his *Pastoral Epistles* can we identify at least eight categories of metaphors. These categories are medicinal (1 Tim 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1–2, 8; 2 Tim 2:17); architectural (1 Tim 3:13, 15; 6:19; 2 Tim 2:19); agricultural (1 Tim 5:17–18; 6:10; 2 Tim 2:6; Tit 3:14); commercial (1 Tim 6:5; 2 Tim 1:12, 14); marine (1 Tim 1:19; 6:9); war (1 Tim 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim 2:3–4); athletic (1 Tim 4:7–8; 6:12; 2 Tim 2:5; 4:7); cultic (1 Tim 2:3–4, 8; 5:9–10; 2 Tim 1:3; 4:6).

[51] Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 491.

a soldier of Christ is a life of suffering together with Christ, the commander, and the general.

While in some respect my conclusions resonate with those of Helgeland, Daly, and Burns, who opine that Christians opposed the military not on the basis of ethics, but of religion. He states that the Roman army was some sort of religion.[52] The same feeling of community is present in both Christianity and the army. Therefore, the matter of allegiance is even further emphasized. If you are in the "army" of Jesus, you can live up to His standards. You will follow His example of life that seeks to redeem others even at the expense of your own suffering. If you are in the army of this world, you will live in accordance with the satanic model, where you will always pull the object of desire to yourself.

Therefore, if Jesus, the Son of God, does not exercise His power and does not play according to the military rules of this world, then those who pledge their allegiance to Jesus Christ should follow the example of Jesus and suffer together with Him. Mounce thoughtfully explains the meaning of the metaphor of soldier that follows the encouragement of sharing in suffering in 2 Tim 2:3 and argues that it has the idea of "single-mindedness to please one who enlists him."[53] This is exactly what we have observed in our analysis of the previous passages. The question of Christians in military service is a matter of who you pledge your allegiance to. Do you follow the generals, rulers, kings, and governments of this world and, by extension, live according to their model of imploring force onto others? Or do you follow Jesus Christ, the general who leads you by His own example?

4. Conclusion

This article has examined the complex issue of Christians in military service and their adherence to NT ethics, particularly in light of the Ukrainian conflict. The analysis of biblical texts has revealed the diverse perspectives within the Christian community on the topic of armed defense versus peaceful resolution.

[52] John Helgeland, Robert J. Daly, and J. Patout Burns, *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 48. They also support this point listing a number of practices that resembled "Roman religious world, a microcosm of Rome itself." Some of the elements that they list are the cult of the standards, the calendar of frequent military festivals and sacrifices timed to coincide with similar services at Rome (Helgeland, Daly, and Burns, *Christians and the Military*, 54).

[53] William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC 46 (Nashville: Nelson, 2000), 507.

In light of these findings, Christians in military service face a delicate balancing act between fulfilling their duty to defend their homeland and upholding the teachings of Jesus. Navigating this tension requires a nuanced understanding that integrates the principles of both the OT and NT.

The OT reflects a transition from pacifism to the participation in just wars, while maintaining the hope for a future without the need for armies. In the NT, there is no explicit condemnation of military service but there is an emphasis on ethical conduct within the military.

By considering passages such as Luke 3:14, the feeding of the five thousand, the triumphal entry, and the arrest of Jesus, we have gained insights into the NT's perspective on military defense. These passages highlight the importance of fair treatment, ethical behavior, and Jesus' rejection of violence.

Those who follow Jesus are His "soldiers," and they cannot be the soldiers of some rulers of this world. As we have observed, multiple passages highlight the idea of choosing the right side and the right allegiance. In other words, you cannot serve both Jesus and Caesar at the same time. Therefore, the question of military service falls into the realm of allegiance.

In the NT, the issue of military service comes down to what or whom one serves. The call of the NT is to choose Jesus, pledge allegiance to Him, to become His "soldier," and follow His model. On the other hand, one can choose the government of this world, which will inevitably command to follow their, in most cases, evil agenda.

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JESUS'S REDEFINITION OF PSALM 110:1 IN MARK: AN INTERTEXTUAL STUDY

DINDO C. PAGLINAWAN
Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Abstract

Psalm 110:1 portrays an enthroned king to whom the Lord has pledged victory. It stands out as the most frequently quoted and alluded passage in the New Testament. Many scholars, acknowledging the NT's utilization of Ps 110:1, focus on establishing how this psalm aligns with and finds fulfillment in Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus Himself referenced this passage in Mark 12:36 and 14:62 when addressing questions about His messianic identity. While this article follows this common trajectory, it also diverges by exploring the nuance that, while Jesus applied Ps 110:1 to His messianic vocation, His self-perception of the Messiah's mission differs from the prevailing notion of a triumphant enthroned king in Ps 110:1. In the psalm, the king's victory follows His enthronement and is achieved by military force. In contrast, the Markan Jesus secures His path to victory and enthronement through enduring shame and a humiliating death (8:31; 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34), representing a defeat from a socio-political standpoint but a victory from a divine perspective.

Keywords: redefinition, inner-biblical resuse, enthronement, victory, and messiah/Messiah

1. Introduction

A plain reading of Ps 110 depicts an enthroned king to whom the Lord pledges victory. Yet the review of the scholarship in Ps 110 reveals that the

passage contains several difficult problems, such as various textual issues,[1] imprecise *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm,[2] loose identification of the figure "my lord,"[3] and the alleged New Testament's (NT) miss application of Ps 110:1 to Jesus.[4] These problems indicate that Ps 110 is a very complex passage,[5] as Hans-Joachim Kraus puts it: "No other psalm has in research evoked so many hypotheses and discussions as Psalm 110."[6] In turn, this complexity serves as a caveat to the reader to read the text responsibly.

In this study, I do not intend to offer conclusive answers to the above-mentioned problems—these issues will continue to be debated in the future. Rather, I will pursue the context of Jesus's use of Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:36 and 14:62 and explicate how He redefined the concept of a victorious-con-

1 All verses of Ps 110:1 have variants, especially v. 6 with six different variants.

2 See John Aloisi, "Who Is David's Lord?: Another Look at Psalm 110:1," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 10 (2005): 103–23. Regarding the historical context behind the psalm, Allen Ross mentions four possible historical situations based on the suggestions by different scholars: (1) the early time of David (perhaps, it makes a reference to an enthronement of a king or a coronation ceremony after the victory is achieved, or a pre-battle celebration which assures the king of his future victory), (2) the monarchy period from David to Azariah, (3) the early post-exilic period, when Zechariah prophesied about the unification of the priesthood and kingship, and (4) the late post-exilic period during which Simon Maccabeus converges the role of king and priest. Of these, the first is the most likely option for him. See Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms, 90–150*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 3:340.

3 The major interpretations of "my lord" are the Israelite king (David or Solomon) and/or the Messiah, see Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms III: 101–150*, AB 17A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 113.

4 John Goldingay (*Psalms: Psalms 90–150*, BCOT [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006], 3:291–93) is a good representative of those who see the tension between the new context of Ps 110:1 in the NT and its original context in Psalms. He states, "Mark 12:35–37 reflects how it would be understood messianically in Roman times, and on that basis some of its verses are applied to Jesus (e.g., Acts 2:34–35), though as a whole it does not fit him, and most of its application to him in the NT requires to be understood in a way that would not correspond to its meaning in any OT context."

5 The use of Ps 110:1 in the NT by quotation and allusion counts 21x (or 22x with the long ending of Mark 16). As a quotation, see Matt 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42–43; Acts 2:34–35; and Heb 1:13. As an allusion to an idea of sitting at the right hand (using κάθημαι or καθίζω), see Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; 16:19; Luke 22:69; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2. As an allusion using only the phrase "right hand," see Acts 2:33; 5:31; 7:55–56; Rom 8:34; and 1 Pet 3:22. The search is based on the textual apparatus of how NA28 connects the passages with the expression "right hand" to Ps 110:1.

6 Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60–150: A Commentary*, trans. Hilton C. Oswald, A Continental Commentary (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1993), 345.

quering royal enthroned king of Ps 110 in Mark.[7] Following this track, this study will contribute to the inner-biblical reuse of Ps 110:1, particularly in the gospel of Mark. However, to achieve the said purpose entails the establishment of the context of Ps 110. Here I will also briefly interact with the elusive issue of the *Sitz im Leben* of the psalm and on the various proposals in which "my lord" is interpreted by different scholarly opinions.

2. The Context of Psalm 110

The Hebrew Bible is taken as the basis of the exegesis of Ps 110.[8] Here I focus my attention on the literary context with emphasis on the enthronement and victory motifs, the nature of the psalm, and the description of "my lord." The goal is to obtain confidence in the context of Ps 110, which is crucial for its inner-biblical reuse in Mark 12:36 and 14:62. Once this foundation is built, I will establish the context of Jesus's use of Ps 110:1 in Mark.

2.1 The Text of Psalm 110

The text of Ps 110 is full of textual difficulties,[9] but this study assumes the reading in the HB. Thus far, the textual notes of Ross, Allen, and Hossfeld

[7] The comments by Rikk Watts on the use of Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:36 and 14:62, along with the allusion to the Son of Man in Dan 7, is insightful (Rikk E. Watts, "Mark," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. Greg K. Beale and Donald A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 220–23, 233–35). Nonetheless, Watts did not explore the prominent theme, victory, in Ps 110 in connection to the victory of Jesus in Mark's Gospel.

[8] The question of whether the Markan Jesus used the Hebrew text or the LXX in His quotation of Psalm 110:1 is intriguing. Comparing Mark 12:36 with Ps 110:1 in the LXX (109:1) suggests that Jesus used the LXX, except for ὑποκάτω ("under") instead of ὑποπόδιον ("footstool") in the LXX (Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ZECNT [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016], s.v. "Mark 12:36"). However, it is not fully certain that the Markan Jesus used the LXX over the Hebrew text, as the LXX aptly translates the Hebrew (William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010], 436–37). The theological significance remains regardless of the source. Since the LXX is a translation of the HB, the Hebrew text should be the basis for context. It is worth noting that majority of commentators on Mark do not seem to be bothered with identifying the precise source of the text in Mark 12:36, whether it is derived from the LXX or Hebrew.

[9] Because of the textual difficulties, some emendations were made as reflected in William P. Brown, "A Royal Performance: Critical Notes on Psalm 110:3aγ–b," *JBL* 117.1 (1998): 93–96. Cf. Thijs Booij, "Rule in the Midst of Your Foes!," *VT* 41.4 (1991): 396–407.

have been helpful in this regard.[10] I find no need to discuss the text-critical issues further, at least not in this article, although this study acknowledges that v. 3 with six different variants, is difficult to translate. The following is my proposed translation of the psalm:

1a A psalm of David,
1b *the* oracle of the Lord to my lord:
1cα "Sit at my right hand
1cβ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
2a The Lord will stretch forth your mighty scepter from Zion,
2b "Rule in the midst of your enemies."
3aα Your people will offer themselves willingly
3aβ in the day of your power, in holy array;
3b from the womb of the dawn, your youth is for you *as* dew.
4a The Lord Himself has sworn and will not change:
4bα "You are a priest forever,
4bβ according to the order of Melchizedek."
5a The Lord *is* on your right hand,
5b He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.
6a He will judge among the nations,
6b He will fill *them with* corpses,
6c He will shatter *the* head (chiefs) over the broad earth.
7a He will drink from the brook by the way,
7b therefore He will lift up *His* head.

2.2 The Literary Context of Psalm 110

The passage begins with a superscription לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר ("a psalm of David" [v. 1]). The said superscript is a standard marker for most of the Davidic psalms.[11] What follows is the content of the psalm (vv. 1b–7), which many

[10] Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:337–39; Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, WBC 21 (Nashville: Nelson, 2002), 110–11; Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Eric Zinger, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2011), 144–45.

[11] Jerome L. Skinner, "The Historical Superscription of Davidic Psalms: An Exegetical, Intertext-ual, and Methodological Analysis" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2016), 352–56. Other scholars represented by Goldingay (*Psalms*, 3:291) say that Ps 110 was written by a court prophet or minister, possibly Gad or Nathan, portraying David as the psalmist. However, this study assumes Davidic authorship because the super-

scholars have divided into two sections (vv. 1–3, 4–7),[12] while a minority sees three (vv. 1–3, 4, 5–7).[13] Scholars who label vv. 1–3 as "the oracle of the Lord to the king" appear to compartmentalize the oracle within the reach of vv. 1–3,[14] thus implying that vv. 4–7 are less than an oracle. Conversely, those who argue that each section contains an oracle can be misleading,[15] as it suggests three distinct oracles. On the contrary, the entire psalm is just one coherent oracle, introduced with נְאֻם יְהוָה (v. 1b). The unity of the psalm is also further substantiated by the victory languages/motifs, which form an *inclusio*, appearing at both the beginning (v. 1, enemies under the king's feet) and end (v. 7, the king lifts up his head [more details in the next section]) of the passage.

2.3 Enthronement and Victory Motifs

Whatever literary structure one may see in Ps 110, the motifs of enthronement and victory—which are prominent in the psalm—presumably remain recognizable. I find myself in harmony with the scholars who observe a twofold section of the psalm, but with a slight modification. I consider v. 1b as the starting point of the first section (vv. 1b–3) because it parallels in almost perfect equilibrium with the second section (vv. 4–7). The opening of both sections begins with statements of declaration: "the oracle of the Lord," which can also mean "the Lord says/said" (v. 1b), and "the Lord has sworn…" (v. 4a).[16] After this, the divine order of the Lord that constitutes

scription "a psalm of David" does not exclude it, and Jesus and Peter attributed Ps 110:1 to David (Mark 12:35–37; Acts 2:14–36; cf. 1 Cor 15:25; Heb 1:13).

12 The above division of Ps 110 is supported by the majority of biblical scholars, e.g., Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 5:697; Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73–150*, NAC 13 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2019); 342–43; Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford et al., *The Book of Psalms*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 834.

13 E.g., Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:344; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 346; Derek Kidner, *Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC 16 (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 427–31.

14 See Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:293; Samuel L. Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, ECC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 751.

15 See Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 346; Erhard Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations*, FOTL 15 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 263; John F. Brug, *Psalms 73–150*, 2nd ed., The People's Bible (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2001), 161.

16 Kraus considers three oracular sayings in the passage (Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 346). The first is the statement, "Sit at my right hand until I have made your enemies a footstool for your feet!" (Ps 110:1). The second, "On the holy mountains, from the womb of the

the royal status to "my lord" follows: "sit at my right hand" (a reference to the king's enthronement, v. 1cα) and "you are a priest forever…" (the king becomes a priest as well, v. 4b). Then the ensuing portion of each section, which contains the victory motif (vv. 1cβ–3, 5–7),[17] is noticeable in the following ways: enemies as footstool of the feet (v. 1cβ), rule in the midst of enemies (v. 2b), people willingly offer themselves in the day of the king's power (v. 3a), the Lord is at your right hand (an idea of strengthening the king for battle, v. 5a), kings be shattered (v. 5b), judgment on the nations (v. 6a), fill the nations with corpses (v. 6b), the chief(s) be shattered (v. 6c), and "lifting up the head" (v. 7b).

Noticeably, a large portion of the psalm deals with the victory motif. In fact, victory language makes an *inclusio* of the psalm as v. 1 closes with the phrase "enemies as footstool of your feet" and v. 7 with "lift up his head." To make this point work, there is a need to explain why the said phrases connote victory. In the phrase "enemies as footstool for your feet" (v. 1cβ), the term "footstool" (הֲדֹם) appears six times[18] in the HB and is always in construct with the feet of Yahweh, except in Ps 110:1, which connects הֲדֹם with the feet of "my lord." Based on the occurrences of הֲדֹם, the footstool of the Lord's feet is mainly associated with Zion and the ark[19] in the sense of rest. However, the imagery of footstool under feet in ANE sources indicates

rosy dawn, I have begotten you like a dew" (v. 3). And the third, "You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek!" (v. 4). This observation at first glance is brilliant because all oracular sayings directly concern the identity of the king. Nevertheless, in v. 3, the "I have begotten you" (יְלִדְתֶּיךָּ) assumes the same vocalization of that in Ps 2:7 (יְלִדְתִּיךָ), which the Masoretes distinguished from each other: they saw the יְלִדְתִּיךָ in Ps 2:7 as coming from ילד ("be born" or "beget"), while the יְלִדְתֶּיךָּ in Ps 110:3 is from יַלְדוּת ("childhood" or "youth"). Moreover, in v. 3, it is not certain as to who the speaker is, the psalmist or God? It seems that the clear direct speeches of the Lord in the psalm are in v. 1c, v. 2b, and v. 4b, rather than in vv. 1, 3, and 4 as suggested by Kraus.

17 My segmentation of the victory motif reflects that of VanGemeren, "Psalms," 697, who sees the victory motif in Ps 110:2–3 and vv. 5–7, following the promise in v. 1 and v. 4, respectively. However, I differ from him slightly because "enemies as footstool of your feet" (v. 1cβ) is a very strong victory language. In fact, this is the most decisive, for it connotes a complete subjugation of the enemy. For the ANE background, see John H. Walton et al., *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 553.

