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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.

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EDITORIAL

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We gladly present to you the 2023 issue of *JAAS*! In this issue we present five articles. Godwin N. Aja, Victoria T. Aja, H. Jacob Aguimesheo, Sa Myo Thoung, and Delwin S. Gusago co-author the article "Understanding the Covid-19 Pandemic for Public Health and Biblical Perspectives." The Covid-19 pandemic is a part of history, but it is still not too late to learn from it. They argue that while using public health measures to control pandemics is necessary, combining this with biblical principles deepens the spiritual and emotional response to such crises.

Oliver Glanz writes "Assessing a Critical Look at Modern Graduate Education Through the Lens of Ancient Textbooks." While acknowledging the benefits of modern textbooks and teaching styles in contemporary education, he finds that they may also compromise the ideals of humanistic and Christian education, namely, training critical and independent thinkers living responsibly in their social contexts. He suggests ways in which we can learn from ancient textbooks. Since this chapter draws examples from the field of teaching Hebrew, those involved in such training can particularly benefit from this article.

The third article is Zdravko Stefanovic's "Whole-Person Care in the Teachings of the Three Abrahamic Faiths." In a world where health and welfare persist to be a challenge, Stefanovic offers reflections on where Judaism, Christianity, and Islam may find themselves converging in perspectives and offering a better way forward in relation to wholeness, wellness, health, and spirituality. This article also provides a basis for engaging in constructive dialogue between the monotheistic religions.

In Donny Chrissutianto's article, "Contrasting Views about the Divinity of Christ and Their Impact on the Acceptance of the Personality of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist Theology," he takes a dive

into the history of discussions and clarifications of the godhead in Adventist history. He surveys the main views and groups in the church's history, and argues that a biblical understanding of the divinity of Christ helps the acceptance also of the personality of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of the Trinity.

The last article is written by Glenn Mariano. He discusses the meaning of "entering God's rest" according to the book of Hebrews. His "Entering God's Rest: Reading Psalm 95:7–11 in Hebrews 3–4" argues that the expression is basically synonymous with the idea of entering God's sanctuary. We hope and pray that these articles will give you food for thought, and stimulate further reflection.

We are also happy to announce that *JAAS* has now been approved for indexing with the ATLA Religion Database. This has been a goal for many years. It means that the visibility and accessibility of the journal significantly increases. In particular we want to thank the Leslie Hardinge Library staff, and Megumi Flores, Lyra Jazel Ilagan, and Dionisio Tuapin in particular, for giving significant help in both achieving this goal and also with the technicalities involved in this process. Publication and a journal is a teamwork, and I also want to take this opportunity to thank the editorial team, and my fellow editors Richard Doss and Dindo Paglinawan, for their significant help in completing the *JAAS* issues.

Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary 24.1–2 (2023): 3–18

Understanding the Covid-19 Pandemic from Public Health and Biblical Perspectives

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has left an indelible mark on the physical, social, economic, political, and spiritual life and well-being of individuals, communities, institutions, and systems. The disruptive effects of this global crisis call for a deeper reflection and understanding of both the public health and biblical perspectives on pandemics to guide future physical, social, economic, political, and mental responses to future pandemics. This article utilizes basic epidemiological questions of who, what, where, when, why, and how, and explores their interactions with the CELEBRATIONS principles of Choice, Exercise, Liquid, Environment, Belief, Rest, Air, Temperance, Integrity, Optimism, Nutrition, Social Support, and Services. By exploring the nexus between these two perspectives, the authors propose unique biblical concepts that contribute to understanding the COVID-19 pandemic and go beyond the public health perspective.

Keywords: COVID-19, Pandemic, Public Health, Bible, CELEBRATIONS, Seventh-day Adventist

1. Background

The COVID-19 pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2[1] originated in Wuhan, China.[2] Despite the guidelines issued by the World Health Organization

[1] Ben Hu et al., "Characteristics of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19," *Nature Review Microbiology* 19.3 (2021): 141–54, doi:10.1038/s41579-020-00459-7.

[2] "Origins of the SARS-CoV-2 Virus," World Health Organization (WHO), March 30,

(WHO), aimed at slowing down the spread of the virus and keeping people safe, millions of deaths were recorded across countries and communities.[3] As of August 27, 2023, there were 770 million confirmed cases and 6.9 million deaths.[4] While the COVID-19 pandemic is not the first of its kind in history, its devastating effects on the social, economic, political, and spiritual well-being of individuals and communities have been tremendous. The impact on the global economy has led to job losses in many countries.[5] Socially, families were separated, particularly at the early stage of the pandemic, and social services were disrupted.[6] Politically, government institutions became dysfunctional.[7] Spiritually, people's faith in God was challenged.[8] Overall, the pandemic has had major effects at multiple levels of society and the global public health systems.[9] Thus, examining the COVID-

2023, https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus/origins-of-the-virus. See also K. G. Andersen et al. "The Origins of SARS-CoV-2: A Critical Review," *Cell* 184.4 (2021): 893–902, https://doi.org/10.1016/j. cell.2021.02.002.

3 "Keeping Health Workers Safe to Keep Patients Safe," World Health Organization, September 17, 2020, https://www.who.int/news/item/ 17-09-2020-keep-health-workers-safe-to-keep-patients-safe-who.

4 "Weekly Epidemiological Update on COVID-19," World Health Organization, September 1, 2023. (n.d.), https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/ weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---1-september-2023.

5 Xueli Wei, Lijing Li, and Fan Zhang, "The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Socio-Economic and Sustainability," *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 28.48 (2021), doi:10.1007/s11356-021-14986-0.

6 Pouya Hosseinzadeh et al., "Social Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic. A Systematic Review," *Investigacion y Educacion en Enfermeria* 40.1 (2022): 10, doi:10.17533/-udea.iee.v40n1e10.

7 Matteo Bonotti and Steven T. Zech, "The Human, Economic, Social, and Political Costs of COVID-19," *Recovering Civility during COVID-19* (2021): 1–36, doi:10.1007/978-981-33-6706-7_1.

8 A. Büssing, Baumann, K. Surzykiewicz, "Loss of Faith and Decrease in Trust in a Higher Source during COVID-19 in Germany," *Journal of Religion and Health* 61.1 (2022): 741–66.

9 Y. Liu et al., "Challenges and Opportunities of a Global Health Crisis: The Management and Business Implications of COVID-19 from an Asian Perspective," *Asian Business & Management* 19.3 (2020): 277–97, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41291-020-00119-x. See also Stephanie M. Topp, "COVID-19 and Global Health Systems," in Sim et al., *The Routledge Handbook of Global Development* (London: Routledge, 2022), 455–68, doi: 10.4324/978100301 7653-44; Giulia Parola, "Flaws of Global Health Governance as Illustrated by the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution," *Culturas Jurídicas* 9.23 (2022), doi: 10.22409/rcj.v 9i23.54728; D. Jato et al., "COVID-19 and Public Health in Africa: a Call for New Perspectives in Health System Strengthening," *Journal of Preventive and Rehabilitative Medicine* 4.1 (2022): 3–13, doi:10.21617/jpr m2022.412.

19 pandemic from both the public health and biblical perspectives may help broaden the conversation.

Throughout history, various forms of pandemics have affected people across the globe. These pandemics have included "plague, cholera, flu, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV) and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV)."[10] The COVID-19 pandemic stands in a long line of plagues that have disrupted humanity. The Plague of Justinian (541–543), Black Death (1347–1351), and Third plague (1885) were caused by fleas associated to wild rodents, while the first (1817–1824), second (1827–1835), third (1839–1856), fourth (1863–1875), fifth (1881–1886), sixth (1899–1923), and seventh (1961) cholera pandemics were as a result of exposure to contaminated water.[11] To create a balanced perspective, our article used basic epidemiological questions and CELEBRATIONS principles as conceptual and organizing frameworks to explore factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic from public health and biblical perspectives. Understanding the COVID-19 pandemic from both perspectives is critical to the development of comprehensive and effective interventions to address future pandemics.

2. The Public Health Perspective

The basic epidemiological questions of who, what, where, when, why, and how usually guide public health approaches to disease prevention and control.[12] Table 1 presents the epidemiological questions and how the corresponding answers help to understand sin from a public health perspective. The questions in the left column are the typical epidemological questions.

3. The Biblical Perspective

The Bible describes the origin of humans and their fall into sin, resulting in the condition of struggle and hope for the future. In the beginning, God created a perfect universe (Genesis 1), and provided specific instructions on how humans should live and relate to the environment. However, when Adam and Eve violated the principles laid down by God (Gen 3:1–13) evil

[10] J. Piret and Boivin G. "Pandemics Throughout History: Frontier in Microbiology," *Front Microbiology* 15:11:631736 (2021), doi: 10.3389/fmicb.2020.631736.

[11] Piret and Boivin, "Pandemics Throughout History."

[12] European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, *Questions and Answers on COVID-19: Basic Facts*, June 12, 2023. https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/questions-answers/questions-answers-basic-facts.

befell the world (Rom 8:22–23). The effects of sin can be seen in the physical (Gen 3:16–19), social (Gen 4:8–16; Gal 5:19–21), economic (2 Kgs 6:24–29), political (Isa 1:23; Rom 13:1–2), biological (Rom 5:12), and spiritual spheres (Rom 3:23; 6:23). Table 1 presents the epidemiological questions and how the corresponding answers help to understand the biblical concept of sin from a public health perspective.

Table 1: Epidemiological questions and answers from public health and biblical perspectives

Question	Public health answer	Biblical answer
What is the problem? (causative agent)	COVID-19 pandemic	Sin/fallen world
Who is affected? (person)	Humans	Humans, animals, environment/planet
Where? (place)	North America, South America, Africa, Europe, Asia, Oceania, etc.	Eden, earth
When? (time)	2019 to present	At birth, through life
Why/how? (causes, risk factors, mode of transmission)	Contact, droplet, airborne, fomite, biological samples, fecal-oral, bloodborne, mother-to-child, and animal-to-human transmission, etc.[13]	Inherited sinful nature,[14] sin against humans, environment, and God

3.1 Public Health and Biblical Perspectives: Connecting the Dots

The World Health Organization defines health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."[15] However, the COVID-19 pandemic distorted the state of health and life of individuals, families, communities, and nations. Public health

[13] "Scientific Brief on Transmission of SARS-CoV-2: Implications for Infection Prevention Precautions," World Health Organization, July 9, 2020, https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/transmission-of-sars-cov-2-implications-for-infection-prevention-precautions.

[14] Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 671. See also George R. Knight, *Sin and Salvation: God's Work for Us and in Us* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2008), 35.

[15] World Health Organization Constitution, 1948.

played a crucial role in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic by using the key prevention and control approaches (a-e) listed by Winslow (1920) in his definition of public health:

> A science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health and efficiency through organized community effort for (a) the sanitation of the environment; (b) the control of communicable infections; (c) the education of the individual in personal hygiene; (d) the organization of the medical and nursing services for the early diagnosis and preventive treatment of diseases; and (e) the development of the social machinery to insure everyone a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health, so organizing these benefits as to enable every citizen to realize his birth-right of health and longevity.[16]

In addition to describing the spiritual implications of the fall in the Garden of Eden, the Bible provides a descriptive history of sin's work on earth. Part of that history is the occurrence of disease and pestilence. The Bible has a rich vocabulary to describe disease outbreaks, for example, pestilence (Deut 28:2), plague (Exod 11:1), boils (Exod 9:8–9), leprosy (Lev 13:2), and fever (Deut 28:22). These outbreaks were described variously as natural results of sin (Rom 6:23, Ps 103:2–3, Prov 14:30), the result of violations of health laws prescribed by God (Exod 15:26, Lev 11), and as punishment for sin and rebellion (Deut 28:15, 22, 27–28, 35).

The Bible associates some diseases and pandemics with sin or disobedience, particularly in the context of God's judgment in specific historical instances. However, not all disease outbreaks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, should be directly linked to personal sin, as they are often the result of natural causes within a fallen, broken world. While sin is the root cause of suffering and death, we may recognize that pandemics like COVID-19 are complex events arising from both natural and human factors, and they reflect the broader brokenness of creation.

The struggle with disease and the need for public health started with the fall of Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden.[17] But even in their state of sin, God began to reveal principles of health to His children to help address and

[16] Egwu IN, "PHC System in Nigeria: Theory, Practice and Perspectives" (Lagos: Elmore Press, 1996), in Winslow CEA, *The Untilled Fields of Public Health* (New York: AAAS, 1920). Winslow's definition, though old, seems to provide a comprehensive overview of the what, why, when, where, and how of public health.

[17] Godwin N. Aja, "Biblico-Historical Foundations of Public Health: An Adventist Perspective," *Christ in the Classroom* 28 (2002): 19–37. http://christintheclassroom.org/-vol_28/28cc 019-037.htm.

mitigate the impacts of sin. The CELEBRATIONS principles (Choice, Exercise, Liquid, Environment, Belief, Rest, Air, Temperance, Integrity, Optimism, Nutrition, Social Support, and Services) promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, encapsulate public health and biblical principles that can be used as a template for addressing the COVID-19 pandemic from the two perspectives. Below is a brief example of how each of the CELEBRATIONS principles relates to the COVID-19 pandemic from public health and biblical perspectives.

3.1.1 Choice

During pandemics, individuals, families, communities, and institutions make public health choices. The choice to obey or not obey the COVID-19 pandemic governmental guidelines and regulations plays a vital role, to a large extent, in whether one contracts the disease or not. From the biblical perspective, choice-making is a fundamental human right and every choice made has physical, social, mental, and spiritual consequences. The Bible reports that humans made a choice in the Garden of Eden, and the result was devastating. Even though God is all-knowing, His loving nature prevented Him from stopping Adam and Eve from making their own paradigm-changing decision. That choice had a dramatic impact on the entire human race. Individuals typically reflect on their lives and priorities during tough times (2 Chr 7:13–14). Some people have turned to their faith during the pandemic for comfort and direction, as the Bible instructs us to do in trying times.[18]

Importantly, the choices we make during a pandemic do not only affect our own health but also the health of others. The decision to follow health guidelines is not merely a personal one—it has a social dimension. The act of wearing a mask, avoiding crowded spaces, and adhering to social distancing rules can prevent the spread of the virus, protecting those who are vulnerable or at higher risk. This reflects the biblical principle of loving one's neighbor (Matt 22:39). In the same way, the apostle Paul in 1 Cor 10:24 teaches that "no one should seek their own good, but the good of others." In the context of a pandemic, personal choices directly impact the well-being of the community. Choosing to act in ways that protect others, especially

[18] M. Ivanova and S. Dzhoubrova, "Religious Views and Religious Struggles in The Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Psychological Research* 25.2 (2021), https://doi.org/-10.7546/PsyRB.2022.25.02.05.

the most vulnerable, aligns with biblical teachings about selflessness and loving others as we love ourselves.

3.1.2 Exercise

Public health promotes the physical well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Physical activity played a crucial role during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.[19] Regular exercise can enhance immune function, potentially reducing the risk and severity of respiratory infections.[20] From the biblical perspective, the human body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit needs to be safeguarded (1 Cor 6:19–20). Engaging in physical exercise is one of the ways to safeguard the body.[21] According to Ellen G. White, "The whole body is designed for action, and unless the physical powers are kept in health by active exercise, the mental powers cannot long be used to their highest capacity."[22]

However, while exercise and physical fitness offer numerous health benefits, including improved immune function and a lower risk of chronic diseases, they do not provide immunity against viral infections like COVID-19. Even individuals who were athletes or exercised daily remained susceptible to the virus before the availability of vaccines, as COVID-19 is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets, and factors like viral load, exposure, and individual health responses play significant roles in determining who contracts the disease. While regular exercise can help reduce the severity of illness and enhance recovery, it does not prevent infection entirely, especially in the face of a novel virus like SARS-CoV-2.

19 T. J. Yeo, "Sport and Exercise During and Beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic," *European Journal of Preventive Cardiology* 27.12 (2021): 1239–41.

20 Martin A. J, "Motivation and Engagement Across the Academic Life Span: A Developmental Construct Validity Study of Elementary School, High School, and University/College Students," *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 69.5 (2009): 794–824, https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164409332214.

21 C. Tracey Greenwood and Teresa Delgado, "A Journey Toward Wholeness, a Journey to God: Physical Fitness as Embodied Spirituality," *Journal of Religion & Health* 52.3 (2013): 941–54, doi:10.1007/S10943-011-9546-9. Paul also said in 1 Tim 4:8: "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come."

22 Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 207.

3.1.3 Liquid

Water intake is an important health requirement. Regular use of clean water to replenish what is discharged through urine, sweat, etc., is vital to ensure good health. Ensuring access to safe drinking water is of paramount importance for health and well-being.[23] Biblically, water symbolizes life (John 4:14) and functions as a cleansing agent (Lev 16:4, 24; 17:15).

Though regular hydration with clean water is essential for maintaining good health, as it helps replenish fluids lost through urine, sweat, and other bodily functions, the consumption of sweetened beverages such as sodas and sugary juices can negatively impact immune function. These drinks, high in added sugars, can contribute to chronic inflammation, impair immune responses, and increase susceptibility to infections, including viral diseases like COVID-19. Research has shown that excess sugar intake can weaken the immune system, making the body less effective at fighting off pathogens and heightening the risk of severe illness when exposed to viruses.[24]

3.1.4 Environment

The environment and COVID-19 are connected.[25] Proper hygiene practices, including handwashing and cleaning utensils, are critical in preventing the transmission of communicable diseases. Studies have shown that hand hygiene can reduce the spread of infections like COVID-19, the flu, and gastrointestinal diseases.[26] Similarly, cleaning and disinfecting utensils and surfaces help prevent foodborne illnesses caused by bacteria such as *Salmonella* and *E. coli*.[27] Inadequate sanitation, on the other hand, can lead to outbreaks

[23] M. Langone et al., "SARS-CoV-2 in Water Services: Presence and Impacts," *Environmental Pollution* 268 (2021): 115806, doi: 10.1016/j.envpol.2020.115806.

[24] J. Skrha and M. Prusik, "The Impact of Excessive Sugar Intake on the Immune System and Chronic Diseases," *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 70.2 (2016), 123–29, https://doi.org/10.1038/ejcn.2015.162. See also L. Jiang et al., "The Role of Inflammation in COVID-19 and its Impact on Immune Response," *International Journal of Infectious Diseases* 97 (2020), 332–38, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijid.2020.06.057.

[25] D. Barcelo, "An Environmental and Health Perspective for COVID-19 Outbreak: Meteorology and Air Quality Influence, Sewage Epidemiology Indicator, Hospitals Disinfection, Drug Therapies and Recommendations," *Journal of Environmental Chemical Engineering* 8.4 (2020): 104006, doi:10.1016/j.envpol. 2020.115806.

[26] "Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020), https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html.

[27] World Health Organization, 2020.

of waterborne diseases like cholera and typhoid, emphasizing the importance of hygiene in disease prevention (WHO, 2021).

The Bible is clear on the role humans play in the care of the environment (Gen 2:15) and prevention of diseases (Exod 15:26; Lev 13:46; Prov 3:7–8; 1 Cor 6:18). God gave ancient Israel detailed instructions on sanitation practices to keep their environment clean (Deut 23:1–14). In his comment on Deut 23:12–14, Nwaomah notes that "Jews who obeyed these godly instructions during the time of the black plagues were not affected in the same ways as others. Their obedience to God gave them a degree of immunity in a way no one can at the time [explain]."[28] According to Ellen G. White, "plenty of sunlight … [is] essential … to the cheerfulness and vigor of the inmates of the home."[29]

3.1.5 Belief

The Health Belief Model is widely used in public health research and practice to explore an individual's belief system in relation to disease susceptibility, severity, benefits, barriers, cues to action, and self-efficacy.[30] People who believe COVID-19 conspiracy theories are less likely to want the vaccine and to support measures to stop the virus.[31] From the biblical perspective, constant dependence upon God, who designed the human body and environment, is a safeguard to a life of health free from COVID-19. Religious beliefs and interpretations can strongly affect people's thoughts about vaccines.[32]

Moreover, religious beliefs and interpretations can strongly shape how people perceive health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Believers may

[28] S. M. Nwaomah, "Religion and Environment," *Religion and Society* (Nigeria: Babcock University Press, 2012), 97–108.

[29] Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942), 276.

[30] Irwin M. Rosenstock, "Historical Origins of the Health Belief Model," *Health Education Monographs* 2.4 (1974): 328–35, doi:10.1177/109019817400200403.

[31] V. A. Earnshaw et al, "COVID-19 Conspiracy Beliefs, Health Behaviors, and Policy Support," *Translational Behavioral Medicine* 10.4 (2020): 850–56.

[32] T. S. Netshapapame, "COVID-19 Vccination Hesitancy in South Africa: Biblical Discourse," *HTS Theological Studies* 79.4 (2023): 1–7. See also Vjetkovic Smiljana et al., "Do Religious People in Western Balkans have Faith in COVID-19 Vaccines?," *European Journal of Public Health* (2022), doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckac131.359; Ozan Kuru et al., "Religious Affiliation and Philosophical and Moral Beliefs about Vaccines: A Longitudinal Study," *Journal of Health Psychology* 27.13 (2022), doi: 10.1177/13591053221082770.

feel guided by their faith to trust in God's plan rather than relying on conspiracy theories or fear-driven narratives.

3.1.6 Rest

Physical and mental rest are critical to vibrant health. The human body needs adequate rest each day. About eight hours of sleep is good for effective living. Getting enough good sleep helps the immune system and can reduce the harm caused by stress from COVID-19.[33] The Bible promotes rest in two mutually reinforcing dimensions—continual spiritual rest and weekly Sabbath rest. Matthew 11:28–30 speaks of the perfect rest that comes from the peace that God provides through a relationship with Him and obedience to His words. Similarly, the weekly Sabbath rest in the Bible allows man to cease from work to rest and spend time communing with God. With this weekly Sabbath rest, God offers a physical, spiritual, and social reminder of His goodness and wholistic care for humankind. In these two dimensions of rest, Jesus's admonishment to His disciples to come aside and rest for a while," (Mark 6:31) displays His care for human well-being.

Morever, Christ's words in Mark 6:31, when He invited His disciples to come away and rest, exemplify the importance of periodic rest from work and ministry. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people found solace in taking moments to rest in God, even amid widespread uncertainty, loss, and anxiety. The pandemic created a global sense of chaos, but for many believers, trusting in God's peace provided a sanctuary of rest that helped them cope with stress and fear. In these times, the peace that surpasses all understanding (Phil 4:7) became a refuge, demonstrating that rest in God can bring a sense of hope and renewal despite external circumstances.

3.1.7 Air

Pure air is essential for maintaining good health, as it provides the oxygen that the body needs for proper functioning. Oxygen is critical for cellular processes, and the quality of the air we breathe can significantly impact overall health. The quality of indoor air plays an important role in the spread of respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.[34] As a result, the use of masks was advised for protection during the pandemic. Poor ventilation

[33] K. K. Gulia and V. M. Kumar, "Importance of Sleep for Health and Wellbeing Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic," *Sleep and Vigilance* 4.1 (2023): 49–50.

[34] M. Z. Abouleish, "Indoor Air Quality and COVID-19," *Public Health* 191.1 (2021).

and high concentrations of viral particles in enclosed spaces can increase the likelihood of transmission. Research has shown that the virus can linger in the air in certain conditions, emphasizing the importance of good air circulation and filtration to reduce the risk of infection.[35]

In the Bible, the air we breathe is recognized as a gift from God, affirming the sanctity and importance of life-giving breath. In Gen 2:7, it is written that "the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (NIV). This verse not only highlights God's role as the Creator but also underscores the vital importance of the air (breath) that sustains life. Thus, the air we breathe is seen as a divine provision, and we are reminded of its significance in sustaining life.

As the world faces challenges such as COVID-19, which is primarily transmitted through respiratory droplets and airborne particles, it is crucial to recognize the role that air quality plays in public health. Ensuring access to clean air, through proper ventilation, air filtration, and outdoor exposure, is an important aspect of disease prevention. The Bible's recognition of God's provision of breath as metaphor of the life He has given us serves as a reminder of the need to value and protect the air that sustains.

3.1.8 Temperance

Public health practice emphasizes moderation in all human activities. Avoiding the use of dangerous substances and judicious use of non-harmful foods is essential for healthful living. Temperance, such as prudence and self-regulation, can assist people with chronic conditions and disabilities in dealing with stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.[36] The Bible promotes total abstinence from all things that are harmful, and moderation in things that appear harmless (Gal 5:23).

One of the most pertinent aspects of public health during the COVID-19 pandemic was the increased risk associated with the use of substances such as alcohol and tobacco. Research has shown that use of these substances can

[35] L. Morawska and J. Cao, "Airborne Transmission of SARS-CoV-2: The World Should Face the Reality," *Environment International* 139 (2020), 105730, https://doi.org/10.1016/-j.envint.2020.105730.

[36] E. Umucu et al., "The Protective Role of Character Strengths in COVID-19 Stress and Well-being in Individuals with Chronic Conditions and Disabilities: An exploratory Study," *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin* 64.2 (2021): 67–74.

lead to worsened outcomes for individuals who contract COVID-19. Tobacco use has been linked to weakened immune function, respiratory complications, and an increased risk of severe disease progression when combined with COVID-19. Smokers are at greater risk of developing complications such as pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), and long-term lung damage. Alcohol use, on the other hand, can impair immune responses and increase vulnerability to viral infections. In addition, excessive alcohol consumption has been shown to exacerbate underlying health conditions such as liver disease, cardiovascular issues, and mental health disorders, all of which can worsen the prognosis for COVID-19 patients. Studies have also indicated that substance use disorders are linked to higher mortality rates from COVID-19, as these conditions can further compromise the body's ability to fight the virus and recover from its effects. Therefore, moderation and the avoidance of harmful substances are crucial for reducing the risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes and improving overall health during the pandemic.[37]

3.1.9 Integrity

Biblical perspectives on integrity, such as aligning one's words with actions and upholding moral values, provide a solid foundation for leaders to guide their communities through difficult times with honesty and trustworthiness.[38] With the surge of misinformation during the pandemic, especially on social media platforms, individuals had to decide which sources to trust. Social media's algorithmic bias towards sensational content led to the rapid spread of false information, and individuals who are predisposed to believe certain narratives may have been more susceptible to accepting conspiracy theories.[39] Public health efforts must account for these belief systems and work to provide clear, factual information while respecting the diverse

[37] "Tobacco and COVID-19: Preventing and mitigating the adverse health impacts of tobacco use in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic," World Health Organization (2020), https://www.who.int. See also "COVID-19 and Alcohol Use Disorder: What You Need to Know," National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) (2020), https://www.niaaa.nih.gov.

[38] D. DeWitt, "Actions Speak Louder Than Words, or Do They? A Look at the Power of Words and Actions in Christian Leadership," in Bruce E. Winston, *The Mind of a Leader: A Christian Perspective of the Thoughts, Mental Models, and Perceptions that Shape Leadership Behavior* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 31–42.

[39] I. Rosenstock Irwin, "The Health Belief Model and Preventive Health Behavior," *Health Education Monographs* 2.4 (1974): 354–86. http://www.jstor.org/stable/45240623.

worldviews of individuals. Maintaining integrity in public health communication during the COVID-19 pandemic was paramount as misinformation spread rapidly.[40] The integrity principle serves as a beacon of hope and stability amidst the uncertainties of the pandemic. During pandemics, it is necessary to ensure that information comes from trusted authorities like the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), or local health departments. Further, integrity compels the avoidance of amplifying rumors while actively sharing accurate, science-based information to counter misinformation. Integrity also means engaging with empathy and clarity in constructive discussions, and correcting misunderstandings, when false information is encountered.

3.1.10 Optimism

Greater social support and optimism are linked to reduced levels of depression and generalized anxiety among healthcare workers.[41] Optimism, rooted in hope and patience, becomes an essential element for sustainable leadership in uncertain times, such as the COVID-19 era.[42] Optimism and gratitude are related, and they have a positive impact on the immune system.[43] Thus, gratitude during a chaotic time such as a pandemic, can be protective. Repeatedly throughout the Bible, the principle of optimism is widespread, encouraging faith in God no matter the circumstances, based on the concept that God is aware of and concerned about human problems, and that when we are with Him eternally, human suffering will come to an end (Rev 21:4).

[40] J. Zarocostas, "How to Fight an Infodemic," *The Lancet* 395.10225 (2020): 676.