18 See 1 Chr 28:2; Ps 99:5; 110:1; 132:7; Isa 66:1; and Lam 2:1.

19 Psalm 110:1 aside, see footstool of God's feet (e. g.) I. Conrnelius, "הֲדֹם," *NIDOTTE*, 1:1011–12.

subjugation of the enemies.[20] This practice is also attested in Josh 10:24, where the leaders of Israel have trampled under their feet the neck of the five kings defeated in battle (Josh 10:16–43). In Ps 110:1, the enemies are said to be footstool "*for* your feet" (לְרַגְלֶיךָ).[21] Here, the inclusion of the preposition לְ clarifies that enemies are assigned "for" the feet of the enthroned king, perhaps as rest for his feet, which is the net effect of a complete subjugation of the enemies.

On the other hand, the phrase "lift up his head" (Ps 110:7b) is an image of victory. While the poetic act of drinking from the brook has been understood in various ways (allusion to Gideon's men drinking from a river, a reference to the ceremonial accession of the king, and symbol for a rich provision),[22] there is a consensus that such language, along with the "lifting of head," signals victory.[23] However, there is also a need to determine whether it is Yahweh or "my lord" who has gained the victory in v. 7.

Psalm 110:5–7 is perhaps the most difficult section, as far as identifying the grammatical subject is concerned. I consider Yahweh as the subject of

[20] For example, the painting from a tomb in *Abd el Qurna* (c. 1400 B.C.) depicts Pharaoh with nine enemies as a footstool under his feet. Carl Richard Lepsius, *Denkmaler aus Agypten und Athiopien* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1853), plate 69a. For more information, see Heinz-Josef Fabry, "הֲדֹם," *TDOT* 3:325–34.

[21] In the HB, the combination of הֲדֹם and רֶגֶל appears only six times (1 Chr 28:2; Ps 99:5; 110:1; 132:7; Isa 66:1; Lam 2:1). It should be noted that it is only in Ps 110 that רֶגֶל (in combination with הֲדֹם) appears with preposition לְ.

[22] Some see an allusion from Ps 110:7a to Judg 7:6 which describes Gideon's men drinking from the river. See Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 431; VanGemeren, "Psalms," 5:700. Others associate the act of drinking with the ceremonial accenssion of the king, which alludes to 1 Kgs 1:38–40. See Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:298; Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 352–53. Still others interpret drinking from the brook as a reference to rich provisions. See Allen, *Psalms 101–150*, 118; Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:357–58.

[23] The combination of the verb רוּם ("raise," "lift up," or "be high") and the noun רֹאשׁ ("head") appears only in Ps 3:4; 27:6; 110:7. In 3:4 and 27:6, Yahweh is agent of the action in lifting (רוּם) the head of the psalmist, and both texts use the said combination in context of victory. However, in 110:7 (within vv. 5–7), Yahweh as agent of the action is clear only in vv. 5–6, but in v. 7, the implied actor of the verbs יִשְׁתֶּה ("he will drink") and יָרִים ("he will lift up") seems not Yahweh, but the priest-king in v. 5. If both 3:4 and 27:6 use יָרִים רֹאשׁ as an imagery of victory, then likely, in 110:7 the expression is used in the same context as well (vv. 5–6). Cf. Geoffrey Grogan, *Psalms*, The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 84. Nordheim says that "'drinking foreign water' is a hostile, provocative act as sign of superiority over the conquered people … and 'lifting up the head' is a sign of the final triumph" (Miriam von Nordheim, *Geboren von Der Morgenröte? Psalm 110 in Tradition, Redaktion Und Rezeption*, WMANT 118 [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2008], 110–11).

the actions in vv. 5–6 and "my lord" in v. 7.[24] In other words, the implicit victory both in v. 1cβ and v. 7b is attributed to the enthroned "my lord." However, one should note that in the flow of the psalm, the psalmist positions Yahweh's act of enthroning the king ("sit at my right hand," v. 1cα) after the prophetic formula (v. 1b). Evidently, the victory motif (vv. 1cβ–3, 5–7) ensues only after the Lord's act of constituting the royal status to "my lord" (vv. 1cα, 4b). There seems to be more of having an enthroned king than of victory in that the necessity of having a king is secured first; only then is victory presupposed. Without an enthroned king, victory can hardly be conceived. Simply put, Ps 110 depicts an enthroned king who is bound to triumph based on the pledge of Yahweh. This must have given hope and encouragement to the psalmist, and by extension, to the intended audience, for to have a king means to have someone who will fight the battle for the people (cf. 1 Sam 8:20).

2.4 The Nature of the Psalm

The psalm is introduced by the expression and prophetic formula נְאֻם יְהוָה ("the oracle of the Lord" [v. 1b]), which can also be rendered "the Lord says/said." This expression is abundant in the prophetic books,[25] but in Psalms it appears only in 110:1. Its usage in the passage implies that the psalm is authoritative[26] and is prophetic in nature.[27] Hence, it can be categorized with prophecy, specifically a messianic prophecy.[28]

[24] Other scholars, as represented by Hossfeld and Zinger, *Psalms 3*, 150–52, see Yahweh as the subject both in vv. 5–6 and v. 7. However, this study follows Kidner (*Psalms 73–150*, 430–31), Ross (*A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:357–58), and Goldingay (*Psalms*, 3:296–99), who consider Yahweh as the subject in vv. 5–6 and "my lord" in v. 7.

[25] The distribution of the occurrences נְאֻם יְהוָה in prophetic books is as follows: Isa 21x, Jer 167x, Ezek 4x, Hos 4x, Joel 1x, Amos 16x, Oba 2x, Mic 2x, Nah 2x, Zeph 5x, Hag 12x, Zech 20x, and Mal 1x. Before the Israelite monarchy period, it appears only in Gen 22:16; Num 14:28; and 1 Sam 2:3.

[26] Writing on נְאֻם, Coppes states, "This root is used exclusively of divine speaking. Hence, its appearance calls special attention to the origin and authority of what is said" (Leonard J. Coppes, "נְאֻם," *TWOT* 2:541–42).

[27] For Lee, the prophetic formula נְאֻם יְהוָה sets the tone of the psalm (Peter Y. Lee, "Psalm 110 Reconsidered: Internal and External Evidence in Support of a NT Hermeneutic," *Reformed Faith Practice* 2.2 [2017]: 26).

[28] James Mays puts it as follows: "In style and content it is similar to sayings of the prophets" (James Luther Mays, *Psalms*, Interpretation [Atlanta: John Knox, 1994], 350–55). Allen P. Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms, 1–41*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 1:164–66, argues that Ps 110:1 is a direct messianic prophecy. Cf.

Crucial to understanding Ps 110 is recognizing its central themes. As mentioned above, Ps 110 depicts an enthroned king ("my lord") whom Yahweh promises victory. Since enthronement and victory appear to be dominant themes in Ps 110, this can then be categorized as a royal and/or enthronement psalm.[29] When compared with other psalms, according to Ross, this type of psalms deal more openly with Yahweh's rule or His reign over all the world, enemies, and created things—through His human king considered as His "son."[30] It should be noted that Yahweh, speaking concerning "my lord's" sitting at Yahweh's right hand in Ps 110:1, has a parallel idea in Ps 2:6, where Yahweh says, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." Psalm 2:7, on the other hand, alludes to 2 Sam 7:4–17, though the allusion focuses only on the adoption of David's offspring (the promised king for David's throne) as God's son in 2 Sam 7:14.[31] The reuse, in this sense, suggests that the promise made to David's dynasty in 2 Sam 7:4–17 is assumed in Ps 2. The latter, though, clarifies that God's son is the מָשִׁיחַ ("the anointed," v. 2), king of Zion (v. 7), and ruler of the nations (vv. 7, 9, 12).

Although the reuse of 2 Sam 7:14 in Ps 2:6 expands God's promise concerning the future of the Davidic dynasty,[32] it does by no means establish the dependence of Ps 110 on Ps 2. While the two passages are interralated

Barry C. Davis, "Is Psalm 110 a Messianic Psalm?," *BSac* 157.626 (2000): 162–73; Aloisi, "Who Is David's Lord?," 119–22.

29 "Royal psalms" is one of the five categories of Psalms according to Hermann Gunkel. See Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967). Gunkel identifies the following as royals psalms: Pss 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, and 144. Other passages are seen as related, such as, Ps 47, 93, and 96–99, but are called enthronement psalms. See Philippus Jacobus Botha, "The 'Enthronement Psalms': A Claim to the World-Wide Honour of Yahweh," *OTE* 11.1 (1998): 24–39.

30 Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 1:157, 164–68.

31 "At the heart of the covenant is the concept of *sonship*; the human partner in the covenant is *son* of the covenant God, who is *father*. This covenant principle of sonship is a part of the Sinai Covenant between God and Israel. The covenant God cares for Israel as a father cares for his son (Deut 1:31) and God disciplines Israel as a father disciplines a son (Deut 8:5)" (Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50,* WBC 19 [Dallas, TX: Word, 1998], 67). I argue that Israel as the son of God does not develop only from the Sinaitic covenant between God and Israel. Israel as a nation that emerged from Abraham, with whom God promised to become a great nation, has already been considered as the firstborn son of God (Exod 4:22–23) before the covenant at Sinai. On the ANE's idea of the newly installed king as the deity's son, see Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 340–41.

32 Edward J. Kissane, "The Interpretation of Psalm 110," *ITQ* 21.2 (1954): 105–6.

in terms of linguistic similarities,[33] their connection lies instead in the shared theological focus. Both psalms emphasize divine kingship and messianic prophecy. Psalm 110 depicts an enthroned king, whom Yahweh promises victory, highlighting themes of enthronement and triumph (110:1–2, 3, 4–7).[34] Similarly, Ps 2 portrays Yahweh, establishing His king on Zion and declaring him His son, underscoring divine rule and authority (2:1–9).[35] These psalms together emphasize Yahweh's sovereignty and the significance of His anointed king, who will eventually subdue His enemies.[36]

Given that Israel's kingdom came under various geo-political powers long after David's reign, even until Jesus's first advent, it seems arbitrary and thus not likely cogent to mount David's coronation[37] or Solomon's enthronement by David as the *Sitz im Leben* of Ps 110:1. If so, the direct messianic nature of the psalm can be used as a control in matters of addressing the question about the historical situation of the psalm and the interpretation of the "my lord" figure in Ps 110:1. In other words, the historical situation and interpretation of "my lord" must cohere with the plausible application/fulfillment of Ps 110:1 if it be read with a prophetic overtone.

2.5 The "My Lord" Figure

The oracle of the Lord is addressed "to my lord" (לַאדֹנִי) (Ps 110:1b). Insofar, the crux of the interpretive problems of the psalm is the difficulty in identi-

[33] There are some terms common between Ps 110 and Ps 2, which resonate with each other, such as; גּוֹי ("nations," 2:1, 8; 110:6) and מְלָכִים ("kings," 2:2; 110:7), יָשַׁב ("sit," 2:4; 110:1), אַף ("anger," 2:5, 12; 110:5), צִיּוֹן ("Zion," 2:6; 110:2), including the interchange of the divine titles יְהוָה and אֲדֹנָי. Other linguistic links, though, are ambivalent in the sense that they do not cohere in a logical sense. This is true with the terms קֹדֶשׁ ("holy," 2:6; 110:3), יוֹם ("day," 2:7; 110:3, 5), יַלְדֻתִיךָ ("birth," 2:7, "youth," 110:3), אֶרֶץ ("earth," 2:8; 110:6), and דֶּרֶךְ ("way," 2:12; 110:7). Note that these linguistic links by no means necessarily establish the dependency of the latter passage upon the former.

[34] See also *Alan Kam-Yau Chan, Melchizedek Passages in the Bible: A Case Study for Inner-Biblical and Inter-Biblical Interpretation* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016), 155.

[35] Chan, *Melchizedek Passages in the Bible*, 155.

[36] In Ps 2, the nations, led by kings who gather against the Lord and His anointed, will ultimately be defeated (vv. 1–3, 8–9). Similarly, in Ps 110, the subjugation of enemies is depicted through the imagery of "enemies as footstool" of the feet of Yahweh's king (v. 1) and the king lifting his head in triumph (v. 7).

[37] E.g., Eugene H. Merrill, "Royal Priesthood: An Old Testament Messianic Motif," *BSac* 150.597 (1993): 54–55.

fying "my lord." Scholars propose three major views: Merrill holds a Davidic view,[38] Bateman IV supports a Solomonic interpretation,[39] and Kidner advocates a direct messianic application.[40] I will briefly comment on these interpretations after dealing with the description of "my lord" in Ps 110.

There are major and minor descriptions of "my lord" in Ps 110. The major descriptions come from Yahweh's three direct speeches (vv. 1c, 2b, 4b). Yahweh's first speech reads: "Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies as a footstool for your feet" (v. 1c). The phrase "right hand" (יָמִין,[41] v. 1) conveys an idea of honor (cf. Gen 48:13–14).[42] In Ps 110:1, the sense of honor comes along with power/authority, and "my lord's" authority/power is noticeable in Yahweh's charge that he should rule in the midst of his enemies (v. 2).[43] One may agree with Hossfeld's opinion, that "my lord's" sitting at

[38] From a socio-cultural perspective the title "Lord" (אָדוֹן) is a fitting address to someone who is superior. Merrill argues that the title became so formulaic that even the king could use it for himself. His main argument is that the psalmist and אֲדֹנִי in Ps 110:1 are the same. For more information, see Merrill, "Royal Priesthood," 55–56.

[39] Bateman IV avers that Hebrew pointing makes a distinction between אֲדֹנִי (*ădōnî*) for human lord (except when it refers to an angelic being) and אֲדֹנָי (*ădōnāy*) for deity. When the two appear together in the same sentence, the former always refers to an earthly lord, while the latter to the Lord. See Herbert W. Bateman IV, "Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament," *BSac* 149.596 (1992): 448–51 (including notes). Having established this, Bateman IV argues that since David used "my lord" only two times during his lifetime, for King Saul and King Achish of the Philistines, it could not refer to the former because of the connection between Ps 110 to 2 Sam 7, and also it could not be applied to the latter because King Achish is a pagan king (Bateman IV, "Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament," 448–51). Thus, the logical reference of "my lord" in Ps 110 is Solomon, and the description of the enthronement might refer to the second coronation of Solomon. Nevertheless, for Bateman IV, the psalmist looked at Solomon as a kind of messiah, which is also the case of others who reigned after Solomon (Bateman IV, "Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament," 452–53).

[40] Kidner uses the NT lens to interpret "my lord" in Ps 110. He points out that Jesus repeated two times "David himself" and used the idea that David spoke in the Holy Spirit concerning his lord, arguing that David spoke the enthronement oracle to the messianic king (Kidner, *Psalms 73–150*, 426–27).

[41] For an overview on how יָמִין is used in the OT, see J. Alberto Soggin, "יָמִין," *TDOT* 6:99–101.

[42] Frederic Clarke Frederik, "יָמִין," *NIDOTTE* 2:466–91. A good example is Bathsheba's sitting at the "right hand" of Solomon (1 Kgs 2:19). Although her sitting at Solomon's right hand does not mean exaltation to the throne, it implies power or authority (cf. Ps 45:9).

[43] Cf. 1 Kgs 2:12; 1 Chr 29:23; Dan 7:9–14. The socio-cultural context of the OT, particularly in ancient Israel, often links honor with positions of authority and power. In many instances, individuals in positions of honor, such as kings, leaders, and priests,

Yahweh's right hand implies, first and foremost, that Yahweh is in the position of honor. Further, he mentions that Yahweh's sitting on the throne depicts His universal royal rule (cf. Ps 9:8; 99:1; Isa 6:1). He concludes that "my lord's" sitting at the right hand "is a participation in the exercise of YHWH's own royal rule."[44] Hossfeld's idea that Yahweh allows another being to reign with Him finds support in other books, where a human king sat on the throne of Yahweh's kingdom (1 Chr 17:14; 28:5; 29:23; 2 Chr 9:8; 13:8; cf. Dan 4:25 [v. 22 MT]). However, it should be admitted that there is no OT passage with similar language as in Ps 110:1. While it is arbitrary to insist that "my lord's" sitting at the right hand refers to his enthronement—because of the brevity of the text and lack of descriptions—the reuse of Ps 110:1 in the NT, particularly in the post-resurrection event, is indicative of Jesus's enthronement in heaven (Acts 2:34; 7:55; cf. Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). If so, the reuse of Ps 110:1 in the NT bolsters a direct messianic interpretation of Ps 110:1. Nevertheless, if Ps 110:1 be viewed apart from its use in the NT, it can be said that "my lord" serves as a co-regent of Yahweh (v. 1cα). He is in power and will ultimately put Yahweh's enemies in subjugation.

Although scholarly discussion associates "sit at my right hand" with the enthronement motif, there is a division among scholars on what setting (time and type) is depicted in the enthronement of Ps 110. Regarding the time setting, Bateman IV mentions three possible periods: [45] the pre-Israelite (Jebusite tradition),[46] the pre-exilic (era of Israelite kings),[47] and the post-exilic (Maccabean period).[48] As to the type of enthronement, festival enthronement, coronation after the battle is won, and even pre-battle ceremony, are

held significant power within their communities. The honor bestowed upon them was often a reflection of their authority and influence. See, for instance, the intersection of honor and authority in the narrative of Solomon with the two mothers before his courtroom (1 Kgs 3:16–28).

44 Hossfeld and Zinger, *Psalms* 3, 147.

45 Bateman IV, "Psalm 110:1 and the New Testament," 438.

46 John H. Patton, *Canaanite Parallels in the Book of Psalms* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1944), 30, 37, 41; Helen G. Jefferson, "Is Psalm 110 Canaanite?" *JBL* 73 (1954): 152–55.

47 See Kraus, *Psalms 60–150*, 345–47; Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms*, 3:340–41.

48 There are two strands here: First, Ps 110 refers to the post-exilic period not long after the return from the captivity of Babylon. This view connects Ps 110 to Zech 6:9–14 (Michael D. Goulder, *The Psalms of the Return: Book V, Psalms 107–150*, JSOT 258 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998], 142–51). Second, Ps 110 refers to the Maccabean period, where one person took the priest-king role (Bernhard Duhm, *Die Psalmen*, 2nd ed., KHC 14 [Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck], 1922), 254–56. Cf. Marco Treves, "Two Acrostic Psalms," *VT* 15 (1965): 81–90.

among the suggested proposals.[49] While we cannot be precise on the time setting and the type of enthronement of Ps 110:1 because of the lack of clarity and descriptions, suffice it to say that the passage depicts a prophetic enthronement of "my lord."[50] This enthronement, back in the psalmist's (David) mind, assumes the framework of which he was accustomed in his days.

The second speech states, "Rule (רְדֵה) in the midst of your enemies" (Ps 110:2b). In this speech, "my lord" (v. 1b) continues to be the recipient of Yahweh's command. The term רְדֵה ("rule")[51] in v. 2b along with מַטֵּה־עֻזְּךָ ("mighty scepter")[52] in v. 2a evoke an idea of kingship, though in the strictest sense there is no word for king (מֶלֶךְ) in the passage.

In the third speech the Lord pronounced, "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4b). This declaration is introduced with Yahweh's irrevocable promise, "the Lord has sworn" (v. 4a), highlighting the certainty of the pronouncement. Noticeably, the Lord's declaration to "my lord" alludes to Gen 14:18–20,[53] where Melchizedek is described as both king and priest, and thus, the priest-king role of "my lord" in Ps 110 is evoked. In the Bible we do find evidence that some kings took part in

[49] Ross, *A Commentary on the Psalms,* 3:340–42; Hossfeld and Zinger, *Psalms 3*, 144–45; and Klaus Homborg, "Psalm 110,1 im Rahmen des judäischen Krönungszeremoniells," *ZAW* 84 (1972): 243–46.

[50] See especially Acts 2:34; 7:55; cf. Heb 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

[51] The term רְדֵה appears twenty-five (25x) in the OT. The gloss indicates dominance by force, and it is often connected to rule by the concept of מׇשׇל. See William White, "רָדָה," *TWOT* 2:833. Its initial use is linked to man's rule over God's creation (Gen 1:26, 28). However, the word is generally used for man's dominion over someone (Lev 25:43), groups (Num 24:19), region (1 Kgs 5:4), rather than God's dominion, with the exception in Ps 72:8. In Psalms, the root appears four times, and only in 110:2 is it applied against the enemies. However, in other books, there are occurrences of רְדֵה against enemies or opponents (Num 24:19; Isa 14:2). It should be noted that in Psalms, God's rule or dominion (as an action) favors מׇשׇל (e.g., 22:29; 89:10; 103:19; 106:41) and מֶלֶךְ (47:9; 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1), except רְדֵה in 72:8, where the psalmist prays/wishes: "May he rule (רְדֵה) from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth" (NIV).

[52] Goldingay takes מַטֵּה־עֻזְּךָ as a metonymy for the powerful king commissioned by God (Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:294). The phrase מַטֵּה־עֻזְּךָ literally means "scepter of your might" which can be rendered as "mighty scepter" in attributive genitive. For an overview of the syntax of the genitive, see Bill T. Arnold and John H. Choi, *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 8–12.

[53] Psalm 76:2 [3, MT] parallels Salem with Zion. The Genesis Apocryphon (1 QapGen 22:13) and Josephus (*Ant.* 1.10.2 [1:180]) make a connection between Salem and Jerusalem. For a short discussion on the possible location of Salem and how it became attached to Jerusalem, see Michael C. Astour, "Salem," *ABD* 5:905; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1 (Dallas, TX: Word, 1998), 316.

priestly functions in some sense (1 Sam 13:8–14; 2 Sam 6:14, 18; 2 Chr 24:17; 26:16–21; 1 Kgs 8:14),[54] including wearing the ephod (2 Sam 6:14). But their role does not encompass that of a priest, as priesthood in the Israelite community follows certain traditions. Apart from Melchizedek, it is only Jesus whom Hebrews described as both priest and king (Heb 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:17). Thus, the Hebrews' appropriation of Melchizedek's priest-king role to Jesus further supports the interpretation that the "my lord" figure in Psalm 110 refers to Jesus, highlighting His unique messianic vocation, which encompasses the role of a priest.

As to the minor descriptions of "my lord," the victory sections of the psalm (vv. 1cβ–3, 5–7) project him as a victorious king. Yahweh is the main agent of the king's victory in physical-political battle, as the psalm presented Him as the agent of putting (אָשִׁית) the enemies under the king's feet (v. 1cβ), stretching forth (יִשְׁלַח) the king's mighty scepter (v. 2), shattering (מָחַץ) the kings and heads of the people (vv. 5, 6c), judging (יָדִין) the nations (v. 6a), and filling (מָלֵא) the space with corpses (v. 6b). However, "my lord" is not totally passive. He is charged to rule in the midst of the enemies (v. 2b). Importantly, Yahweh is said to be in his right hand (v. 5a). Putnam states that when the Lord is in someone's right hand, He is there to strengthen (Ps 16:8; 63:9 [8 in MT]; Isa 41:1, 13), defend (109:31), and grant victory (Ps 110:5).[55]

In the psalm, the preposition of יָמִין changes from לְ (לִימִינִי "at my right hand") in v. 1cα to עַל (עַל־יְמִינְךָ "on your right hand") in v. 5a. With Yahweh on the right hand of "my lord," the priest-king is depicted as strengthened for battle. Thus, we expect him to get into a fight against enemies. Surprisingly, Yahweh does the fighting (vv. 5b–6).[56] What follows is even more striking, because after Yahweh has fought, it seems that it is "my lord" who appears in the triumph scene, lifting up his head after drinking from the brook (v. 7). However, if we keep in mind what it means for the Lord to be on the right hand of the king (v. 5a), then the king's poetic victory (v. 7)

[54] For more information, see Carl E. Armerding, "Were David's Sons Really Priests?" in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*, ed. by Gerald F. Hawthorne (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 75–86.

[55] Frederic Clarke Putnam, "יָמִין," *NIDOTTE* 2:467.

[56] One may agree with Brueggemann who mentions that Yahweh's actions in vv. 5–6 "bring to mind the historical tradition of the great victories YHWH brought the people in early Israel. YHWH gloriously defeated those who opposed the covenant people; in Psalm 110 YHWH promises such victories for the ruler of the covenant people" (Walter Brueggemann and W. H. Bellinger, *Psalms,* NCBC [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014], 480).

could be seen as the anticipated result of Yahweh's implied act of strengthening "my lord" for battle (v. 5b). Therefore, "my lord" is not only a victorious king; importantly, he is a warrior who fights with Yahweh.

2.3 A Brief Critique

Having described "my lord" in Ps 110, this study argues that the Davidic and Solomonic interpretations on the identity of "my lord" are not convincing. It is very hard to advocate any of the above interpretations when the passage lacks more detailed descriptions. As to the Davidic interpretation, for it to be true, Ps 110:1 would require a speaker other than David—believed to be the psalmist in this passage—to identify David as "my lord." Jesus attributes the speaker in Ps 110:1 to David (Matt 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; cf. Acts 2:25). Of course, this argument may seem simplistic, but this is also the most biblically supported,[57] unlike the suggestion that Zadok was the speaker in Ps 110:1, who spoke of "my lord" as referring to David, which is difficult to establish.

Concerning the Solomonic interpretation, the perpetual priesthood that Yahweh pronounced upon the king in Ps 110:4 poses a major problem. It is true that Israelite kings on some occasions functioned as priests besides their role as king (2 Sam 6:14, 18; 24:17; 1 Kgs 8:14),[58] but this does not fit with the language of Ps 110:4. The clause "you *are* priest" is verbless (אַתָּה־כֹהֵן), and anticipates a stative הָיָה (*hayah*) "to be" between אַתָּה־כֹהֵן. The force of the Lord's pronouncement is on the identity of the king, which is more of a state. Thus, the king by *state of being* is a priest, forever priest in Melchizedek's order (Gen 14:18–20). Apparently, Solomon does not come close to this identification.

[57] Cf. Harold H. Rowley, "Melchizedek and Zadok," in *Festschrift für Alfred Bertholet*, ed. Walter Baumgartner et al. (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1950), 461–72.

[58] Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:296–97, notes that the kings' performance of priestly functions is natural because "they were heirs to the position of the king of Jerusalem as it obtained before Jerusalem was an Israelite city, when its king was also its priest." See also Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 113–14; Armerding, "Were David's Sons Really Priests," 75–86; John Westerdale Bowker, "Psalm 110," *VT* 17.1 (1967): 31–41. For different interpretations of Ps 110's reference to Gen 14:18–20, see Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, *Das Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie im Alten Testament: Unter besonderer Bercksichtigung der Geschichte der Psalmenexegese dargestellt und Kritisch Gewrdigt* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 235, especially note 3; H. E. Del Medico, "Melchisédech," ZAW 69 (1957): 167; T. H. Gaster, "Psalms," *Journal of the Manchester University Egyptian and Oriental Society* 21 (1937): 41.

The messianic interpretation is thus far the most natural and biblical reading. The mention of נְאֻם in Ps 110 suggests that the psalm belongs to the prophetic category. Hence, its fulfillment in the messianic era resonates with its prophetic nature.[59] It should be noted that in the Bible, Ps 110:1 is reused only in the NT.[60] Thus, it calls for a messianic interpretation. The question is whether David viewed the messiah as a divine being or merely an ideal human. Aloisi is inclined to the former, arguing that God might have revealed to David who the messiah is, but it is not written in the Scripture.[61] Although it is true that the OT is not covert about a divine messiah as hinted in, e.g., Isa 9:6 (v. 5 MT and LXX),[62] this view appears to be lost from sight in the landscape of the NT people's messianic expectations, as they looked forward to a geo-ethnic political messiah from David's lineage.[63] As far as the

59 Jesus's application of the psalm to Himself (Mark 12:36; 14:62) appears to argue that He is the figure pointed to by "my lord" in Ps 110:1. However, Ps 110:1 is not just about who "my lord" is, but also what Yahweh envisioned him to do, namely to "put enemies under his feet." Mark 14:62 points to Jesus's exaltation. Peter (allusion) and Stephen (echo) use Ps 110:1 in reference to Jesus's exaltation after His ascension (Acts 2:34–35; 7:55).

60 See Artur Weiser, *The Psalms: Commentary*, OTL (London: SCM, 1971), 692–97; Carl Fried-rich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *A Commentary of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 692–96; James Swetnam, "Psalm 110,1 and New Testament Christology: A Suggested Interpretation," *MelT* 50.1 (1999): 37–55. Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 179, notes that Ps 110 is rarely referenced during the intertestamental period. For possible influence of Ps 110 in early Jewish sources, see, e.g., Dead Sea Scrolls, 11Q13; Semilitudes of *1 Enoch* 37–71; *Testament of Job* 33:3.

61 Arguing that David was conscious of a divine messiah, Aloisi reasons that "David may have known more about the Messiah than was recorded in Scripture or revealed to Israelites in general at that time…. David may have received new revelation about the Messiah in connection with the composition of this psalm" (Aloisi, "Who Is David's Lord?," 120).

62 John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 244–48. For a natural (non-divine) reading of the messianic passage, see George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah, I–XXXIX*, ICC (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1912), 164–77.

63 Examples are as follows: (1) Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ (Mark 8:27–30), but when Jesus told His disciples that He as the Son of Man will suffer and die and be raised after three days, Peter rebuked Him (8:31–9:1). Peter's dislike of a messiah that will eventually die merely shows his belief in a political messiah. This understanding is also reflected in the request of the two sons to Zebedee to sit with Jesus on the throne, one at the right hand and the other at the left of Jesus (10:37). (2) The scribes viewed the messiah according to the OT expectations as the Son of David (12:35). (3) Nathanael perceived Jesus to be the Son of God, the king of Israel (John 1:43–51). (4) The wise

Gospels are concerned, it seems hard to trace a belief in a divine messiah held by the people in the pre-resurrection period,[64] with the exception of John the Baptist[65] and Jesus Himself. Writers of the NT who associate the "my lord" figure of Ps 110 with a divine messiah, did so only after the post-resurrection event,[66] and thus, their view of Jesus was influenced by the truth of His resurrection and what this event revealed about His messianic identity.

If we have to stress a possible divine messianic interpretation within the context of Ps 110, the word הֲדֹם "footstool" in v. 1 is perhaps insightful. As had been pointed out above, the said term occurs only six times in the HB and is always in combination with Yahweh's feet (1 Chr 28:2; Ps 99:5; 132:7; Isa 66:1; and Lam 2:1), except in Ps 110:1, which links the term with the feet of the enthroned king. If הֲדֹם in general expects divine feet, could it be that the הֲדֹם of "my lord's" feet in Ps 110:1 hint at divine feet and thus supports a divine messianic interpretation? Nevertheless, if הֲדֹם is such an important concept implying the deity of the messiah, then its Greek equivalent ὑποπόδιον could have been consistently used by the Gospel writers in Jesus's quotation of Ps 110:1. The fact is, only Luke used it.[67]

men considered Jesus as the king of the Jews (Matt 2:1–12). (5) For the woman at the well, the messiah had the ability to tell all things (John 4:25). (6) Others identified the messiah based on the Davidic lineage and his origin from Bethlehem (John 7:41–42).

64 There are some references that can be connected to the messiah in the Second Temple literature. For example, 4Q246 II, 1–5, describes the "son of man" as God's son who will rule his eternal kingdom and will judge in truth and in peace. 4Q174 *frag.* 1, I, 10–11, presents him as a Davidic figure who will save Israel. While the messianic identity of the figure referred to here is clear, it is not totally clear whether in these references there are enough direct hints that can support for the claim of a divine Messiah.

65 In the four Gospels, John the Baptist's view of Jesus as a divine Messiah is most evident in the Gospel of John. In John 1:19–34, religious leaders question John about the Messiah. He denies being the Christ (v. 20) and explains that he is preparing the way for the Lord, alluding to Isa 40, which speaks of Yahweh's coming. John identifies Jesus as the returning Yahweh ("he who comes" in vv. 15, 27, 30). Additionally, John refers to Jesus as the Son of God (John 1:34, cf. v. 49), a messianic title from 2 Sam 7:14 and Ps 2:7. While "Messiah" doesn't automatically imply divinity, John perceives Jesus as both divine and Messiah, linked to the coming God of Isa 40. Furthermore, John 1:29 describes Jesus as the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world, alluding to Isa 53 (vv. 6–7). Thus, John the Baptist identifies Jesus as both the coming God and the suffering servant of Isaiah's prophecies.

66 See Acts 2:34–35; 7:55; Rom 8:44; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; 1 Pet 3:22.

67 The LXX of Ps 110:1 translates הֲדֹם as ὑποπόδιον. However, the Markan and Matthean Jesus use ὑποκάτω to express "under" your feet (Mark 12:36cγ; cf. Matt 22:44), while the Lukan Jesus followed the LXX's rendering (20:43; cf. Acts 2:35; Heb 1:13; 10:13).

3. The Context of Psalm 110:1 in Mark

Jesus quoted or alluded to Ps 110:1 twice in Mark (12:36; 14:62).[68] In both texts, Ps 110:1 is used on the issue of his messianic identity.[69] Moreover, both uses are located in the final literary division of Mark (11:1–16:8).[70] The first is mentioned in Jesus's confrontation in Jerusalem (11:1–12:44), while the second is found in the passion narrative (14:1–16:8).[71]

3.1 Psalm 110:1 in the Text of Mark 12:35–37

The text of Mark 12:35–37 is without text-critical problems, though there is a variant between ὑποκάτω ("under") and ὑποπόδιον ("footstool") in v. 36.[72] The former is preferred,[73] as it conveys a more direct sense of subjugation, while the latter uses a metaphor, depicting subdued enemies as the resting place for "my lord's" feet. However, this variant is a minor one and does not complicate the syntax and semantics of the surrounding words (see the passage below).

35aα And Jesus answered and said,
35aβ as he taught in the temple;
35bα "How can the scribes say
35bβ that the Christ is the son of David?
36a David himself said in the Holy Spirit;
36b "*The* Lord said to my lord;

[68] If the long ending of Mark 16 is preferred, then Mark 16:19 can be included in the use of Ps 110:1 in Mark. However, this study opts for a shorter ending of chap. 16 (vv. 1–8). Thus, the use of Ps 110:1 in Mark 16:19 will not be explored in this study.

[69] For a short overview of some uses of the Psalms in the Gospel of Mark, see Timothy J. Geddert, "The Use of Psalms in Mark," *Baptistic Theologies* 1.2 (2009): 115–16.

[70] For scholars who place the final literary division of Mark in 11:1–16:8, see Richard T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 426; M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 311.

[71] Boring divides the final major section of Mark (11:1–16:8) into three sections based on the genre: chaps. 11–12 (narrative), chap. 13 (discourse), and chaps. 14–16 (narrative) (Boring, *Mark*, 311).