[41] C. Schug et al., "Social Support and Optimism as Protective Factors for Mental Health among 7765 Healthcare Workers in Germany during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Results of the VOICE Study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18.7 (2021): 3827.

[42] S. Waldner, "Sustainable Leadership: How the Virtues of Hope and Patience can become Essential Elements for Resilience in Uncertain Times," *Scandinavian Journal for Leadership and Theology* 10 (2023): 299–314.

[43] "Expressing gratitude makes us healthier: Who wouldn't be grateful for that? ScienceDaily," National Communication Association (April 11, 2017), https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/04/170411104712.htm.

3.1.11 Nutrition

Knowledge about diet and food choices changed because of the pandemic.[44] Individuals with pre-existing health conditions and the elderly, who are more vulnerable to COVID-19 can benefit from a diet rich in essential nutrients to bolster their immune systems.[45] Plant-based foods such as vegetables, fruits, legumes, and nuts constitute the original diet God recommended to man (Gen 1:29). They are known to contain the required vitamins, minerals, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, and oil.

3.1.12 Social Support and Services

There is a complex relationship where social support positively influences mental health, partially mediated by resilience, and moderated by age group.[46] The Bible commands us to support one another, especially the vulnerable (Matt 25:35–40). The biblical idea of caring for others is relevant in times of crisis.[47] In the Bible, Paul admonishes Christians to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2). The early Christians' actions of caring for the sick, practicing charity, and demonstrating solidarity during epidemics align with the principles of social support and services found in the Bible.[48]

However, the social isolation induced by COVID-19, though necessary for controlling the spread of the virus, created significant challenges, particularly for vulnerable populations such as the elderly and young people. Elderly individuals in nursing homes and young people experiencing developmental milestones were particularly affected. The elderly often faced increased isolation due to strict visiting restrictions, which compounded

44 A. Folorunso et al., "Nutritional Knowledge and Immunity-boosting Food Consumption Patterns before and after the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown Periods in Osun State, Nigeria," *Nutrition and Health* 28.4 (2022): 761–69.

45 L. Octavia and J. Harlan, "The Role of Nutrition the COVID-19 Pandemic," *International Journal of Public Health* 10.2 (2021): 304–10.

46 T. Hou, "Social Support and Mental Health among Health care Workers during Coronavirus Disease 2019 outbreak: A Moderated Mediation Model," *Plos One* 15,5 (2020): e0233831.

47 Sandro Galea, Raina M Merchant, and Nicole Lurie, "The Mental Health Consequences of COVID-19 and Physical Distancing: The Need for Prevention and Early Intervention," *JAMA Internal Medicine* 180.6 (2020): 817–18, doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2020.1562.

48 A. Justice Arthur, "Visions of Church Life in the Post COVID–19 Era: Analysis and Proposal," *Daniel Institute* (2021): 1–15, https://ocw.danielinstitute.net/media/uploads/researches/research_20210801184542_4dc546dc98.pdf.

feelings of loneliness and despair. Young people, on the other hand, were deprived of crucial social interactions during key stages of their development, which led to feelings of anxiety, depression, and disconnection from others. These disruptions to social connectivity had significant mental health consequences for both groups. The Bible speaks to these challenges as well, emphasizing the importance of connection and community, as seen in passages like Heb 10:24–25, which encourages believers to "not give up meeting together" but to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (NIV).

The mental health impact of social isolation during the pandemic underscores the importance of social support networks in promoting resilience and well-being.[49] The Bible encourages Christians to provide emotional and social support, recognizing that in times of crisis, the need for community care and mutual support is paramount. Just as the early church responded to crises with acts of solidarity and care, believers today are called to respond to the mental health crisis caused by the pandemic with compassion, understanding, and practical support for those in need.[50]

4. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant global event that has affected every aspect of human life—physical, social, economic, political, and spiritual. As we move forward, it is crucial to reflect on the profound impact this pandemic has had on individuals, communities, and institutions. This article aimed to explore the intersection of public health and biblical perspectives to better understand the pandemic and to guide future responses to similar crises. By employing the basic epidemiological questions (who, what, where, when, why, and how) and the CELEBRATIONS principles (Choice, Exercise, Liquid, Environment, Belief, Rest, Air, Temperance, Integrity, Optimism, Nutrition, Social Support, and Services), this article explored how both scientific and spiritual approaches offer complementary insights into the complexities of the pandemic.

From a public health standpoint, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of prevention, preparedness, and response strategies in mitigating the spread of infectious diseases. The use of frameworks like

[49] "The Impact of Social Isolation on Mental Health During COVID-19," National Institutes of Health (NIH) (2020), https://www.nih.gov.

[50] "Social Support and Mental Health: How Social Connections Affect Well-Being," Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health (2020), https://www.hsph.harvard.edu.

the CELEBRATIONS principles emphasizes the importance of individual choices, lifestyle factors, and community support systems in influencing health outcomes. Public health models have demonstrated the critical need for scientific research, data-driven decision-making, and effective communication to combat future pandemics. These frameworks emphasize the multifactorial nature of disease outbreaks, which are influenced not only by pathogens but by environmental, behavioral, and social determinants of health.

However, the biblical perspective offers something unique in this context—an understanding of human suffering, resilience, and hope rooted in faith. The Bible provides an essential framework for moral reflection, offering spiritual principles that guide individuals and communities through times of crisis. It provides a framework for understanding the spiritual dimensions of health—how obedience to God, rest, care for others, and trust in divine providence can shape responses to suffering and illness. As seen in scriptural teachings, humans are encouraged to rely on God during times of crisis, seeking spiritual solace and comfort through prayer, community support, and obedience to God's word (Matt 11:28–30; Gal 6:2). The example of early Christian care for the sick during pandemics further underscores the biblical mandate to show compassion, solidarity, and practical love toward those suffering.

This article underscores the point that while public health measures are vital for controlling pandemics, the biblical principles offer deep insights into the spiritual and emotional aspects of dealing with such crises. The pandemic has revealed the need for holistic health approaches—those that integrate physical, mental, and spiritual health. The biblical perspective contributes to this discussion by providing a framework for understanding suffering, coping with uncertainty, and maintaining hope in the face of adversity. It reminds us that our choices matter not only for our health but also for the health of our communities. The lessons learned from the pandemic should inspire both public health strategies and spiritual responses that prioritize compassion, resilience, and community care. Going forward, it is essential that we consider the spiritual dimension alongside the physical and social factors when preparing for future health crises, ensuring a balanced approach that fosters both well-being and spiritual growth in times of uncertainty.

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A Critical Look at Modern Graduate Education Through the Lens of Ancient Textbooks

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Abstract

The disruption of traditional teaching and learning strategies within the (post) COVID era has invited teachers to rethink education, evaluate what they have done so far, and reimagine what it means to be an educator in the 21st century. The need to reflect on 21st-century education has particularly been felt in the realm of the humanities (religion, literature, history, etc.). This essay seeks to compare the "textbooks" of the ancient world (Iliad, Odyssey, Aeneid, TNK) with modern textbooks and draw conclusions that can function as a critical lens for reflecting on modern teaching strategies for the humanities. I suggest that modern textbooks and teaching styles—without neglecting their benefits—have contributed to compromising the ideals of the humanistic and, more specifically, the Christian educational aim: developping critically and independently thinking individuals who live responsibly in their social context. This essay will, however, not remain critical of modern education but make suggestions informed by ancient textbooks to improve education in a world where remote and internet-based learning has become an integral part of 21st-century education.

Keywords: textbooks, modern education, Torah, Odyssey, Iliad, Aeneid, dogmatism, truth, ethics

Read poetry. Don't hide in the comfort of your beliefs.
Do the opposite. The more sceptical, dubious, intellectually insecure you are the better it is for you.
(Roberto Beginini)

There are people who know everything,
and that's all they know.
(Niccolò Machiavelli)

1. Introduction

In this essay, I intend to contribute to a critical assessment of how the humanities are being taught in modern college education.[1] My critical interpretative lens will be provided by comparing modern and ancient textbooks. While one can define textbooks differently, I will use the term "textbook" (TB) in the sense of "foundational text" as a basic tool for education. Modern TBs are foundational texts in schools, colleges, and universities. Likewise, ancient canonized texts (Iliad, Odyssey, Aeneid, TNK[2]) were foundational in ancient educational setups.[3] As no modern religion or history class is taught without a TB as the most foundational course material, so was no ancient class taught without Homer's epics (in the Greek world), Vergil's Aeneid (in the Roman world), or the TNK (in the Jewish world).

The differences between ancient and modern TBs are stark and have triggered different educational methods. After describing the essential task of Western education ("2. The Idea of Modern/Western Education"), I will describe some of the essential differences between ancient and modern textbooks ("3. Ancient vs. Modern TBs"). This will then allow me to compare

[1] This essay is based on my invited lecture at the annual Andrews University Teaching and Learning Conference on March 25, 2021.

[2] TNK is the abbreviated form of Tanakh which refers to the three major sections of the Hebrew Bible: Torah (Pentateuch), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings).

[3] Scholarship in ancient and classical literature identify the Bible, the Homeric epics, and Vergil's *Aeneid* as "foundational texts." One of the reasons for such classification is that these works have been used as TBs in ancient schools and educational environments. With the rise of Christianity, the foundational texts of Judaism and the Greek *paideia* were combined within the Christian curriculum. Thus, Vergil, Homer, and the Bible continued to be foundational texts for both the ancient and Christian eras up to the fall of Byzanz in the 15th century. Cf. Margarit Finkelberg, "Canonising and Decanonising Homer: Reception of the Homeric Poems in Antiquity and Modernity," in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters*, ed. Maren Niehoff (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 16–20.

the different natures of TBs and identify how they have informed different educational methods ("4. Comparison"). We will see that each method has its advantages and disadvantages. To describe in concrete ways some of the disadvantages that come with modern TBs, I will use examples from typical TBs used in Biblical Theology and Biblical Language classes offered at colleges and seminaries. The insights gained through a comparative analysis of TBs help to see the strengths and weaknesses of modern education and show how they can foster polarization on various fronts. They can also suggest practical implementations of ancient methods within the modern educational setup. To illustrate this, I will provide a concrete example of a restructured Biblical Hebrew language course.

When integrating ancient approaches to education, modern educators can help students not only to perform better but, hopefully, to develop skills with which they can navigate more humbly through the challenges of modern everyday life—a life that steadily grows in complexity.[4]

2. The Idea of Modern/Western Education

There is always the risk of romanticizing the past when one is involved in a critique of present culture. As I try to evaluate modern TBs as a central element of our modern educational strategies by comparing them with ancient TBs, I don't claim that the old times were better than today's times. However, at the same time, most of us consternate that modern (Western) education has failed to achieve what it was supposed to achieve. This becomes visible when we compare the official statements of Western state-governed educational departments about the purpose of education with the present discourse of citizens who were educated in Western institutions. A typical example of a purpose statement of modern education in a democratic society is the "Strukturplan für das Bildungswesen" published by the German Education Commission:

> The comprehensive goal of education is the individual's capacity for individual and social life, understood as his or her ability to realize the freedom and liberties granted and imposed by the constitution.... The fundamental rights mentioned in the Basic Law, which are here representative of all humane fundamental rights, apply to everyone in the same way. Each individual should be able to exercise them and behave

[4] Such a need has been formulated in different ways and formats by educational scholars. See, for example, Christoper P. Long, "The Liberal Arts Endeavor," *The Journal of General Education* 65.3–4 (2016): v–ix.

> in such a way that he grants every other member of society the exercise of the same fundamental rights as a matter of course. Thus, fundamental rights also give rise to duties. To enable every citizen to exercise his rights and to fulfill his duties must therefore be the general aim of education, for which the state, next to the parents, must provide.... Learning should promote the whole person. This includes that everyone learns to learn. The social system of learning should lead, in all educational institutions, to the acquisition of the behaviors necessary for living together.[5]

A dedicated Christian version of such a purpose statement is found in article no. 1 of the official educational mission statement of the state of Bavaria:

> Schools shall carry out the educational and training mandate enshrined in the Constitution. They shall impart knowledge and skills and educate mind and body, heart and character. The highest educational goals are reverence for God, respect for religious conviction, for human dignity, and for the equal rights of men and women, self-control, a sense of responsibility and a willingness to take responsibility, a willingness to help, an open-mindedness for all that is true, good and beautiful, and a sense of responsibility for nature and the environment. Students are to be educated in the spirit of democracy, in a/the? love for the Bavarian

[5] The German original: "Das umfassende Ziel der Bildung ist die Fähigkeit des einzelnen zu individuellem und gesellschaftlichem Leben, verstanden als seine Fähigkeit, die Freiheit und die Freiheiten zu verwirklichen, die ihm die Verfassung gewährt und auferlegt.… Die im Grundgesetz genannten Grundrechte, die hier stellvertretend für alle humanen Grundrechte stehen, gelten für alle in gleicher Weise. Jeder einzelne soll sie wahrnehmen können und sich so verhalten, daß er jedem anderen Mitglied der Gesellschaft die Wahrnehmung derselben Grundrechte selbstverständlich zugesteht. Damit ergeben sich aus den Grundrechten auch Pflichten. Jeden Staatsbürger zur Wahrnehmung seiner Rechte und zur Erfüllung seiner Pflichten zu befähigen, muß deshalb das allgemeine Ziel der Bildung sein, für die nächst den Eltern der Staat sorgen muß.… Das Lernen soll den ganzen Menschen fördern. Dazu gehört, daß jeder das Lernen erlernt. Das soziale System des Lernens soll in allen Bildungseinrichtungen dazu führen, daß die für das Zusammenleben erforderlichen Verhaltensweisen erworben werden" (Deutscher Bildungsrat, *Strukturplan Für Das Bildungswesen* [Stuttgart: Ernst Klett, 1972], 29–31. My underlining). For a critical reception from a Christian perspective see Ulrich Becker, *Hoffnung für die Kinder dieser Erde: Beiträge für Religionspädagogik und Ökumene* (Münster: LIT Verlag Münster, 2004).

homeland and the German people, and in the spirit of reconciliation among nations.[6]

The current discourse on racial discrimination, tax strategies, ecology, economy, etc., has become utmost dogmatic. This has been well demonstrated in the rhetoric of both candidates and supporters of the 2024 presidential election campaign in the US (Trump vs. Harris). Not only a critical analysis brings this to the floor, but also the popular rhetoric in social media, TV, and radio. For example, there are the "post-Christian Socialists and Marxists" on the one hand and the "White Supremacy Capitalists" on the other hand. As educators, we realize these categorizations are too simplistic and harmful to "the behaviors necessary for living together" (cf. p. 22). Or think of the fan groups surrounding Slavoj Žižek and Jordan Peterson in their public debate.[7] While each of them is a thinker in his own right, highlighting societal problems with precision, their respective following often creates the impression that a good amount has allowed themselves to be indoctrinated. One would expect that such indoctrination would happen less were the followers to realize that the precision of problem descriptions by Žižek or Peterson (and any thinker, for that matter) is usually gained by reducing the complexity of the matters discussed.

Interpretative simplification is a general psychological survival strategy. But while this is undoubtedly true, it becomes a dangerous threat to the fabric of societal peace. It is the call of modern democratic education to prevent simple truths that stimulate radicalization but, instead foster the development of a skillset that resists the temptation of doctrinal thinking on the one hand and the ever-increasing temptation of agnostic comforts on the other hand.[8] I claim that the educational system has not performed at its best because of how it relates to doctrinal thinking. Such a critical perspective is

[6] The original: "Die Schulen haben den in der Verfassung verankerten Bildungs- und Erziehungsauftrag zu verwirklichen. Sie sollen Wissen und Können vermitteln sowie Geist und Körper, Herz und Charakter bilden. Oberste Bildungsziele sind Ehrfurcht vor Gott, Achtung vor religiöser Überzeugung, vor der Würde des Menschen und vor der Gleichberechtigung von Männern und Frauen, Selbstbeherrschung, Verantwortungsgefühl und Verantwortungsfreudigkeit, Hilfsbereitschaft, Aufgeschlossenheit für alles Wahre, Gute und Schöne und Verantwortungsbewusstsein für Natur und Umwelt. Die Schüler sind im Geist der Demokratie, in der Liebe zur bayerischen Heimat und zum deutschen Volk und im Sinn der Völkerversöhnung zu erziehen." See https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayEUG-1. My underlining.

[7] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peterson-Žižek_debate.

[8] Cf. Andreas Dörpinghaus, Andreas Poenitsch, and Lothar Wigger, *Einführung in die Theorie der Bildung* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2008), 54–65.

made possible when comparing ancient TBs with their modern counterparts.

3. Ancient vs. Modern TBs

3.1 The Modern TB

A typical modern TB contains text-book specific ingredients:

1. *Table of Contents*
2. *Books are pedagogically organized in chapters*:
   This means that the order of chapters follows a logical structure. Each chapter builds on the insights of the previous chapter(s).
3. *Chapters are organized with a specific simple architecture*:
   a. *Introduction:* Modern TBs never go *in medias res*. They always provide an introduction to prepare the student's mind to "land softly" in the material before him.
   b. *Mind-sensitive chunking*: Each chapter is further divided into chunks of information that the mind can efficiently process. It is, in a sense, mentally predigested food. For example, a TB on Homer's epics will interpret in a summarized fashion its primary source (Iliad, Odyssey), while a TB on OT theology will summarize certain topics and ideas entertained in the TNK and interpret them for the reader. To use a different metaphor: modern TBs offer a topographic map for the topography of their primary data. The routes found on the topographic map are doctrinal in nature, i.e., interpretative conclusions. While the conclusions might be right (or wrong), as such, they are not offering "orientation skills" that help to walk one's own way in a landscape that contains a significant amount of underdetermined data (what something means is not always obvious and requires interpretative subjective involvement).[9] Of course, there are good exceptions. Some textbooks are intentional with having their readers navigate the presented materials without a biased mind.

[9] As a general phenomenon see Klaus Brinker, *Linguistische Textanalyse Eine Einführung in Grundbegriffe Und Methoden* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2010), 12–15, 39–40. In relation to the TNK see John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 198–219.

c. *Summary/Conclusion*: Once the student has processed the predigested "food," he is exposed to a summary of the mental food provided. Here the highest of all abstraction levels is being found: it is the "menu."
d. *Discussion Questions and Exercises*: Finally, most modern TBs present questions and exercises at the end of a chapter to deepen one's understanding of the presented conclusions and confirm the concepts taught.

After having worked through a TB, the good student may experience a certain clarity and mastery of the source text (e.g., Bible, Vergil's *Aeneid*) the TB sought to discuss. However, the achieved clarity and sense of mastery often turn out as illusionary once the students get an unfiltered exposure to the actual source. As an example, the topics "obedience" and "salvation" are an integral part of any Christian OT theology TB.[10] Integrating the "Binding of Isaac" (Gen 22) when discussing "salvation" and "obedience" is common in TBs. The careful reader will learn that Isaac is a type for Christ's death at the cross, while Abraham is an example of radical obedience. The student can reproduce this argumentative chain and receive "clarity" on this challenging text. However, when the student reads the actual narrative account in Gen 22, he finds himself confused as he cannot easily make sense of its composition, nor can he easily recognize how the TB's argumentative line about "Abraham's obedience" can be traced in the actual narrative.[11] The primary text seems to be so much more complex than the TB he has read about it.[12] The disconnect between TB and source text also becomes obvious by the simple fact that in biblical scholarship, research on

[10] For example, Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 336–38, or Gordon Wenham, *A Guide to the Pentateuch*, vol. 1 of *Exploring the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 44.

[11] This confusion has been worked out well in Omri Boehm, *The Binding of Isaac: A Religious Model of Disobedience*, Library of Biblical Studies (New York: T&T Clark, 2007) and more recently in J. Richard Middleton, *Abraham's Silence The Binding of Isaac, the Suffering of Job, and How to Talk Back to God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021), 129–226.

[12] This disconnect has been famously worked out in Auerbach's "Odysseus' Scar," in Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature: Fiftieth-Anniversary Edition*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 3–23.

the "Binding of Isaac" is still ongoing.[13] To use another metaphor: The *real* text does not know of mental "fast food" nor provides directions for convenient mental "drive-ins." Cognitive convenience is not a feature of ancient TBs. However, the "raw" text is not a desert void of food and vegetation. It's full of delicious fruits and nutritious vegetables waiting to be harvested. However, modern TBs do not primarily focus on developing harvesting skills—they instead focus on food delivery. It's not about how to develop doctrines but about how to defend acclaimed doctrines.[14]

3.2 Another example: Biblical Hebrew TB

A second example from the world of Biblical Hebrew TBs can further illustrate the symptomatic challenge of modern TBs, more specifically, Biblical Hebrew TBs used in today's colleges and universities in the US. While a modern theology TB will focus on doctrines, a modern Biblical Hebrew TB will focus on paradigms. These paradigms come in different versions, some color-coded, some in well-organized tables. What they all have in common is that they show inner consistency and can, therefore, be easily learned.

The table below shows in the left column the paradigm of the Hebrew strong verbs in the hofal stem (in *qatal*/perfect tense). It's always the prefix הָ֫ that distinguishes it from all the other stems. But when looking up all strong verbs of this *hofal* stem (right column) it becomes visible that the paradigm does not accurately describe the textual/linguistic reality.

The issue here is that the paradigm suggests that the *hofal qatal*/perfect prefix of the regular verb always looks like this: הָ֫. The linguistic reality, however, knows of a paradigmatic variation: הָ֫ and הָ֔. While some TBs mention this deviation as a side note, many TBs do not.[15] Even when noted, the impression is being created that this deviation (הָ֔ instead of הָ֫) is not

[13] For example, Arlyn Sunshine Drew, "A Hermeneutic for the Aqedah Test: A Way beyond Jon Levenson's and Terence Fretheim's Models" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2020), https://doi.org/10.32597/dissertations/1719.

[14] I am not overlooking the fact that there are also courses offered that focus on the art of interpretation (hermeneutics, exegesis, etc.). But even there, I would argue, we find often similar problems. More time is spent with TBs than with working with real and raw texts.

[15] For example, the widely adopted Page Kelley TB does not mention the deviation but rather states, "All Hof'al perfects are prefixed with הָ (he plus qames-hatuf)" (Kelley and Crawford, *Biblical Hebrew*, xiv, 37). This TB is the basic Biblical Hebrew TB at Andrews University and many other Adventist religion departments and seminaries in the English-speaking world.

worth much of our attention as the paradigm should be taken as representative of what we find in the biblical text. However, the reality is that we have a ratio of 9/5 (הָ/הָ). Thus, more than 1/3 of all cases deviate from the paradigm as it is commonly presented. This is not an exceptional case. Countless examples of similar nature could be given.

Table 1: The Hofal stem in TB and the BHS.

Paradigm[16]	Reality

Hof'al

הָשְׁמַר
הָשְׁמְרָה
הָשְׁמַרְתָּ
הָשְׁמַרְתְּ
הָשְׁמַרְתִּי
הָשְׁמְרוּ
הָשְׁמַרְתֶּם
הָשְׁמַרְתֶּן
הָשְׁמְרְנוּ

n	p	book	word
1	Leviticus 5:23	Leviticus	הָפְקַד
2	1_Samuel 25:15	1_Samuel	הָכְלַמְנוּ
3	Isaiah 14:19	Isaiah	הָשְׁלַכְתָּ
4	Jeremiah 6:6	Jeremiah	הָפְקֹד
5	Jeremiah 14:3	Jeremiah	הָכְלְמוּ
6	Jeremiah 22:28	Jeremiah	הָשְׁלְכוּ
7	Ezekiel 19:12	Ezekiel	הֻשְׁלְכָה
8	Ezekiel 32:32	Ezekiel	הֻשְׁכַּבְ
9	Psalms 22:11	Psalms	הָשְׁלַכְתִּי
10	Job 5:23	Job	הָשְׁלְמָה־
11	Daniel 4:33	Daniel	הָתְקְנָת
12	Daniel 6:24	Daniel	הֻסַּק
13	Daniel 8:11	Daniel	הֻשְׁלַךְ
14	Daniel 9:1	Daniel	הָמְלַךְ

As a result, Hebrew TB students are not necessarily students of the Hebrew text. They learn idealized forms of the linguistic datum. They might get an "A" for reproducing TB paradigms correctly, efficiently, and effectively, but when they have to translate a concrete OT text, they often struggle.

For the mind, narrow paradigmatic thinking is convenient since the morphological rules are consistent and follow an internal logic. However, once

[16] The example is taken from "Verb Chart I: Strong Verb" in Page H. Kelley and Timothy G. Crawford, *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018), 400.

students are exposed to the actual linguistic datum, they struggle to match their idealized forms with what they find in the linguistic datum. At the seminary at Andrews University I have often had students confess: "I have received an "A" for all my Greek and Hebrew classes, but I cannot translate Hebrew and Greek texts." Professors of Biblical studies recognize this as a more general phenomenon among the student body. Students, then, are made fit for the doctrinal world. They can classify and categorize paradigmatic forms, but those doctrines do not fit the real world, be that world the linguistic datum, a primary text, or the life of an individual.

3.2 Ancient TBs

Unlike modern TBs, the typical TBs of ancient times do not contain tables of contents, introductions, summaries, exercises, or convenient text divisions. Some of this has to do with the fact that book production was a very costly and labor-intensive enterprise. The material costs were immense, and the human labor was very demanding as everything got manually copied. For cost-saving purposes, empty space was kept at a minimum, as the table with images of the oldest discovered versions of ancient canonical text demonstrates below.

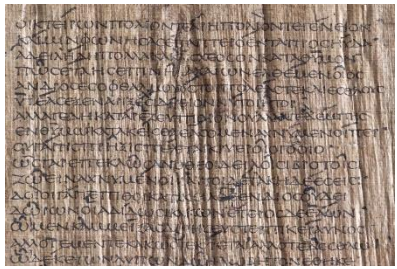
As one can see, except for the Hebrew text (TNK), all Latin (Aeneid) and Greek scripts (Iliad, Odyssey) don't have spacing between words. Thus, there are no graphical markers for word beginnings and endings. Also, often, no visual markers/punctuation for clause beginnings and clause endings are present. Punctuation is also not required for most (ancient and modern) languages when a fully developed morphology is present. If one knows Latin or Greek morphology well, one can identify syntactical subjects (in nominative case), syntactical objects (in accusative case), syntactical indirect objects (in dative/ablative case), and predicates (morphologically identifiable).[17]

Due to the lack of punctuation and—in many cases—word divisions, reading becomes more difficult and requires good language skills. But this is not the only difficulty. While modern TBs are written in a language and a vocabulary that the learner is acquainted with, these ancient TBs are *Traditionsliteratur* (except for the *Aeneid*). Thus, their texts contain vocabulary and language characteristics from different periods and locations. The rich history of their language development has been deposited within their literature.

[17] Since Hebrew does not have a morphologically based case system, phrase functions cannot always be identified easily, making spacing between the words necessary.

Table 2: Images of Texts from ancient TBs

Iliad:[18]



Hebrew Bible:[19]

Odyssey:[20]

Codex Sinaiticus:[21]

[18] Papyrus 114 is one of the oldest Iliad fragments of the 2nd century. The image shows parts of Iliad 24.127–804. The manuscript can be viewed at OMNIKA Foundation Contributors. "Papyrus 114 / The Bankes Homer." Las Vegas, NV: OMNIKA Foundation. Created June 8, 2019. Accessed Nov 1, 2024. https://omnika.org-/stable/161. OMNIKA provides open-access to ancient resources and data (https://om-nika.org/datastore).

[19] The first verses of the book of Isiah as found in 1QIsa (the Great Isiah scroll). The scroll is dated to the 2nd century BC. A high resolution photocopy of the fragment is available (public domain) on Wikimedia: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Great_Isaiah_Scroll.jpg (accessed Nov 1, 2024).

[20] The selection shows parts of the oldest found papyrus manuscript containing the Odyssey (showing book IX and X). The fragment is dated to the 3rd century BC. A high resolution photocopy of the fragment is available (public domain) on Wikimedia: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ende_Johannesevangelium.jpg (accessed Nov 1, 2024). The entire codex can be studied at https://codexsinaiticus.org/.

[21] The selection shows the end of the gospel of John. The codex is dated to the 4th century AD. A high resolution photocopy of the fragment is available (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license) on Wikimedia: https://commons.wi-ki-media.org/wiki/File:Fragment_Odyssee_2245.jpg (accessed Nov 1, 2024).https://co-dex-sinai-ticus.org/.