[72] For a short discussion of the use of ὑποκάτω instead of ὑποπόδιον, see Roger L. Omanson and Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), s.v. "Mark 12:36."

[73] See NA28 and UBS5.

36cα 'Sit at my right hand,
36cβ until I put your enemies under your feet.'"
37a David himself called him lord,
37b and so how is *he* his son?
37c And the great crowd heard Him gladly.

The text in v. 36 contains a quotation from Ps 110:1. Jesus's actual quotation of the said psalm in Greek reflects the rendering of the MT—which is aptly translated in the LXX—with modifications. In turn, it can be said that the quote in the passage reflects the LXX as well.[74] Whether the Markan Jesus used the passage based on the MT or the LXX, we cannot be sure. Besides, the identification of the exact source of the quotation does not alter the approach of this study—to use the rendering of Ps 110 and its context in the MT in order to illuminate its reuse in Mark. Below is a table of comparison between Mark 12:36 in Greek and Ps 110:1 in the MT, demonstrating how Mark slightly modifies Ps 110:1.

Table: Comparison between Mark 12:36 and Ps 110:1

Mark 12:36	Text	Psalm 110:1	Text
36a	αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ εἶπεν ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ	1a	לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר
36b	εἶπεν κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου·	1b	נְאֻם יְהוָה לַאדֹנִי
36cα	κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου,	1cα	שֵׁב לִימִינִי
36cβ	ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου	1cβ	עַד־אָשִׁית אֹיְבֶיךָ
36cγ	ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν σου.	1cγ	הֲדֹם לְרַגְלֶיךָ

The parallel passages show slight modifications. First, the Markan Jesus interprets the superscript לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר ("a psalm for David") in the MT to mean that it was David himself who expressed the psalm, as He puts it in Mark 12:36a: αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ εἶπεν ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ ("David himself said in the Holy Spirit"). The addition of ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ is seen by several scholars as an emphasis on the inspiration of the psalm.[75] Second, Jesus used

[74] See Adela Yarbro Collins and Harold W. Attridge, *Mark: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2007), 580.

[75] Τῷ Δαυιδ ψαλμός εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἕως ἂν θῶ τοὺς ἐχθρούς σου ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου (Ps 109:1, MT 110:1). Collins argues that the phrase "in the holy spirit" means David's prophetic status; thus, implying that Jesus took Ps 110:1 as if it were a Scripture (Collins and Attridge, *Mark*, 579). See also Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–*

ὑποκάτω to express "*under* your feet" (Mark 12:36cγ; cf. Matt 22:44) in place of הֲדֹם in the MT (ὑποπόδιον in LXX) to express "*footstool* of your feet" (cf. Luke 20:43; Acts 2:35; Heb 1:13; 10:13). The reason for Mark's use of ὑποκάτω instead of ὑποπόδιον, the equivalent of the MT rendering, is not clear. Suffice it to say that he used it as well in Mark 6:11 when Jesus mentions dust under feet (ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν). This usage is almost the same in 12:36, except for the change of the second person plural in the previous to the singular in the latter. Likely, Jesus's preference for ὑποκάτω instead of ὑποπόδιον seems to shy away from integrating the idea that enemies are a footstool of the feet, which is the net effect of a complete subjugation in the context of Ps 110:1. Nevertheless, ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν in 12:36 is still capable of conveying the idea of subjugation.

3.2 The Literary Context of Mark 12:35–37

The first quotation of Jesus from Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:36 appears in the final dispute between Jesus and the religious leaders (12:35–37). The passage above makes clear that the quotation is used when Jesus answered His own question to the interlocutors concerning the identity of the Christ (χριστὸς, "messiah").[76]

To gain a better understanding of the dispute on the messianic identity in Mark 12:35–37, it is important to have an overview of the narrative context of Jesus's conflict with His opponents in Jerusalem (11:1–12:44).[77] The narrative context in 11:1–12:44 contains five series of disputes, all happening in the temple: the question on Jesus's authority (11:27–33), the issue of paying taxes to Caesar (12:13–17), the question on marriage at the resurrection (12:18–27), the inquiry about the greatest commandment (12:28–34), and the

16:20, WBC 34B (Nashville: Nelson, 2008), 273; James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 376; Ezra P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1996), 236–37.

[76] The term "messiah" comes from the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ which means "anointed one." Its equivalent in Greek is χριστὸς, translated as "Christ," "messiah," "anointed one." See Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 2nd ed. (2014), s.v. "χριστὸς."

[77] Support for the literary development of Jesus's confrontation in Jerusalem, see Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 165–66; Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 306.

question regarding the identity of the messiah (12:35–37). These controversies did not develop from a vacuum but emerged from Jesus's provocative actions in the previous sections, namely: Jesus's veiled messianic entry into Jerusalem (11:1–11) and His act of cleansing the temple (vv. 12–25).

In Mark 11:1–11, the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem, as described in vv. 7–10, echoes the arrival of the eschatological king (Messiah) who brings salvation and universal rule (vv. 7–8; cf. Zech 9:9–10), and alludes to a triumphant celebration of national victory (Mark 11:9–10; cf. Ps 118:26 [117:26 LXX]).[78] The Jews, who valued the prophetic significance of Zech 9:9–10 in relation to their national expectations, would have understood that Jesus's manner of coming to Jerusalem is an enactment of Zechariah's eschatological king, bringing salvation and establishing universal rule.[79] Furthermore, the quotation from Ps 118:26 reinforces the idea of the victorious arrival of the eschatological king. Thus, in Jesus's arrival in Jerusalem, He veiledly displayed His messianic claims.

However, Carson asserts that it is not the manner of Jesus's coming to Jerusalem but rather His act of cleansing the temple (11:12–25) that serves as the backdrop, setting the stage for the ensuing disputes.[80] Within this narrative, there is an intercalation where the cursing of the fig tree (vv. 12–14) and the consequences of that curse, along with the lessons derived from it (vv. 20–25), sandwich Jesus's act of cleansing the temple (vv. 15–19). This act symbolizes the judgment upon unfaithful Israel and foreshadows the impending destruction of the temple.[81] Psalms of Solomon 17:21–27 associates the cleansing of the temple with the coming of the Davidic messiah.[82] Additionally, Hurtado notes that "in ancient Jewish expectation, the mes-

78 France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 434.

79 See also Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 262.

80 "Jesus' public entry into the city, with its messianic overtones (11:1–11), sets the stage for the confrontation; and the cleansing of the temple (11:12–19), a strike at the heart of Judaism, forces the issue" (D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005], 171).

81 The point of the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:12–14) including the result (vv. 20–25) and the cleansing of the temple (vv. 15–19) is the same. Jesus's actions in vv. 12–25 are real, on the one hand, in that they really happened in the narrative context. On the other hand, His actions are symbolic in that they point to the judgment upon the unfaithful Israel. Israel, like the fig tree, appeared to be nice and healthy, but is fruitless. Thus, judgment will fall on Israel and its sacred space. See James A. Brooks, *Mark*, NAC 23 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1991), 180.

82 Schnabel, *Mark*, 305–6.

siah was sometimes understood as rebuilding or refurbishing the temple, making it the seat of his kingdom."[83] If the messiah's cleansing of the temple referred to in Pss. Sol. 17:21–27 sheds light on the situation, then Jesus's act of cleansing the temple in Mark 11:12–25 conveys His messianic identity, albeit indirectly. Subsequently, the narrative unfolds with the emergence of the five series of controversies.

The first controversy revolves around the question of Jesus's authority (11:27–33). In this dispute, the chief priests, scribes, and elders[84] pose their inquiry to Jesus: "By what authority are you doing these things, or who gave you this authority to do them?" (v. 28, ESV). Their question arises directly from Jesus's veiled messianic actions in vv. 1–11 and 12–25, establishing a connection to His messianic identity. In response to their query, Jesus skillfully counters by asking about the origin of John the Baptist's baptizing authority—whether it is from heaven or from man (v. 30).[85] Faced with this counter-question, the opponents slyly reply, "We do not know" (vv. 31–33a), prompting Jesus's subsequent silence (v. 33b).

In the next section (12:1–12), Jesus confronts the religious leaders with a pointed attack through the parable of the tenants. The intensity of the dispute grows as opponents actively seek to arrest Him (v. 12). This leads to the second controversy (12:13–17), where the Herodians are dispatched to present a trap question to Jesus regarding the payment of taxes to Caesar (v. 14). Jesus's sagacious response, advocating the rendering of what is due to both Caesar and God, elicits marvel from those present (v. 17).[86] The third controversy unfolds (12:18–27), with the Sadducees entering the scene and posing a question to Jesus about marriage at the resurrection of the dead.

[83] Larry W. Hurtado, *Mark*, UBCS (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 208.

[84] The groups, namely, chief priests, scribes, and elders, appear first in Mark 8:31, which deals with Jesus's first passion prediction. They are mentioned next in 11:27 when they question Jesus's authority. They appear also in the arrest of Jesus in 14:43. And finally, they are present at Jesus's trial before the Sanhedrin in 14:53.

[85] In Jesus's questions to the opponents in Mark 11:30, the term "heaven" is a circumlocution for God. See Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 526.

[86] Cf. Luke 20:25–26. It is unclear in what manner the opponents marveled at Jesus's response. Their amazement might not have stemmed merely from His statement that people ought to give to Caesar what is due to him, which could suggest Jesus's lack of nationalistic zeal. Rather, their astonishment could have been provoked by His proclamation that one needs to give to God what is due to Him, directing people, as God's image bearers, to offer ultimate loyalty to God. See also Lamar Williamson, *Mark*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox, 1983), 219.

Jesus's response concludes with a direct challenge to the Sadducees' denial of the resurrection (v. 27).[87]

In the fourth controversy (12:28–34), a scribe emerges, questioning Jesus about the greatest commandment. Unlike the questions in the previous dispute, which were designed to ensnare Jesus, the fourth one takes a positive turn as the scribe sincerely asks about the greatest commandment (v. 28). He engages with Jesus and offers sincere comments (vv. 32–33) following Jesus's response (vv. 29-31).[88] Up to this point, Jesus has effectively silenced His opponents (v. 34).[89] However, this moment of silence sets the stage for a final dispute (vv. 35–37), where Jesus takes the initiative and queries the scribes about the identity of the messiah,[90] pushing the controversy further. In doing so, Jesus circles back to the primary concern of the first dispute—the question of the messianic identity (or Jesus's authority, 11:27–33). While He had previously responded prudently, now He provides a definitive answer, thereby framing the series of disputes with questions directly addressing the identity of the messiah (11:27–33; 12:35–37). However, it should be noted that He did not make explicit claims to be the Messiah.

Having set the stage by establishing the context of the controversies, I will now provide a brief analysis of Mark 12:35–37. Gundry has outlined a chiastic structure for this passage,[91] which I follow with some modifications to enhance our understanding of the literary flow.

87 In Mark 12:27, the phrase "God of the living" contrasts with the statement that God is not a "God of the dead." Within the context of Mark 12:18–27, "God of the living" is specifically connected to the statement that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (v. 26). Although Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are already dead, it is significant that God is described as the "God of the living," implying that in this context Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are deemed alive in some sense in His perspective. While this description of God adumbrates His resurrecting power in the eschaton (1 Thess 4:16–17; 1 Cor 15:51–53), this could also mean that "reality" in Hebraic thought is not merely based on what eyes and hands respectively see and touch. It is true that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still await resurrection, but the Markan Jesus describes them as if they are presently alive as hinted by οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς νεκρῶν ἀλλὰ ζώντων (Mark 12:27).

88 Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, ZECNT (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 543.

89 The silence of the opponents indicates that the debates had come to an end and Jesus was victorious (Hurtado, *Mark*, 208; Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark*, 332). However, Lane remarks that the silence of the opponents only leads to the next conflict scene (Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 434).

90 See also Walter W. Wessel, "Mark," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 8:738.

91 Robert H. Gundry, *A Commentary for His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 719.

A And (καὶ) Jesus, having answered and said, as He taught in the temple (35a),
  B "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son (υἱὸς) of David (35b)?
    C David himself said (αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ εἶπεν) in the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord (κυρίῳ) (36ab)
      D Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet (36c).
    C[1] David himself called (αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ λέγει) him lord (κύριον) (37a),
  B[1] so how is he his son (υἱός) (37b)?"
A[1] And (καὶ) the great crowd heard him gladly (37c).

The chiastic structure is built upon a solid linguistic correspondence between the parallel segments, particularly in BB[1] and CC[1], with the exception of the D segment (center of the chiasm).[92] The parallelism between v. 35a and v. 37c makes sense only in the use of the καὶ at the opening of the clauses and in the logical sense between Jesus's teaching at the temple (v. 35a), which the people heard gladly (v. 37c). From what can be observed in the structure, the content of the fifth dispute (vv. 35b–37b) is framed by two rhetorical questions about the Son of David (B and B[1]). Lane points out that "those questions are calculated to provoke thoughtful reflection upon the character of the Messiah in the perspective of the OT witness to his lordship."[93]

The question posed by Jesus in v. 35b ("How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?") reflects the prevailing belief of both the scribes and the community regarding the regal Davidic messiah,[94] identified as the Son of David due to his Davidic lineage.[95] It is noteworthy that the title "Son of David" appears only three times in the Gospel of Mark. Bartimaeus uses it twice when pleading with Jesus for healing (10:47–48; cf. Rom 1:1–4), and Jesus employs it as well when challenging the views of His opponents about

92 See the linguistic elements in the structure, especially BB[1]CC[1].

93 Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 436.

94 In Jewish apocalyptic expectations, there are variations of messianic views: messiah as king, messiah as priest, and the righteous messiah by the Qumran community.

95 In the OT, the messiah is described as the stump of Jesse (Isa 11:1), the branch of David/Jesse (e.g., Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5–6; Zech 3:8; 6:12). In the rabbinic writings (e.g., *b. 'Erub.* 43a; *b. Meg.* 17b; *b. Ketub.* 112b) and Pss. Sol. 17:21, the Davidic descent of the messiah is maintained. See Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 272. Contrarily, Gundry argues that the biblical reference to the messiah as the Son of David is not solid (Gundry, *Mark*, 718, 723).

the messiah.[96] Importantly, Jesus's question to the scribes does not discredit the concept of the Messiah as David's son but rather exposes its inadequacy,[97] as seen in vv. 36–37b.

In v. 36 Jesus references Ps 110:1 stating, "The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.'" Subsequently, in v. 37, He elucidates that if David addresses the one seated at the right hand of God as "Lord," then how can this individual also be David's son (v. 37b)? Aligning with Bock's perspective, one may concur that David designates the messiah as "Lord" due to their shared authority to rule. Furthermore, the socio-cultural connotations of the title "lord" imply a position of superiority.[98] Consequently, Jesus's intent in quoting Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:35–37 appears clear—He posits that the messiah surpasses the conventional Davidic understanding, thereby challenging and rectifying the prevailing perception of the Messiah. Jesus concludes the dispute with this assertion, and the crowd receives His message with approval (v. 37c).[99] If those present during the exchanges had synthesized the events in context, they might have comprehended that Jesus was indeed the messiah[100]—one who

[96] Although Jesus in Mark 12:35–37 does not claim that He is the messiah, the Son of David, it appears that the Markan narrator expects his audience to pick up that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, who is the Son of David, because of its connection to Jesus as the Son of David in Bartimaeus's confession (Mark 10:47–48). For sources dealing with different views of the messiah, see Marinus de Jonge, "Messiah," *ABD* 4:777–88; Trevan G. Hatch, "Messianism and Jewish Messiahs in the New Testament Period," in *New Testament History, Culture, and Society: A Background to the Text of the New Testament*, ed. Lincoln H. Blumell (Provo, UT: RSC/BYU, 2019), 71–85; Micheal F. Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come?: The Historical Jesus and the Messianic Question* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009); Stanley E. Porter, *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments*, MNTS (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

[97] Allen Black, *Mark*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), s.v. "Mark 12:35." In contrast, France (*The Gospel of Mark*, 483) seems to argue for the opposite as he puts it, "Yet the thrust of this pericope seems to be at least to devalue this title, if not to disavow it altogether."

[98] Darrell L. Bock, *Mark*, NCBC (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 313.

[99] R. Alan Cole says that the gladness of the crowd expresses delight at the discomfiture of the scribes (and opponents in general) (R. Alan Cole, *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC 2 [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989], 275). However, I argue that the crowd's gladness is rather a conscious response to the profundity of Jesus's teaching (12:17, 37; cf. 1:27; 2:12; 9:15).

[100] Within the section of Jesus's way to Jerusalem (Mark 8:22–10:52), Bartimaeus acknowledged Him as the Son of David (10:28, 47). Jesus's confrontations in Jerusalem, particularly His entry to the city (11:1–11) and actions of cleansing the temple (11:12–25),

is far superior to the archetypal Davidic messiah, and thus, could have confessed with Mark that Jesus reigns as hinted by the loaded prologue statement "Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ" (Mark 1:1).[101] It is noteworthy that, despite the absence of an explicit messianic claim in Mark 12:35–37, the implied distinction underscores the elevated messianic designation of Jesus.