Aeneid:[22]

We, therefore, find plene (דויד) and defective (דוד) writings in Hebrew, verbal forms (*qal* passive) that are no longer in use by the post-exilic readers.[23] The Hebrew of Daniel is different from the Hebrew of Genesis. This is even more true for the Homeric epics, where we do not find a homogeneous language even within each epic. In contrast, different Greek dialects (Spartan, Athenian) are used in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[24] The TNK and Homer's epics use many archaic formulations that did not appear in the common language practice of the ancient students. Most of the language used in those TBs is already outdated for ancient readers. It felt like reading the original Shakespeare when reading the TNK or the *Odyssey*. This all meant that reading and understanding took much more time in ancient education.

[22] The photograph shows the oldest found fragment (Hawara Papyrus 24) of Virgil's *Aeneid* (book II, line 601) from the 1st century AD. A high resolution photocopy of the fragment is available (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license) on Wikimedia: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hawara_Papyrus_24,_with_line_of_Virgil%27s_Aeneid_repeated_7_times,_Book_2,_line_601._Recto._Latin_language._1st_century_CE._From_Hawara,_Egypt._On_display_at_the_British_Museum_in_London.jpg (accessed Nov 1, 2024).

[23] Cf. Ronald Hendel and Jan Joosten, *How Old Is the Hebrew Bible?: A Linguistic, Textual, and Historical Study*, Bilingual edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 2–4.

[24] Wilson writes that the "language is a mishmash of several different dialects" and that "Homer's language … is always a mixture of words and phrases from many different dialects and periods" (Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Emily Wilson [New York: Norton, 2018], 11, 72).

The missing subchapters, introductions, summaries, and exercises in these TBs meant that these texts could not be easily appropriated and understood. Therefore, the student of ancient TBs always first started with memorization of the text. The ability to read was not a requirement to access the blessings of education. More fundamental than reading and writing was memorization. We know that most portions of the Torah, *Odyssey*, *Iliad*, or *Aeneid* were learned by heart as a preparation for learning, reading, and interpretation.[25]

Memorization came before text interpretation. Or, to formulate it differently: To a great extent, learning did not start with doctrines and paradigms but with text appropriation. I see this as one of the key distinctions between the pedagogical frameworks surrounding ancient and modern TBs.

4. Comparison

The textual differences in form and organization between ancient and modern TBs translate into pedagogical techniques when it comes to the process of education. The table below seeks to summarize these differences. It is, however, important to mention that not all academic disciplines show the same stark contrast between ancient and modern TBs. Ancient and modern TBs for legal studies, architecture, or mathematics looked more similar to their modern counterpart than those for studies in history, literature, religion, or philosophy.[26]

The table below indicates that the ancient approach is characterized by intrinsic humility. This is because its TBs require constant revisitation—not to memorize concepts about the text but to continue working on the neverending task of understanding the text that is known. This is because

[25] The practice of memorizing the Homeric epics in the ancient world is well documented through various accounts and analyses of oral traditions. The Perseus Encyclopedia explains that "The Homeric epics ultimately were memorized as precisely as any religious text" (https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hop-per/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.04.0004:entry=homer). See also Saccheri P, Travan L, Crivellato E., "The Cerebral Cortex and the Songs of Homer: When Neuroscience Meets History and Literature," *The Neuroscientist* 30.1 (2024):17–22, doi:10.1177/10738584221102862.

The memorization of larger portions of the Torah has been a fundamental aspect of Jewish education and tradition throughout history. See Martin S. Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth: Writing and Oral Tradition in Palestinian Judaism 200 BCE– 400 CE* (Oxford: University Press, 2001).

[26] For example, ancient TBs in mathematics used also exercise sections. See David M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 21, 85.

Table 3. Summary of Ancient and Modern TB Differences

Ancient	Modern
The ancients start with the most difficult: the un-abridged, un-simplified, un-summarized, and un-concluded text.	The modern start with the ends: an abridged, commented, summarized, and concluded reader.
The ancient student starts with memorizing major parts of the text.	The modern student ends with memorizing (if at all) selected passages or paradigms that are considered elementary.
The ancient student develops his insights and mental abstractions after he knows the text.	The modern student believes in understanding the text when he has learned paradigms and doctrines about the text.
The ancient student is aware of the gap between his knowing (of the text) and his understanding (concepts, paradigms, doctrines). He knows that he knows more than what he understands.	The modern student is much less aware of the gap between understanding and knowing. He often owns less knowledge than "understanding": He "understands" more than what he knows.
The knowing–understanding gap translates into a fruitful tension as it requires a constant revisitation of the text/reality to test and recalibrate once understanding. The text/reality is always ahead. And since all students know the text, they can supervise their own understanding process.	The knowing-understanding gap does not easily stimulate humility but can contribute to the depreciation and deconstruction of the canonical nature of their source text (e.g. *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, Torah, *Aeneid*). There tends to be more epistemological authority assumed in one's understanding than in the actual text.[27] A deeper understanding of

[27] Often one of the main reasons for canonization processes of texts is that a community assumes that the canonized text contains a richness that cannot be exhausted by human epistemic activity and should, therefore, be protected from deconstructive forms of criticism. This is one of the main reasons for why allogrization became such an important tool for the canonization of Homer's epics (and later the Bible). See Margarit Finkelberg, "Canonising and Decanonising Homer: Reception of the Homeric Poems in Antiquity and Modernity," in *Homer and the Bible in the Eyes of Ancient Interpreters*, ed. Maren Niehoff (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 16, 18–19. A healthy balance needs to be sought when approaching the learning object. Both the development of a critical mind and a humble spirit are needed.

the text is often sought in reading another TB that takes a different perspective.

more truth-authority is located in the actual text than in the doctrines/paradigms derived from it. This foundational formal difference of ancient TBs (in contrast to modern TBs) communicates to the ancient learner that his interpretations are always only aspectual and reductionistic. The text is always truer than its interpretation. While the modern student is taught to use his TB as a means to shed light on the actual source text (*Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Aeneid*, TNK), his TBs run the risk of functioning as the actual authority over the source text. In contrast, ancient TBs remain a source of confusion and, therefore, a constant reminder that one's doctrines, concepts, or paradigms derived from these texts are not to be considered final and, thus, cannot claim ultimate authority. On a fundamental level, it is the ancient TB that sheds light on one's ideas about it, not the other way around.

5. Incorporating Elements of Ancient Education

With the above comparison as a critical lense, we can learn for the college setting of the 21st century. A complex growing world requires, first and foremost, a better knowledge of the world before we seek to organize our lifestyles, political choices, religious beliefs, and social engagements by our understanding of the world. In the context of religious Christian education more work with the actual OT and NT texts can help to develop a better sense of the gap between source and interpretation.

Having the general aim of Western education in mind (cf. pp. 21–23), a critical and humble assessment of our paradigms and doctrines/understandings is only possible when we know *more* of the "text" of life. As we have seen, the ancient TB is much more a form of *in medias res*, where *res* is a portrayal of life rather than a paradigmatic summary of it. The object of learning is contained in the actual TB. In contrast, in modern forms of education, the object of learning is usually found outside the TB (see 4. Comparison). This fundamental difference allows us to rethink how we want to approach the ultimate learning object, "life." If my comparative observations can be used to reflect modern education critically, I suggest that we need more exposure to the *datum* of life before involving ourselves in paradigmatic interpretation. This can mean that we need to experience more the actual lives of blacks, Asians, immigrants, the real lives of the disadvan-

taged blue-collar world, and multimillionaire philanthropists. More exposure to the experience of the religious Muslim, the agnostic life, the atheistic humanist, meritism in its failed and successful variants, the disadvantaged life of women, and the competitive life of men, etc.… We need more exposure to the *text of life* than exposure to our interpretations and paradigms. Once our memorization of whatever text has become rich, i.e. once we have developed an ample knowledge of the learning object, we have developed the necessary epistemological humility to develop perspectives that correspond better—but always and only in relative ways—with the text/source, i.e. learning object, we engage with.

5.1 An Example in Teaching Biblical Hebrew

The comparative insights between ancient and modern TBs and their corresponding pedagogical methodologies can be made fruitful for teaching several subject matters in the 21st century. I demonstrate this by using a concrete university course as an example: Biblical Hebrew language. I will show how I have integrated insights about ancient TBs and ancient education into my teaching of Biblical Hebrew in the concrete university setting of Andrews University.

First, instead of using a typical Biblical Hebrew TB as the basis for my teaching, I use the "raw" (instead of simplified or "cleaned" from difficulties) biblical Hebrew text. From the first day, the student is put *in medias res*. That means the student works with actual biblical Hebrew texts for the entire course. Thus, a *corpus-driven* approach is chosen. We are not doing a "proof-text" reading in which we translate only texts that confirm our grammatical training. Instead, entire narratives are being read and translated. This means that students do not learn abstract vocab lists and abstract grammar. Typical vocabulary lists contain the most frequently appearing words in the Hebrew Bible but do usually not contain words that actually appear in a concrete biblical Hebrew text that is to be translated.

Second, by choosing a corpus-driven approach, I replaced the classical Biblical Hebrew TB with van der Merwe's *Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*.[28] This grammar is used by many Bible translators, exegetes, and Hebrew scholars who work with the biblical Hebrew text regularly. Since this grammar is not written with pedagogy in mind, it cannot be used in class as

[28] Christo H. J. Merwe van der, Jacobus A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017).

a typical modern Biblical Hebrew TB is used, i.e., starting with the first chapter and progressing through the book until the course is completed with the last chapter. Instead, different grammar sections are incorporated in a non-linear order with each lecture. Each week, more paragraphs from different sections of the grammar will be studied. At the end of all Hebrew courses, most of the grammar has been read and studied. In contrast to standard Hebrew TBs, whose useability as a reference work is very low, the Hebrew reference grammar can continue its purposeful life as an excellent reference in the work of the future translator, scholar, or pastor.

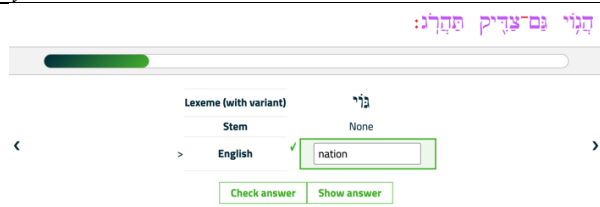
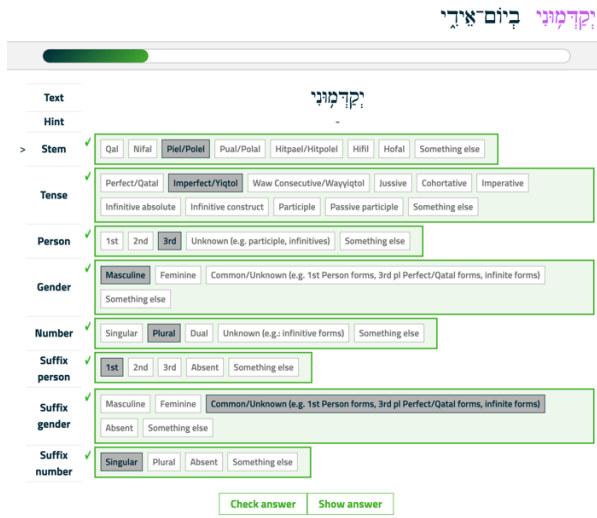
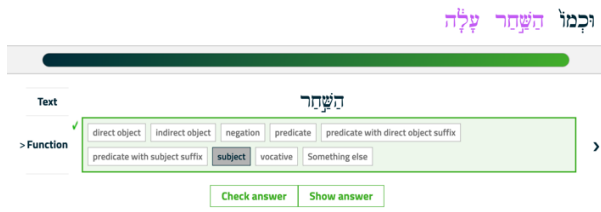
Consequently, I have moved away from such primarily frequency-based vocab lists, and instead, students now learn all the vocab that appears in the texts they work on within a given course. Now, each word they learn appears several times in the text they translate. This allows for instant gratification as the students see that the words they are learning are relevant to the narrative they read and do not remain words on an abstract vocabulary list that do not appear in the texts they translate. The same applies not only to vocabulary but also to grammar (morphology, syntax, and text-grammar). Students learn those grammar concepts that are necessary for making progress in the reading and translating of the texts they work with. With the help of databases and a Python-based research environment (Text-Fabric[29]), it is possible to find narratives that contain a high density of high-frequency words and all major grammatical concepts. In this way, narratives can be translated that do not contain too many deviations and exceptions from general grammatical rules. As a result, my text selection choice is Gen 19–20, Ruth 3, Ps 3.

Third, without exercises, learning cannot take place. Since a typical modern TB has been removed, exercises and assignments that would otherwise come with each TB chapter are missing. Instead, the BibleOnlineLearner (BOL) is employed (https://learner.bible/) allowing for flexible corpus/data-driven exercise production. The BOL makes exercise creation of any sort easy: vocabulary, morphology, syntax. The screenshots below show samples of BOL exercises that are built around Gen 19–20, Ruth 3, and Ps 3.

All exercises present the *real forms* that appear in the *real text*. Thus, word forms that might deviate from the standard paradigms found in TBs are presented to the student together with the "perfect" paradigmatic forms.

[29] See https://github.com/annotation/text-fabric.

Table 4. Screenshots of BOL exercises.

Vocabulary exercise	
Morphology exercise	
Syntax exercise	

Therefore, initially, these exercises are slightly more difficult than TB exercises as they are not paradigmatically "cleaned." The advantage, however, is that students quickly learn the bandwidth of paradigmatic deviation and are no longer puzzled by unexpected forms.

Fourth, with BOL, I can automatically grade/provide feedback for each single exercise.[30] Students can look up their scores for each exercise run:

[30] To ensure that students stay motivated through the semester, I distribute the final grade weight unevenly throughout the 16 weeks of a semester. While the total weight of the graded exercises in the 1st week is 1%, the weight increases per week up to 16%

Figure 1. Performance Recording in BOL.

Grades for exercise "TOHFL/exams/course-1_exam_1_midterm-material_01_vocabulary_Gen19-20_full-pool"

Student	Date	Correct	Grade	Total time (s)	Avrg. time/question (s)	
Student Glanz (Best Run)	2025-01-16 23:44:18	100%	100%	46	3.0	Hide Det.
Student Glanz	2025-01-16 23:40:22	80%	80%	53	5.0	
Student Glanz	2025-01-16 23:39:46	33%	33%	20	12.0	

In addition, students can look up their right/wrong answers to learn from their mistakes in Figure 2. Using algorithms and databases allows students to take each exercise as often as they want until the deadline set by the teacher. Grading only the best run stimulates students to repeat exercises until the material is mastered. The example above (Figure 1) shows how a student took an exercise 3 times and improved both on the percentage of right answers as well as on the speed used to produce the right answer.

Consequently, students do not operate under fear of failure but fully control their own performance. Importantly, each time the student redoes the exercise, he will be presented with new forms, vocab, or syntax. Redoing each exercise is not a revisitation of the same questions but of the same difficulty. The difficulty increases throughout the course until the student can master all variations of the entire spectrum of grammatical forms.[31]

While such a corpus-driven approach is much more challenging for the first weeks of a typical language course, students start to excel after a few weeks have passed. While a standard modern TB approach usually never exposes the student to several complete Hebrew narratives and poems, my students have translated up to 8 chapters of Hebrew texts by the end of a typical Hebrew II course.[32]

in the final week. This means that students doing very well in the first half of the semester might still be at risk of failing the class if they do not keep up with the course. It also means that students who have struggled in the first half of the course can still turn their fate in the second half to receive a high final course grade.

31 While we encounter text-critical problems and discuss them (erroneous forms, copying mistakes, wrong spelling, etc.), I do remove dubious text-critical cases from the exam materials.

32 At least 2–3 chapters are randomly (even for me as teacher) picked in class and translated at the spot. In this way student build confidence in that the actually have learned biblical Hebrew and not just paradigms of a TB.

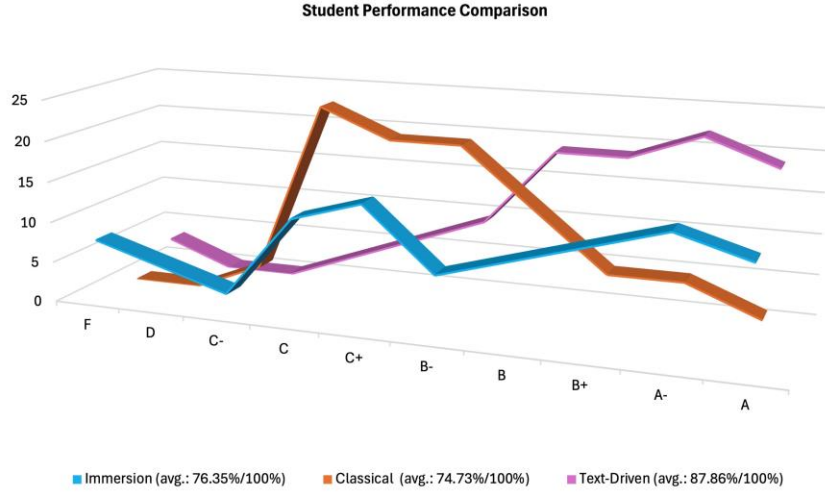
Figure 2. Exercise Details shown in BOL.

Exercise Detail

Question Number	Feature Location	Text	Question Object	Right/Wrong	Correct Answer	Student's Answer
1	Genesis, 20, 9	וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְאַבְרָהָם	Lexeme (with variant): קרא I; Stem: qal	1	call, meet; read (aloud)	call
2	Genesis, 20, 9	וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִימֶלֶךְ לְאַבְרָהָם	Stem: NA; Lexeme (with variant): אַבְרָהָם	1	Abraham	Abraham
1	Genesis, 20, 7	כִּי־נָבִיא הוּא	Stem: NA; Lexeme (with variant): נָבִיא	1	prophet	prophet
1	Genesis, 19, 9	וַיִּגַּשׁ לְשַׁבֵּר הַדָּלֶת׃	Stem: qal; Lexeme (with variant): נגש	1	draw near, approach	draw near
2	Genesis, 19, 9	וַיִּגַּשׁ לְשַׁבֵּר הַדָּלֶת׃	Stem: NA; Lexeme (with variant): דֶּלֶת	1	door	door
1	Genesis, 19, 19	וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אוּכַל לְהִמָּלֵט הָהָרָה	Stem: NA; Lexeme (with variant): אָנֹכִי	1	I	I
2	Genesis, 19, 19	וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אוּכַל לְהִמָּלֵט הָהָרָה	Stem: qal; Lexeme (with variant): יכל	0	be able, endure, prevail	able
3	Genesis, 19, 19	וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אוּכַל לְהִמָּלֵט הָהָרָה	Stem: nif; Lexeme (with variant): מלט I	0	escape	flee
4	Genesis, 19, 19	וְאָנֹכִי לֹא אוּכַל לְהִמָּלֵט הָהָרָה	Stem: NA; Lexeme (with variant): הַר I	1	mountain, mountain range	mountain
1	Genesis, 20, 10	וַיֹּאמֶר אֲבִימֶלֶךְ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם	Stem: NA; Lexeme (with variant): אַבְרָהָם	1	Abraham	Abraham

The success of such an approach has also been measured objectively (see Figure 4 below). The three lines represent three different teaching methods. "Immersion" represents the language immersion approach (students learn to develop conversational Hebrew in class). "Classical" represents the classical TB approach, where the course goes through the different chapters of a TB. "Text-driven" represents the text-driven approach as outlined above. Students of each approach took the same qualifier exam. This paper-based exam consisted of 40 questions and tested vocabulary, morphology, and syntax. All questions were multiple-choice-based. A variation of ten exams (all consisting of 40 questions and having the same difficulty level) was used

Figure 4. Performance Comparison of Hebrew Teaching Approaches.



over the course of 20+ years. Each semester, students who wanted to pass the Hebrew II course needed to take this qualifier exam. In the syntax section, the qualifier contained three Hebrew texts that had to be translated. Thus, one could easily compare the language proficiency of the students taking a typical TB approach, an alternative immersion approach, and those taking a corpus-driven approach. Students of the corpus-driven approach performed, on average, 11% better than those students taking a TB approach. This, however, is only half of the truth. In addition to higher scores, students of the corpus-driven approach finish their exam in 30–50% less time than the TB students. They can maneuver quicker and easier through real Hebrew text since their minds can handle not only idealized paradigmatic forms and grammatical concepts but the full bandwidth of real forms as they appear in the Hebrew Bible.

6. Summary

At the beginning of this essay, I noted that our modern educational strategies have not lived up to their mission. Students and graduates contribute to the polarization found in social, political, and religious debates. Part of this concerns how paradigms, doctrines, and understanding are approached in modern education. Much of our present polarization in society in general, and church communities in specific, is due to idolizing doctrines/paradigms/understanding. The integration of ancient educational

methods can help make the gap between the knowledge of a text (as a metaphor for any object of study) and its understanding more visible. With the humility that grows out of this gap experience (knowing > understanding, rather than understanding > knowing), a skillset is built that allows interpreting texts (and reality as The Text) in more empathic and passionate ways. At the same time, this gap experience clarifies that agnosticism is not an alternative way of living as it shies away from engaging responsibly with reality. Paradigms and doctrines are necessary and helpful as long as they are not idolized.

This conclusion is, however, not complete without recognizing the continued importance modern TBs must play. In a world where information grows exponentially, the modern student does not have the luxury of always exposing himself to primary data first. He often must seek shortcuts. While TBs provide excellent time savings, they need to be used carefully. Both students and instructors must constantly remind themselves and others that the real and raw text is more true and complex than the understanding of it.

Further, the value of modern TBs is also found in the critical perspectives and interpretative questions they offer to the student. With skilled teachers in the classroom, developing critical thinking does not have to rely on TBs. However, in a digital world where asynchronous learning increases and, with it, the hours of student-instructor encounters are reduced to a minimum, high-quality modern TBs will play an increasingly important role.

Finally, for some subject matters, like language learning, modern advances in digital humanities make it possible to efficiently implement ancient learning/teaching techniques to develop interpretation skills. Due to the very nature of conventional TBs, such skills cannot be taught with them.

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Whole-Person Care in the Teachings of the Three Abrahamic Faiths

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Abstract

This article focuses on the wholistic view of caring for human beings as taught by the three Abrahamic Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It deals with pertinent questions such as: What does it mean to be human in a wholistic sense? What are the key terms found in the texts sacred to the three great monotheistic faiths that express wholeness? Is it right to say that God is the source of illness and pain? Since human beings reflect God's image and likeness, how do they experience wholeness and wellness? How does wholeness relate to spirituality and devotion?

The concluding points of the article show that, despite some differences, the teachings of the three Abrahamic faiths about whole-person care complement one another. All three faiths affirm that wholeness, wellness, and health are great gifts to humanity given by the Creator God. In addition to this, the three faiths view the practice of healthcare as being "prophetic" in character. This is because the calling and the ministry of both the prophets and healthcare practitioners are about complete healing and the restoration of wholeness.

Keywords: Wholeness, wellness, healing, Judaism, Christianity, Islam

1. Introduction

While there is a wide semantic overlap between the concepts of wholeness and wellness, there are nuances as well. A helpful observation on the two

concepts was proposed by Garth Ludwig, who found connections between wholeness and life's purpose. Ludwig suggested that *wellness* "means the ability to function," while *wholeness* "means to live for a purpose."[1]

Etymologically, the English word "health" is based on an Anglo-Saxon word "hal/hale," meaning "whole."[2] Thus the English term "holy" is based on the same root as "whole." To be healthy is to be whole (cf. Hebrew term *shalem*).

In his monograph on wholeness in nature, Henri Bortoft has proposed that there is a "fundamental distinction between whole and totality." Totality is the sum of all parts, but there are no parts that are independent of the whole. In this way, the whole can be reflected in all the parts.[3] For David Bohm, "all this indicates that man has sensed always that wholeness or integrity is an absolute necessity to make life worth living. Yet, over the ages, he has generally lived in fragmentation."[4] This is the reason why the faithful look to God for a complete restoration of wholeness at individual and cosmic levels. The definitions above are very helpful, and that is how the concept of wholeness will be used in this article.

In this article, I will summarize the findings of a bibliographic study that focuses on searching for answers to the following questions: How are wholeness and wellness perceived in the Hebrew Bible and defined by followers of the three Abrahamic faiths, namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam? Are there similarities?[5] What are some of the characteristic perceptions? Given the scope of my study, this article will focus more on similarities between the three faiths.

1 Garth Ludwig, *Order Restored: A Biblical Interpretation of Health, Medicine and Healing* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1999), 128. See also, Farzaneh Yazdani, *Occupational Wholeness for Health and Wellbeing: A Guide for Re-Thinking and Re-Planning Life* (Milton: Taylor & Francis, 2023).

2 *Chrestomathy of Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Written Records*, s.v. "*hál*," https://germanic.ge-/en.

3 Henri Bortoft, *The Wholeness of Nature* (Herndon, VA: Lindisfarne Books, 1996), 6–7. This proposition can be very intriguing when applied to God's image borne by individual human beings.

4 David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (New York: Routledge, 1980), 3–4.

5 Darla Schum and Michael Stoltzus, eds., *Disability in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam's Sacred Texts, Historical Traditions, and Social Analysis* (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2011).

2. Three Faiths from One Parent

Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity grew out of common origins found in the faith of ancient Israel and recorded in the Hebrew Bible. Each has a distinct emphasis resulting in differing concepts and practices. Since both faiths came into being around the same time in history, such expressions as "twin birth" and "siblings" seem appropriate when the two are described, compared, and contrasted.[6] This thesis was advanced by two professors, one Jewish and the other Christian. It proposes that both Judaism and Christianity are daughters of a common parent, the ancient Hebrew faith presented in the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible.[7]

Centuries later, yet another world faith was born claiming the status of a legitimate child of the ancient Hebrew faith by confessing a firm belief in the God of the Patriarchs and affirming that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah[8] who was followed by God's messenger (*rasul*) Muhammad.[9] Thus, with the emergence of Islam on the Arabian Peninsula, the Abrahamic family house was further expanded through a renewed spiritual emphasis brought by this "third child." In this way, to the old, well-trodden revelations, concepts, and practices were added many that were new.[10]

The Muslim tradition has used the phrase "the people of the book," to refer to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The members of all three faiths "are

6 One group fled the destruction of the temple by going westward, thanks to permission granted by the Roman commander to Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai. This group was allowed to settle in Jamnia on the Mediterranean coast. The other group escaped by traveling eastward, having been forewarned by Jesus Christ (Mark 13:14–16; Luke 21:20–22); they went to the city of Pella in Transjordan. In this way it became apparent that Yahweh, whose traditional residence was believed to be the temple in Jerusalem, became, so-to-say, "a portable God."

7 Lisa Levitt Kohn and Rebecca Moore, *A Portable God* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

8 Among numerous Qur'anic references to Jesus, several include the title "Messiah" (*al Masih*) or "Christ" (Qu'ran An-Nisa 4:171–72 [2x]). Also, some chapters (*suras*) in the Qur'an are named in reference to Jesus (Qur'an Maryam).

9 Muslims maintain that John the Baptist prepared the place for Christ's ministry on earth, while the Comforter who Jesus promised would come after him "is the Prophet Mohammad [peace be upon him]" (B. Rogerson, *The Prophet Mohammad: A Biography* [Mahwa, NJ: Hidden Spring, 2004], 142).

10 It is widely recognized that all three faiths, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, share traditions that stem from "the holy books" attested first in the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament. To these were added later documents that were considered inspired and authoritative. While the emphases among these traditions often differ, there are also clear similarities.

children of Abraham, part of a Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition."[11] The three faiths consider their "respective sacred texts as authoritative sources regarding questions of tradition, membership within the community, belief, ethical conduct, and social customs."[12]

The followers of the three Abrahamic faiths view wholeness as the cornerstone of spirituality and devotion, whether in reference to an individual or a community of believers.[13] Can this view on wholeness that includes the spiritual component be corroborated by modern science? Thanks to the pioneering work of Victor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist who survived the Holocaust, it is widely recognized today[14] that faith or religion can provide an effective way to (re)gain a meaning and purpose in life.[15] It has been

[11] J. L. Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), xv.

[12] D. Schumm and M. Stoltzfus, *Disability in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 1.

[13] J. Ryce-Menuhin, *Jung and the Monotheisms: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (London: Routledge, 1994). See especially chapter 3, "The Dream of Wholeness," 33–42.

[14] K. F. Ferraro and C. M. Albrecht-Jensen, "Does Religion Influence Adult Health?," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 30.2 (1991): 193–202; H. Benson, *Timeless Healing: The Power and Biology of Belief* (New York: Scribner, 1996); Jeff Levin, *God, Faith, and Health: Exploring the Spirituality-Healing Connection* (New York: Wiley & Sons, 2001); A. Bussing, T. Ostermann, and P. F. Matthiessen, "Roles of Religion and Spirituality in Medical Patients," *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes* 3.10 (2005): 1–10; C. R. Cloninger, "Fostering Spirituality and Well-Being in Clinical Practice," *Psychiatric Annals* 36.3 (2006): 1–6; W. Alexander, *Innerweave: Making the Spiritual-Faith Connections in Whole Person Medicine* (Loma Linda, CA: Loma Linda University Press), 2008); C. M. Puchalski and B. Ferrell, *Making Health Care Whole: Integrating Spirituality into Patient Care* (New Brunswick, NJ: Templeton Press, 2010); T. Greenwood and T. Delgado, "A Journey Toward Wholeness, a Journey to God: Physical Fitness as Embodied Spirituality," *Journal of Religion & Health* 52.3 (2013): 941–54; H. Koenig, *Spirituality in Patient Care: Why, How, When, and What* (New Brunswick, NJ: Templeton Press, 2013); C. S. Keener, *Miracles Today: The Supernatural Work of God in the Modern World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021).

[15] Even to the ancient Egyptians, for example, "it was absolutely rational to recite prayers while administering drugs or bandaging wounds. Both activities were essential to the success of the treatment" (Kent Weeks, "Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health in Ancient Egypt," in Jack M. Sasson et al., eds., *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 3 [New York: Scribner's Sons, 1995], 1787–88). Similarly in ancient Mesopotamia, physician and magician worked side by side on the same cases. "There is no hint in the ancient texts that one approach was more legitimate than the other. In fact, the two types of healers seem to have had equal legitimacy" (Robert D. Biggs, "Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health in Ancient Mesopotamia," *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* 3:1911.

rightly observed that an "understanding that our life on earth is not our ultimate existence unites faiths."[16] As the dominance of a purely materialistic approach to life is fading away in the developed world, a more humanitarian and altruistic emphasis, accompanied by spiritual values, informs us what it truly means to be human.

3. Wholeness and Wellness in the Hebrew Bible

For the people who lived in biblical times, their wellness and wholeness faced daily potential hazards such as "blowing dust, domestic dirt, contaminated food, impure water, city and town sewage, refuse, and garbage."[17] The organs that were particularly at risk of infection were the eyes, ears, and skin.[18] To this, various types of mental instability could be added. To be or become sick or diseased (Heb. *halah*) was synonymous with being weak (1 Kgs 15:23),[19] in contrast with the feeling of wholeness and strength expressed by the Hebrew term *shalem* (or *shalom*), which is pregnant with meaning and is best rendered as "completeness, wellbeing, and soundness." One could also add Hebrew words like *kol*, meaning "all" or "every," and *tam* and *tamim*, meaning "whole, well-done, right, complete, finished."[20]

From God, the Creator and Sustainer of life, come all blessings that primarily include wellness and wholeness.[21] It has been rightly said that "a central concept of biblical religion is that health and well-being are the design of God, and that illness in whatever form it appears is not an established part of the divine order of reality."[22] Since the Lord's ownership embraces the totality of the earth (Exod 19:5; Ps 24:1), He alone is worthy of

[16] A. Thompson, *Jesus of Arabia: Christ Through Middle Eastern Eyes* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), ix.

[17] Roger W. Uitti, "Health and Wholeness in the Old Testament," *Consensus* 17.2 (1991): 47.

[18] People in ancient Mesopotamia recognized "the natural origin of some illnesses, which might occur as a result of overexposure to heat or cold, overeating, eating spoiled food, or drinking too much of an alcoholic beverage" (Biggs, "Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health in Ancient Mesopotamia," 1912).

[19] Unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations are taken from NIV.

[20] Ernest Jenni and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 3:1424–25.

[21] A. Basson, "Just Skin and Bones: The Longing for Wholeness of the Body in the Book of Job," *VT* 58.3 (2008): 287–99; J. Penzenstadler, "Teaching the Book of Job with a View to Human Wholeness," *Religious Education* 89.2 (1994): 223–31.

[22] G. F. Hasel, "Health and Healing in the Old Testament," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 21 (1983): 191.

complete human devotion (Ps 119:2, 10). On the vertical level, God is the supreme example of wholeness, while people are whole in relation to Him (Deut 6:5–6). On the horizontal level, people's wholeness and wellness rest on healthy interpersonal relationships that are motivated by love rather than hate (Lev 19:17–18).[23]

Roger Uitti has rightly identified the following three rich concepts that serve as "the contours of health and wholeness in the Old Testament."[24] They are (1) shalom, (2) Sabbath rest, and (3) self or being (Heb. *nephesh*). These key concepts need to be positively defined in their contextual relationships of wholeness and harmony.

3.1 Shalom

In ancient Israel, shalom was a foundational concept used to indicate everything that constituted a healthy and harmonious life.[25] As such, the term embodied "the warmest and most comprehensive vision of health and wholeness in the Old Testament."[26] In fact, "the idea of wholeness and completeness forms the basic content of the Hebrew word *shalom*, which can be translated as 'wholeness,' 'completeness,' and also as 'peace.'"[27] Though usually translated as "peace,"[28] shalom very frequently means health and/or wellbeing (Gen 29:6 [2x]; 37:14 [2x]; 43:28).[29] This fact has led scholars to conclude that "the biblical peacemaker is physician as well as prophet."[30] In brief, shalom is the greatest possible blessing that encompasses all other blessings.

Regarding etymological observations, "the root *shlm* is attested since the earliest times in all branches of Semitic [family of languages], in a wealth of forms with a broad range of meanings."[31] The Hebrew noun *shalom* is related

[23] J. Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing: A Medicinal and Theological Commentary* (Edinburg: Handsel, 1998).

[24] Uitti, "Health and Wholeness in the Old Testament," 49.

[25] J. Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture*, *TLOT* 3:1339.

[26] Uitti, "Health and Wholeness in the Old Testament," 56.

[27] Hasel, "Health and Healing in the Old Testament," 191.

[28] See Walter Brueggemann, *Peace* (St. Louis, MS: Chalice Press, 2001).

[29] F. Skolnik and M. Berenbaum, eds., *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., vol. 15 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007), 700. In Isa 52:7, shalom stands in synonymous parallelism with "good" (Heb. *tov*), in the sense of physical good (cf. Ps 34:15).

[30] L. Ryken et al., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 632.

[31] F. J. Stendebach, "Shalom," *TDOT* 15:15.

to the Akkadian (Assyrian and Babylonian) terms *shalamu* or *salamu* expressing "peace and friendliness." Arabic has the noun *salam* signifying "intactness, wholeness, welfare, peace and security." In ancient Aramaic texts, the same noun is used in formulaic beginnings of letters, meaning "greetings" or "welfare."[32]

Lexical evidence shows that in biblical Hebrew and Aramaic the root *shlm* occurs as nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs.[33] The semantic range of the root *shlm* is very wide and multifaceted. Generally, the term can be characterized as stative (not static but pertaining to the state of being), dynamic, and relational. Its closest cognate is *sedeq* "righteousness." Thus, in Ps 85:10 these two concepts are personified as they embrace (or kiss) each other, a biblical picture of reconciliation. In fact, shalom *is* the fruit of righteousness (Isa 32:17), and the prophet Isaiah pairs the two terms: "If only you had paid attention to my commands, your *peace* [*shalom*] would have been like a river, your *righteousness* [*tsedeq*] like the waves of the sea" (Isa 48:18, emphasis supplied). While it is not always possible to make a clear distinction between secular and religious usages of the two terms, one thing seems certain: doing what is right (*sedeq*) and good (*tov*) will result in shalom!

The most prominent antonym of shalom is *ḥaser*, the word that describes "one who is deficient," "inadequate," "someone in want of," or "lacking something." A widely known occurrence of the related verb is in Ps 23:1: "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be *in want*" (emphasis supplied). The psalmist's words express "a security based on God's promise, that enjoys his guidance, protection, care, deliverance, and presence."[34] The authors of the biblical books quote the Lord saying that the wicked have no shalom (Isa 48:22). The cognate word *ḥassir* from biblical Aramaic is found in Dan 5:27, where it describes King Belshazzar's behavior as "defective" or "of poor quality."

When used in the Bible, the Hebrew noun *shalom*, together with other terms built on the same root, relate to the following concepts in English:

[32] Jenni and Westermann, *TLOT* 3:1337.

[33] M. V. Van Pelt and G. D Pratico, *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019), 128. There are 474 occurrences of words that are based on the root *shlm*. Of these, 237 are nouns, while 358 occurrences also include other forms, such as adjectives and adverbs, that are mostly found in the three longest books of the Bible: Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Psalms. The verbal forms occur 116 times, mostly in Psalms and Exodus. Finally, in biblical Aramaic this root's total occurrence is 7, 4 nouns and 3 verbs.

[34] Heinz-Josef, "חָסֵד," *TDOT* 5:88.

1. Completeness, totality, entirety, wholeness, and good health. Examples are as follows: To Joseph's inquiry about Jacob's wellbeing, the brothers replied: "Thy servant our father is in *good health*" (Gen 43:28 KJV, emphasis supplied). The prophet Jeremiah warned the king and queen in Jerusalem that "all Judah will be carried into exile, carried *completely* away (Jer 13:19, emphasis supplied). There is a wordplay in 1 Kgs 9:25 where it says that King Solomon, whose name was built on the noun shalom, "completed" [Heb. verb *shlm*] the house of the Lord, that is, the temple in Jerusalem.

2. Satisfaction, both (a) internal, such as desire, joy, and pleasure; and (b) external, such as sufficiency ("to have enough"),[35] good fortune, success, and prosperity. Examples are as follows: Asaph, one of the chief musicians in Israel, was greatly troubled when he "saw the *prosperity* of the wicked" (Ps 73:3, emphasis supplied). The promises of blessings given by God through the prophet Zechariah included this one: "The seed *will grow well*, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew" (Zech 8:12, emphasis supplied).

3. Safety,[36] security, peace, rest, favor, contentment, cessation of hostilities between nations.[37] Examples are as follows: Jacob arrived (*shalem*) in the city of Shechem, and this means that he arrived safe.[38] "The people of Gibeon had made a treaty of *peace* with Israel and had become their allies" (Josh 10:1, emphasis supplied). Hadadezer and David later did the same thing (2 Sam 10:19). The pilgrims going to Jerusalem prayed: "*May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels.* For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, 'Peace be within you'" (Ps 122:7; cf. Lev 26:6; Deut 23:6). Not knowing that his son had died in battle, King David asked the messenger: "Is the young man Absalom *safe*?" (2 Sam 18:29, 32, emphasis supplied). During Solomon's reign in Israel, "there was *peace* on all sides" (1 Kgs 4:24, emphasis supplied). In the book of Isaiah, one of the prominent titles given to the future Deliverer was "Prince of *Peace*" (Isa 9:6, emphasis supplied).

4. Welfare, wellbeing, company, salutation, or greetings. Examples are as follows: Jacob sent Joseph to "go and see if *all is well* with your brothers and with the flocks and bring word back to me" (Gen 37:14, emphasis sup-

[35] Jenni and Westermann, *TLOT* 3:1337.

[36] Safety from wild beasts or invaders (Lev 26:6).

[37] Jacob Neusner and W. S. Green, eds., *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1996), 574.

[38] Skolnik and Berenbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 15:700.

plied). In other words, Joseph was sent to check on his brother's "well-being" or "state of health." Just before facing the giant Goliath, David "ran to the battle lines and *greeted* his brothers" (1 Sam 17:22, emphasis supplied).

5. Integrity and an "undivided heart," in the moral sense, regarding God and fellow human beings; welfare in administrative or social relationships. Examples are as follows: To be *shalem* with somebody means to be loyal to him (Gen 34:21). King Solomon urged his people to make their hearts *fully committed* to God (1 Kgs 8:61; cf. 11:4). When "heart" or "mind" is combined with adjective *shalem*, it describes a pure or undivided heart/mind. King Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre, made a treaty because "there were *peaceful* relations between ... the two of them" (1 Kgs 5:12, emphasis supplied). The psalmist prayed that God would save him from wicked people "who speak *cordially* with their neighbors but harbor malice in their hearts" (Ps 28:3, emphasis supplied).

6. Wholesomeness and peace are the ultimate goals of history. Examples are as follows: The prophets saw the day when "the fruit of righteousness will be *peace*; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. [Their] people will live in *peaceful* dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest" (Isa 32:17–18, emphasis supplied). The covenant of shalom will usher in a time of blessing and security (Ezek 34:25–31). "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation…. He will proclaim *peace* to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zech 9:9–10, emphasis supplied).

The time of the eschaton will be characterized by "the perfection to which the creation longs to return, that world of being in which every individual and people are full and complete, free of injustice, oppression, pain and sickness, that world where social relationships no longer exploit or are exploited for personal or corporate gain, but rather are enriched and enhanced. Shalom is that place and state where God, humanity, and environment are one in harmony and peace."[39] In the Bible, the concept of peace is closely related to rest, especially on the day divinely appointed for rest.

3.2 Sabbath Rest

The weekly rest, called "the Sabbath" in the Bible, can be "a venerable agent

[39] Uitti, "Health and Wholeness in the Old Testament," 56. See also Walter Bruegegemann, *Living Toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shalom* (New York: United Church Press, 1982).

for health, renewal, and freedom."[40] This is because from the beginning the Creator intended the Sabbath to be a wholesome resource for blessing. The original verb *shabat* that means "to cease" or "to rest" and its related noun *shabbat* "cessation" or "rest" occur frequently in the Hebrew Bible.[41]

The first use of this verb in Gen 2:1–3 has God as its subject: "By the seventh day God had finished the work He had been doing; so on the se-venth day He rested from all His work." The creation of weekly rest is the climax of the first story in the Bible. Being the only feast mentioned in the Decalogue (Exod 20:8–11; Deut 5:12–15), the Sabbath celebrates God's creative and liberating types of work. It also commemorates the day on which God rested after the six days of creation.[42]

Humans were told to rest just as the Lord did at the end of His creative work, a concept called by some scholars a "restful imitation."[43] The Sabbath was to be the basis for the continual life and well-being of humans and the rest of creation. Ceasing from work on the Sabbath refreshed a person (Exod 31:16–17) because renewal was "part of sabbath rest."[44] If one was to borrow the language of psychology, this weekly rest offers humans an opportunity for regular mental hygiene.

According to Exod 16, even "the manna should not be gathered on the 7th day, [because] the ration for the 6th day will be sufficient for two days."[45] It is possible to talk about the "Sabbath principle" that extended beyond the weekly rest to encompass the sabbatical year (Exod 23; Lev 25) and the year of Jubilee (Lev 25). All three festivals commemorate the Lord's ownership of the earth and everything in it. Thus, the "sabbath raises vital questions about our relationship with God as well as to God's world. The sabbath

[40] Niels-Erik Andreasen, "Recent Studies of the Old Testament Sabbath: Some Observations," *ZAW* 86 (1974): 453–69. See also Niels-Erik Andreasen, *Rest and Redemption*, Andrews University Monograph 11 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1978); G. Robinson, "The Idea of Rest in the Old Testament and the Search for the Basic Character of the Sabbath," *ZAW* 92 (1980): 32–42; S. Bacchiocchi, *Divine Rest for Human Restlessness: A Theological Study of the Good News of the Sabbath for Today* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 1988); Sigve K. Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009).

[41] Van Pelt and Pratico, *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic*, 127. The verb is found 71 times in the Hebrew Bible, while the noun occurs 111 times.

[42] Neusner and Green, *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period* 2:572.

[43] Uitti, "Health and Wholeness in the Old Testament," 53.

[44] Ryken, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 747.

[45] Jenni and Westermann, *TLOT* 3:1300.

command motivates us to look more closely at ourselves and our relationship with others, especially those who are less fortunate."[46]

The Sabbath is often paired with other celebrations, such as the New Moon (Isa 1:13; Hos 2:13). The prophet Amos preached against greedy business people who could not wait for the end of the Sabbath to increase their profit (Amos 8:5). In many cases where the verbal forms of *shabat* are transitive (requiring direct objects), the subject is the Lord who announces judgment through the promise of bringing an end to arrogance (Ezek 7:24) and idol worship (Ezek 16:41), as well as hostility coming from foreign nations (Isa 13:11). During the exile, the loss of the Sabbath celebration in the temple was profoundly felt by the captives (Lam 2:6).

Considering the enduring qualities of the Sabbath, it is an institution that primarily points to the past, based on its humanitarian quality. This is evident from passages like Exod 23:10–12 that express concern for poor people and hungry wild animals. But the day of rest also points to the present through its societal aspect (Exod 20:10). In ancient Israel, the Sabbath was to be "an agent of restoration, health, and wholeness" for society as a whole.[47] It was a perfect time for worship, praise, and equity before God. Finally, the Sabbath pointed to the future since it was firmly grounded in the biblical promise of rest and wholeness for all of God's creation. Its restorative aspect pointed to the final and wholesome recreation of all nature by the God who had called it into existence in the beginning.

The prophet Isaiah foresaw the day when non-Israelites who worship the Lord and keep the Sabbath would belong to the community of God's people (Isa 56:1–8). The Lord promises to bring them to His "holy mountain and give them joy in [His] house of prayer" (Isa 56:7). The future era of salvation, which is characterized by wholeness, will include pilgrimages to New Zion on every Sabbath and New Moon (Isa 66:23). Abraham J. Heschel rightly stated that "a world without sabbath is a world without the vision of a window in eternity that opens into time."[48] This is how the Sabbath becomes a foretaste of the world to come where the redeemed will be living forever. Now we turn to an important Hebrew word that describes "living beings."

[46] Uitti, "Health and Wholeness in the Old Testament," 55.

[47] Uitti, 54. See also Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014).

[48] Abraham J. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1951), 16.

3.3 Self or Being

In the Hebrew Bible, the concept of restoration is view as *shalom* because it consists of a renewal of one's whole *nephesh*, or person. Although commonly rendered as "soul," the Hebrew feminine noun *nephesh* is best translated as "self" or "person" and is one of the most studied words in the Bible.[49] This word "has counterparts in all Semitic languages,"[50] with meanings such as "throat," "breath," "life," and so on. The related verbal root *npsh* can mean "to blow, breathe, or exhale." Linguists maintain that the original meaning of this word was "throat," from which were derived such meanings as "self," "life," or "being." H. W. Wolff wrote: "The *nephesh* referred to what was alive and vital in a person,"[51] a basic aspect of human beings. It is life standing in opposition to death, suggesting that "no quality makes life precious—life itself is precious" (cf. Gen 9:6; Exod 21:23; 2 Sam 14:7; Jon 1:14).[52]

Scholars agree that in the Hebrew Bible the meaning "life" better fits this noun because it is "attested more often, more densely, and more uniformly than the meaning 'soul.'"[53] In other words, *nephesh* is life itself, the very nature of humans, not merely their possession. Throughout the Bible, there are numerous examples of God's acts of saving and preserving human *nephesh* or life (Ps 116:4–8). In a similar manner, a person can save someone else's *life* (2 Sam 19:6) or one's own *life* (1 Sam 19:18).

The first human created by God was described as a "living being" (Heb. *nephesh ḥayya*) in Gen 2:7. According to biblical authors, humans could be vulnerable to rejoicing, grieving, hungering, being troubled, and even dying or ceasing to exist:[54] in short, the complete human experience in life. Together with other nouns translated as "heart," "bone," or "flesh," *nephesh* was often used in the Hebrew Bible to point to a person's completeness or totality.

An in-depth consideration of the Hebrew *nephesh* "self" gives an insight into "the totality and indivisibility of individual and corporate being."[55] In

[49] Van Pelt and Pratico, *The Vocabulary Guide to Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic*, 171. It occurs 757 times in the Hebrew Bible (Leviticus, 60 times; Proverbs, 56 times; Psalms, 144 times; Jeremiah, 62 times).

[50] Jenni and Westermann, *TLOT* 2:743.

[51] H. W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 10–25.

[52] Jenni and Westermann, *TLOT* 2:753.

[53] Jenni and Westermann, *TLOT* 2:752.

[54] Robert Laurin, "The Concept of Man as a Soul," *Expository Times* 72 (1961): 131–34.

[55] Uitti, "Health and Wholeness in the Old Testament," 57. See also Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge &

general, there is "no clear-cut distinction in biblical literature between a person's 'soul' or 'spirit' and 'body': the person is a unified whole."[56] As Roland de Vaux states: "The distinction between soul and body is something foreign to the Hebrew mentality, and death, therefore, is not regarded as the separation between these two elements. A live man is a living 'soul' (*nephesh*), and a dead man is a dead 'soul,' a dead *nephesh* (Nb 6:6; Lv 21:11; cf. Nb 19:13)."[57] Encyclopedia Judaica expresses it aptly: "The personality was considered as a whole in the biblical period [of history]."[58] In the Septuagint, for example, in about 90% of the cases, *nephesh* is translated with the Greek word *psyche* whose prevalent meaning is "person." This best-known translation of the Hebrew Bible does not go in the direction in which "soul" is understood as something opposite of the body, as proposed by Platonic dualism.[59] The following is a list of meanings applied to this rich Hebrew term (*nephesh*):

1. Life, breath, living being, person, creature, lifeless body.[60] Examples are as follows: Adam was the first living *being* (Gen 2:7) and as such he was privileged to name every living *creature* (Gen 2:19). According to the Pentateuch, throughout a Nazirite's period of dedication to the Lord, he was not to go near a *dead body* (Num 6:6). The prophet Elijah prayed: "LORD, my God, let this boy's *life* return to him!" (1 Kgs 17:21, emphasis supplied).

2. Force, vitality, yearning, refreshment, restoration. Examples are as follows: For the psalmist (David, according to the superscript), the LORD was the one who regularly *revived* him or who restored his *whole being* (Ps 23:3). The weeping poet, traditionally identified as Jeremiah, complained that "no one is near to comfort me, no one to *restore my spirit*" (Lam 1:16, emphasis supplied).

3. Will, heart, mind, one's inner being, wish, choice. Examples are as follows: Abraham entreated the elders in Canaan: "If you are *willing* to let me bury my dead [wife Sarah]" (Gen 23:8, emphasis supplied). Abner, David's army commander, urged the king to make a covenant with all Israel so that

Kegan Paul, 1970).

56 Neusner and Green, *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period* 2:599.

57 Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 56. New Testament scholar Oscar Cullmann argues the same point regarding the nature of humans in *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead: The Witness of the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2000).

58 Skolnik and Berenbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 19:33.

59 Jenni and Westermann, *TLOT* 2:759.

60 It is worth noting that in the Septuagint (LXX), when *psyche* translates *nephesh*, its meaning is best rendered as "breath, life, or a person."

he "may rule over all that your *heart* desires" (2 Sam 3:21, emphasis supplied).

4. Desire (negative or positive), pleasure, delight, want, craving, lust, appetite. Examples are as follows: The wise man taught that it is "better what the eye sees than the roving of the *appetite*" (Eccl 6:9, emphasis supplied). In Isa 42:1, the Lord promises to uphold His servant because he "is my chosen one in whom I *delight*" (emphasis supplied).

5. Hope, love, joy, praise (to God), satisfaction, longing for God[61] or God's house. Examples are as follows: Isa 26:9 describes one's love for God in the following manner: "My *soul* [or my *inner being*] yearns for you in the night" (emphasis supplied). Jeremiah said that the remnant who went to live in Egypt would not return to the land of Judah, where they "[*longed*] to return and live" (Jer 44:14, emphasis supplied). In like manner, the psalmist *longed* to pay a visit to God's temple: "My *soul* yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God" (Ps 84:2, emphasis supplied).

Individuals in ancient Israel found their true selves in their interactions with other members of their community. In addition to having their separate individualities, each of them could represent the whole group they belonged to. This concept was labeled by H. W. Robinson as "corporate personality."[62] No individual was intended to be an island isolated from their various communities, such as the household, extended family, clan, or tribe. Even Yahweh's *nephesh* was described in some Bible passages as having close family members on earth (Judg 10:16; Isa 1:14; Jer 12:7; Amos 6:8). The people of Israel are therefore called His "spouse" or "child," while He was their Parent, Husband, and Kinsman.

In contrast to ancient Israel, where the one "lived in and for the many … we live [today] in a world where individuals and communities tend to live and care only for themselves, where the sick, the aged and infirm, the disadvantaged, and the poor and homeless are often shamefully marginalized and forgotten." Uitti goes on to say: "Contemporary groups, including the churches, might ask themselves whether it is better to characterize and model themselves as an *'am* (Heb. 'people' [who feel like being] a family of related and committed persons who transcend international barriers) or as a *goy* ('nation' [which is] a political institution proud of its distinctiveness

[61] George V. Wigram, *The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 831.

[62] H. Wheeler Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964).

and insistent upon maintaining lines of demarcation)."[63] From ancient Israel we now turn to Judaism's teachings about whole-person care and wellness.

4. Wholeness and Wellness in Judaism

There is a Jewish story about a powerful king who imprisoned his physician and fed him only a morsel of barley bread and water. Several months passed before the physician's relatives were allowed to visit him. To their great surprise, he looked happy and healthy in his prison cell. This he credited to his drink, which he described as a blend of seven herbs that he had brought with him to prison and managed to drink a few drops of a day. These "seven magic herbs" were: trust in God, hope, patience, awareness of sins, joy from knowing that present suffering will end in the world to come, the possibility that suffering could be worse, and the knowledge that God's power could free him from prison at any time.[64]

For centuries, physical well-being has been understood in Judaism as being closely bound to spiritual wholeness, each dependent upon and affecting the other. For this reason, "Jewish society and literature have always valued and promoted healthfulness. As a result, ascetism, prolonged fasts, isolation, and self-denial have not been primary modes of Jewish spiritual expression."[65] Fasting on the Sabbath, for example, was discouraged because that day was intended to be a time of rest (*menuha*), filled with shalom, joy, and other divine blessings.[66]

Building on the rich Hebraic heritage in the Scriptures, Judaism confesses that God is the Creator and Sustainer of people and all else in the universe. Because life is a precious gift, healthcare decisions reflect a mandate to respect and preserve life. Since the human body was created by God, it is on loan throughout the duration of life. For this reason, physical happiness is to be enjoyed.[67] Central to the Jewish perspective on healthcare is the belief that human beings are created in God's likeness, and as such they should be treated with great respect. The Jewish wholistic view recognizes that the physical and spiritual realms are inseparable. Illness is not only a

63 Uitti, "Health and Wholeness in the Old Testament," 52.

64 J. Z. Abrams and D. I. Freeman, *Illness and Health in the Jewish Tradition: Writings from the Bible to Today* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1999), 9–10.

65 Abrams and Freeman, *Illness and Health in the Jewish Tradition*, 248.

66 Heschel, *The Sabbath*, 30.

67 E. J. Taylor, *Spiritual Care: Nursing Theory, Research, and Practice* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 254.

clinical or physical state. It is also a spiritual challenge to many devout people.[68]

Shalom in Judaism is viewed as the greatest possible blessing that encompasses all other divine blessings.[69] Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel said: "By these three things the world is preserved, by truth, by judgment, and by peace."[70] The Talmud teaches that Shalom is one of the names of God and achieving shalom is the purpose of the entire Torah.[71] It is permitted to deviate from the strict line of truth in order to establish peace.[72] In other words, to assure peace, even truth may be sacrificed. Rabbi Hillel defined the heart of Judaism with the maxim, "Love shalom and pursue it!"[73]

In their sourcebook on Jewish writings on health, illness, and healing titled *Illness and Health in Jewish Tradition*,[74] the editors list Judaism's most fundamental commonalities as: (1) a search for God, (2) a reverence for life, (3) a belief in the sacredness of health, and (4) a life-defining conviction that illness is an evil to be banished. The book addresses some key questions often posed by all spiritual persons, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. Questions like "How can one cope with illness?" or "What constitutes good health?" are very important for any discussion on the concepts of wholeness and wellness in Judaism.

The section of the book *Illness and Health in Jewish Tradition* that stands out is titled "The Patient as a Person," because it is filled with veritable gems.[75] In it, Abraham J. Heschel challenges physicians to see the patient not as a machine but as a human being who is "the disclosure of the divine." The practice of medicine is more than a profession because "medicine has a soul," and it is all about service to others. The doctor's mission is prophetic.