If, according to Jesus, the Messiah holds a superior status compared to the conventional understanding rooted in Davidic terms, one may question the significance of such a distinction. Does this not render the concept of "the least and the great" meaningless, especially in light of Jesus's rebuke to His disciples who sought elevated positions in his kingdom (10:35–45)? Watts, in his analysis, points out that the central concern in Mark 12:35–37 revolves around the implications of "the messiah being David's Lord." The focus lies less on divergence in Jesus's perception of the messiah compared to that of Israel,[102] as suggested by some scholars.[103] Watts' subsequent exposition suggests that the Messiah, as identified with Jesus, being recognized as David's Lord, implies a divine nature. This interpretation is based on the inner-biblical reuse observed between Mark 1:11 and Ps 2:7, the consistent use of the "Son of Man" referencing Dan 7 in relation to Jesus (Mark 2:10, 28; 8:38; 10:45; 14:62), Jesus's demonstration of divine prerogatives (2:5–7), and His authoritative rebuke of spirits along with the performance of miraculous acts (4:39–41; 6:49–52).[104]

While the aforementioned reasons may lend support to the arguments for Jesus's divine identity, they appear somewhat detached from the narrative context. Consequently, I align with scholars who posit that in Mark

covertly depict His messianic identity. His question to the scribes further elaborates the identity of the Messiah (12:35–37).

101 Commenting on Mark 1:1, N. T. Wright asserts that Mark's prologue subverts Roman imperial ideology by portraying Jesus as the rightful King, thereby posing a challenge to Caesar's rule. See N. T. Wright, *How God Became King: The Forgotten Story of the Gospels* (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2012), 67–69. Similarly, Richard Horsley argues that Mark 1:1 offers a political critique of Roman authority, presenting Jesus as the true Son of God in contrast to Caesar, who also claimed this title. See Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 14–16. Cf. Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB (London: Yale University Press, 2000), 138–41.

102 Watts, "Mark," 221–22.

103 E.g., Witherington, *The Gospel of Mark*, 332–33; Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 376–77. Cf. Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), says that Jesus is greater than the messiah in Davidic term because He is not just the Son of David, but also "lord" (He is "lord" because He is the Son of God).

104 Watts, "Mark," 221–22.

12:35–37, Jesus presents a distinct perspective on the messiah compared to the conventional belief held by the Jews. In Jesus's view, the Messiah transcends the category traditionally ascribed to David. However, Jesus refrains from providing explicit clarification within the narrative context of 11:1–12:44, leaving the audience to infer the implications of His statement.[105]

In a broader narrative context, Jesus consistently underscores the idea that, He would undergo suffering and death (with the title "Son of Man" used interchangeably with "Messiah" in Mark 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34),[106] but His death would provide ransom for many (10:45). Examining the perspective of "the least and the great," introduced by Jesus in 10:35–45, it becomes evident that the Messiah/Son of Man (Jesus), who will offer His life for the people, occupies a preeminent position, described as greater and foremost. This characterization aligns with the notion that "He came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (v. 45). Jesus's act of service implies that He takes the form of a servant, demonstrating the role of the least. This ultimate act of service, giving His life for many, is what elevates Him to the status of the greatest. Through His willingness to serve and sacrifice, Jesus anticipates His eventual victory and enthronement, as implicitly conveyed in 16:60–62.

3.3 Psalm 110:1 in Mark 14:60–62

In a further instance, Jesus invokes Ps 110:1 during the exchange with the high priest in Mark 14:62, as delineated in the dialogue presented in vv. 60–62. The allusion to Ps 110:1 ensues from the high priest's interrogations, prompting Jesus to respond to the accusations leveled against Him (v. 60). Jesus's reticence (v. 61a) prompts a follow-up question from the high priest (v. 61bc), leading to Jesus's eventual response in v. 62, which includes allusions drawn from the OT. From a text-critical perspective, vv. 60–62 exhibit no discernible textual issues, although they incorporate allusions to the OT.[107] This study, however, concentrates solely on the allusions in v. 62, derived from Dan 7:13 and Ps 110:1.[108]

[105] See also David E. Garland, *Mark*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 478.

[106] See the first few paragraphs of section 3.2.

[107] Mark 14:61 contains echoes and allusions to Isa 53:7; Pss 38:14–16; and 39:9–10.

[108] The sequence of the allusions in Mark 14:62 follows this way: Dan 7:13 ("Son of Man") + Ps 110:1 ("sitting at the right hand" of power) + Dan 7:13 ("coming with the clouds of heaven").

60a And the high priest stood up in the midst,
60b he asked Jesus, saying:
60cα "Do you have no answer,
60cβ what is it that these men testify *against* you?"
61a But He remained silent and answered nothing.
61b Again the high priest asked and said to Him;
61c "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed?"
62a And Jesus said;
62b "I am,
62cα and you will see the Son of Man,
62cβ seated at the right hand of power,[109]
62cγ and coming with the clouds of heaven."

3.4 The Literary Context of Mark 14:60–62

The inquiry into Jesus's messianic identity in Mark 14:60–62 constitutes a pivotal element within the Passion narrative (14:1–16:8),[110] specifically within the trial of Jesus (vv. 53–65). This immediate section comprises several units: vv. 53–54, 55–59, 60–62, and 63–65.[111] Setting the stage for the trial, vv. 53–54 depict Jesus in the Sanhedrin before the high priest, chief priests, elders, and scribes (v. 53). The appearance of the chief priests, scribes, and elders together recalls their initial appearance in 8:31, coinciding with Jesus's first Passion prediction (cf. 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34).[112] It is noteworthy that the fulfillment of this prediction unfolds through various stages.[113]

Examining the narrative context, from Jesus's confrontation in Jerusalem (11:1–12:44), the progression seamlessly leads into the Passion narrative (14:1–16:8),[114] albeit momentarily interrupted by Jesus's eschatological dis-

[109] Many scholars believe that the use of "power" (δυνάμις) is a circumlocution for "God." See for example, France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 611; Stein, *Mark*, 684.

[110] Swete provides an overview outline of the passion: "(1) the official rejection of the Messiah by the Sanhedrin, (2) His violent death, (3) His victory over death" (Henry Barclay Swete, ed., *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, CCGNT [London: Macmillan, 1898], 178).

[111] See also Strauss, *Mark*, 652.

[112] "From 8:31 to the end (16:8), the Gospel of Mark becomes an extended 'Passion Narrative,' and the necessity of Jesus's death is emphasized" (Stein, *Mark*, 401).

[113] See note 84.

[114] I find myself in harmony with Rhoads and Michie with regards to the development of the narrative context that leads to the execution of Jesus, though they did not mention major narrative blocks as I did. See David M. Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as*

course (13:1–37). Crucially, the chief priests, scribes, and elders—the same groups that questioned Jesus's authority regarding His messianic identity in the initial dispute (11:27) of 11:1–12:44—reappear during His arrest (14:43), conduct the trial before the Sanhedrin (vv. 53–54), and ultimately deliver Him to Pilate (15:1). In the broader narrative context, the explicit response Jesus provides to the question of messianic identity in 14:60–62 stands as the climactic point in the series of disputes between Jesus and the religious leaders.

As the narrative unfolds in 14:55–59, the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin exhibit a determined resolve to condemn Jesus. Their concerted efforts to find credible witnesses for this purpose prove futile (vv. 55–56).[115] Faced with the absence of convincing testimony, the high priest takes matters into his own hands, seeking to compel the issue by directing questions at Jesus that ultimately address His messianic identity (vv. 60–62).[116] In the initial question, the high priest ostensibly seeks Jesus's response to the accusations leveled against Him (v. 60), but Jesus remains silent (v. 61a). The subsequent query, however, is more direct. When the high priest poses the question a second time, inquiring whether Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed (v. 61b), Jesus affirms, stating, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (v. 62). Stein notes that Jesus's response comprises two distinct parts. The first part, the declarative "I am" statement, effectively concludes the messianic secret, addressing the question of whether He is the Christ.[117] The second part incorporates allusions from Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13,[118] providing additional elaboration on Jesus's messianic identity.

Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 82–83.

115 Scholars have quickly recognized that Jesus's trial was not fair because "while the charge was not yet decided, the verdict was!" (John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP 2 [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002], 427; Stein, *Mark*, 681; France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 604). For reasons why the trial was invalid and unfair, see Stein, *Mark*, 68–82.

116 France (*The Gospel of Mark*, 608) mentions that the question of the chief priest in v. 60b (οὐκ ἀποκρίνῃ οὐδὲν τί οὗτοί σου καταμαρτυροῦσιν) should be seen as double questions: the first posing a challenge to the silence of Jesus, and the second is designed to call for Jesus's response. However, he adds, "But to take it as a single question, with the τί doing duty for a relative … while grammatically awkward, would achieve the same sense."

117 Stein, *Mark*, 684.

118 Stein, *Mark*, 684.

Consequently, Jesus's unequivocal response became the basis of the high priest's charge of blasphemy against Him (Mark 14:63–65).[119] However, the precise nature of this charge remains somewhat ambiguous. It is not explicitly stated whether the high priest accuses Jesus of blasphemy for professing to be the Christ, the Son of God (Blessed) as hinted in His "I am" statement or for claiming to be the "Son of Man," or both. Aligning with Schnabel's perspective, one might posit that Jesus's alleged blasphemy is most plausibly associated with His self-identification with the authority of the enthroned royal figure in Ps 110:1 and the authoritative figure resembling the Son of Man in Dan 7:13. This association is rooted in Jesus's claims of being seated next to God in heaven, forming the basis for the high priest's charge of blasphemy.[120]

Jesus's response to the high priest's question in Mark 14:62 encompasses deliberate allusions from Ps 110:1, evident in the use of the phrase "sitting at the right hand," and from Dan 7:13, as indicated by the reference to the "Son of Man" coming with great clouds. The term "Son of Man" appears fourteen times in the Gospel of Mark, reflecting three distinct emphases: His authority (2:10, 28), His experience of suffering and death,[121] and His subsequent exaltation (8:38; 13:36; 14:62). Notably, the transition from "Christ" to "Son of Man" occurs only twice—both instances involve the confession that Jesus is the Christ, immediately interchanged with the Son of Man (8:29–31; 14:61–62). This interchange suggests that Jesus's understanding of the "messiah" is intricately linked with His understanding of the "Son of Man," with the latter being His preferred self-designation for specific reasons.

Firstly, it appears that Jesus's replacement of "Son of Man" for "Christ" serves to redefine the conventional image of a political-warrior messiah, transforming it into a figure characterized by humility and vulnerability.[122] This notion of a messiah is emphasized in Jesus's journey, particularly as it unfolds in His approach to Jerusalem (8:22–10:52).[123] During this period, Peter makes a significant confession, affirming Jesus as the Christ (8:29), the

[119] Blasphemy (βλασφημία) is defined as "speech that denigrates or defames," see BDAG, s.v. "βλασφημία." On different grounds of blasphemy, see Schnabel, *Mark*, 385–86.

[120] Schnabel, *Mark*, 386.

[121] Mark 8:31, 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 14:21 (2x), 41.

[122] Against those who say that the Son of Man title in Mark makes a reference to the messianic and divine identity of Jesus, Evans asserts that Jesus applied the title to Himself using its generic meaning, humanity (cf. Ps 8:4), except when the Son of Man has a direct link to Dan 7:13 (Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, lxxiii–viii).

[123] The section on the way of suffering and glory in Mark 8:22–10:52 is enclosed by two sections of healing of blind men. In other words, it opens and closes with the sections

long-awaited messiah anticipated to bring deliverance to Israel. However, Jesus disappoints Peter by revealing that the "Son of Man"—replacing the title "Christ"—will undergo suffering and death (8:31). Peter's subsequent rebuke (v. 32) reflects a reluctance to relinquish the notion of an ideal regal messiah, envisaged as a triumphant warrior.[124]

Despite Peter's resistance, Jesus reiterates His impending Passion three more times, emphasizing the Son of Man's (in lieu of Christ) suffering and death (9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34). Crucially, Jesus underscores that through surrendering His life in death, He will provide a ransom for many (10:45).[125] This awareness of His death vocation[126] is reiterated two more times in the Passion narrative (14:21, 41). Consequently, Jesus's redefinition of the messianic identity—shifting from a regal figure in Ps 110:1 to a messiah who conquers not through physical force but through sacrificial death—transforms the conventional notion of victory, reframing it as a triumph from a divine perspective despite its apparent defeat in socio-political terms.

Secondly, Jesus's use of the term "Son of Man" serves as a forward-looking anticipation of His imminent exaltation in glory, particularly in the face of His trial before the Sanhedrin with death looming. This deliberate use of the of the title serves to balance the frequent emphasis on the "Son of Man" in association with His impending death.[127] The profound portrayal of Jesus's exaltation in Mark 14:62 is articulated through deliberate allusions to Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13.

of Jesus's healing of a blind man: the healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22–30) and the healing of blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52).

124 The belief in a political and victorious messiah is also reflected in the request of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They requested Jesus to let them sit, one at the right hand and the other at the left, when Jesus would sit in glory (10:35-40). Jesus's initial answer to this request is appropriate, "you don't know what you are asking" (v. 38a). It is interesting that at Jesus's crucifixion (a form of exaltation), two robbers were with Jesus, one at His right and one at His left (15:27). Indeed, James and John had missed essential points in their understanding of Jesus's messianic identity.

125 Although there is no direct connection of τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν in Mark 10:45 to Isa 53, the sacrificial suffering of the Yahweh's servant and his ψυχὴ (נֶפֶשׁ)—mentioned three times in Isa 53 (vv. 10–12)—given to death for people's (our) sins, transgressions, and iniquities, implies such a connection.

126 The Markan author does not totally forego the description of a conquering messiah as Jesus engaged in conquering all kinds of peoples' maladies and diseases (e.g., 1:29–34; 1:40–2:12), raising the dead to life (5:21–43), and driving out evil spirits and demonic forces (1:21–28; 5:1–20; 9:14–32). He is still a warrior and a conquering messiah, albeit in different terms—not as a messiah being a political-warrior.

127 See Mark 8:31–32; 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34; 14:21, 41.

While the contextual relevance of Ps 110:1 has been established previously, it is essential to note that the context of the "coming" of the "Son of Man" in Dan 7:13 does not pertain to Jesus's arrival on earth but rather to His enthronement. In Dan 7:13–14, although the "Son of Man" is depicted as coming with the clouds, there is no descent on earth.[128] Instead, He approaches the Ancient of Days (v. 13) and subsequently receives dominion, glory, and a kingdom (v. 14).

In the context of Jesus's trial before the Sanhedrin, the assembly seeks a verdict leading to His condemnation and death. Jesus statement in Mark 14:62—with deliberate allusions to Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13—speaks not of His vindication within the Sanhedrin's legal court but of His exaltation before the Ancient of Days.[129] To use the language of Dan 7:13–14, it refers to His exaltation in heaven at the right hand of God, as Luke applies Ps 110:1 to Jesus's exaltation in Acts 2:33–34 and 7:55–56.

It should be noted that in Dan 7 the intervention of the Ancient of Days leads to the destruction of the beast and the little horn, while other beasts having been stripped of power, are allowed to still live for a short time more (vv. 9–12, 22, 26). Only after this the Son of Man approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence to receive authority, power, and glory, thereby to vindicate His people (vv. 13–14, 22, 27). Applying this context to Mark 14:62, it becomes evident that the reference to Jesus's enthronement presupposes not just God's judgment and victory over His enemies, but most importantly, the vindication of God's people under the Roman regime, and by extension, under the power of sin and Satan. Nonetheless, instead of believing His messianic claim and siding with Him, the high priest and the religious leaders use it as the ground for Jesus's condemnation. In doing so, it appears that they and others who oppose Jesus, the Messiah, align themselves with the forces represented by the beasts and the little horn in Dan 7, and thus are destined for defeat. Meanwhile, Jesus is destined to be exalted in glory, participating in Yahweh's universal and cosmic rule.

This theological framework finds explicit support in Acts and Hebrews, where figures such as Peter and Stephen (2:32–35; 7:52–56) and the author of Hebrews (e.g., 1:3, 13; 10:12) explicitly appropriate the fulfillment of Ps 110:1 to the enthronement of Jesus, an event occurring shortly after His resurrection. The combined allusions from Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13 in Mark

[128] See also France, *The Gospel of Mark*, 611–12. He states that there is an increasing awareness among scholars that the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds of glory does not in any case point to Jesus's coming to earth.

[129] Schnabel, *Mark*, 385.

14:62,[130] therefore, serve to reinforce Jesus's messianic identity, emphasizing a rule that transcends the limited scope of a nationalistic political messiah within the earthly realm.

4. Conclusion

Psalm 110:1 portrays an enthroned king with whom Yahweh pledges victory. The psalmist (David), along with the intended recipients, likely found encouragement in the hope conveyed by this psalm, as the prospect of having a king implies a figure who actively defends and fights for God's people (cf. 1 Sam 8:20), and thus ensuring their stability and continued existence. Categorized as a prophetic psalm through the expression נְאֻם יְהוָה ("the oracle of Yahweh"), Ps 110:1 resonates with Yahweh's covenant with David, promising him of an everlasting kingship from his lineage, whom He designates His own son (2 Sam 7:14).