[68] H. S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981); David Kramer, *Responses to Suffering in Classical Rabbinic Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); J. D. Kark et al., "Does Religious Observance Promote Health? Mortality in Secular vs Religious Kibbutzim in Israel," *American Journal of Public Health* 86.3 (1996): 341–46. Frank Boehm, *Doctors Cry, Too: Essays from the Heart of a Physician* (New York: Hay House, 2003).

[69] In Judaism, Moses exemplifies the ideal of justice, while his brother Aaron exemplifies the ideal of peace (M. Avot 1:12).

[70] M. Avot 1:18.

[71] B. Shabbat 10b; Gittin 59b. For this and the next two references from Judaica, I am indebted to Neusner and Green, *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*.

[72] B. Yevamot 65b.

[73] M. Avot 1:12.

[74] Abrams is a Talmudic theologian, while Freeman is a physician and professor of medicine.

[75] A. J. Heschel, "The Patient as a Person," *Conservative Judaism* 19 (1964): 1–20.

Says Heschel: "To minister to the sick is to minister to God." There is "a prophetic ingredient" in the calling of a healthcare worker. In summary, the physician is "a prophet, a watchman, and a messenger." He or she should be considered God's partner in the struggle between life and death. There is no greater ministry than to save human life. This is the very work of God. The physician "may be a saint without knowing it, and without pretending to be one."

From the perspective of divine love, "the work of medicine and the work of religion are one. The body is the sanctuary, the doctor is a priest." A human being should not be defined as "an ingenious assembly of portable plumbing." Nor is he or she "a combination of body and soul but rather body and soul as one." While diet and physical exercise are important, "so are the capacity to praise, the power to revere, self-discipline, and the taste of self-transcendence. All are qualities of being human." For this reason, the physician's main task is to treat the whole person, the total individual. Complete health goes beyond mere physical fitness. Longevity is not the only purpose of living. "*Quality* of living is as important as quantity of living."[76]

The question is often asked if a person can feel whole when experiencing pain and suffering. Heschel's answer is that it can be a positive opportunity to feel "more empathetic to others who suffer and to perform increased acts of lovingkindness, [and] act as God's partner, giving meaning to the inherently meaningless…. This experience may allow me to enable my own life by acting as God's partner in bringing healing not just to myself, but to others as well…. I would not have known how much suffering hurts if not for this experience."[77] The Jewish scholar Hermann Cohen wrote that true immortality of the soul is its spirit, which is "the possibility and the obligation to effect the principles of truth and morality in this world."[78]

Ultimately, the complete and universal healing and restoration will be accomplished by a divine act. In an ancient midrash, the Messiah is portrayed as sitting in paradise and shedding rivers of tears over all the suffering present in the world. The prophet Elijah, who is sitting next to the Messiah, offers these comforting words as he wipes his tears away: "Do not weep my son, for soon God will open His heart of grace."[79] The idea that

[76] Heschel, "The Patient as a Person," 1–20.

[77] This type of confession could be labeled as "extreme empathy." See Abrams and Freeman, *Illness and Health in the Jewish Tradition*, 56–57.

[78] Skolnik and Berenbaum, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 19:33.

[79] Abrams and Freedman, *Illness and Health in the Jewish Tradition*, 20.

grace is an essential component of wholeness and healing is also prominent in Christian teachings.

5. Wholeness and Wellness in Christianity

Augustine of Hippo, a great Christian theologian known to most Christians as Saint Augustine, has also been called "the patron saint of restless hearts."[80] This peculiar title derives from Augustine's long search for God out of his spiritual and emotional brokenness that resulted in some outstanding works such as *Confessions*. Carl Vaught maintains that this timeless Christian classic should be interpreted as an attempt to address *the human being as a whole person* rather than through purely intellectual or volitional dimensions.[81]

The end of Augustine's journey is eloquently stated in a sentence found in the opening chapter of his *Confessions*: "You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds rest in you."[82] The words penned by this great Christian theologian express so eloquently human yearnings for peace and wholeness that come from finding God and communing with Him. In other words, a human being can find freedom, truth, and other blessings when they find themselves in God's story. Augustine's teachings were based primarily on passages from New Testament books.

The authors of the New Testament[83] expanded the concept of wholeness grounded in the theology of the Hebrew Bible.[84] An important word found in the Greek translation of the Bible known as the Septuagint (LXX) and in the New Testament is *holokleros*. It means "whole, intact, or healthy" and describes the state of being complete and with integrity. The noun built on

[80] James K. A. Smith, *On the Road with Saint Augustine* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2019).

[81] Carl G. Vaught, *The Journey Toward God in Augustine's Confessions*, books I–IV (New York: Suny Press, 2003).

[82] Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.

[83] A. Rush Ryan and B. H. Aboul-Enein, "Health, Healing, and Well-being according to the New Testament," *The ABNF Journal* 27.2 (2016): 44–47; M. C. Albi, "'Are Any among You Sick?' The Health Care System in the Letter of James," *JBL* 121.1 (2002): 123–43; F. J. Gaiser, "'Are Any among You Sick?': The Church's Healing Mandate (James 5:13–20)," *Word & World* 35.3 (2015): 241–50.

[84] A. Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); H. Avalos, *Healthcare and the Rise of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); F. J. Gaiser, *Healing in the Bible: Theological Insight for Christian Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010); Gaiser, "In Touch with Jesus: Healing in Mark 5:21–43," *Word & World* 30.1 (2010): 5–15.

the same word root is *holokleria*, meaning "wholeness, health,"[85] and "*soundness* in all parts."[86] For example, the word is used to describe *rough* stones, unshaped by iron tools, that were used to build the altar of the Lord (Deut 27:6; Josh 8:31). It is also used for seven *full* weeks (Lev 23:15) or for wood *untouched* by fire (Ezek 15:5). Throughout the Septuagint, the word describes sacrificed animals without defect and physically whole.

The apostle Peter uses the noun *holokleria* when explaining how faith gave the sick man *complete* healing (Acts 3:16). James, in his letter to the followers of Christ, encouraged the believers to endure difficulties and thus become *complete*, lacking in nothing (Jam 1:4). The Greek words *haplous* and *haplotes*, on the other hand, describe persons who are morally whole, faithful, peaceful, and innocent.[87] These individuals exhibit simplicity of heart (cf. 1 Chr 29:17), and they obey God with a sincere heart (Eph 6:5; Col 3:22). "The man of integrity walks securely," argued the wise man (Prov 10:9), while James states that God gives wisdom *generously* (Jam 1:5). The noun *haplotes* is also used to point to one's simplicity and purity with respect to Christ (2 Cor 11:3).[88]

Believers look up to the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer, and they maintain a relationship with the One who is their supreme example of completeness. "God is the embodiment of self-sufficient (Acts 17:25) wholeness. His actions express perfect balance, the infinite beauty and symmetry of his person."[89] In Exod 19:26, God says that He is "the LORD who heals you." Mark 12:28–30 reiterates the Deuteronomic exhortation to love God and wholly belong to Him. On the horizontal level, people's wholeness rests on healthy interpersonal relationships characterized by love (John 13:35), mutual respect (Gal 6:1–10), and peace (Eph 4:25–5:2). While God is the supreme healer, He uses human agents as well as nature in the process of restoring wholeness (Matt 10:1). The Christian position is that "those who seek healing by prayer should not neglect to make use of the remedial agencies within their reach. It is not a denial of faith to use such remedies as God has provided to alleviate pain and to aid nature in her work of restoration."[90]

[85] C. Spicq, *TLNT* 2:578.

[86] Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 2nd ed., trans. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979), 564.

[87] Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 86.

[88] Jenni and Westermann, TLOT 2:759, also mention the following Greek words: *holos, pas, hygieys, sodzo*.

[89] Ryken, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 944.

[90] Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1942), 231–32.

Unfortunately, the fall into sin brought a fracture of wholeness, so now all of nature longs for redemption and a restoration of the primeval wholeness. That is why statements about the universal sinfulness of humankind (Rom 3:19; 8:18) point to the need of the Messiah's work of restoring physical and mental health (Matt 9:22).[91] Being human, "we have a persistent yearning to interact with a sympathetic healer who knows our unique selves as reflected in our infirmities."[92] As promised in the Hebrew Bible, the punishment of the Suffering Servant can make believers whole (Isa 53:5), thus giving them fullness of life in Christ (Col 2:10).[93]

It is worth noticing how the Gospel narratives fittingly frame the recreative work of God's kingdom in accordance with the work of the LORD's servant described in Isa 61. Jesus Christ's healing ministry brought wholeness to human brokenness.[94] Many of His healing miracles took place on the Sabbath day, showing the true purpose of the day of rest (cf. Isa 58). Sigve Tonstad, who is by profession both a physician and a biblical scholar, presents the Sabbath as a sacred time when we are invited to celebrate God's work of creation and His intent to heal and restore all that is broken.[95]

Christ's invitation recorded in Matt 11:28–30 is cherished by many of His followers: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." How did this work in practice? The answer may be found in the following quote: "The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"[96]

The New Testament letter to the Hebrews pictures what Jesus is doing for faithful people today. He is in the heavenly sanctuary ministering on behalf of the believers (Heb 8:1–2). Filled with assurance, the author invites

[91] W. S. Kurz, "The Scriptural Foundations of 'The Theology of the Body,'" in *Pope John Paul II on the Body*, ed. J. McDermott and J. Gavin (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2006), 27–46; F. J. M. Deschene, "The Mystic and the Monk: Holiness and Wholeness," *Review for Religions* 38.4 (1974): 547–55.

[92] Gaiser, "Are Any among You Sick?," 243.

[93] K. J. Vanhoozer, "Hocus Totus: The Elusive Wholeness of Christ," *Pro Ecclesia* 29.1 (2020): 31–42.

[94] Ryken, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 748. See also Jan-Olav Henriksen and Karl Olav Sandnes, *Jesus as Healer: A Gospel for the Body* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

[95] Tonstad, *The Lost Meaning of the Seventh Day*.

[96] White, *The Ministry of Healing*, 143. See also Jon Paulien, *The Ministry of Healing Study Guide* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2016).

the faithful to approach God boldly, without fear of condemnation: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb 4:15–16). Thus, the author does not focus on something essentially negative, like overcoming a list of sins. Instead, the readers are told that "the life to which the Master calls us—the One that He modeled for us—wasn't an absence of sin, but one of wholeness."[97]

From the eschatological perspective, wholeness will be fully realized when the redeemed are one with God throughout eternity (Rev 21:3). In anticipation of such blessings, the apostle Paul offered a prayer that is considered a significant Christian passage on wholeness: "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do it" (1 Thess 5:23–24, emphasis supplied). In conclusion, the concepts of healing and wholeness run like golden threads through both the Old and New Testaments. We now turn to the Muslim teachings about health and wholeness.

6. Wholeness and Wellness in Islam

Rumi was a thirteenth-century Persian poet and Sufi Islamic scholar.[98] He was called by his followers Mevlana, meaning "our master." He described himself simply as "a lover of God" who created and sustains everything. After an extensive period of fasting and seclusion, he was ready to begin his influential work in accordance with the following commission from his spiritual mentor: "Go and flood the souls of men with new life and immeasurable grace. Revive the dead of this world with your message of love."[99]

In one of his poetic stories, Rumi talks about a sober-minded man who said to Jesus: "What in this existence is hardest to bear?" Jesus replied: "O dear soul, the hardest is God's anger, from which Hell is trembling as we

[97] William G. Johnsson, *Hebrews*, Bible Amplifier (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1994), 104.

[98] Sufism arose as a reaction to the formulation of Islam in purely legal and theological terms. The Sufis argued that faith essentially deals with the inner life of humans, with the "tendency of the soul." Though neither lawyers nor theologians cared for this aspect of the religion, for the Sufi this was its essence. See F. Rahman, *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition* (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 6.

[99] The words of this commission are posted in one of the exhibits at the Islamic Cultural Center in Konya, Turkey.

are." The man continued: "And what is the protection against God's anger?" According to Rumi, Jesus answered: "To abandon your own anger at once."[100] Islam's high esteem for Jesus Christ is best formulated in this statement from the Qur'an: "Then we followed up [the earlier prophets] with Jesus son of Mary, and we gave him the Evangel, and we put in the hearts of his followers kindness and mercy."[101]

Muslims consider themselves to be the recipients of the same divine guidance that had been entrusted to Jews and Christians.[102] The starting point of historical, scriptural, and theological continuity is the fact that "*Allah* is the Arabic word for the God of the Jewish and Christian Bibles." All three faiths "proclaim one God. All teach about a common humanity created in the image of the same God and respect for all humanity. All emphasize the importance of communal values over selfish individualism…. All struggle with both script and tradition in the light of modern insights."[103] The concept of the day of rest and devotion is present in Islam, though not in the form of the biblical Sabbath.

The person of the Creator God, His character, greatness, and compassion are central to the Muslim faith. Human beings are God's noblest creatures. The Qur'an states that humans were created "in the best of molds"[104] and that Adam was placed on earth to be the viceregent of God Himself.[105] As the first human being, he was created as a single organism with body and

[100] Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, *Jewels of Remembrance*, trans. Kabir and Camille Helminski, (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, 2000), iv, 113–16.

[101] Qur'an Al-Hadid 57:27. In the Qur'an, there are multiple references to Jesus, son of Mary. Mary is the only woman mentioned by name in the Qur'an. An entire chapter in the Qur'an (Surah 19) "is dedicated to her and her history" (Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*, 31). There are also chapters (*surahs*) in the Qur'an that are named in reference to Jesus. In several references, Jesus's name is followed by the title "Messiah" (*al Masih*) or "Christ."

[106] "Abrahamic Family House" is a project in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, that is intended to affirm the foundation on which the three Abrahamic faiths are established. Through its architectural design, this complex tries to capture the shared values of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, so it includes a mosque, church, synagogue, and an educational center. The project is intended to be "a beacon of mutual understanding, harmonious coexistence and peace among people of faith and goodwill." Its goal is to serve as "a powerful platform for inspiring and nurturing understanding and acceptance between people of goodwill." For more info, check the following website: www.forhumanfraternity.org/abrahamic-family-house.

[103] Schumm and Stoltzfus, *Disability in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, xii–iii.

[104] Qur'an At-Tin 95:4–5.

[105] Qur'an Al-Baqarah 2:30.

mind that were intended to function as "one organized unit." In all creation, only they were given free choice, something withheld from nature and even angels. Being God's viceregents, humans "must preserve and develop and beautify God's creation, including human life, and not destroy or spoil it."[106]

Islam proposes a cohesive approach to life with human well-being at its center.[107] The counterpart of the classical Hebrew term *shalom* is the Arabic noun *salam*, which is commonly used as a greeting. It expresses the notion of safety, salvation, and peace.[108] The word is often understood to be a short prayer for "peace and wholeness." The root *slm*, from which this noun is derived, means "to be safe, whole, or integral." Thus safety, wholeness, and integrality are basic teachings in Islam. A related word in Islam is *iman* ("faith or faithfulness"), a noun built on the root *amn*, which means "to be at peace" and "to be safe." In the Qur'an, God is referred to as As-Shafi, the Restorer of Health.[109]

When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost their innocence. This fall caused the weakness of humans expressed in pettiness, narrow-mindedness, and selfishness. Fortunately, God opened the door of repentance (*tauba*). The three "vicious ailments"[110] listed above may be cured when a person discovers something greater than oneself by self-giving to others. The primary role of the divine revelation in the Qur'an is to function as the "restorer of health" and thus lead humans to spiritual, mental, and physical well-being. A point of view totally foreign to the Qur'an is that the "soul" can be healthy while the body is sick or vice versa. In fact, the Arabic word *nafs* (Heb. *nephesh*), which is commonly rendered as "soul," is instead best translated as "person."

The genre of literature and research[111] called "Prophetic Medicine" (Arab. *Tibb Nabawi*) was an attempt to spiritualize medicine and set high

[106] Rahman, *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition*, 29.

[107] Shahid Athar, ed., *Islamic Perspectives in Medicine: Achievements and Contemporary Issues* (New York: Kazi, 1996); Cyril Glassé, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); F. Javaheri, "Prayer Healing: An Experiential Description of Iranian Prayer Healing," *Journal of Religion & Health*, 45.2 (2006): 171–82; D. F. Baharudin et al., "Potential Integration of *Naqli* and *Aqli* Knowledge in Counseling by Understanding the Concept of Wellness," *Ulum Islamiyyah* 20 (2017): 1–9; N. Alimohammadi et al., "Laying the Foundations of Lifelong Health at the Beginning of Life: Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Religion & Health* 59.1 (2020): 570–83.

[108] P. J. Bearman et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), s.v. "*salām*."

[109] Qur'an Fussilat 41:44.

[110] Rahman, *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition*, 13.

[111] Salih Yucel, *Prayer and Healing in Islam* (Clifton, NJ: Tughra Books, 2010).

religious value on it. It deals primarily with general health principles, with scientific medicine filling in the details. F. Rahman says: "The integrality of the health of the whole person—spiritual, psychological, physical, and moral—is the essence of the message" of Prophetic Medicine.[112] It includes physical, spiritual, and, occasionally, magical cures.

The official tradition, Hadith, preserves a good number of sayings that exalt prophetic medicine. These are only a few examples: Health is the most excellent of God's blessings upon man after the faith. "Ask of God His forgiveness and health: for, after faith, no one can get a greater good than health." To the comment, "I much prefer to be in good health and be grateful for it than be affected with ill health and bear it with patience," this prophetic advice was spelled out: "God prefers you to be in good health."[113]

The practice of medicine is a religious vocation of the first order, next only to religion in importance. This is because medicine helps men and women to help others preserve and restore their health. After faith, the art and practice of medicine is the most meritorious service in God's sight.[114] The Qur'an states that whoever saves one human life, it is as though he saved all humanity.[115] A doctor first tries his best by way of treatment and then puts his trust in God for his success. It's like a farmer who tills the soil, sows the seed, and then trusts in God that the crop will grow. In brief, medicines are part of the decree of God.

Since for a Muslim believer the basic tenets of faith are closely related to health, it is widely believed that a physical illness may be cured by the recitation of Qur'anic verses or other prayers.[116] Unlike many other religions, Islamic prayer includes the exercise of the body. The postures used in prayer are standing upright, bending the knee, falling prostrate, relaxing, and concentrating.[117] Along with prayers, singing is considered the most exalted spiritual medicine. Music is the soul's pleasure, the heart's delight, and food

[112] Rahman, *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition*, 45.

[113] Al-Dhahabi, *al-Tibb al-Nabawi* (Cairo: n.a., 1961), 7.

[114] In Doha, the capital of Qatar, there is a large and impressive compound named "Education City" where several universities and schools are located. On this compound, there is also a garden called "Qur'anic Botanic Garden" where plants, mentioned in the Qur'an as beneficial for health, are cultivated. In the same garden are also displayed samples of nutritious and healthy cereals and seeds which are mentioned in the Qur'an. For more information, check the following website: https://qbg.org.qa/.

[115] Qur'an Al-Ma'idah 5:32.

[116] For an excellent overview of the material presented here, see F. Rahman's book *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition*.

[117] See Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*, 24–25.

for the spirit. It beautifies and refreshes the body, as the example of David's proverbial singing of psalms shows. Finally, the custom of visiting a sick person is highly commendable because doing that is like visiting the Lord Himself.

Community is very important to Muslims in accordance with the following reasoning: Since God is one, humanity should be one, too. It is governed by five basic human rights: Protection of life, property, faith, honor, and reason. Muslims treasure the prophetic sayings about community that have been preserved by ancient traditions (Hadith). Here are a few of the best-known: "When an orphan cries, God's throne shakes." "A person who helps the widows and the helpless is fighting a Holy War [jihad]." The question, "How can I know if I am a good man or not?" was readily answered in this way: "Find out from your neighbors what they think of you, whether you are a good person or not."[118]

Muslims believe that a person who does not have good, positive, and balanced morals cannot be healthy. From the global perspective, the basic causes of the rise and decline of civilizations are moral in nature. In the Qur'an,[119] at the end of the story of Cain and Abel, the following statement is recorded: "For this reason we decreed it for the children of Israel that whosoever kills a [single] human for other than murder or other than the corruption of the earth [war], it is as though he has killed all humankind and whosoever has saved one human, it is as though he has saved all humankind."

This is not to say that the religious teachings and practices of Islam always agree with those of Christian and Jewish theologians. For example, Muslims do not have a Sabbath day like Jews and Christians do. Rather than being a day of rest, Friday (*juma*) is the day of community prayer and worship, as well as time for socializing.[120] Michael Lodahl argues for a respectful interfaith engagement that he calls "Similarity-in-difference."[121] This type of a positive approach is the key to a constructive dialogue because each faith will prove illuminating in understanding the other. Islam presents itself as

[118] For examples from Muhammad's own life, see Barnaby Rogerson, *The Prophet Muhammad: A Biography* (Mahwah, NJ: Hidden Springs, 2003), 216–17.

[119] Qur'an Al-Ma'idah 5:32.

[120] Esposito, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam*, 32–34.

[121] Michael Lodahl, *Claiming Abraham: Reading the Bible and the Qur'an Side by Side* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010).

a faith that offers its followers the so-called "practical moral trend,"[122] or a very practical attitude toward life.

The Muslim approach to health has been influenced by practices from Iran, India, and Greece. In Greek tradition, for example, medicine is closely tied with philosophy (and ethics), and the same is true of Muslim traditions. Hippocrates, who is often called "the father of modern medicine," taught that before the physician could treat the patient as a whole, he or she should be whole. Based on this philosophy, Islam affirms that the physician must lead a balanced and moderate life and not waste time and energy indulging in pleasures or amusements. All Abrahamic religions are unanimous in honoring physicians, so healthcare practitioners should live up to that high standard.[123] The Arabic title for a physician is *hakim*, which means someone full of knowledge and wisdom. The honorific title *hakim*, "The Wise," is in fact one of the names of God in Islam.

7. Concluding Points

The wholistic view considers the human being as a total person, an individual with physical, mental, spiritual, and social needs. In a wholistic sense, to be human means to live for a cause or a purpose that is greater than oneself. To take an example, this was the capstone experience of the renowned writer and Christian apologist C. S. Lewis. After going through some of the most challenging tests of faith, he was able to regain a sense of wholistic healing and a renewed purpose in life.[124] He, in the end, thrust himself into

[122] Rahman, *Health and Medicine in the Islamic Tradition*, 11.

[123] Cf. Michelle J. Cox, *Doctors Are Not Gods: Taking Responsibility for Our Own Health and Wellbeing* (Solon: Wabi Sabi Publications, 2020); Boehm, *Doctors Cry, Too.*

[124] C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: HarperOne, 2015); Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (London: Faber and Faber, 1961). Lewis authored the book *The Problem of Pain*, that was published in 1940. Twenty years later, another book on the same topic, considered by many to be his best, titled *A Grief Observed*, was colored by a dramatic personal experience. Unlike his previous book on the problem of pain, this one left him a wounded, sobered man who carried the grief of his wife's [prolonged suffering and eventual] death to his own grave three years later. His descent into darkness broke him, but the break made him a better man and a wiser Christian. During the rest of his days on earth, Lewis gradually regained life's purpose through his courageous resolve to trust God and to be steadfastly loyal to the possibility that *life could be meaningful* despite the blow that had shattered his earlier hopes. This breakthrough, in the end, brought back a sense of healing and wholeness. It is very unlikely that Lewis, called by some "the most reluctant convert," could have regained this sense of

the caring hands of the Creator God. This article presents the following concluding points:

1. Shalom or "wholeness" is a comprehensive expression denoting all that the people in biblical times wished for. It is the substance of blessing that describes a state of being "unimpaired and unthreatened, of ease and security, of felicity and wholeness in the broadest possible sense." In brief, shalom has "a semantic breadth that cannot be conveyed adequately by any single English word."[125]

2. All three Abrahamic faiths teach that God is not the source of illness or pain. On the contrary, there is a general agreement that the divine heart is filled with grace and compassion and that God is the Great Healer. The Hebrew Bible presents the weekly Sabbath rest as a sacred time when we are invited to claim God's promised intent to heal and restore all that is broken.

3. An important common trait in the three Abrahamic faiths is that their members view wholeness as the cornerstone of spirituality and devotion, whether of an individual or of a community of believers.[126] While wholeness and wellness are important for health, prayers for healing are equally important.

4. All three faiths believe in whole-person care, which is often tied to the expressions "prophetic healing" and "prophetic medicine." This may explain why the reading and studying of sacred texts, such as passages from the Torah or the Qur'an, is believed to have curative effects.[127] In some cases, incantation and even magic are acceptable for the purpose of healing.[128]

5. Since humans reflect God's image and likeness[129] (cf. Gen 1:26–27; 9:5–6), and God encompasses the entire world, destroying a single person is like

wholistic healing and a renewed purpose in life without a firm trust in the caring Creator God.

125 Friedrich J. Stendebach, "שָׁלוֹם," *TDOT* 15:15.

126 J. Ryce-Menuhin, *Jung and the Monotheisms: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (London: Routledge, 1994). See especially chapter 3, "The Dream of Wholeness," 33–42.

127 This view is strongly emphasized in Judaism (Abrams and Freeman, *Illness and Health in the Jewish Tradition*, 4) and in the Muslim traditions (Hadith).

128 Abrams and Freeman, *Illness and Health in the Jewish Tradition*, 139–42. If the sacred text inside a mezuzah is defective (damaged or written incorrectly), those who live in the house are more vulnerable to illnesses and tragedies (Abrams and Freeman, *Illness and Health in the Jewish Tradition*, 96).

129 See Paul Brandley & Philip Yancey, *Fearfully and Wonderful: The Marvel of Bearing God's Image* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2019).

130 M. Sanhedrin 4:5; Qur'an (Al-Ma'idah 5:32).

destroying the entire world. On the contrary, saving one person's life is like saving the whole of humanity.[130] This is why it is by "our deeds that we express our faith and make it real in the lives of others and the world."[130] An active faith means that in lieu of the prevailing disorder and brokenness, we need to search for a renewed wholeness. Humanity in its brokenness looks forward to the promised intervention by its Creator and the ultimate Restorer of wholeness who says: "Look! I am making all things new" (Rev 21:5).

[131] Jonathan Sacks, *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility* (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 5.

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Contrasting Views about the Divinity of Christ and Their Impact on the Acceptance of the Personality of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity in Seventh-day Adventist Theology

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Abstract

In the early church, the divinity of Christ's understanding was significant to accepting the doctrine of the Trinity. How were the Seventh-day Adventists? This work surveys the impact of the divinity of Christ's idea on the doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist theology. Of five views on the divinity of Christ, two ideas reflect the acceptance of the Trinity. These two ideas argue that if Jesus is God, he has a distinct personality from the Father, and he has the nature, substance, and attributes of God; this understanding will lead to the acceptance of the personality of the Holy Spirit, then, finally to the inclusion of the Trinity. This article maintains that a correct biblical understanding of the divinity of Christ helps to the acceptance of the personality of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity.

Keywords: Divinity of Christ, Trinity, Holy Spirit, Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Godhead

1. Introduction

The divinity of Christ was a major topic of discussion during the Early

Church. The issue triggered the first and second ecumenical councils' decisions regarding the Trinity, including a discussion of Christ's divinity. Paul Tillich states that the "Trinitarian decision in Nicaea preceded the definitely Christological decision of Chalcedon. . . . but in terms of motivation the sequence is reversed; the Christological problem gives rise to the Trinitarian problem."[1] The Councils of Nicaea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD) confirmed the Trinity and divinity of Christ. Thus, Christianity since this formative period closely connected the divinity of Christ to the acceptance of the Trinity.

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, even though there are some works done on the Trinity,[2] there has scarcely been done work on the divinity of Christ and the acceptance of the Doctrine of the Trinity. This study identifies different views about the divinity of Christ, and how they impacted the acceptance of the personality of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity doctrine in Seventh-day Adventist theology. The following sections identify five different ideas on the divinity of Christ among Adventists and how these diverse perspectives are connected to the doctrine of the Trinity.

2. Jesus Christ as a Divine but Created Being

Some of the early Adventist pioneers believed that Jesus Christ was the

1 Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1967), 285.