As a recognized messianic psalm, Ps 110:1 finds particular relevance in its application to Jesus in the book of Mark. The Markan Jesus reuses Ps 110:1 only in Mark 12:36 and 14:62, where questions revolving around His messianic identity arise. The use of Ps 110:1 in Mark 12:36 underscores the surpassing greatness of the Messiah over the ideal Davidic figure, whose rule is confined within temporal and spatial limitations. This transcendent dimension of Jesus's messiahship is further elucidated through the combined allusions to Ps 110:1 and Dan 7:13 in Mark 14:62, where Jesus aligns Himself with the "Son of Man" depicted as seated at the right hand of power, arriving with great clouds of heaven to stand before the Ancient of Days and receive dominion, glory, and a kingdom. This enthronement scene serves to articulate Jesus's authority within the context of Yahweh's universal and cosmic rule. Consequently, Jesus's messiahship stands apart from a

[130] It is not difficult to see the allusion to Dan 7:13 in Mark 14:62, but the allusion to Ps 110:1 needs explanation. In the HB, the phrase "sit at the right hand" comes from two words: יָשַׁב ("sit" or "dwell") and יָמִין ("right hand" or "southward"). This combination appears only four times in the HB. Two passages describe "sit at the right hand." In 1 Kgs 2:19 Bathsheba is described as sitting at Solomon's right hand, and Ps 110:1 portrays "my lord's" as sitting at the right hand of Yahweh. The other two passages speak of "southward to the inhabitants" (Josh 17:7) and living in the south (Ezek 16:46). With this information, the only possible passages that is alluded to in Mark 14:62 are 1 Kgs 2:19 and Ps 110:1. Of these, I argue that Ps 110:1 is the reference of the allusion in Mark 14:62, as it had been quoted previously in 12:36. Besides, in both passages in Mark where sitting at the right hand of God/power are mentioned, the context revolves around the identity of Jesus as the Messiah.

narrow, nationalistic political understanding, as His rule extends beyond the confines of time and space, encompassing a more expansive and transcendent scope.

However, Jesus fully understood what it takes for Him to be enthroned in glory. In Mark, He consistently underscored the inevitability that the "Son of Man"—shifting from the title "Messiah" or "Christ"—would endure suffering and death (Mark 8:31–32; 9:9–10, 31–32; 10:33–34). His deliberate sacrifice, giving up His life, carries the profound purpose of providing ransom for many (10:45). In what might appear as Jesus's moment of apparent defeat, He strategically triumphs by drawing people closer to God. This transformative perspective is further elucidated in the subsequent exaltation of Jesus in glory, as depicted in Acts 2:32–35; 7:52–56; Heb 1:3, 13; and 10:12.

In effect, Jesus deviates from the traditional trajectory of the regal messianic figure found in Ps 110:1, notably diverging from the victory motif grounded in physical or military force. Consequently, Jesus's use of Ps 110:1 in Mark's gospel appears to represent a deliberate redefinition, aligning it with His unique self-perception of His messianic vocation.

For Jesus's audience in Mark's Gospel, this means that Jesus is not merely the Messiah par excellence but a divine figure enacting Yahweh's rule over His people. His reign is aptly substantiated by the allusion to Daniel's "Son of Man," who comes on the clouds receiving dominion and a kingdom (Dan 7:13). Meanwhile, His reign is characterized by full security and peace, without intrusion from enemies, as reflected in Ps 110:1, where the king sits at Yahweh's "right hand" with enemies placed "under his feet." For those living under the oppressive Roman Empire, this message offers hope and assurance that they will ultimately triumph with Jesus. By extension, for those who identify with the Messiah, there is the prospect of sharing in Jesus's victory. However, this participation requires a willingness to follow in Jesus's footsteps, even to the point of embracing suffering and, if necessary, death. According to Jesus, this is the true path to victory and glory.

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Thesis and Dissertation Abstracts

Theological Seminary, Adventist International Institute
of Advanced Studes, PHILIPPINES

Reaching Radio Listeners in Northeastern Mindanao Mission, Philippines: A Case Study

Researcher: Jerson P. Arellano, DMin, 2022
Research advisor: Olaotse Gabasiane, PhD

God uses radio to spread the Gospel with speed and urgency to the world. Radio crosses many barriers. It penetrates all classes of people. These facts are also true for the radio evangelism in the Northeastern Mindanao Mission (NEMM). This entity manages Hope Radio Butuan which runs *Pattern of Truth* broadcast ministry. However, the program hosts of Hope Radio Butuan lament that the church is not participating fully in reaching out to the radio listeners. Thus, the local churches have demonstrated minimal engagement in reaching out to the *Pattern of Truth* program listeners. There is, therefore, a need to develop a strategy to effectively reach the radio audience in NEMM.

However, the officials of Hope Radio Butuan lament the fact that the church's support is inadequate for the successful and effective outreach of the radio audience. Therefore, there was a need to develop a strategy that would effectively engage the church in reaching the radio audience. The purpose of this project was to reach the radio listeners of the evangelistic radio program of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in NEMM.

In order to achieve this overall objective, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the biblical basis for using radio to advance the mission of the church?
2. What are the historical and cultural backgrounds that influence the broadcast of the radio program *Pattern of Truth*?

3. How successful are the strategies that are used by the radio program *Pattern of Truth* to reach the radio listeners in NEMM?
4. What strategy could be developed to effectively reach the radio listeners in NEMM?

I conducted this research in NEMM. The participants of this study were 5 newly baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, 5 district pastors, and 5 local church officers from different areas of NEMM. The selection criteria for the newly baptized members were the following: (a) they accepted the Adventist message through the radio program *Pattern of Truth* of Hope Radio Butuan, (b) they were baptized not more than 2 years at the time of their participation in this study, and (c) they were still active members of their respective local churches during the conduct of this study. The selection criteria for the local church officers (elders, deacons/deaconesses, and department leaders) were as follows: (a) they were active financial supporters of Hope Radio Butuan, (b) they had been local church leaders for not less than 2 years, and (c) they had been involved in nurturing the newly baptized radio converts. Lastly, the pastors must (a) be ordained ministers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, (b) had conducted at least 2 annual reaping campaigns sponsored by Hope Radio Butuan, and (c) were daily listeners of *Pattern of Truth*.

The participants in the study were referred to using pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. I audio recorded the face-to-face interviews and then transcribed them. The data that emerged from the interviews include

1. Participants' perceptions, experiences, and observations
2. Participants' perceptions and experiences through the radio program as a tool for their conversion
3. Participants' perception of the effectiveness of the strategies and activities of *Pattern of Truth* broadcast to encourage the listeners and the local church involvement in the follow-up programs
4. Participants' suggestions of necessary steps to improve the effectiveness of the radio program *Pattern of Truth* and the activities of the local church in reaching the radio program audience.

Based on the findings, this study recommends further action to improve Hope Radio Butuan for the benefit of the listeners. Furthermore, the district pastors should train the local church members to be involved in consistent follow-up operations to reach the radio audience. It is paramount to increase the effectiveness of local church members' initiative to reach out to radio program listeners.

A Contextualized Adventist Model for Reaching Orthodox Christians in Northern Ethiopia: A Case Study of Converts from the Orthodox Church with Muslim Background

Researcher: Aytegeb Berhanu Awoke, PhD in Religion, 2022
Research advisor: Olaotse Gabasiane, PhD

Ethiopia officially accepted Christianity in the 4th century. Though 1,700 years have passed since then, Orthodoxy remains strong. Ethiopia is one of the few ancient Christian countries in Africa that survived the expansion of Islam. That is why some scholars call Ethiopia an island of Christianity. The Orthodox Church's contribution to the nation's survival was tremendous.

Ethiopia has the second largest Orthodox population in the world, next to Russia. It also hosts the largest oriental (non-Chalcedonian) church. The oriental churches did not accept the christological theology of the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451. History reports that there were Christian centers in Africa between the 1st and 6th centuries in Egypt, Carthage (Tunisia), and Nubia (Sudan). Many prominent African theologians who influenced early Christianity emerged from these Christian centers. However, many of them were ill-fated and got destroyed, while others became weak because of the emergence of Islam in the 7th century.

According to the 2007 Ethiopian census, 44% of the population belonged to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Also, that but the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians are considerably more religious than Orthodox Christians in other parts of the world. Studies show that of the 50,000,000 adherents, 78% attend weekly and 65% attend daily services, while in Russia 6% attend weekly and 18% attend daily church services (Pew Research Center, 2017).

The Orthodox Church fused Christianity, Judaism, and paganism. Many of the Old Testament rituals are still practiced by the church. Practically, the tradition of the fathers of the church has more prominence than the Bible. The believers are sincere Christians. They prefer to read the Psalms and other prayer books for their morning devotional and to attend church services regularly to grow in their knowledge of the Word of God. They attend daily and weekly church services for their spiritual nourishment.

Northern Ethiopia is the origin of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The northern part of the country constitutes the Amhara and Tigray regions. The people of the Amhara and Tigray regions are considered the protectors of the faith. A great number of the clergy are from northern Ethiopia. They spread the Orthodox faith all over the country and uphold the church.

The Seventh-day Adventist mission spent 97 years in north Ethiopia. However, the growth of the Adventist Church is insignificant. The past experience shows that the northern Orthodox Christians, including those with Muslim background, are highly resistant to the everlasting Gospel presented by the Adventist Church. This research employed a qualitative explanatory case study approach. The purpose of the study is to develop a contextual missiological model for reaching out to Orthodox Christians with Muslim background in northern Ethiopia. It seeks to explore and analyze the background of the northern Ethiopian Orthodox Christians with Muslim background and identify factors that created barriers that resulted in resistant attitude to the gospel truth.

Overcoming Cultural Prejudice of the Seventh-day Adventist Members in Bacolod City to Facilitate Cross-Cultural Mission

Researcher: Rafael J. Carado, DMiss, 2022
Research advisor: Pavel Zubkov, PhD

This study aimed to develop a strategy on how to overcome cultural prejudices among Adventist members in Bacolod City to reach people from other cultures. Bacolod is a highly urbanized city where various ethnic groups reside. The local Adventist Church members lack effective strategies to reach people of different cultures such as the Chinese Filipinos (CF) and Maranao Muslims (MM).

To develop a strategy, first, this study established the biblical and theological foundations of cross-cultural mission (CCM). The OT and the NT reveal God as the prime mover of mission, the God who crosses cultures, and the God who executes His love and judgment to all the people of the earth. Second, the history of the Philippines and the background of the Adventist Church in the Philippines support the necessity for an intentional CCM initiative and contextualized CCM strategies.

Furthermore, to reach the goal of this research, this qualitative study used focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. This study investigated the existing approaches used by some of the Adventist members who tried to reach the CF and the MM. This study revealed that traditional approaches have not been effective in reaching out to CF and MM. The findings of this study identified several challenges faced by Adventists in Bacolod City that need to be addressed for them to effectively engage in CCMs.

These challenges include cultural values, assumptions, and prejudices of local Adventists towards CF and MM; lack of CCM training; unresolved missiological issues; and lack of CCM structure. Moreover, Adventists in Bacolod City were given an opportunity to suggest more effective CCM approaches based on their experiences.

As a result, a strategy on how to overcome prejudices while reaching people from different cultures was developed based on the Bible, extant literature, and empirical data. The strategy is divided into two parts: (a) the preparation stage and (b) the implementation stage. The first stage prepares the Adventist members, pastors, and leaders for CCM in Bacolod City. The second stage consists of the steps on how to implement the CCM initiative. The developed strategy ensures the establishment of a relationship-based mission and a contextualized approach to building relationships.

A Missiological Model for Cross-Cultural Mission to Chakma Buddhists in Mizoram, India: A Case Study

Researcher: Lalrokima Fanai, PhD in Religion, 2022
Research advisor: Pavel Zubkov, PhD

In this study, I aimed to develop a missiological model that could assist Adventist missionaries in evangelizing Chakma Buddhists in Mizoram. To reach the research goal, I first investigated the Chakma worldview, religious rituals, social practices, and overall context to understand them better. Second, I used case study as a research design to discover how the Seventh-day Adventist mission became successful in Sedailui amidst cultural, language, social, political, and religious barriers.

Chakma's version of Buddhism blend elements of animism and Hinduism. The components of their Hinduism include the Chakma creation narrative, the idea of karma, festivals, and the worship of some Hindu deities for protection and blessings. The aspects of animism include fear of invisible powers, offering of animals and rice to appease ghosts, and worship of Bogabhan and other deities. Elements of Buddhism include merit making, the 3 jewels (the Buddha, dhamma, and sangha), the 4 noble truths, the middle path, removal of the 10 fetters, and admiration of Buddha. The other aspects of Buddhism include salvation by works, the law of karma, the cycle of death and rebirth, the cessation of reincarnation, and the panchosil (5 precepts). The mixture of these religious elements greatly influences Chakmas and leads them to religious syncretism.

Relationship building through a group-oriented approach, sharing Bible stories in ways through which Chakmas could relate the teachings to their beliefs and practices, and winning their confidence played a crucial role in the success of the Adventist mission in Sedailui. These components of the successful Adventist mission in Sedailui, along with the challenges faced by Adventist missionaries, contributed to the creation of a contextualized missiological model for presenting the Gospel in the Chakma's frame of reference. At the same time, existing contextual communication methods were integrated into this model.

A contextualized missiological model proposed in this study consists of 7 main points. The first point is pre- and on-field trainings to prepare Adventist missionaries for fieldwork. The second point is the top-down model, Christ's integrative evangelistic approach, and multi-individual, mutually interdependent conversion methods to establish relationships with Chakmas and pave the way for evangelism. The third is integrating contextualized communication models. The fourth is presenting Christ in a way Chakmas can relate Him to their everyday life and worldview. The fifth is providing functional substitutes and making changes in the 3 dimensions of culture to assist worldview transformation. The sixth is assisting Chakmas in decision making for conversion. Finally, the seventh point is discipling Chakma converts to grow spiritually. These 7 components worked together to create a missiological model which Adventist missionaries can use to convey the Gospel to Chakmas in terms that are understandable to them and can transform their worldview.

A Biblical Theology of Service among People with Special Needs

Researcher: Watland François, PhD in Religion, 2022
Research advisor: Cristian Dumitrescu, PhD

People with special needs are spread in all communities and social groups. They represent 15.3% of the world's population. The most recent Adventist global survey revealed that about 10% of Adventist members live with some form of disability. In some places like Haiti, this percentage goes up to 15%. However, despite being so significantly present within Adventist communities, this particular category of brethren continues to be a marginalized and underserved group in several places. Moreover, non-members with disabilities represent an under-explored mission field worldwide. This disser-

tation is built on the premise that an appropriate theology of service among people with special needs can help reverse this situation.

Consequently, this dissertation purposed to develop such a theology through a comprehensive documentary research approach. Therefore, a literature review was carried out and revealed the existence of a few disability-related and service-related theologies. This review also showed how the Adventist Church has been responding to disability so far.

However, the assessment of these existing related theologies demonstrated that several aspects of a holistic service to their targeted group were left unaddressed. In addition, these theologies do not suggest strategies or models for their application. This theological gap partially explained why the Adventist Church is yet to respond adequately to disability in several places and confirmed the need for a more specific theology aiming to foster a holistic service to people with special needs. Consequently, a 6-passage analysis series was conducted to discover biblical principles that would inform this much needed theology.

In the last chapter of this dissertation, the findings of the series of passage analyses are arranged into a Christ-centered model for holistic service among people with special needs. This model shows how an appropriate theology of service can enable a holistic service among those with special needs through 6 biblical principles: the consciousness of Christ's covenant of grace, the intentionality and protection for people with special needs, the balanced Christ-centered view of disability, the holistic embrace of people with special needs, the enabling of self-determination, and the authentic worship to Christ through His disabled children. Lastly, some recommendations are offered to make the Adventist Church more inclusive. These findings are also applicable to other denomination

Malachi's Use of Joel's "Day of the Lord": An Inner-Biblical Allusion Study

Researcher: Petronio M. Genebago, PhD in Religion, 2022
Research advisor: Teófilo Correa, PhD

The Day of the Lord texts of Malachi (3:2, 7; 4:5) seem to allude to Joel's Day of the Lord (2:11, 13; 3:4). However, the interpretive significance of Joel's Day of the Lord in Malachi has not been investigated comprehensively as the review of literature, intertextual, and inner-biblical studies on Malachi

have validated. The threefold purpose of the study is to (a) establish the criteria to verify the inner-biblical connection between Malachi and Joel on the Day of the Lord, (b) determine how Malachi uses Joel's Day of the Lord motif, and (c) find out how Malachi develops the Day of the Lord theme in his book.

To address the problem and the threefold purpose of the study, this dissertation employs the five steps of the inner-biblical allusion study established in Chapter 2. After applying this method, this study concludes that Malachi alluded to Joel on his Day of the Lord as indicated by these lexical coordinates: וּמִי (but who) and כול (endure; Joel 2:11, Mal 3:20; שׁוּבוּ (return; Joel 2:13, Mal 3:7); יוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא (the great and the fearful day of the Lord; Joel 2:31 [MT 3:4], Mal 4:5 [MT 3:23]); אַיֵּה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם (where is their God) and אַיֵּה אֱלֹהֵי הַמִּשְׁפָּט (where is the God of the judgment; Joel 2:17, Mal 2:17); בְּרָכָה (blessing) and מִנְחָה (offerings; Joel 2:14; Mal 3:3, 10); and ישׁב (sit) and שָׁפַט (judge; Joel 3:12; Mal 3:3, 5) and as verified by these criteria for validation: the volume of parallels and the frequency and distribution of the shared lexemes. Applying step 1 concretizes Malachi's allusion on Joel's Day of the Lord.