2 Erwin Roy Gane, "The Arian or Anti-trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer" (MA thesis, Andrews University, 1963); Hans Varmer, "Analysis of the Seventh-day Adventist Pioneer Anti-Trinitarian Position" (term paper, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, 1972); Merlin D. Burt, "Demise of Semi-Arianism and Anti-Trinitarianism in Adventist Theology, 1888–1957" (term paper, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, 1996); Merlin D. Burt, "History of the Adventist View on the Trinity," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17.1 (Spring 2006): 125–39; Russell Holt, "The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance" (term paper, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1969); Woodrow W. Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve, *The Trinity: Understanding God's Love, His Plan of Salvation and Christian Relationships* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002); Woodrow W. Whidden, "Salvation Pilgrimage: The Adventist Journey into Justification by Faith and Trinitarianism," *Ministry*, April 1998, 5–7; Gerhard Pfandl, "The Doctrine of the Trinity among Seventh-day Adventist," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17.1 (Spring 2006): 160–179; Jerry Moon, "The Adventist Trinity Debate Part 1: Historical Overview," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 41.1 (2003): 113–29; Jerry Moon, "The Adventist Trinity Debate Part 2: The Role of Ellen G. White," *AUSS* 41.2, (2003): 275–92; and Denis Fortin, "God, Trinity and Adventism: An Old Controversy over the Nature of God Surfaces again," *Perspective Digest* 15.4, (2010): 1.

Lord, but that He was created by God. Since He was a created being, His substance was different from the Father. Even though Jesus was created, they still believed that Jesus Christ was truly a divine being.

J. M. Stephenson wrote in 1854 that Jesus Christ was a divine being. He recognized that "His being the only begotten of the Father supposes that none except him were thus begotten; hence he is, in truth and verity the only begotten Son of God; and as such he must be Divine; that is, be a partaker of the Divine nature." In spite of Jesus Christ being "immortal," and "in his original nature, . . . deathless,"[3] nevertheless, He was not seen to be as immortal as the Father. He continued:

> that there are none good except the Father, it cannot be understood that none others are good in a relative sense; for Christ and angels, are good, yea perfect, in their respective sphere; but that the Father alone is supremely, or absolutely, good; and that he alone is immortal in an absolute sense; that he alone is self-existent; and, that, consequently, every other being, however high or low, is absolutely dependent upon him for life; for being.[4]

From this fact, Stevenson did not just say that Jesus Christ was not as immortal as the Father, but that in his "sphere" it was an obvious difference as well. Stephenson called Jesus Christ the "only begotten" or, using the borrowed biblical term, he called Him "The first born of every creature." He stated that the "creature signifies creation; hence to be the first born of every creature, (creation) he must be a created being and as such, his life and immortality must depend upon the Father's will, just as much as angels, or redeemed men" and he emphasized that the "Divine nature" of the Son was not "the same" as that of the Father.[5] The difference between "sphere" and "a created being" from the Father, therefore, made Jesus into a lower, but yet still a divine being.

More than a decade later, Uriah Smith wrote *Thoughts on Revelation* (1865).[6] He recognized the divinity of Christ that He "is seated with his Father upon the throne of universal dominion, ... and ranks equally with him in the overruling and disposition of the nations and affairs of earth." Indeed, he stated that Christ is the "Lord" and "Son of God." However,

3 J. M. Stephenson, "The Atonement," *Review and Herald* [*RH*], November 14, 1854, 105.

4 Stephenson, "The Atonement," 106.

5 Stephenson, "The Atonement," 106.

6 This book was written in 1865, but it was not published until 1867. See [Editor], "Now Ready," *RH*, May 14, 1867, 276; [Editor], "Our Book List," *RH*, June 18, 1867, 15.

Smith denied that Jesus Christ was God and equal from eternity with the Father. He claimed that "the complete eternity, past and future, can be applicable only to God, the Father. This language, we believe, is never applied to Christ."[7] Regarding a phrase applied to Jesus Christ in Rev 3:14, he wrote that Christ was "not the beginner, but the beginning, of the creation, the first created being, dating his existence far back before any other created being or thing, next to the self-existent and eternal God." Regarding the title "Alpha and Omega," as applied to Jesus Christ, he explained that "the expression must be taken in a more limited sense than when applied to the Father."[8] Uriah Smith believed that Jesus Christ was a Lord who was a created being, while still yet being divine, though being made by the Father.

Since this idea denied Jesus Christ as God, the supporters of this view believed that He was only a created being who had a lower divine nature with a different "sphere" and substance than that of the Father. They refused to clearly say that Jesus Christ was truly part of the Godhead. They believed that only the Father was truly God, and Jesus Christ was the Lord and Son of God. This thought refused to see Jesus Christ as fully God. They similarly also denied that the Holy Spirit was fully a personal part of the Godhead or Trinity.[9] Uriah Smith identified the Holy Spirit as "it" or as a "power," and not as a person.[10]

3. Jesus Christ as a Lord, but Not a God

A second idea on Christ's deity believed that Jesus Christ was a divine being, but that he was begotten and therefore not created by God. In a similar way to the previous idea, they considered that the word "God" was a term used only for the Father. The term "Lord" was reserved for Christ. They also understood the term "Lord God" as exclusively reserved for the Father, even though one individual from this group believed that Jesus Christ was in fact "equal with God." Nevertheless, he still called Him "Lord" but not

7 Uriah Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam press of the Seventh-day Adventist, 1865), 14, 16, 26, 54.

8 Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, 323.

9 For the second generation of Seventh-day Adventists, they preferred to use the term "Godhead" instead of "Trinity," since the latter "still remained essentially a no-no in church usage---probably because it was a nonbiblical word and was associated with the creeds." Gilbert M. Valentine, *W.W. Prescott: Forgotten Giant of Adventism's Second Generation*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 278. See also LeRoy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 273.

10 Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Revelation*, 14, 325.

God. Individuals from this group believed that the substance or nature of Jesus was different from that of the Father.

An example of one early Seventh-day Adventist pioneer who held this position was Joseph Bates. In 1846, he referred to Jesus as "the first born of every creature" who was "equal with God" (Phil 2: 5, 6) as well as the term "image of God" (Gen 1:27), advocating what was essentially a Unitarian understanding.[11] In response to the accusation that he was Unitarian, he replied, "so then was Paul, or I have not quoted him right."[12] He rejected the Trinity because he understood that the "Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, was also the Almighty God, the Father, one and the same being."[13] He believed that "God and his Son to be two persons in heaven." He stated: "I think here is sufficient proof from the Scriptures to justify the true believer to be still looking for a personal Saviour, and that God the Father is a person, and looks like Jesus and we like him."[14] He denied the Trinity, in part, due to his misunderstanding about what was the orthodox view on the Trinity, but it was also due to his Unitarian understanding, which placed Jesus as a lower divine entity than the Father.

James White, another co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, held a similar position to that of Joseph Bates. On January 8, 1845, he wrote an article that used the title "Lord God" four times, exclusively referring to the Father and "Lord" in reference to Jesus Christ. He refuted the idea that "Jesus is the eternal God" because "he is the Son of the eternal God."[15] He thought that only God is eternal. He had difficulty with the concept of the Trinity since he assumed that the Trinity, he believed, did not distinguish between the persons of the Father and the Son except by spiritualizing them. He stated, "Here we might mention the Trinity, which does away with the

[11] Unitarianism was wide spreading in New England, especially in the Christian Connection since early 19th century and the growing supporters were at Harvard. They believe that "Christ was God's special son, 'divine' in a relative sense yet not equal with the Father." Thomas H. Olbricht, "Unitarians," *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 749; see also D. A. Currie, "Unitarianism," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 1231–32.

[12] Joseph Bates, *The Opening Heavens: Or A Connected View of the Testimony of the Prophets and Apostles, Concerning the Opening Heavens, Compared with Astronomical Observations, and of the Present and Future Location of the New Jerusalem, the Paradise of God* (New Bedford, MA: Benjamin Lindsey, 1846), 18.

[13] Joseph Bates, *The Autobiography of Elder Joseph Bates* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1970), 205.

[14] Bates, *Opening Heavens*, 18–19.

[15] J[ames] W[hite], "Letter from Bro. White," *The Day-Star*, January 24, 1846, 25.

personality of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ."[16] He claimed that the "trinity" was a made-up (fictional) doctrine from Roman Catholicism that the Protestant Reformers, unfortunately, retained as an erroneous belief.[17] He called Jesus the "divine Lord"[18] but not as God.

J. N. Andrews was another pioneer within this group. He expressed the idea that Jesus Christ was inferior to God "for he had God for his Father, and did, at some point in the eternity of the past, have beginning of days." He contrasted this with "God the Father, who is without father, or mother, or descent, or beginning of days, or end of life."[19] Andrews placed Jesus inferior to God because he contended that only the Father was eternal God in the absolute sense and not with the Son. Subsequently, a few years later, he wrote, based upon 1 Tim 6:16, that "this text is evidently designed to teach that the self-existent God is the only being who, of himself, possesses this wonderful nature. Others may possess it as derived from him, but he alone is the fountain of immortality." It meant that Jesus Christ derived immortality from the Father, even though "our Lord Jesus Christ is the source of this life to us."[20] Andrews believed that the nature of God and the Lord Jesus were different since God the Father was eternal, self-existent, and contained the source of immortality whereby Jesus Christ did "have beginning of days," was not self-existent and his immortality was derived from the Father. That was why Andrews argued that the Father and the Son were different in "nature."

Another significant individual was Uriah Smith, whose understanding about the divinity of Christ developed over time. In 1872, he published *Fundamental Principles,* which omitted the phrase "created being" in reference to Jesus Christ. He simply mentioned the "Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom God created all things, and by whom they do consist."[21] The two main Seventh-day Adventist periodicals, *The Review and Herald* and *Signs of the Times*, published this statement in 1874. In these *Fundamental Principles,* allegedly reflected "so far as we know, entire unanimity throughout the body."[22] But it was not "a system of faith, but is a

16 J[ames] W[hite], "Preach the Word," *RH*, December 11, 1855, 85.

17 J[ames] W[hite], "The Word," *RH*, February 7, 1856, 149.

18 J[ames] W[hite], "The Faith of Jesus," *RH*, August 5, 1852, 52.

19 J[ohn] N. Andrews, "Melchisedec," *RH*, September 7, 1869, 84.

20 J[ohn] N. A[ndrews], "Immortality through Christ," *RH*, January 27, 1874, 52.

21 Uriah Smith, *A Declaration of the Fundamental Principles Taught and Practiced by the Seventh-day Adventist* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1872).

22 U[riah] S[mith], "A Brief Sketch of their Origin, Progress, and Principles," *RH*, November 24, 1874, 171.

brief statement of what is, and has been, with great unanimity, held by them [Seventh-day Adventists]."[23] In this statement, we see the understanding of Jesus as Lord with the terms "God" and "eternal" reserved for the Father as a dominant idea held by early Seventh-day Adventists during this formative period. In 1881, Smith revised his phraseology about Jesus Christ in Rev 3:14 when he replaced the term "created" with "begotten."[24] Uriah Smith later refined his understanding of the divinity of Christ, which is further discussed later on.

Another influential, early Seventh-day Adventist minister who held this viewpoint was Roswell F. Cottrell. He noted "that the term trinity means the union of three persons, not offices, in one God" and concluded "that one person is three persons, and that three persons are only one person, is the doctrine which we claim is contrary to reason and common sense." He did not believe that Jesus was "merely man." Neither did he hold the view that the Son was the same person as the Father. He assumed that the Father and Son were "in perfect harmony, of one mind and purpose, one in design and one in action; they were one in creating the world, and one in redeeming it." He maintained that the Son was inferior to the Father when he referenced to what Jesus said-- that "My Father is greater than I." He claimed that "you will not make him contradict himself." He called Jesus "Lord" or the "divine Son of God" while retaining the title "God" as strictly referring to the Father.[25]

In 1883, the Seventh-day Adventist Church launched its first *Year Book*. The faith statements of the church emerged in the *1889 Year Book* under the title "Fundamental Principles of the Seventh-day Adventists." These convictions reflect those of Uriah Smith, who referred to the Father by stating that "there is one God, a personal, spiritual being, the creator of all things, omnipotent, omniscient, and eternal." The second article states that "there is one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, the one by whom he created all things."[26] While this statement may be "interpreted favorably by

[23] [Editor], "Fundamental Principles," *Signs of the Times*, June 4, 1874, 3. Words in bracket are added.

[24] Uriah Smith, *Thoughts, Critical and practical, on the Book of Revelation* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist, 1881), 74.

[25] R. F. Cottrell, "The Trinity," *RH*, July 6, 1869, 10–11.

[26] General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Year Book of Statistics for 1889: Comprising the Classified Business Proceedings of the General Conference, the International Tract Society, the International Sabbath-school Association, the American Health and Temperance Association, Denominational Publishing Houses, Colleges, Etc., Supplemented with a Department of General Information, Interspersed with Practical Comments*

either Semi-Arian or Trinitarians,"[27] nevertheless, it reflects the view of Uriah Smith that the word "Lord" should only be used for Jesus Christ, and the words "God" and "eternal" should refer only to the Father.

This group maintained that Jesus was a lower divine being and therefore different in nature when compared with the Father. They believed that He did not deserve the title "God." This caused them to deny Jesus Christ as part of the Godhead as well as the Holy Spirit, since they recognized that such a title was only befitting as applied to the Father. Generally, they described the Holy Spirit as an energy or medium and used the words "its" or "itself," as was indicated in the *Year Book*.[28]

4. Jesus Christ as a Fully Subordinate God

A third group believed that Jesus Christ is God, but He is, in a sense, inferior to the Father. His subordination is everlasting, even before the incarnation. As a result, the power that He had before his first coming was derived from the Father and prevails forever. Supporters of this view see the word "begotten" as meaning fully subordinate.

D. W. Hull expressed this belief in 1859 by stating that Jesus Christ is a fully subordinate God, with a distinct person, but who is not included in the Godhead. He comments on John 1:14: "this is undoubtedly the same Word which was in the beginning with God, and which was God." He then asked: "why was the Word called God?" In reference to John 1:3, he says that "as Christ has always been known to cooperate with the Father, there is no doubt that through his agency the worlds were formed." Hull believed that Christ is God, but this function is as an agent of the Father, since "his power is only delegated." He commented (referencing John 10:34) that "Christ does not in the above passage deny that he is God; and we have found heretofore that he has been called God." However, Hull assumed there is a different quality between the two. He thought that "there is here a clear distinction made between the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father. The distinguishing qualities are, that whilst one is called the Son, the other is known as God the Father."[29] Hull's objection to the Trinitarian understanding was

on the Proposed Religious Amendment to the Constitution of the United States (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1889), 147.

27 Whidden, Moon, Reeve, *The Trinity*, 203.

28 General Conference, *1889 Year Book*, 150.

29 D. W. Hull, "Bible Doctrine of the Divinity of Christ," *RH*, November 10, 1859, 193–94.

based upon the idea that Jesus and the Father are one person, so that, if Jesus died on the cross it meant that God "could not have raised Jesus from the dead."[30] He believed the Son and the Father are distinct persons. Regarding the substance, he thought that the Son was an inferior "God" to the Father. Hull confirmed this view of subordination by referencing Matt. 28:18: "The very fact that he informs his disciples that all power had been given him, implies that hitherto (although he had great power) he had not possessed all power."[31] Altogether, Hull believed that Jesus did not fully share in the Godhead, but instead, only the Father was counted as fully divine in the Godhead.[32]

James White, toward the end of his life, developed a much more nuanced idea about the divinity of Christ. In 1876 he called Jesus Christ the "divine Son." He also stated: "Adventists hold the divinity of Christ so nearly with the trinitarian, that we apprehend no trial here."[33] He further explained (1877) that Jesus Christ before his incarnation was "in the form of God" and "equal with God. . . . The reason why it is not robbery for the Son to be equal with the Father is the fact that he is equal."[34] However, as far as equality is concerned, it seems that this would only have limited things since he stated that "The Son . . . was equal with the Father in creation, in the institution of law, and in the government of created intelligences."[35] His view about the divinity of Christ is that He was not fully equal with the Father. He thought that the idea of the trinity was "bad enough."[36] He maintained the subordination of the Son, that the word "eternal" only referred to the Father.[37] One scholar observes that James White "contended with the Trinitarians who gave Christ the Father's divinity."[38]

Uriah Smith, similar to James White, developed his understanding of the divinity of Christ. He referenced Phil 2:5-8 when he stated that Jesus Christ was "the only being save God" that was "equal with the Father, and sharing equally in the glory." He referred to him as "deity." However, the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, based upon John 1:14 and John 8:42, was "begotten." It

30 D. W. Hull, "Bible Doctrine of the Divinity of Christ," *RH*, November 17, 1859, 201.

31 Hull, *RH*, November 10, 1859, 195. Words in parentheses are original.

32 Hull, *RH*, November 17, 1859, 201; Hull, *RH*, November 10, 1859, 194.

33 J[ames] W[hite], "The Two Bodies," *RH*, October 12, 1876, 116.

34 J[ames] W[hite], "Christ Equal with God," *RH*, November 29, 1877, 172.

35 J[ames] W[hite], "The Son represents the Father," *RH*, July 15, 1880, 56.

36 W[hite], *RH*, November 29, 1877, 172.

37 J[ames] W[hite], "The Time of the End," *RH*, July 15, 1880, 56.

38 Varmer, "Analysis of the Seventh-day Adventist Pioneer," 16.

means that the beginning of the Son was "by some divine impulse or process, not creation, known only to Omniscience, and possible only to Omnipotence, the Son of God appeared." He affirmed the superiority of the Father over the Son by stating that "God alone is without beginning. At the earliest epoch when a beginning could be,—a period so remote that to finite minds it is essentially eternity,—appeared the Word." The subordination of Jesus Christ was not just in His existence, but also in terms of the power of creation. He stated: "the Father" was "the antecedent cause, the Son" was "the acting agent through whom all has been wrought." [39] Smith believed, like D. W. Hull, that in the creation Jesus Christ was an agent and source of power derived from the Father. He had no power of his own. Thus, he affirmed the full subordination of Jesus Christ to the Father.

D. M. Canright stridently battled against a kind of Trinitarian concept that God is not a person, but only a spirit.[40] Nevertheless, his concept of God was based upon the idea that only the Father was the true God and the Son was derived from him. He used John 1:1 to state that "Christ is plainly called God. Many argue from this that he is the very and eternal God, the Father. But this is not a necessary conclusion, especially since other scriptures plainly deny the idea." He also referenced Heb 1: 8, 9, in which the Father called the Son of God as God. He stated, "We see that the Father has given the name of God to his Son." Canright called Jesus Christ as God, but the name was derived from the Father, since "he was the first being that was ever born into the universe." He was "begotten of the Father's own substance" and therefore "the Son is subordinate to the Father." He argued that the Son was inferior to the Father, since "Christ disclaims all power or authority in and of himself and says that he gets it all from his Father; that the Son is entirely dependent upon the Father."[41] Canright wrote that it was not just in power and name that Jesus Christ owed His deity to the Father, but also "his existence and his life from the Father."[42] He concluded, "Christ, being the Son of God, has inherited the name, the nature, and the glory of

[39] Uriah Smith, *Looking unto Jesus: Christ in Type and Antitype* (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1898), 11, 13, 10, 13. Uriah Smith also mentioned that Jesus Christ was an agent in the creation in his 1899 publication entitled, *The Prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1944), 391.

[40] D. M. Canright, "The Personality of God," *RH*, August 29, 1878, 73–74; September 5, 1878, 81-82; September 12, 1878, 89–90; September 19, 1878, 97–98.

[41] D. M. Canright, "Jesus Christ the Son of God," *RH*, June 18, 1867, 2, 1, 2. Canright claimed that for Adventists the name "very and eternal God" only referred to the Father exclusively. See Canright, "Answer to 'Inquirer,'" *RH*, Nov 1, 1877, 144.

[42] Canright, *RH*, August 29, 1878, 73.

God his Father. Hence, he is by inheritance placed far above all other things."[43] In this concept, Jesus does not have power, but all things are derived from the Father and subordinate to Him. This full subordination is everlasting because of his being "entirely dependent upon the Father." Therefore, he called the Father the "true and living God. He is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent."[44] He was "greater than the Son, but Christ is truly his Son; hence a divine Being."[45] Canright avoided calling Jesus God in the same sense as the Father since he was fully subordinate to the Father. This prevented the Son from being a part of the Godhead.

J. H. Waggoner recognized the "pre-existent divinity" of Jesus Christ. This was based on John 1:1. "[T]he Word *was* God, and also the Word was *with* God." He distinguished between the person of the Son and the Father: "the word *as* God, was not *the God* whom he was *with*." He suggested that Jesus Christ was an inferior God to the Father. He stated, "there is but 'one God,' the term must be used in reference to the Word in a subordinate sense." The true God was the Father. The Son received the title, as Waggoner explained because "the title of God is applied to the Son, and *his* God anointed him. This is the highest title he can bear, and it is evidently used here in a sense subordinate to its application to his Father."[46] Waggoner believed that even though, technically, Jesus could be referred to as God, such a title was subordinate to the Father.

Altogether, a survey of the early pioneers on this thought indicates that many viewed the Son as an inferior God to the Father and thus to be effectively fully subordinate. They hesitated to use the term "God" about the Son as with the Father, even though they recognized that Christ was God. The Father was truly God, Jesus was a subordinate God. He was subordinate, both in terms of origin and power. The Son was an "agent" in the work of creation. They did not accept Jesus Christ as a part of the Godhead and thus regarded His position as fully subordinate to the Father. This refutation included Jesus as not part of the Godhead and significantly impacted their view of the Holy Spirit whom they assumed to be an "it,"[47] "medium,"[48]

43 Canright, *RH*, June 18, 1867, 2.

44 Canright, *RH*, August 29, 1878, 73.

45 Canright, *RH*, Nov 1, 1877, 144.

46 J. H. Waggoner, *The Atonement: An Examination of a Remedial System in the Light of Nature and Revelation* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1872), 87–88. Italics are in the original.

47 James White, *Life Incidents, in Connection with the Great Advent Movement, as Illustrated by the Three Angels of Revelation xiv* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1868), 290.

48 Smith, *Looking unto Jesus*, 10.

"mighty energy,"[49] or "power."[50] Thus, quite evidently for these thinkers, Jesus was not fully a part of the Godhead.

5. Jesus Christ as A Partially Subordinate God

Another idea maintained was that Jesus Christ was God in a sense that He had the same attributes as the Father. They deliberately described the Son as being God. However, their major concern with this idea was the pre-existence of the Son whom they saw as not co-eternal with the Father. Over time, at a distant point in the past Jesus Christ was derived from the Father.

Ellet J. Waggoner, in his earliest descriptions of the divinity of Christ (1884), described the Father as One who "gave His only begotten Son,—the one by whom all things were made, whom angels worship with the reference equal to that which they yield to God,—that man might have eternal life."[51] He recognized the Son as the creator and worthy of the same worship given to the Father. Waggoner wrote more extensively about the divinity of Christ (1890) in comments on Mark 10:17–18 that "Christ cannot deny Himself, ... He is and was absolutely good, the perfection of goodness. And since there is none good but God, and Christ is good, it follows that Christ is God." Waggoner frequently referred to Christ as God in his later writings. He noted in connection with John 10:30 that "truly was Christ God, even when here among men, that when asked to exhibit the Father He could say, Behold Me." The Son, according to Waggoner based on Col 2:9 "possesses by nature all the attributes of Divinity." He also has "the very substance and nature of God, and possesses by birth all the attributes of God." Thus "He has 'life in Himself;' He possesses immortality in His own right, and can confer immortality upon others." In this sense, his life was not dependent on the Father. For this reason, Waggoner said that the Son "having life in Himself," should be "properly called Jehovah, the self-existent One." This particular description, "self-existent," as a way to refer to the Son is notable

[49] Uriah Smith, *Synopsis of the Present Truth: A Brief Exposition of the Views of S. D. Adventists* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1884), 247.

[50] Regarding the personality of the Holy Spirit, Waggoner was not certain. He said that the "prevailing ideas of *person* are very diverse, often crude, and the word is differently understood." He defined the Holy Spirit that the "Spirit of God is that awful and mysterious power which proceeds from the throne of universe, and which is the efficient actor in the work of creation and of redemption." See J. H. Waggoner, *The Spirit of God: Its Offices and Manifestations, to the end of the Christian Age* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press, 1877), 8–9.

[51] E. J. Waggoner, "Eternal Life," *Sign of the Times*, August 28, 1884, 522.

because "He has by nature all the attributes of Deity." Waggoner is one of the earliest Seventh-day Adventists who wrote that Jesus Christ was in fact self-existent. Since he believed that the Son and the Father have the same nature, attributes, and substance meant that Jesus Christ was not just to be seen as a part of the Godhead but was also "filled with all the fullness of the Godhead." He regarded the term "begotten" to mean that "there was a time when Christ proceeded forth and came from God, from the bosom of the Father (John 8:42; 1:18), but that time was so far back in the days of eternity that to finite comprehension it is practically without beginning."[52] In reality, this meant that he believed in Jesus's derived existence, although his writings helped to set a new Christological direction in Adventist theology.

A. T. Jones, another leading protagonist at the 1888 General Conference Session, believed that Jesus Christ was God. He called the Son the "divine One" and explicitly mentioned Him as God. On the incarnation of the Son of God, Jones said that "he not only humbled himself as God" but also "He emptied himself as God, and became man."[53] With regard to the nature of the Son and his equality to the Father, Jones stated: "He was one of God, equal with God; and his nature is the nature of God." For Jones, since the Father abided in Jesus Christ, the Son was described as follows: "'All the fullness of the Godhead Bodily' is reflected in him."[54] For this reason, Jones believed that Jesus could partake of the Godhead. He formulated, in 1899, that "God is *one*. Jesus Christ is *one*. The Holy Spirit is *one*. And these *three* are *one*: there is no dissent nor division among them."[55] At first glance, this statement appears to support a fully Trinitarian viewpoint; however, he saw that there was a difference in the span of eternity between the Father and the Son. He wrote that the Son is "eternal,"[56] even though he believed there was a time when He proceeded out from the Father. This argument (based on Proverbs 8:30) stated: "He alone could reflect the Father in his fullness, because his goings forth have been from the days of eternity." With regard to the work of salvation for humanity, he wrote: "only he whose goings

52 E[llet] J[oseph] Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1972), 12, 14–16, 21–23.

53 A. T. Jones, "The Third Angels's Message—no. 17," *General Conference Bulletin*, February 25, 1895, 330, 332. This sermon used the quotations of Ellen G. White freely that were taken from *Review and Herald*, July 5, 1887.

54 A. T. Jones, "The Third Angels's Message—no. 20," *General Conference Bulletin*, February 27, 1895, 378.

55 [A. T. Jones], [editorial], *RH*, January 10, 1899, 24. Italics are in the original document.

56 Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, February 25, 1895, 332.

forth have been from the days of eternity could do it."[57] The term "goings forth" expressed a moving out from the Father and it happened in "the days of eternity." Jones stated that "God is one" and therefore the three persons in the Godhead were an advanced step to the full acceptance of the Trinity, even though his understanding of Jesus's eternity was closer to that of Waggoner.[58] Waggoner and Jones avoided the word "Trinity" since the term was an effort to explain God who was beyond human comprehension.[59] However, both believed in the existence of three divine persons in the Godhead.[60]

57 Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, February 27, 1895, 378.

58 Jones wrote that the sacrifice of Jesus for the salvation of sinners is for "all eternity." Nevertheless, his understanding of the expression "all eternity" was not meant in its full sense. He stated, "for how long a time was it? Thats the question. And the answer is that it was for all eternity. The Father gave up his Son to us, and Christ gave up himself to us, for all eternity. Never again will he be in all respects as he was before." Thus, for Jones the words "all eternity" are not full in past time but fully for the present and future. See Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, February 27, 1895, 382.

59 Waggoner reasoned why he rejected the term Trinity, because there was no such word in the Bible. He said, "In teaching and preaching the Gospel we always confine ourselves strictly to Scripture terms and language…. It is attest not to presume to define what the Bible has not defined, nor to attempt to explain infinity." See [E. J. Waggoner], "Do You Believe?" *The Present Truth*, July 30, 1903, 483. Jones also avoided defining God in a formula or term because "no man's conception of God can ever be fixed as the true conception of God. God will still be infinitely beyond the broadest comprehension that the mind of man can measure." See A. T. Jones, "How the Catholic Creed Was Made," *The Bible Echo*, September 13, 1897, 292. They believed that the term "Trinity" could not define God properly.