To proceed with the second and third purposes, steps 2 to 5 have been observed, namely: determine the direction of dependence between texts, delimit the passage where the allusion is found in both Malachi and Joel, exegete both passages to find out the interpretive significance of the allusion from the earlier text to the alluding text, and ascertain the development of the allusion in the alluding text.

This study concludes that Malachi has saturated himself with the message of the book of Joel on the Day of the Lord. His allusions to it extends the powerful message of Joel to the audience of Malachi. However, Malachi develops more the Day of the Lord theme in his book. He starts with Edom's Day of the Lord as historical fulfillment, where Joel ends his book looking forward to it. From this historical fulfillment of Edom's desolation (Mal 1:2–5), Malachi moves to the future orientation of the Day of the Lord, which looms upon Yehud (Mal 3:1–7) and the Earth (Mal 4:1–6).

Malachi's allusion on the Day of the Lord has been enriched when the earlier source is considered. Thus, this method (inner-biblical allusion) can also be used in analyzing other themes in the book of Malachi as it alludes to other books of the OT. It will be helpful to understand Malachi's use of Scriptures in other motifs through the inner-biblical allusion study. Finally, this method can also be applied to other allusion studies from one book to another.

A Self-Awareness Survey of Pastoral Leadership Values in Central Philippine Union Conference

Researcher: Richard Dean Masangcay, DMin, 2022
Research advisor: Dioi Cruz, DMin

This is a descriptive research study on authentic biblical leadership values of Seventh-day Adventist pastors in Central Philippine Union Conference. It evaluated and described the leadership values of church pastors under the perspective of the authentic biblical leadership model. A modified survey questionnaire was used to gather data. A total of 205 church pastors from Central Philippine Union Conference completed the survey. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. The results of this study showed that the overall authentic biblical leadership values of the participants can be described as good. However, there are leadership values from other components of the authentic biblical leadership model that church leaders still need to improve. Also, a cohort of church leaders found the need to enhance their leadership skills based on the authentic biblical leadership model. Capacity building, provision of guidance, formulation of training modules, and a guidebook or training toolkits necessary to enhance church leaders' authentic biblical leadership values were recommended.

The Culture of Overseas Filipino Adventist Members' Giving and Its Effect on Tithing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Researcher: Samson S. Pagunsan, DMin, 2022
Research advisor: Reuel Almocera, DPS

The tithing system is God's way to finance His work on earth. God's people primarily carry it out as members of His church. The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church follows this principle and has made policies for its appropriate usage to fulfill its mission. The leadership implements these agreed policies about the tithes and is also followed by the church membership worldwide. Nevertheless, there is a reality that members are making *tithe diversion* because of the mission field's need or for cultural reasons.

The problem of tithe diversion tends to be a *concern* to the SDA Church. There seems to be a common belief among Adventists in five continents of the world (Africa, Europe, Australia, North America, and South America) that it is reasonable to divert tithe. This is seriously alarming. The leading

purpose of this study is to find out whether this practice is also evident among Filipinos who are Asians, as Filipinos are the majority of Adventists in Asia—the 6th continent.

This study has explored the culture of Overseas Filipino Adventist Members' (OFAMs) giving and its effect on tithing in the SDA Church. The research study included seven OFAMs as participants working and living in the United States of America. They are baptized and active members of the church. They are also mature Adventist members who are also involved in supporting the mission of the church in the Philippines. Finally, the findings created a strategy to educate OFAMs to practice tithing by the church policy.

Developing a Cycle of Training for Local Church Elders in Masbate in Central Visayan Conference, Philippines

Researcher: Dianito P. Pantaleon, DMin, 2022
Research advisor: Dioi Cruz, DMin

In the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, the success of local church leadership is highly reliant on the church elders. The shortage of pastors required to oversee each local church is a primary concern. Many local church leaders struggle to carry the burden of responsibility placed upon them. The leadership abilities of local church elders in Central Visayan Conference—Masbate, Philippines—were examined in this study.

The study employed descriptive research, a quantitative design. The survey results, based on the data gathered from 130 local church elders from 207 churches throughout Masbate's 8 districts, had a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. This study determined (a) the biblical-theological foundation of elders' training in the local church, (b) the conditions faced by church elders in the districts in Masbate, (c) the type of training required for church elders, and (d) the theoretical basis for the cycle of training for local church elders in the districts in Masbate.

The abovementioned training cycle is reinforced in Exod 18 and Num 11. The NT also supports this idea. Masbate is located in the farthest territory of Central Visayan Conference and the conference's poorest province. Hence, conducting seminars and implementing programs in the province is challenging. It was found that church elders' attendance in care group meetings is very low and they least read Ellen G. White books. The leadership satisfaction of elders in the province of Masbate is far below the ideal rating.

Survey questions number 18 (M = 4.42, SD = 1.769) and number 24 (M = 3.05, SD = 1.501) did not yield satisfactory answers.

The leadership professionalism questions number 20 (M = 5.38, SD = 1.102) and number 23 (M = 5.01, SD = 1.640) received more satisfactory answers than the abovementioned questions. However, this improvement (or difference) only means that the church elders still have more to learn about leadership professionalism. Servant leadership is achieved through a continuous process of learning. Question number 21 (M = 4.52, SD = 1.681), which focused on church conflict management, and question number 22 (M = 4.88, SD = 1.434), which was about rivalry and jealousy between members, indicate the reality of constant conflict within the SDA Churches in Masbate.

The multi-church structure of the SDA Church, wherein one pastor is responsible for multiple churches, proves the need for better leadership skills among church elders. Elders must perform their tasks very efficiently as the church membership grows. This study's results suggest the urgent need to create and implement a training cycle for church elders. The training cycle should aim to improve the spiritual leadership skills of church elders to become shepherds of God's flock in the local churches.

Impact of an Adventist Television Channel in the North Philippine Union Conference: A Case Study

Researcher: Joel L. Sarmiento, DMin, 2022
Research advisor: Aivars Ozolins, PhD

This study assessed the possible impact of Hope Channel Philippines (HCP) broadcast on its Adventist viewers. This mixed-method study used a survey with 384 respondents and 8 participants for the in-depth interview and 8 focus groups. These respondents and participants were all members of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in the North Philippine Union Conference territory.

HCP is the television network of the three unions of the SDA Church in the Philippines in coordination with the Southern Asia Pacific Division. The three unions produce programs that air on their specific time slot. Since 2011, the start of its broadcast, the HCP programs have not undergone evaluation. Thus, this study attempted to evaluate the impact of HCP's broadcast to the North Philippine Union Conference territory among its SDA viewers.

Through the questionnaire used, the Adventist viewers' profile and viewing habits were determined. With the in-depth interview of newly converted members through HCP broadcast and the focused group interviews, its impact was assessed. Furthermore, suggestions for improvement were gathered through these interviews.

As a result of the analysis of the qualitative data, two themes emerged as the impact of HCP's broadcast on its Adventist viewers. These were conversion and nurture. The conversion theme had three categories: baptismal decision, reclamation, and transformation. Moreover, the nurture theme's categories were involvement, knowledge, and spiritual growth. In addition, the answers to the improvement research questions were composed of two themes: programs and motivation. The study revealed that for HCP to have a greater impact on its Adventist viewers, new programs should be initiated based on their needs.

The findings indicated that HCP broadcast positively impacted its viewers. Some viewers were converted and made a decision to be baptized, others returned to the church, and others were transformed. Likewise, other viewers were nurtured; and this was shown in their involvement in church activities, according to the participants. Others watched to gain knowledge and grow spiritually. With these results of the study, it is therefore recommended that there should be an increased production of programs in Bible study especially on prophecy, livelihood, and others. These programs should be focused on the middle-aged individuals or the youth to increase HCP's impact on its viewers.

Discipleship Program Integration for Selected Departments in North Philippine Union Conference: A Case Study

Researcher: Jose V. Zabat Jr., DMin, 2022
Research advisor: Abner Dizon, DMiss

Discipleship is the primary responsibility of the church leadership. Different departments in the North Philippine Union Conference (NPUC) were organized to implement discipleship in their specific areas of ministry. However, issues were raised that the implementation of discipleship programs caused competition, program duplication, overlapping, and burden to pastors and churches. This study explores how selected NPUC departments contribute towards the accomplishment of NPUC's discipleship mandate as a basis for interdepartmental discipleship programs integration (IDPI) in NPUC.

To approach the issue, a qualitative case study was used. The study interviewed six officers, six pastors of conferences and missions, and six department directors in NPUC. They are directly involved in the planning, implementing, and evaluating of department programs. This study found seven essential principles of discipleship programs: (a) empowerment, (b) equipping, (c) nurturing, (d) relationship, (e) evangelism, (f) leadership, and (g) program integration strategies.

Based on these findings, methods and practices for IDPI was developed and suggested. The suggested IDPI methods and practices include two main elements: Collaborative Leadership and Discipleship Programs Integrations Strategies.

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Book Reviews

Kwiyani, Harvey C. *Multicultural Kingdom: Ethnic Diversity, Mission and the Church*. Golden Lake, London: SCM Press, 2020. Pp. 256, Paperback $24.61, Kindle $23.38.

Harvey C. Kwiyani is a lecturer in African Christianity and Theology at Liverpool Hope University. Originally from Malawi, he has lived in Europe and North America for many years, working both as an academic (teaching theology, missions, and leadership). In this book, he is presenting a relevant assessment of the current situation of the church. This book contributes to the current debate in ecclesiology from the perspective of social science. In this book, Harvey provides the historical overview of the development of the church's idea for the last couple of hundred years that led us to the concept of a multicultural church. Harvey analyzes the emerging process of the multicultural church in Britain as a reflection of the worldwide church's diversity.

For example, in chapters one and two, Kwiyani discusses the failure of western Christianity in the past to understand the idea of the kingdom of God for all kindred and tongue. He specifically uses the experience of the churches in the United Kingdom as an example of the development of the multicultural church as a worldwide phenomena. For him, the kingdom of God is like a mosaic where people contribute something to bring more color and to create beauty in the group. He says that "the Spirit is the glue" (p. 4)

in the church, and does not mention much about any other means. He believes that the kingdom of nations and languages mean all nations, and languages may bring their flavor of culture to the kingdom of God.

For Kwiyani, diversity is a gift. It is part of God's plan for His people to be able to demonstrate unselfish love. Throughout the book, he emphasizes the idea of multiple images of Christianity. He argues that there is no one image of Christianity that is representable enough to be taken as the only Christian identity. He repeats the idea of diversity as a gift in the book. For example, in chapter two, he discusses how in the past, the western countries tried to evangelize the world, but today the world evangelizes them (UK, Europe, Australia) back. They created a universal image of Christianity in the past but it is not commended anymore today.

He discusses how the multicultural church has become a new normal in the UK and elsewhere. He believes that past Western Christians probably never anticipated this new reality. He argues that in doing mission, the Western Christians in the nineteenth and until the early twentieth centuries seemed to assume that the idea of church is similar to the idea of colonialism. He points out how mission and colonialism were seen as "two side of the same coin" (p. 28) for most people in the world at that time. He describes well how global culture exposure has changed Christianity from a Western Christianity to a multicultural church. In the past Western missionaries tended to conform all the local cultures of the new believers to their cultures and made Western Christinaity a standard for Christianity wherever they went. However, he believes that the all nations-Christianity is the new "typical image" (p. 31) for Christianity today, that every country has its typical church, even typical sub-cultures within the country, with their own uniqueness.

Furthermore, he discusses how William Carey brought the idea of contextualization. It was strange at that time since "less than 10% of world Christians lived outside the West" (p. 19). However, today, it has become very much relevant and important for the church's mission. The Jews who spread the gospel to the world did not imagine that they would become a minority among those who had accepted Christianity. In a similar way, the Western countries that sent missionaries to spread the gospel in Asia and Africa in the past, now have becoming more pagan. Christianity, once a Jewish sect, first became a Western religion, and then the religion of the whole world. Kwiyani argues that this fact should be enough to urge the church today to evaluate its role in society.

Kwiyani presents in chapter two an irony in Christianity that we should try to avoid in the future. He states that in the World Missionary Conference in 1910 with 1215 delegates, only 18 came from Asia and none from Black Africans. The delegations were optimistic that it was possible to evangelize the whole world in their generation. Far removed from such optimism, Christian countries were at that time involved in WWI and WWII instead. On the contrary, African rejection of missionaries as colonial in 1960 had grown from 20 to more than 70 % of the Christian population, to around 630 million. It is far from what Western Christians feared in the past, namely that "Africa would continue to convert to Islam" (p. 25).

In chapter three, Kwiyani discusses the characteristic of the multicultural church that is emerging nowadays. He also points out how some Christian misinterpret the Bible to support the idea of racial division. This theological misunderstanding has made Christians in the past force conformity to the church. He then presents the transition of the mission orientation in chapter four. He argues that in the multicultural kingdom of God, the mission is from everywhere to everywhere. He claims that even though historically speaking the mission started from Europe, the day when Western missionaries thrive have just ended, not because there are no more Western missionaries, but because of the world Christianity is emerging in. Global migration and the fall of colonialism also contribute to the world church mission efforts.

In chapter five, Harvey discusses the multicultural reality in connection with the fast growth of globalization and migration. He discusses mono-cultural myth. He argues that the world is already diverse and multicultural for the last two thousand years. He is criticizing the reasons for the existence of mono-cultural churches. For instance, most first-generation migrants find that mastering a new language is quite difficult, especially among older people. When this happens, they need a church that provides worship service in a language they can understand, and this will naturally be in a mono-cultural church. Another theory among church planters on church growth is that churches grow faster if they are mono-cultural. Church planters are encouraged to find their niche–people of similar cultural characteristics as themselves—if their church plant is to grow fast because people like to attend churches where they do not need to overcome cross-culture barriers.

Whatever reason for the mono-cultural church, for him, it needs to be evaluated. In chapter six, for example, Harvey argues that to ignore cultural diversity means to isolate one's own self from the reality. He argues that experiencing and celebrating diversity is a gift from God, because we can have a foretaste of heaven and have the opportunity to use a "penknife" (p.

76) of wisdom that comes from people we thought strangers for personal benefit. He argues that "the kingdom of God finds its fullest expression in the intercultural mutuality" (p. 77). In chapter seven, he also argues that multicultural churches are the Gospel Imperative.

Probably the importance of chapter nine is to answer questions such as: Why do we prefer to remain segregated in our ecclesiology? Why do several churches of different ethnic heritage use the same building for Sunday services but not worship together? Why has ethnic diversity in Christianity sometimes led Christians to a mono-culturalal perspective on churches? Kwiyani believes that the mono-cultural churches go against everything that we see in the New Testament. For him, Christianity emerged in a multicultural context and stays connected to the local culture. He believes that there is "no such thing as a culture-free ecclesiology" (p. 124). In the last chapter of his book, Harvey compares the idea of mono-cultural church and multicultural church. He presents conditions that allow the mono-cultural church and discusses how the mono-cultural church has hindered the mission in the multicultural world. He concludes that multicultural church is the answer for doing mission in the multicultural world.

The key idea for Kwiyani in this book is that the kingdom of God is multicultural, and therefore, the church is supposed to be multicultural. This understanding will affect the way denominations in the church do their mission. This book is a good reminder for the church leaders today, as well as students that will be future leaders of the church, in that we have to give serious consideration to the issue of pluralistic and multicultural aspect in the church. Even though his approach in this book is socio-anthropological and missional, Kwiyani tries to provide some biblical examples to justify his argument. It guides the readers to see the theological background for his apology.

However, Kwiyani seems to not clearly discuss the issue of unity in the multicultural setting. It is not clear how Christians maintain their universal identity as a worldwide kingdom at the same time as preserving their unique local identity as part of the local culture. It seems that for Kwiyani, it is the culture that shape the church not the other way around. His recommendation to this issue is more on the socio-anthropological explanation rather than the biblical one. The Holy Spirit seems to be the only unifying element mentioned as a glue among individuals or groups in Christianity. When he discusses the issue of power in relation to the unity, he keeps on proposing socio-anthropological solutions for it. Readers cannot expect a profound biblical-theological exposition for this issue and most of his argument in this book.

Kwiyani contributes in bringing awareness to the importance of contextualization and appreciation of cultures in the church. On the other hand, he sees that the universal Christian identity clashes with the multicultural world, and therefore proposes the acceptance of a multicultural image of Christianity rather than having a shared global identity. Subsequently, he seems to have no solution to how people with different cultural backgrounds can be united. He neither engages much with the different kinds of situations in the different denominations. He tends to present a limited example from a particular Christian denomination. Nevertheless, this great book will be an eye-opener to those who want to deal with ecclesiology and church missions.

Orsly Winston Raranta
Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Peckham, John C. *Divine Attributes: Knowing the Covenantal God of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021. xii + 336 pp. Paperback US$ 29.99.

John C. Peckham is a professor of theology and Christian philosophy at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. He has written several books, including *God with Us*, *Theodicy of Love: Cosmic Conflict and the Problem of Evil*, *The Love of God: A Canonical Model*, and *Why We Pray*. He was honored with Educator of the Year awards in 2012 at Southwestern and in 2016 at Andrews University, followed by an Excellence in Scholarship award in 2018 from Andrews University.

In his book, Peckham discusses the divine attributes of God as suggested by the title. Here, he unpacks important aspects that have been in discussion throughout the history of Christian theology. In chapter 1, Peckham summarizes how God has been understood, primarily from two perspectives: The Scriptures and Philosophers. According to him, the Scriptures portray God as the one who creates, sustains, and dwells with man. This dwelling is understood through the covenantal relationship God has with His people, which is later termed "Covenantal theism." Conversely, the philosophers approach God from the perspectives of classical theism, process theology, and Greek philosophy. These views commonly depict God as purely transcendent and timeless, with minimal or no connection to the created order. He further advocates Canonical theology, meaning, to read and understand the Bible as "one book" that testifies to the overarching theme of "Christ's

Spirit-borne commissioned testimony to himself" (pp. 29–30). Also, he aims to integrate biblical exegesis and systematic theology under the rule of Scripture to fulfill two fundamental goals: systematic coherence and canonical correspondence. This chapter sets the stages for the whole book.

In chapter 2, Peckham explores three key attributes of God: Aseity, immutability, and impassibility. These can be examined through three pivotal questions: Does God change? Does God experience emotions? Does God genuinely care about humanity? He depicts God as one who suffers alongside humanity, asserting that God is voluntarily passible—willfully experiencing emotions while maintaining His aseity. God relates to the world through divine love that is covenantal (reciprocal), volitional (freely given), evaluative (delighted or displeased), and emotional (relationally affected emotions). Peckham is convinced that Scripture affirms God's changelessness (Ps 117:2; Mal 3:6–7; John 1:5) in certain aspects while also acknowledging that God changes relationally (2 Sam 24:25; Ezek 22:30), what he terms as "qualified immutability and qualified passibility (p. 65).

In chapter 3, the author examines divine presence and its connection to omnipresence and eternity. He highlights differing perspectives on divine omnipresence, such as panentheism (the world is in God) and divine incorporeality (God has no physical body). However, for Peckham, the Scriptures record ample evidence of divine presence in a particular location and everywhere. While God cannot be contained in a specific location (1 Kgs 8:27), He also reveals His presence in a special manner (Gen 18:33), either through "theophanies" or "bodily" form. He further points out that omnipresence does not imply uniformity of presence. God's special presence is foundational to His covenant with His people. He quotes Horton, who calls it God's special "covenantal-judicial presence," a recurring theme from Genesis to Revelation.

Also, Peckham cautions the readers against the misconception that God can be contained or encompassed within creation, any physical form, or location. Hence, he concludes that God's omnipresence might be *nonderivative* (present to all creation) and special divine presence might be *derivative* (not necessarily uniform but dwells with humans in a special manner, pp. 88–89). Although timelessness is commonly associated with the attribute of God, Peckham argues that there is no explicit biblical warrant to attest that God is timeless. Still, instead, the Scriptures depict He is everlastingly eternal and experiences temporal succession (Pss 90:2; 102:24). This is further identified in the incarnation of Christ as evidence of divine temporality. Hence, Peckham provides a "biblical" model of God and time by affirming

that God is eternal (Rom 16:26) and He is not influenced by time, nor does He relate to it in the same way that humans do (Ps 90:4).

In chapters 4 and 5, Peckham discusses God's omniscience, omnipotence, omnibenevolence, foreknowledge, and providence. He rejects the "Open-Theism view" and affirms that God's omniscience includes exhaustive definite foreknowledge, knowing "the end from the beginning" (Isa 46:10) and "everything in between" (Ps 139:16). This might be understood as God knowing not only future events but also the decisions of human beings that lead to them. Notably, the foreknowledge of God does not affect or determine man's free will. Additionally, God is omnipotent, meaning He is Sovereign and possesses the power to initiate, sustain, and accomplish any task without relying on external force. However, Peckham also highlights that God cannot perform actions that contradict His character. He cannot be tempted by evil (Jas 1:13) and cannot deny Himself (2 Tim 2:13). To summarize this attribute of God, Peckham aptly states that "God sovereignly governs all of creation such that God's *remedial* will always come to pass, but much of what occurs in creation is *not* what God actually prefers" (p. 174).

In chapters 6 and 7, Peckham presents God as omnibenevolent and explores the problem of evil through the lens of Divine Triunity. Peckham asserts that love is the foundation of God's governance, through which freedom is expressed. To clarify this concept, he introduces the "Cosmic Conflict Motif" and the "Rules of Engagement" to emphasize the approach God uses to eliminate sin, in contrast to Satan's deceptive schemes and temptations. Although God has the power to eliminate sin instantly, He demonstrates His unconditional love even as He passes judgment on the wicked. Peckham further provides biblical warrant for the core Trinity doctrine by stating it in four tenets, namely: (1) There is one and only one God (Exod 8:10; Deut 6:4; Mark 12:29); (2) There is a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 3:16–17; 28:19); (3) The Three Persons of the Trinity are distinct from one another (Exod 23:21; John 14:26; Acts 5:3–4; Rom 8:26–27); and (4) The three Persons of the Trinity are fully divine and thus coequal and coeternal (1 Chr 17:20, John 1:1–3). In the final chapter, Peckham explains how God relates with humanity through His divine attributes, a concept he refers to as "Covenantal Theism." By this, he means that God engages in a reciprocal love relationship with mankind. This covenantal theism affirms that God is "dynamically relational and covenantal" (p. 253). To address the problem of evil, God sent His Son to offer salvation to all who accept Him, a solution Peckham refers to as "theodicy of love."

Peckham provides a comprehensive understanding of divine attributes by asking prominent biblical, philosophical, and theological questions. The book can be commended for many reasons. First, he considers Scripture as his ultimate authority. This was consistent with the claims of early church fathers and later protestant reformers. He meticulously presents his arguments with extensive biblical evidence. Following this, he examines various perspectives on certain concepts and critiques them from a biblical standpoint. In addition to providing biblical evidence, he supports his arguments with references to respected authors who have written on the subject, such as John Walton, Gerhard von Rad, Linda Zagzebski, and N. T. Wright. Second, the table of contents and outline are well-structured, making it easy to navigate through the author's arguments. Third, his emphasis on systematic coherence in doctrinal development is notable. This is helpful to ensure that theological concepts are consistent and interrelated. Fourth, the author concludes the book by giving prominence to the Trinity and covenant. This is pivotal for two reasons: (1) Divine attributes are rightly understood and clarified from the Trinitarian perspective, particularly omnibenevolence; and (2) The divine attributes are not merely transcendent but are intimately connected to humanity through the covenant relationship. Lastly, Peckham provides serval models and motifs that are drawn from Scripture to support his arguments, among them are "Qualified Immutability and Qualified Passibility," "Divine Omnipresence and Eternity," and "Cosmic Conflict Motif."

While Peckham offers a wealth of insight through his compelling arguments, there are a few areas that warrant critical examination. Given that the doctrine of God's attributes has been extensively explored throughout Church history, including a discussion of a historical perspective would have enriched the topic. Additionally, given the numerous views, models, and theological terms presented by the author, a "Definition of Terms" section would be beneficial. Such a section would aid the reader in following the author's arguments more effectively throughout the book. In his discussion of the incarnation, Peckham rejects some aspects of the classical view without explicitly acknowledging this. This omission could leave readers uncertain about his position on the matter. Overall, this book is well-written and is carefully argued from Scripture. I would recommend this book to students and professors of systematic theology and those interested in the

Doctrine of God. It can further be used as a textbook to have an overview of the divine attributes of God.

Andrew Ben Jacob
Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

Hasel, Frank M., Barna Magyarosi, and Stefan Höschele, eds., *Adventists and Military Service: Biblical, Historical, and Ethical Perspectives*. Madrid: Safeliz, 2019. vi + 225 pp. Softcover. Paperback US$ 18.99.

The present book discusses the view of the Seventh-day Adventist Church regarding military service from biblical, historical, and ethical perspectives. It is a collection of chapters written by scholars who see military service from different angles. These chapters complete one another to lead the Adventist readers to understand how they should respond to the calling of governments to work in a military domain. This book counts nine chapters, underscoring the idea of military service from various perspectives. The contributors write the following articles: (1) Violence and War in the Old Testament; (2) War and Nonviolence in the New Testament; (3) Ethnicity, the Church, and Violent Conflicts; (4) Military Service and Just War: An Historical Overview; (5) Pacifists, Conscientious Cooperators, or Combatants? The Seventh-day Adventist Loss of Clarity on War and Military Service; (6) Adventist Opposition to War in Europe: Cases of Nonconformity and Conscientious Objection; (7) Ethical Challenges in Military Service; (8) Psychological Effects of War and Pastoral Care; and (9) Adventists and Military Service: Conclusion. The three remaining sections are the appendixes that deal with the statements of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on military service, peace, noncombatancy, and war.

The introduction sets the ground to guide the reader to comprehend how the whole world is involved in war, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In this context, the author demonstrates that as long as we live in war-like conflicts, SDA members could easily adhere to different groups that practice violence or even bear weapons by pursuing a military career. This section summarizes the position of each contributor to the book regarding the military domain and then the position of the SDA Church on this matter. This section seems to implicitly state that joining a military career or bearing arms equals violence.

In chapter one, Barna Magyarosi discusses the idea of war and violence in the Old Testament through several approaches. He mainly addresses the

concept of "holy war" to support that the OT is strict against violence and war. He defines "holy war" as a war oriented towards the culture and society of Canaanites to uproot the polytheistic traditions. In addition, he argues that most wars and conflicts between nations were God's. This means that Israel never waged any battles against the nations. Rather, they were attacking neighboring countries to respond to the divine command as an expression of judgment. The attacks against the nations were also to eradicate the foreign practices, which could contaminate the Israelite monotheistic culture or worship of the heavenly God.

In chapter two, Johannes Kovar sheds much light on the idea of war and nonviolence from the context of the New Testament. This section is grounded in the beatitudes, the sermon on the mountain, to promote a nonviolent and peacemaking lifestyle. This was at the heart of Jesus's teachings. The author suggests that the NT never supported war, violence, or aggressive attitudes. However, at the same time, the author provides a couple of instances, including Cornelius, that show individuals who worked in the military service and state positions but who were faithful and did not betray the Christian principles. In this section, the author focuses much on the anchor passages of the Gospels, besides a few in the Pauline letters and others, to uphold the nonviolent attitude to discourage people from joining the military.

The third chapter is a case study in which Kwabena Donkor explores cases of war and violence worldwide, especially in Africa. He differentiates two concepts that have almost the same meaning but are contradictory at the same time, which people should understand to overcome social problems in the Church community: ethnicity and ethnocentrism. Based on the biblical arguments, he argues that ethnicity will not divide people within the Church, while ethnocentrism will. He provides several examples of cases that occurred in the twenty-first century, such as the genocide against Tutsis in Rwanda that cost more than one million human lives. Donkor postulates that at the heart of ethnocentrism, there is "sin" that provokes misunderstanding and violent conflicts in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He concludes by proposing a curative principle that Christians should implement to overcome the idea of ethnocentrism: conversion. A sincere conversion within the Seventh-day Adventist Church will help the members to see each other as one unique universal Christian family.

In the fourth chapter Zoltán Szallos-Farkas assesses the understanding of military service through history from the pre-Constantine era until the twenty-first century. The main concept analyzed in this chapter is the idea

of "just war." This concept was initially introduced by Augustine, who reasonably seems to defend the right cause of joining the military service as a civic duty and a response to the call to serve and protect the nation. Szallos-Farkas shows that the Christian church strictly forbade its members to exercise military duties in the pre-Constantine era. Those who joined could be subjected to Church discipline or even be disfellowshipped. However, after Constantine joined the Church, military service was Christianized. When Constantine joined the Christian church, the mindset about the military career started to change, and Christians started to join this domain. The concept of "just war" became more popular over the years and became a foundational doctrine for how Christians should relate to military service. Szallos-Farkas demonstrates that the idea of just war was adopted by the later Christian movements, even the reformers, except Mennonites, Hutterites, Amish, Brethren, and Friends.

The fifth chapter states the position of the SDA Church regarding war and military career. Morgan's point enforces what Kovar wrote in the second chapter about war and nonviolence in the New Testament. In the same way, Morgan centers his points of view on the teaching of Jesus where He explicates that bearing arms or engaging in war is a violation of the sixth commandment—You shall not kill (Exod 20:13). Nevertheless, he shows how the SDA Church was born in the context of military service. In addition, he provides several examples of many members who joined the SDA Church after their military career or even when they were still rendering their services to their countries as soldiers. This chapter does not show a clear position of the SDA church concerning military involvement. Instead, the position seems to be subjective—it changes with time. On the one hand, it accepts military service without being involved in violent acts and wars. If a SDA member engages in a military career, he should work in medical services or chaplaincy. Therefore, Morgan seems to argue that military service itself is not a problem while killing is a violation of the sixth commandment.

The sixth chapter narrates the hardship and persecution SDA members endured during the First and Second World Wars. Those who joined because of the political pressure fought even on the Sabbath. Daniel Heinz shows that during these times nonconformist and conscientious objector Adventists openly opposed conscriptions into the military by various governments. The countries involved in these wars forced their populations—including Adventists—to participate in the conflicts. Some resisted and were martyred, while others joined the military service. In this section, Heinz demonstrates the hardships many nonconformist and conscientious

Adventists faced because of their Christian convictions. He also suggests that military service was an ethical matter rather than a violation of religious principles.

In the seventh chapter, Frank M. Hasel articulates the ethical challenges people in military service encounter when exercising their profession. He contends that before exercising their functions, they must make vows that they will faithfully serve the country no matter the cost. He argues that soldiers pronounce the military creeds before joining the military career. He stipulates that these vows sometimes become barriers and cause Christians to compromise their beliefs.

The eighth chapter is a psychological discussion about consequences that last even when the individual has retired from his military career. Andreas Bochman raises these facts to explain how military service can have lasting consequences, that can affect even later generations. The eighth chapter is the conclusion. Hasel summarizes the whole book by stating the position of each contributor to the book.

This book is a very informative work that provides information about military service and the understanding of the Seventh-day Adventist Church from different perspectives. It explores the idea of Christians who enroll in military service, especially SDA members. The contributors see this concept from biblical, historical, and ethical lenses. This analysis enlarges the reader's understanding, and clarifies the position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The main idea of the book seems to be that Christians, especially SDA members, should not enroll in military careers where they might betray ethical and religious principles.

Concerning the content of the book, I disagree with the idea that SDA members should not enroll in military service because of the danger of violation of some religious and ethical principles. First, what Magyarosi calls "holy war" to justify Israelite wars may also be understood in parallel with the concept of "just war" by Augustine, for he defines "holy" as having the right reason to wage war and fighting for a noble cause. For Magyarosi, holy war belongs to God, and he states that most of the wars that Israel waged in the Old Testament were according to a divine command. All the contributors express the same idea that a Christian should never be involved in the military to avoid violent acts and wars. However, from my understanding, as someone who lived in war-like situations, military service must not be understood synonymously with violence and the compromise of ethical principles. One can argue that even military systems can work in accomplishing a divine plan. Thus, one can enroll in a military career and still be a faithful Christian.

It is obvious that military service can influence non-committed Christians to compromise. Still, on the other hand, this cannot be a weight reason for Christians to resign or to not participate in military tasks. Military service is analogous to understanding politics in the Seventh-day Adventist church. The SDA Church opposes and does not adhere to political systems. Nevertheless, many SDA members engage in political parties while remaining committed to their fundamental beliefs. Based on biblical principles, there are several God's servants who faithfully accomplished administrative and political duties without compromising their ethical principles, such as Daniel, Nehemiah, and Ezra. Therefore, the military service can also be a way through which the divine can execute the divine plans, whether by using a peacemaking process or sometimes violence.

One of the arguments that the contributors give for their view is that military service betrays the fundamental beliefs of the SDA members. Nevertheless, one can ask the question: if political systems can function on God's account, why not military service? In addition to that, one may ask the following questions: (1) Is being a soldier synonymous to engaging in violence? (2) Does the sixth commandment "You shall not kill," apply even in the context of battle and war? (3) Would Adventists support the idea that countries should live without military systems? If not, why Adventists should not participate in it? (4) Is defending the nation or standing to defend the victimized people a crime? (5) Shouldn't Adventists contribute to developing their countries in various ways, including the military service? (6) If Adventists can tolerate the participation in noncombatant duties, will it not be an indirect contribution to the war-like acts? My point is to argue that it is correct to enroll in military service as long as it does not break the ethical and moral principles considering the place, time, and circumstances. It is a civic task that every citizen is called to partake in, including the SDA members.

To conclude, I would argue that the issue of military service in the SDA Church is ethical rather than biblical. The context of what Magyarosi calls "holy war" may not be a convincing argument to forbid someone from enrolling in the military service because of the context, time, and place. As far as I understand, this issue must be decided depending on the place and situation. I support the concept of "just war," which stipulates that as long as people fight for a good reason, it is legitimate. In war-time, despite the propaganda and sometimes emotional decisions, I would suggest that people should engage in military service: To serve community interests, defend the

nations or rights of the populations, and guarantee the safety of national territory and people's goods.

Etienne Munyamashara Irakiza
Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, PHILIPPINES

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EDITORIAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Mail Information
Editor
Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary
AIIAS
P.O. Box 038
Silang, Cavite 4118
PHILIPPINES

E-mail Information
editor: *jaas@aiias.edu; kbergland@aiias.edu*
assoc. editor: *drazmerita@aiias.edu*
book review editor: *kbergland@aiias.edu*
journal exchanges: *jaas@aiias.edu*
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