60 Waggoner at least two times mentioned his recognition of the three persons in a Godhead. He wrote, "We believe in God; we believe in Jesus Christ as the Word is God, and who was made flesh; and we believe in the Holy Spirit as the Divine revealer of both the Father and the Son,-a Being so wonderfully sacred as not to admit of description even by Inspiration."E. J. Waggoner, "The Papacy and the Schools," *The Present Truth* [*PT*], February 15, 1894, 102. In 1902, as he stated to avoid the term Trinity, he accepted the three persons in a Godhead. He said, "As to the Being of God,-the Godhead,-Divinity as revealed in the Father, the Word (the Son), and the Holy Spirit, we believe and teach just what the Bible says, and nothing else." See E. J. Waggoner, "The Editor's Private Corner," *PT*, February 6, 1902, 83. Woodrow W. Whidden observes that "by 1892 Waggoner's views on the Trinity and the full deity of Christ were quite well formed." He also says that "when it came to the doctrine of the Trinity, he came close to full truth, but still remained a son of the semi Arian Seventh-day Adventist pioneers."Woodrow W. Whidden, *E. J. Waggoner: From the Physician of Good News to Agent of Division* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2008), 263, 265. Thus, his trinitarian idea was not in the fullest sense because his begotten idea indicated that Jesus was not co-eternal with the Father. A. T. Jones' statement, as previously mentioned above, in 1899, recognizes the three persons in a Godhead. This statement, according

W. W. Prescott, another influential leader and scholar, expressed the idea that Jesus Christ was God.[61] He stated that "He has life originally in Himself; His essence is life."[62] At the 1919 Bible Conference, he combined the eternity of Jesus Christ and his derivation from the Father.[63] He believed that Jesus Christ was not just eternal, but co-eternal with the Father. He said "I think the expression 'I am' is the equivalent of eternity. I think these expressions, while they do not use the term co-eternal, are equivalent in their meaning." However, in an inferior sense, Prescott thought about the relationship of the Son to the Father. The "Son is subordinate to the Father, but that subordination is not in the question of attributes or of His existence. It is simply in the fact of the derived existence." He plainly said, "the Son is co-eternal with the Father." Nevertheless, he stated that Jesus Christ was "One with the Father, one in authority, in power, in love, in mercy, and all the attributes -- equal with him and yet second in nature."[64] With these statements, Prescott did not mean that the "co-eternal" was co-equal, thus his idea of "co-eternal" still implied inferiority. He avoided the term "inferior," but instead, "second in nature" meant "second in rank."[65] The concept that Christ was born in eternity past was conceived by Prescott as early as 1896

to Merlin Burt is a "nearly Trinitarian statement." Merlin D. Burt, "History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 17.1 (Spring 2006): 129. And George R. Knight comments this 1899 statement as "Jones certainly approached making a Trinitarian statement." See George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 115. It seems that Jones and Waggoner share a similar idea that Jesus is not co-eternal with the Father even though they believe in a Godhead there are three divine persons.

61 W. W. Prescott, "Gospel by John Chapter 1 to 6:14," *International Sabbath School Quarterly*, third quarter (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1896), 6.

62 W. W. Prescott, "Gospel by John Chapter 10:1 to 14:31," *International Sabbath School Quarterly*, first quarter (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1896), 16.

63 A more specific treatment of the Trinity issue in the 1919 Bible Conference could be read in the works of Burt, "History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity," 132; and Michael W. Campbell, *1919: The Untold Story of Adventism's Struggle with Fundamentalism* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2019), 73–78.

64 "Report of Bible Conference, Held in Takoma Park, D.C., July 1–19, 1919 (RBC)," (July 2, 1919), 20, 27.

65 "RBC, July 1–19, 1919, 30. Valentine noticed that H. C. Lacey supported Prescott's idea that Jesus Christ was "second in rank" in the Godhead. Valentine, *W. W. Prescott*, 278. Lacey also believed in the Trinity. Even though he believed the Holy Spirit was a person but He did not have "any definite 'form' whatever, as of course we do image the Son and the Father to have." See H. C. Lacey to W. C. White, July 27, 1936; cf. W. C. White to H. C. Lacey, July 30, 1936.

when he wrote that "Christ was twice born,—once in eternity, the only begotten of the Father, and again here in the flesh, thus uniting the divine with the human in that second birth."[66] He still retained a partial subordination of Christ in 1920 when he stated "the Son existing with the Father from eternity, and possessing to the full the Father's infinite powers, but these received from the Father, existing because the Father wills him so to exist, eternal and infinite and derived." He emphasized the derivation of Jesus, as he wrote that "as the Father possesses these divine attributes from himself alone, whereas the Son possesses them as derived from the Father, in this real sense and in this sense only, the Father is greater than the Son."[67] Altogether, the efforts by Prescott, to combine the eternal Son as being a part of his derivation from the Father, were indicating Jesus was not co-existent with the Father. Still, he made a significant contribution by suggesting that Christ was eternal, even though this did not mean for all eternity in the fullest sense.

O. A. Johnson, an educator like Prescott, believed that Jesus Christ had all the nature of God, to the point that He was worthy to be called God. He wrote that "since Christ is begotten of the Father, he must therefore be of the same substance as the Father; hence he must have the same divine attributes that God has, and therefore he is God." He continued by saying that the Son deserves to have the title, that is, since "the Father calls his Son 'God,' and therefore he must be God." However, the word "begotten" as the Son of God, made the Father the "greatest" among the Godhead and "greater than" the Son.[68] He did not just confirm the divinity of Christ, but also the Godhead or the Trinity. He stated, "there are three persons in the Godhead; viz., the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." He believed that the Holy Spirit is a person and the "third name in the trinity" since he "proceeds from the Father."[69] Johnson contributed to the development of Adventist beliefs when he explicitly stated that the Holy Spirit was a person and belonged to the "Godhead" or the "Trinity." However, he retained an

66 W. W. Prescott, "The Christ for Today," *RH*, April 14, 1896, 232.

67 W. W. Prescott, *Doctrine of Christ: A Series of Bible Studies for Use in Colleges and Seminaries* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1920), 20.

68 O. A. Johnson, *Bible Doctrines: Containing 150 lessons on Creation, Government of God, Rebellion in Heaven, Fall of Man, Redemption, Prophecies, Millennium, End of Sinners, and Satan, Paradise restored, etc., etc.* (Collage Place, WA: n. p., 1911), 26–27.

69 O. A. Johnson, *Bible Doctrines: Containing 150 lessons on Creation, Government of God, Rebellion in Heaven, Fall of Man, Redemption, Prophecies, Millennium, End of Sinners, and Satan, Paradise restored, etc., etc.* 4th rev. ed. (Collage Place, WA: n. p., 1917), 34, 37.

understanding of the subordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit, where both came out of the Father in an ontological sense.

The 1931 statement of faith was not an official statement of beliefs since it was not voted in the General Conference session.[70] This statement of faith appeared for many years in the *Year Book* and the *Church Manual*. The statement on the Godhead simply stated, "that the Godhead, or Trinity, consists of the Eternal Father, a personal, spiritual Being, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom and love; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Eternal Father, . . . the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead." This explicitly expressed that only the Father is "Eternal" and that Jesus Christ is merely the "Son of the Eternal Father." The subsequent statement follows with the same phrase that referred only to the Father as eternal. It indicated "that Jesus Christ is very God, being of the same nature and essence as the Eternal Father."[71] It designated the words "very God" when it emphasized that the Son of God was of "the same nature and essence" with the Father, but it still did not answer the question about the eternity of the Son. Thus, the telling expression "left room for interpretation."[72] However, this statement of fundamental beliefs expressed the acceptance of the Holy Spirit as a person, including His part in the Trinity. It left "room" regarding the meaning of the full eternity of the Son, which was then effectively left for later statements of faith to explore in much greater depth.

The 1936 Sabbath School quarterly reflected some of this discussion about the Son's eternity and the Godhead.[73] T. M. French wrote that "we

[70] Gilbert Valentine, "The Stop-Start Journey on the Road to A Church Manual," *Ministry*, June, 1999, 22. Even though it was not voted on the General Conference Session, the 1931 statement of faith was indicated in the 1931 yearbook. H. E. Rogers, *1931 Yearbook of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1931), 377–80. It had a dynamic background of the Trinity issue in 1919 and 1920. For further reading of this issue see Michael W. Campbell, *1922: The Rise of Adventist Fundamentalism* (Nampa, ID: Review and Herald, 2022), 45–54.

[71] *1931 Year Book of the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination*, prepared by H. E. Rogers (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1931), 377.

[72] Burt, "Demise of Semi-Arianism and Anti-Trinitarianism," 37.

[73] T. M. French explicitly stated his belief in the Trinity since 1934 "that the three Persons of the Godhead the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—were actively present at the creation of this earth, and that they created man in their image." He also noted that the "Hebrew word for God (Elohim) is in the plural … allowing of three in the Godhead, while the singular form of the verb used with God conveys the idea of the unity of the Godhead." See T. M. F[rench], "They Replenished from the East," *RH*, August 9, 1934, 4. In 1937, he confirmed his conviction on the Trinity. He wrote that Jesus Christ, the Son of God "is the second person of the heavenly trinity." See T. M.

learn that the name God is used of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit—a kind of heavenly family name. These three constitute the Godhead."[74] The recognition of three persons in the Godhead was followed up with another explanation that Jesus Christ, as the "begotten" Son, was existing "in the days of eternity, and was very God Himself." Does this mean that Christ belonged, in the full sense of the term, to have existed within the full span of eternity? The author explained that "we cannot comprehend eternity—without beginning and without ending—yet it is clearly affirmed here that the life which Christ possesses is 'from the days of eternity.'" Nevertheless, when French invoked the title "God" for Jesus Christ he attempted to clarify its meaning: "A son is the natural heir, and when God made Christ His heir, He recognized His sonship. This is why the Son bore the same name as His Father." He argued that the title "God" was chosen because the Son inherited it from the Father (Heb. 1:4).[75] The "inherited" idea implies the derivation sense. Thus while the words "very God" in the 1931 Fundamental beliefs referred to a Son might be understood as "equally self-existent and eternal" Son to the Father,[76] French understood this in a different way. He believed that the words "eternal" or "eternity" (that is, of the Father) could not be used in the same sense as when they referred to Jesus Christ. He thought that there was a derivation of Christ in His pre-existence from the Father. That was why he said, "Christ was indeed the very Son of God in every aspect."[77]

After the 1931 fundamental beliefs were circulated, some Seventh-day Adventists struggled to define the term "eternal" in relation to Jesus Christ. This is especially obvious in reviewing the statements between 1932 and 1942 in the *Church Manual*.[78] The earliest edition of the *Church Manual* (1932) consisted of a formulation of beliefs with the purpose of providing a means for the "examination of candidates for baptism and church membership." The list contained twenty-one inquiries for the baptismal candidates. The

F[rench], "The Sonship and Deity of Christ," *RH*, May 20, 1937, 3.

74 T. M. French is the brother of W. R. French, who was an anti-trinitarian. "The Journey's End," *RH*, October 30, 1941, 27. See also Burt, "History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity," 137.

75 [T. M. French], "Bible Doctrines: Number One," *Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly*, October 17–24, 1936, 10, 12–13.

76 Burt, "History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity," 136.

77 F[rench], "The Sonship and Deity of Christ," 3.

78 In both Church Manuals the 1931 fundamental beliefs were included. These statements of faith were inclusive for many years in the *Church Manual*.

first question was about the Father as "God" and a person. Then, it continued with the second about "the Lord Jesus as the eternal Son of God, and as the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind."[79] Together these statements implied that only the Father was the true God, and the Son derived his divinity from him. However, a "summary of fundamental beliefs" in the 1942 *Church Manual* mentions a similar idea. It described the Father as "the true and living God, the first person of the Godhead" and regarded the Son "Jesus Christ" to be "the second person of the Godhead, and the eternal Son of God."[80] A more progressive understanding of the Son appears in the 1932 and 1942 *Church Manual* in which Jesus Christ is described as "eternal." However, they do not define whether this means He existed from all eternity or some point in eternity past. 1942 *Church Manual* does specify that the Father is the "true and living God" which implies that Son's life is derived from Him. This expression, as used by some Adventists earlier, indicates that only the Father possessed original life.[81] The Son simply derived his existence from Him.

A major problem within this group was the question of how to accept the fact that Jesus Christ and the Father were co-eternal and co-existent. The word "begotten" Son of the Father was a stumbling block for those who held onto the idea that the Father and Son were equal from all eternity. This group still maintained the idea of the derivation of Christ from the Father even though they believed in three persons in a Godhead. However, this group generally accepted the personality of the Holy Spirit,[82] and that He came out from the Father in a derived pre-existence sense.[83] Since they accepted Christ's divine personality, they also accepted the Holy Spirit as the

79 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Church Manual* (Washington, DC: The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1932), 75.

80 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Church Manual* (Washington, DC: The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1942), 81.

81 For example, Canright, *RH*, August 29, 1878, 73; R. F. Cottrell, "Sealing of the Servants of God," *RH*, April 29, 1875, 137; John G. Matteson, "Tylstrup, Denmark," *RH*, March 28, 1878, 100; J. P. Henderson, "Worship God," *RH*, June 19, 1883, 387.

82 Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, 23, 67, 80, 84; E. J. Waggoner, "The Everlasting Gospel: God's Saving Power in the Things That Are Made," *PT*, July 21, 1898, 452. See also Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, February 25, 1895, 329; Jones, *General Conference Bulletin*, February 27, 1895, 379; [French], *Sabbath School Lesson*, 10; [T. M. French], "Heart to heart Talks with Our Readers," *RH*, October 15, 1936, 2. General Conference, *Church Manual* [1932], 76; General Conference, *Church Manual* [1942], 81.

83 Johnson, *Bible Doctrines* [1911], 28; Johnson, *Bible Doctrines* [1917], 37; [French], *Sabbath School Lesson*, 11.

third person within the Godhead. This idea led to the acceptance of the Godhead or the Trinity (even though within this group the level of acceptance may have differed from one theologian to another, such as Waggoner and Jones who believed in three persons in a Godhead while rejected the term Trinity and French together with Prescott who believed in the term Trinity), but the Son and the Holy Spirit were subordinate to the Father within this framework of derivation.

6. Jesus Christ Fully God

Another group within Adventism has contended that Jesus Christ had the same divine substance and nature and that He was underived and co-eternal with the Father. Jesus Christ was truly eternal in the fullest sense. He was self-existent. The Father was not "older" than him. There was no time in eternity past when the Father existed ahead of the Son.

Even though Ellen G. White statements before the 1890s did not precisely indicate what position she had,[84] from the 1890s onward she played a confirming and clarifying role in referring the Seventh-day Adventist Church to study the Bible and to see the more biblical idea of Christ's full divinity.[85] Denis Fortin notes that "White's influence was beneficial in helping the denomination at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to adopt an orthodox view of the divinity of Christ and personhood

[84] George R. Knight observes that Ellen White's statements before the 1890s did not indicate whether they were against the Trinity concept or for it. "Her early statements were vague enough to be interpreted either way" (Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 115).

[85] Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 115. See Burt, "History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity," 129. M. L. Andreasen was astonished to see the explicit statement of Ellen White on the full divinity of Christ that was "very revolutionary" at his time. M. L. Andreasen, "The Spirit of Prophecy," A Chapel talk at Loma Linda, California, November 30, 1948, 3–4, Center of Adventist Research. One argues that, according to H. C. Lacey, Prescott influenced the idea of Ellen White on Christ's full divinity. Gilbert Valentine, "Learning and Unlearning: A Context for Important Developments in the Seventh-day Adventists Understanding of the Trinity, 1888–1898," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 55.2 (2017): 227–28. Even though there might be an influence to a certain degree, however, the idea of Prescott, even after the death of Ellen White, still indicated the derivation of Jesus's divinity to the Father as shown in the fifth section of this article. Burt observes that Prescott, in the 1919 Bible Conference, still retained an idea that Christ "derived his existence from the Father" (Burt, "History of Seventh-day Adventist Views on the Trinity," 132), something that Ellen White did not endorse. Thus, the idea of Prescott's influence on Ellen White's full divinity of Christ is hard to maintain.

of the Holy Spirit."[86] George R. Knight correctly says that Ellen White did not write significant writings on "the Trinity, full equality of Christ with the Father, and the personhood of the Holy Spirit. Her writings merely assumed them to be truths. In time Adventists investigated those assumptions. During the first four decades of the twentieth century they went to the Bible to study topics related to the Godhead."[87]

Ellen White had a Methodist background which believed that the persons of the Godhead had no "body or parts."[88] However, as early as 1850 she claimed that "I have often seen the lovely Jesus, that He is a *person*. I asked Him if His Father was a person and had a form like Himself. Said Jesus, 'I am in the express *image* of My Father's *person*.'"[89] She accepted that God did not have an impersonal form, but rather, she viewed Jesus Christ as a divine being. She stated, in 1869, that "this Saviour was the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person. He possessed divine majesty, perfection, and excellence. He was equal with God."[90] She repeated this idea in 1872 that He was a "divine Son of God" and that He "was in the form of God, and he thought it not robbery to be equal with God."[91] While many contemporary Adventist writers hesitated to use the word "eternal" in describing the Son, during the 1870s, she penned that Jesus Christ was indeed "the eternal Son of God."[92] Several years later, she stated that Jesus Christ was "the eternal word" and therefore "God became man."[93] With regard to the oneness of the Son with the Father, she claimed that He is "one with the eternal Father,—one in nature, in character, and in purpose."[94] The substance of the Son was indeed "one" with the Father. She stated, "the words of Christ were full of deep meaning as he put forth the claim that he and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same

86 Denis Fortin, "Ellen G. White's Influence in the Development of Adventist Beliefs and Practices," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Seventh-day Adventism*, eds. Michael W. Campbell at al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024), 101.

87 Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 115.

88 Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977), 3:807.

89 Ellen G. White, *Early Writings* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1906), 77. Italics are in the original document.

90 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 2:200.

91 Ellen G. White, "The First Advent of Christ," *RH*, December 17, 1872, 2.

92 Ellen G. White, "An Appeal to the Ministers," *RH*, August 8, 1878, 1.

93 Ellen G. White, "Christ Man's Example," *RH*, July 5, 1887, 1.

94 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan During the Christian Dispensation* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1888), 493.

attributes."[95] After the 1888 General Conference Session, she emphasized that Jesus Christ was eternal, self-existent, and equal to the Father in the fullest sense. She noted that "the Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both." She said Jesus Christ was "Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One."[96] She reiterated this idea in 1897 that the Son was "infinite and omnipotent. . . . He is the eternal, self-existent Son."[97] Up to 1897, Ellen G. White shared with her contemporaries who believed in the deity of Christ such as His self-existent, eternity, and that He took part in the Godhead. Indeed, by 1898 she went further to clarify the meaning of the "eternity" between the Son and the Father. She expanded the idea as to how the Son of God "announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, 'whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.'" She was emphatic that "in Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived."[98] Even the term "eternity" used to describe the Son was defined as "speaking of His pre-existence, Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God."[99] She reinforced the pre-existence of the Son as "He was with God from all eternity."[100] His "glory which He had with the Father from all eternity."[101] The statement about "the days of eternity" was the stumbling block for many Adventist leaders at that time who refused to believe that the Son was co-eternal with the Father. However, she stated, "from the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father."[102] Altogether White contributed by guiding and directing to the biblical idea of accepting that "all eternity" applied to Jesus and His relationship with the Father.

Le Roy E. Froom expounded upon this concept of the Trinity within the Godhead. He stated in 1931 that "our God is one God (Deut. 6:4); but there

95 Ellen G. White, "The True Sheep Respond to the Voice of the Shepherd," *Sign of the Times* November 27, 1893, 54.

96 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets, The Story of*, or *The Great Conflict Between Good and Evil as Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1890), 36, 305.

97 Ellen G. White, "The True High Priest," September 26, 1897, Manuscript 101, 1897.

98 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages: The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Life of Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 470, 530.

99 Ellen G. White, "Resistance to Light no. 3," *Signs of the Times*, August 29, 1900, 3.

100 Ellen G. White, "The Word Made Flesh," *RH*, April 5, 1906, 8.

101 Ellen White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain view, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 39.

102 White, *Desire of Ages*, 19.

are three persons in the one Godhead." He explained the Trinity is like "a triangle . . . . it has three sides. So the Godhead, being one, is manifested as Father, Son and Holy Spirit." So that the attributes of God, according to Froom, such as "omnipotence (Luke 1:35), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7–10), and eternal life (Heb. 9:14)" referred to the Holy Spirit as well as to the Father and the Son.[103] Froom clarified the persons within the Godhead or Trinity because each possessed the same level in nature, eternity, and attributes. Later in 1971, Froom defined that the term "begotten Son of God" was "the concept that Christ was 'begotten,' or 'born,' of the Father at some time back in eternity is altogether alien to Scripture." He explained that "the term or title 'Son of God' denotes a special relation between God and Jesus Christ. But the idea of filiation is excluded." Even the pre-existence of "Christ is and always has been, very God of very God, one with the Father, of the same substance or essence, the eternal Second Person of the eternal Godhead – God in the highest and fullest sense, 'all the fullness of the Godhead.'" Finally, he concluded that "Christ was and is eternally divine – consubstantial and coeternal with the Father, and therefore self-existent and coexistent."[104] Froom understood the term "very God" as used in the 1931 Fundamental Belief as indicating that the Son was co-eternal and co-existent with the Father.

Another prominent scholar, after the death of Ellen White, was Milian L. Andreasen. He believed that the divinity of Christ indicated that He was co-eternal with the Father. He commented on Jesus Christ in Heb. 1:3 that the Word "being" in this verse "is an expression of eternal, timeless existence and has the same sense as 'was' in John 1:1." He continued the Son "did not come into existence in the beginning. In the beginning He *was*. He did not *become* the brightness of the Father's glory. He always was. This constitutes the essential and eternal ground of His personality." Andreasen connected the nature of the Father and the Son: "The Father, so is the Son—one in substance, one in character, one in mind and purpose."[105] He wrote in 1948 about the Son in Heb. 1:2 stating that "the Son of God, Christ is Himself God." In relation to Jesus Christ toward the Trinity, he wrote that "Christ is Creator indicates a division of activity among the members of the God-

[103] LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Coming of the Comforter* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1931), 49–50.

[104] Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 311–12.

[105] M. L. Andreasen, "Christ, the Express Image of God," *RH*, October 17, 1946, 8-9. Italics are in the original document.

head." With regard to Jesus Christ's pre-existence, he believed "in His pre-incarnate state" that "Christ was equal with God. He was with God and was God." Thus, he affirmed the eternity of Jesus Christ[106] that "Christ is the eternal Son of God."[107] Since he believed in the "timeless existence" of the Son, He was always together with the Father. Froom and Andreasen represent a significant shift in accepting the full and complete eternal existence of Jesus Christ.

Even what is arguably the most controversial book in Adventist history, *Questions on Doctrine*, a book that Andreasen was strongly against, advocated the full and complete divinity of Jesus Christ. It appears that the full and complete divinity of Christ was largely accepted by the 1950s, even if there were occasional pockets of resistance. This work stated, it is to "set forth our basic beliefs in terminology currently used in theological circles." The publication was faithful to "the framework of the official statement of Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists which appears in our *Church Manual*," including the 1931 Fundamental Beliefs, which was quoted in their entirety. The author described the Trinity as the "Father, Son and Holy Spirit—who are united not only in the Godhead but in the provisions of redemption." With regard to the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, it simply stated, "that Christ is one with the Eternal Father—one in nature, equal in power and authority, God in the highest sense, eternal and self-existent, with life original, unborrowed, underived." Even the term "eternity," used with regard to the Son and His nature, the writers explained, "that Christ existed from all eternity, distinct from, but united with, the Father, possessing the same glory, and all the divine attributes."[108] Thus this work represents the first publication from the General Conference which explained the position of the church about the full divinity of Jesus Christ and the Trinity.

[106] There is an article of Samuel T. Spears that M. L. Andreasen took as additional notes in his chapter "The Humanity of Jesus." This document discusses the doctrine of the Trinity with the subordination sense of the Son to the Father. Samuel T. Spears, "The Bible Doctrine of the Trinity," in M. L. Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 115-24. However, in this book, I cannot find Andreasen's thoughts about the subordination of the Son to the Father as Spear suggested.

[107] M. L. Andreasen, *The Book of Hebrews* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948), 46–47, 63, 65.

[108] Representative Group of Seventh-day Adventist leaders, Bible Teachers, and Editors, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 8, 11–18, 36.

Another notable book, which was prepared by the General Conference department of education in 1959, written by T. H. Jemison, also confirmed the co-eternal status of the Son with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jemison described the Godhead as "referring to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit in their unity." The term Godhead or Trinity "is used as the equivalent of 'the Deity' in the sense of including the quality, condition, and dignity of being God." Regarding the Son, he understood that "He is God in the full and unqualified meaning of that expression. He is God in nature, in power, in authority." He also mentioned the attributes of Jesus Christ, who "in addition to being eternal, He is said to possess the characteristics we call omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and immutability." The pre-existence of the Son, he believed, indicated that He was co-eternal with the Father.[109]

Among the leading theologians of the Seventh-day Adventist Church during the 1970s and 1980s was Raoul Dederen. He expounded the concept of the Trinity as the equality of the persons in Godhead. In 1970 he stated that the Godhead consists of "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" and "that there is but one God." Why are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit each described as persons? Dederen argued as follows: "because they are described as doing that which only intelligent agents or persons can do." He continued that "the three divine persons" are "at the same time distinct and yet one." He not only described Jesus Christ as "God," but "fully God." He discussed the same attributes and nature of the persons within the Godhead, but each had a unique purpose for labor. He stated that "the triune God has really only one work to accomplish, just as he himself is one true God. That is his eternally all-embracing, life-creating and life-saving work. In this one work all three persons are actively engaged, drawing us away from sin, the devil and destruction." He believed that the Father and the Son are co-eternal, and that this oneness included the Holy Spirit. As for what might appear to be a manifestation of subordination within the Godhead, he explained:

> The willing subordination of the Son to the Father-and of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son-relates not to their essential life with the Trinity. Nor is it in any way inconsistent with true equality. It is a demonstration of the unity of purpose existing among the members of the Deity. Here the activities of one are seen to be but the carrying out of the united will.[110]

[109] T. H. Jemison, *Christian Beliefs* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1959), 71, 84–86.

[110] Raoul Dederen, "Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity," *AUSS* 8.1 (January 1970),

In this way subordination was not based upon the nature or connected with the "essential life," but it was rather described as "the unity of purpose" and "the united will" to accomplish their work. Dederen confirmed the "true equality" of the persons in the Trinity. It was this sharing of activity that he called the "divine economy."[111] In this way, he believed in the full deity of Jesus Christ.[112]

The 27 Fundamental Beliefs of Seventh-day Adventist, first voted in 1980 and later expanded in 2005 (as *28 Fundamental Beliefs*) and revised in 2015, provided a much clearer statement about Adventist beliefs than the semi-official 1931 statement that was gradually developed, voted, and adopted afterward.[113] The changes needed in this new statement demonstrated how the topic was "increasingly debated within Adventism." In principle "none of the [original] 27 beliefs were new," however, the earlier 1931 statement contained "glaring omissions." The new statement of beliefs included specific fundamental beliefs about the divinity of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity.[114] The 1980 *Fundamental Beliefs* explicitly stated that "there is one

4, 15–18, 20.

111 Dederen, "Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity," 19.

112 Matthew L. Tinkham Jr. identifies the hierarchical concept of the Trinity in Raoul Dederen's article. Based upon few findings of Dederen's statements such as "we may conclude with some that the Father has metaphysical priority, or with others that he has a primacy of order" and "Christ, here, is set in the order of Deity" (Dederen, "Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity," 18) Tinkham observes that "one could argue that he [Dederen] made a more unqualified argument" on the deity of Christ. See Matthew L. Tinkham Jr., "Neo-Subordinationism: The Alien Argumentation in the Gender Debate," *AUSS* 55.2 (2017): 250n42. However, these apparent subordination statements of the Son, Dederen argues "relates not to their essential life with the Trinity. Nor is it in any way inconsistent with true equality. It is a demonstration of the unity of purpose existing among the members of the Deity. Here the activities of one are seen to be but the carrying out of the united will" (Dederen, "Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity," 18). He also states that "the NT writers have not worked out the problem with subtle refinement, but they all agree that the Father has priority and that both Father and Son are God. And they consider such a statement consistent" (Dederen, "Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity," 18–19). Whatever he meant by these statements, it seems, Dederen understands the apparent hierarchical concept of Trinity relates to the "willing subordination" among the Godhead to accomplish "unity of purpose" and "united will" without any relation with "their essential life" (Dederen, "Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity," 18).

113 The first vote happened in 1946 when the General Conference Session voted the 1931 Fundamental Beliefs which appeared in the *Church Manual*. "Proceedings of the General Conference," *RH*, June 14, 1946, 197.

114 Word in bracket is added. Lawrence T. Geray, "A New Statement of Fundamental

God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of the three co-eternal persons." The statement indicated that there is only one God who is "co-eternal." The persons of the Trinity were each three distinct persons. Each existed from eternity past, including not only the Son but also the Holy Spirit. "God the eternal Father is the creator, source, sustainer, and sovereign of all creation." Regarding Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, it stated that "God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ" and "God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption."[115] Thus, the 1980 Fundamental Beliefs statement provided much greater clarity after decades of debate about the pre-existence of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, especially on this matter of what the term "eternity" meant.

The 28 fundamental beliefs of this denomination retain the "co-eternal" divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit with the Father in its statement of faith in 2005[116] and 2015.[117] Indeed, in the 2015 edition, the addition "God, who is love" was added to emphasize that the co-eternal trinity has equal quality of love.[118] In this latest statement of beliefs, the church added a statement on the Holy Spirit that "He is as much a person as are the Father and the Son."[119] By inserting this new sentence, eliminating the idea that the Holy Spirit has a nuanced personality from the Father and the Son.[120]

What was up until then a rather ambiguous and debated topic about the Son's "eternity" was clearly explained in the Seventh-day Adventist beliefs from 1980 to 2015. Ellen G. White earlier contributed in referring back to the biblical idea that Jesus was with the Father in "all eternity" in Seventh-day Adventist theology. Her writings played a pivotal role in guiding the church to understand the Bible regarding the full divinity of Christ.[121] She believed

Beliefs," *Spectrum*, 11.1 (1980): 3, 2, 3. Comparing the two Fundamental Beliefs one said that the 1980 one was "similar but more comprehensive." General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventist Believe: Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1988), iv.

115 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1981), 5.

116 *Seventh-day Adventist Church Yearbook 2006* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2006), 5.

117 *Seventh-day Adventist Church Yearbook 2016* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2016), 6.

118 *Yearbook 2016*, 6.

119 *Yearbook 2016*, 6.

120 See footnotes 65.

121 Ellen G. White, since 1898, clarified the meaning of "eternity" as eternity in the past, present, and future for the Son that seemed revolutionary for most Adventists at that

that the Son was co-eternal, in all complete eternity, with the Father. Even though she does not mention the term "co-eternal," however, her expressions such as "dateless ages," "all eternity," "original," "unborrowed," "underived," and "days of eternity" help the Adventist theologians to understand the biblical term "eternal" as it applies to the Son. This recognition led to the acceptance of the Holy Spirit as a person, co-eternal, and of the same substance as the Father in the fullest sense. This paved the way for later theologians and statements that indicated the full acceptance of the Holy Spirit within the Godhead.[122]

7. Summary and Conclusion

A survey of each idea shows the importance of the concept of Jesus Christ to the acceptance of the Trinity or Godhead among the Seventh-day Adventists. The first group who believed that Jesus Christ was a created being, even though He was divine but had a different substance to the Father, could not see Jesus Christ as being equal with the Father and He did not fit into the Godhead. Their teaching described the Holy Spirit as only power or energy.

The second group accepted Jesus Christ as not created but "begotten" and still saw Him as an inferior divine person in relation to the Father. They understood the Son to possess a lower substance than that of the Father. They believed Jesus Christ did not fit into the Godhead, where there was only a place for the Father. This view was in line with their teaching on the Holy Spirit, that they still accepted Him as a medium and not a person.

The third group modified the idea that Jesus Christ was a fully subordinate God. They assumed that the Father was superior to the Son. The adherents of this group freely called the Son, Lord, rather than God, even though they recognized Jesus as God but He was fully subordinate to the Father. Jesus Christ was subordinate, not just in the idea of His pre-existence—He was not just self-existent, but also His divinity was diminished in the concept of His alleged power to give life. He was viewed as fully dependent on

time. Thus, she enriched this denomination's understanding of the full divinity of Jesus Christ. See Andreasen, "The Spirit of Prophecy," 3–4. Campbell asserts, "If there was any doubt that Adventism was moving away from Arian positions, Ellen White made her position crystal clear when she wrote *The Desire of Ages* (1898)" (Campbell, *1919*, 77).

122 Cf. White, *Evangelism*, 615-17; Froom, *Coming of the Comforter*, 49; Andreasen, *Book of Hebrews*, 115-124; General Conference, *Questions on Doctrine*, 36; Jemison, *Christian Beliefs*, 90-94; Dederen, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 7-9; General Conference, *Yearbook* [1981], 5; *Yearbook* 2006, 5; *Yearbook* 2016, 6.

the Father, even from His pre-incarnation. This understanding made Jesus Christ to be effectively excluded from the Godhead. This concept was related to the precept of the Holy Spirit that He was seen as an impersonal power of God.

The fourth group had a developing concept of the divinity of Christ. The supporters of this idea believed that Jesus Christ was God. He had the same substance as the Father and had life and power in Himself. The only subordination was in His pre-existence. They believed that Jesus Christ was "eternal" and even "co-eternal" with the Father but not co-equal and co-existent in a sense of all eternity as the Father did. However, as they came to see Jesus Christ as being God and that He had the same substance as that of the Father, they were led to accept Jesus Christ as part of the Godhead, as well as the Father and the Son being closely associated with the Holy Spirit. This group accepted the Holy Spirit as a person and He was understood to be a divine being, even though He was subordinate to the Father in the word of "eternity" as well as the Son.

The fifth group acknowledged Jesus Christ as fully God, co-eternal, co-equal, and co-existent and possessing the same substance and nature as the Father. There was no time when the Son was not with the Father. This final position recognizes the Son as being on the same level as the Father. This equality also extends to the Holy Spirit. These three persons were equal and none were subordinate in nature.

This study demonstrates that the development of the divinity of Christ's understanding among Adventist theologians was parallel to the acceptance of the personality of the Holy Spirit. If Jesus Christ is regarded as God, distinct personality from the Father, and has the same substance and attributes as the Father, it directs to the acceptance of the Holy Spirit as the third person in the Godhead. This extended application leads to the acceptance of the Trinity. This observation can be seen in the fourth and fifth ideas (fifth and sixth section of this article) on the divinity of Christ.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the nearer the concept of the divinity of Christ to the concept of the nature, substance, and attributes of the Father, the greater the possibility for the acceptance of the Holy Spirit as a personal, divine being. All of this then led to the greater possibility for the acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity. Thus, the concept of the divinity of Christ has had a significant impact on the acceptance of the personality of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity doctrines into Seventh-day Adventist theology.

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Entering God's Rest: Reading Psalm 95:7–11 in Hebrews 3–4

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Abstract

The theme of Heb 3–4 is the promise of entering God's rest. Psalm 95:7–11 is the basis of the exposition about exhortation and warning to enter His rest in Hebrews. The inner-biblical and Christological reading of Ps 95:7–11 in Hebrews exemplifies the spatial concept of entering God's rest, making it more meaningful and relevant to the readers for their faithfulness, encouragement, hope, and realization of such rest today and hereafter. Studies about God's rest in Hebrews have shown little agreement on the meaning, nature, and implications of "rest" (i.e., κατάπαυσις and σαββατισμός). This paper exegetically examines the connections between the believers entering God's rest and Jesus entering the heavenly sanctuary to understand the promise of rest based on Ps 95:7–11 in Heb 3–4. Believers' entering God's rest and Jesus's entering the heavenly sanctuary are closely connected, indicating that κατάπαυσις is God's sanctuary. Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary through His blood and sat down at the right hand of God's throne as their High Priest and King of the new covenant. To enter God's rest is to enter His sanctuary. Entering His rest becomes possible through faith in Jesus, who is in God's presence in the heavenly sanctuary where the believers can confidently worship God and find true rest, happiness, and salvation.

Keywords: Rest, entering, today, high priest, sanctuary, throne of grace, domain, covenant

1. Introduction

The problem of restlessness and suffering is universal. Many people lack rest and sleep. They suffer from fatigue, exhaustion, stress, sickness, and hospitalization.[1] They need physical and psychological rest, vital to their health and productivity.[2] Yet, from the biblical perspective, they need more than physical and psychological rest. Biblical rest has broader connotations: physical, psychological, temporal, spatial, and spiritual rest. Rest is God's gift for humanity. The creation Sabbath (Gen 2:1–4; cf. Exod 20:8–11) is foundational to all biblical rests. In Matt 11:28–29, Jesus invites wearied and burdened people from the legalistic Sabbath-keeping to come to Him to find and receive rest (ἀνάπαυσις, "rest") in the context of Sabbath day of rest and salvation.[3]

Likewise, the Book of Hebrews talks about the suffering and challenges of God's people. These Christians also face "great conflict of sufferings" (10:32) and "reproaches and tribulations" (v. 33). Thus, they are encouraged to stand firm in faith to be rewarded later (vv. 34–39), like the saints who patiently endure hardships but die in faith even without receiving His promises (11:4–40). Their spiritual journey on earth is full of challenges, which include suffering and death. In the early chapters (Heb 3–4), the Christians are also urged to enter God's rest (κατάπαυσις and σαββατισμός) and the seventh-day of rest is mentioned (4:4).[4] The author of Hebrews expounds that rest is a promise based on Ps 95:7–11. That promised rest is the

1 Anna Green, "68 Percent of People Feel They Don't Get Enough Rest, Report Finds," *Mental Floss* (2016), https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/86885/68-percent-people-feel-they-dont-get-enough-rest-report-finds#:~:text=A%20recent%20survey%20of%20more%20than%2018%2C000%20people,the%20broader%20impact%20of%20not%20getting%20enough%20rest; Nick Collins, "No Rest, No Gain:Why Resting Is Vital for Your Productivity," *DailyStamina.com: Daily Activity and Energy* (2000), https://dailystamina.com/blogs/news/no-rest-no-gain-why-resting-is-important-for-your-productivity.

2 "Why It's Important to Allow Yourself to Rest," *INTEGRIS Health*, April 16, 2021, para. 3,https://integrisok.com/resources/on-your-health/2021/april/why-its-important-toallowyourself-to-rest.

3 See discussion in Ekkehardt Mueller, "The Sabbath in the Gospel of Matthew: Part 1," in *The Sabbath in the New Testament and in Theology: Implications for Christians in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Ekkehardt Mueller and Eike Mueller, *Biblical Research Institute Studies on the Biblical Sabbath* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2023), 2:17–22.

4 The NT Greek text that is used in this paper is *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Nestle-Aland, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

focal point of discussion to provide hope, assurance, salvation, warning, and encouragement amid challenges in life among God's people.[5] It is the ultimate solution to the restlessness of humanity.

Entering the promise of rest is the theme of Heb 3–4. Some studies have dealt with God's rest in Heb 3–4 with various emphases, purposes, and methodologies that explain the meaning, nature, and implications of such rest (temporal and/or spatial sense) with present reality, already-not-yet tension, and/or future realization.[6] There are varied interpretations of the meanings of God's promised rest for His people in Heb 3–4 due to its lack of explicit explanation and insertion in the logical flow of the author's discussion about Jesus's superiority over the angels, Moses, Aaronic priests, sacrifice, etc.[7] George H. Guthrie succinctly outlines three theological interpretations of rest: (a) the eschatological resting place (perhaps the holiest place of the heavenly sanctuary) to be entered at the end of the age;[8] (b) the spiritual rest in connection to the seventh-day Sabbath that can be entered

5 The words ἐπαγγελία, "promise" (4:1; 6:13, 15, 17; 11:9 [2x]); ἐλπίς, "hope" (3:6; 6:11, 18, 19; 10:23); and ἄθλησις, "struggle" (10:32) are also used in Hebrews.

6 See, e.g., John Laansma, "'I Will Give You Rest': The Background and Significance of the Rest Motive in the New Testament," *Tyndale Bulletin* 46.2 (1995): 385–88; Andrew S. Kulikovsky, "God's Rest in Hebrews 4:1–11," *CEN Technical Journal* 13.2 (1999): 61–2; Lee Irons, "Entering God's Rest by Faith: Realized Eschatology in Hebrews 3:7–4:11," unpublished article (2007): 1–36, www.upper-register.com; Jared C. Calaway, "Heavenly Sabbath, Heavenly Sanctuary: The Transformation of Priestly Sacred Space and Sacred Time in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the Epistle to the Hebrews" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2010), 329–63; Erhard H. Gallos, "Κατάπαυσίς and Σαββατισμός in Hebrews 4" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2011), 62–63; José Adriano, "The Use of Ps 95:7b–11 and Genesis 2:2b in Hebrews 3–4," *Reflexus* 12.19 (2018): 299–315; Leonardo G. Nunes, "Function and Nature of the Heavenly Sanctuary/Temple and Its Earthly Counterparts in the New Testament Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles: A Motif Study of Major Passages" (PhD diss., Andrews University Theological Seminary, 2020), 335–50; Kevin L. Morgan, "*Sabbatismos in Hebrews*," unpublished article (2023): 1–13, https://www.academia.edu/30335548/Sabbatismos_in_Hebrews_Updated_May_24_2023_.

7 Like for example, Erhard H. Gallos contends that God's rest is the seventh-day Sabbath. He argues against other views on God's rest. He is not satisfied with the interpretation of rest "as justification and salvation, millennial kingdom, divine realm, entering the Most Holy Place, the cosmic pleroma, the new Day of Atonement, or the Calvary rest, nor does the symbolic soteriological process" (Gallos, "Κατάπαυσίς and Σαββατισμός," 198).

8 See Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to Hebrews*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 163–66.

by the believers at the present life;[9] and (c) the "already" and "not yet" rest which is an "entrance into the new covenant via the great Day of Atonement sacrifice of the great high priest, Jesus."[10] Thus, there is little agreement on the topic of rest whether such "rest" is a temporal, spiritual, or spatial to be experienced/entered today and/or in the future.

This paper exegetically investiges the meaning of entering God's rest in Heb 3–4 in connection with Jesus's entering the heavenly sanctuary to elucidate the contextual meaning of κατάπαυσις and σαββατισμός. It proposes that entering God's rest is the same as Jesus's entering the heavenly sanctuary; namely, the promised rest in Heb 3–4 refers to the heavenly sanctuary—the resting place of God—that the believers can spiritually enter today and fully experience at the coming of Christ and beyond. To come up and validate the spatial concept of rest, it analyzes the setting of Ps 95:7–11 in Heb 3–4, which includes the discussion on Hebrews' addressees, theme and purpose, and usage and literary setting Ps 95 in Heb 3–4 to understand the historical and the literary backdrop of the study. It also examines the lexical, contextual, and theological meaning and nature of κατάπαυσις and σαββατισμός in Heb 3–4 to point out the relationship between believers' entering God's rest and Jesus's entering the heavenly sanctuary. Then, it concludes the study on entering divine rest with some theological implications.[11]

[9] George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2007), 2752. Gallos contends for this view of Sabbath rest. See Gallos, "Κατάπαυσίς and Σαββατισμός."

[10] Guthrie, "Hebrews," 2753–54.

[11] This study utilizes the historical-biblical/grammatical method of exegesis. See Ekkehardt Mueller, "Guidelines for the Interpretation of Scripture," in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2006), 1:111–34. The historical-biblical method is defined as "the attempt to understand the meaning of biblical data using methodological considerations arising from Scripture alone" (Richard M. Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen [Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2000], 12:94). This study also accepts the seven basic presuppositions of the historical-biblical method of exegesis: (a) "*sola Scriptura*," (b) "the Bible is the ultimate authority," (c) "suspension of the compelling principle of analogy," (d) "suspension … of the principle of correlation (or natural cause and effect)," (e) "unity of Scripture," (f) "timeless nature" (i.e., "the message transcends the cultural settings as timeless truth"), and (g) "the Bible *equals* the Word of God" (Davidson, "Biblical Interpretation," 12:94).

2. The Setting of Psalms 95:7–11 in Hebrews 3–4

This section discusses the historical and literary context of entering God's rest in Heb 3–4. It tackles the background of the recipients of the epistolary sermon[12] who are being exhorted to remain faithful to enter that rest. It also analyzes the purpose, theme, and literary setting of Ps 95:7–11 in Heb 3–4 and how divine rest is used in the same context.

2.1 Addressees of Hebrews

The author of Hebrews[13] sent his epistolary sermon (Book of Hebrews) to his intended readers in Rome, before AD 70. The title "Hebrews" is applied to Christians (Jews and Gentiles alike). In Heb 3–4, the recipients are juxtaposed with Israel as the new covenant church. They belonged to ὁ λαός τοῦ θεοῦ, "the people of God" (i.e., Israel, 4:9),[14] namely, His οἶκός, "house" (3:6). He exhorted and called them as ἀδελφοὶ (ἅγιοι), "(holy) brethren" (3:1, 12; 10:19; 13:22). Also, the word ἐκκλησία, "congregation, assembly, church" which only occurs in Heb 2:12 and 12:23 is applied and related to these

[12] There is no consensus on the literary genre of Hebrews among biblical scholars. This paper purports the idea that Hebrews is an epistolary sermon. Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough designate the book as a "Sermonic Epistle" to describe its two combined aspects of literary genre (i.e., sermon and epistle) (Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*, 3rd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013], 330). On the other hand, Craig S. Keener designates the book as a "letter-essay"—"a written homily or sermon" (Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 2nd ed. [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014], 638).

[13] This paper assumes Pauline authorship of Hebrews with the idea of having an amanuensis such as Luke or other possible writer who was directly connected to Paul. See the various views and discussions on the authorship of Hebrews in, e.g., David L. Allen, *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews*, NAC Studies in Bible and Theology 8 (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010); David Alan Black, *The Authorship of Hebrews: The Case for Paul* (Gonzalez, FL: Energion, 2013); Keener, *IVP Bible Background Commentary*, 637.

[14] Gallos contends, "The best reasons seem to support a mixed ethnic background.... The author calls the ancestors—'fathers' rather than 'our fathers.' The epistle never mentions Jews or Christians, the Temple or circumcision, never makes negative references to Jews or Gentiles, and refrains from divisive references to Jews or Gentiles. The important group to belong to is the λαός of God. If credibility is attributed to R. Brown, then all types of Christianity were a mixture of Jewish Christians and their Gentile converts" (Gallos, "Κατάπαυσίς and Σαββατισμός," 62–63).

brethren. These intended recipients of Hebrews, suffering from tribulations (10:32–33), were exhorted to enter God's rest.

2.2 Purpose and Theme of Hebrews

The Book of Hebrews aims to exhort and warn the readers against apostasy in returning to the Jewish temple ritual system that would compromise their Christian confession (see 6:4–8; 10:26–31; 12:2–4, 13, 15–19).[15] Their Christian faith was seriously challenged and undermined by that apostasy (5:11–14; 6:12; 10:25; 12:1–2). Their faith in Christ and His work of salvation was waning, and they were attracted to return to the first covenant cultic system administered by the Levitical priesthood (see chs. 7–10).

The first covenant system was fulfilled when Jesus inaugurated the new covenant and its new ritual system (chs. 8–10) through His death, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement as the High Priest, Mediator, and King.[16] The concept of the cessation of the first covenant is perceived as typological fulfillment. The author exhorted the readers to remain faithful to Christ and His new covenant with its Christ-centered ritual system. Such faithfulness is a prerequisite to entering God's rest for it is explicitly envisaged in the context of Jesus's high priesthood in Heb 3–4 (3:1–6 and 4:14–16).[17]

2.3 Usage and Setting of Psalm 95:7–11 in Hebrews 3–4

2.3.1 The Usage of Psalms 95:7–11 in Hebrews 3–4

The Book of Hebrews surpasses other NT books concerning its direct and indirect quotations of the OT. Among the OT books, the Book of Psalms is often cited and used in the Book of Hebrews as well as in the books of Ro-

[15] See Donald A. Hagner, *Hebrews*, NICBC (Peabody, MA: Henrickson, 1990), 11; Mark Allan Powell, *Introducing the New Testament: A Historical, Literary, and Theological Survey*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2018), 445.

[16] See Felix H. Cortez, "'The Anchor of the Soul That Enters Within the Veil': The Ascension of the 'Son' in the Letter to the Hebrews" (PhD diss., Andrews University, 2008), 324–426.

[17] Some words like πιστός/πίστις (3:2, 5; 4:2), παρρησία (3:6), σκληρύνω (3:8, 13, 15), παραπικρασμός (3:8, 16; 4:), πλανάω (3:10), ἀπιστία (3:12, 19; 4:11), υπόστασις (3:14), and ἀπειθέω (3:18) are used in connection to the spiritual status of the believers in Hebrews.

mans and 1 Corinthians.[18] In Hebrews, "about one-third of the direct quotations are drawn from the book of Psalms."[19] Simon Kistemaker states,

> It is apparent that in the first century A.D. the writers of the NT Scriptures, as well as Clement of Rome, used the Psalter not only for substantiating ideas, but—what seems even more important—for citing something which was familiar to the eyes and ears of the readers and hearers of their letters.[20]

Hence, the inner-biblical (or intertextual) analysis[21] of Ps 95:7–11 in the context of Hebrews is inevitable and noteworthy in discovering hope and assurance for the Christians today. Psalm 95:7–11 is quoted in Heb 3:7b–11. Then, some of the verses are requoted in Heb 3:13, 15 (v. 7); 4:3b, 5 (v. 11), and 7 (vv. 7–8). The first and the last verses are often quoted in Heb 3–4 as the author emphasizes listening and avoiding the hardening of the hearts by unbelief to enter God's rest.

[18] Simon Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1961), 13–14.

[19] Kistemaker, *Psalm Citations*, 14. Here is the citation list of the Book of Psalms in Hebrews: Ps 2:7 in Heb 1:5; Ps 97:7 in Heb 1:6; Ps 104:4 in Heb 1:7; Ps 45:6–9 in Heb 1:8–9; Ps 102:25–27 in Heb 1:10–12; Ps 110:1 in Heb 1:13; Ps 8:4–6 in Heb 2:6–8; Ps 22:22 in Heb 2:12; Ps 95:7–11 in Heb 3:7–11; Ps 95:7 in Heb 3:13; Ps 95:7–8 in Heb 3:15; Ps 95:11 in Heb 4:3, 5; Ps 95:7–8 in Heb 4:7; Ps 2:7 in Heb 5:5; Ps 110:4 in Heb 5:6; Ps 110:4 in Heb 7:17; Ps 110:4 in Heb 7:21; Ps 40:6–8 in Heb 10:5–9; Ps 118:6 in Heb 13:6. Here are the passages of Psalms that are often quoted in Hebrews (twice or more): 2:7; 8:4–6; 22:22; 40:6–8; 45:6–9; 95:7–11; 97:7; 102:25–27; 104:4; 110:1, 4; 118:6.

[20] Kistemaker, *Psalm Citations*, 14.

[21] "Inner-biblical hermeneutics" is "the use of earlier Scripture by later Bible writers" (Richard M. Davidson, "Inner-Biblical Hermeneutics: The Use of Scripture by Bible Writiers," in Biblical Hermeneutics: An Adventist Approach, ed. Frank M. Hasel [Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2020], 3:235). "Intertextuality" is another related term that is used in biblical interpretations. It is originally a secular term used by Julia Kristeva in her secular literary analysis. In 1989, however, the term was redefined and has been used in biblical studies regarding reusing the OT passages in the NT context (Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation,* 2nd ed. [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006], 674). Hence, this study uses both terms ("inner-biblical hermeneutics" and "intertextuality") interchangeably in analyzing the relationship between the OT and the NT. See further discussion of inner-blical hermeneutics and intertextuality in Ganoune Diop, "Innerbiblical Interpretation: Reading the Scriptures Intertextually," in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 1:135–51.

2.3.2 The Literary Setting of Psalm 95:7–11

Psalm 95 (Ps 94, LXX) is called a "royal thanksgiving psalm."[22] The chapter is a worship setting, a "cultic-liturgical service."[23] William L. Lane explains that this chapter is used for worship service. He states, "The liturgical use of Ps 95 as a preamble to synagogue services on Friday evening and Sabbath morning is well established."[24] Psalm 95 has two sections: vv. 1–7c (a celebratory song of exhortation) and vv. 7d–11 (Yahweh's response to the community of the psalmist).[25] In the first section, David (author, Heb 4:7) invites God's people to come before His presence to joyfully sing, praise, and worship Him with thanksgiving, for He is the Savior, God, King, Creator, and Shepherd. In particular, the section has two main invitation commands (לְכוּ/δεῦτε, "come" in vv. 1 and 2) followed by a series of exhortatory commands ("Let us …") under each main invitation with reasons. Structurally, the section consists of two sequences, but they are not repetitive:

Exhortation (vv. 1–2)
  Reasons (vv. 3–5)
Exhortation (v. 6)
  Reasons (v. 7a–c)[26]

Hence, the Psalmist's exhortative invitation is to come to the presence of the Lord God and serve Him as He is the Savior, God, King, Creator, and Shepherd.

In the latter and direct discourse section (Ps 95:7d–11), God is the speaker. Yahweh's response to the praise of His people is a prophetic word, and thus, it is called "prophetic liturgy."[27] It has three movements: (a) the exhortation not to harden hearts (vv. 7d–8); (b) the exhortation that provides an example or illustration (vv. 9–10); and (c) the reminder to the community about divine judgment on the rebellious people (v. 11).[28] This section is both a warning and an exhortation concerning the Exodus experience for the exilic people who were looking forward to returning to the promised land.

22 Martin G. Klingbeil, "Psalms," *Andrews Bible Commentary (Old Testament)*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2020), 723.

23 Guthrie, "Hebrews," 2736.

24 William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, WBC 47A (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 757.

25 Klingbeil, "Psalms," 723; Guthrie, "Hebrews," 2736.

26 John Goldingay, *Psalms: Psalms 90–150*, Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 3:127.

27 Guthrie, "Hebrews," 2737.

28 Guthrie, "Hebrews," 2737.

God is portrayed here as the Shepherd who guided their ancestors during their 40 year-Exodus toward the land of Canaan. Yet, they hardened their hearts at Meribah and Massah (v. 8; cf. Exod 17:7; Num 20:13) by their unbelief. Hence, in His anger, God did not let them enter the promised land.[29]

Also, the concept of creation and re-creation is evident in Ps 95 (e.g., the creation of the earth, hills, sea, and people, vv. 4–6).[30] "Hebrews 4 uses this psalm and issues a similar warning to hear His voice 'today' (v. 7c; cf. Heb. 4:7–8). The promise of the Sabbath rest still remains today."[31] The author intends to apply the OT passage to the readers of Hebrews, as pilgrims toward the heavenly rest, which corresponds to the pilgrim Israelites toward the promised land.[32]

In sum, Ps 95:1–7c provides the immediate context of Ps 95:7d–11 that is quoted in Heb 3:7–11. The concept of liturgy and worship exhorts the community to come to the presence of God. In Ps 95:7d–11, God warns and exhorts His people to listen to His voice σήμερον, "today" and not to harden their hearts against entering His rest. The invitation to God's presence to worship Him and to enter His rest is closely related based on Ps 95.

2.3.3 The Context of Hebrews 3–4

The context of Heb 3–4 is connected to the faithfulness and high priesthood of Jesus, "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (3:1). Jesus's divinity and kingship (ch. 1) are not only presented in Hebrews but also the superiority of His high priesthood and ministry—the high priest of the new covenant in the order of Melchizedek (chs. 5–7)—and His self-sacrificing act for the forgiveness of sins (chs. 9–10). Such supremacy is the arching theme of Hebrews—"the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ as revealer and as mediator of God's grace."[33] That is expounded in the book's central section (8:1–10:18), which is "the heart of the Christological exposition."[34] The exposition is "the effective sacrifice of the Son as high priest."[35]

[29] Klingbeil, "Psalms," 723.

[30] See further discussion in Filho, "Hebrews and the Scriptures," 301–4.

[31] Klingbeil, "Psalms," 723.

[32] See Filho, "Hebrews and the Scriptures," 301, 307–8.

[33] See "Theme and Message" in the introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews in NASB (Updated 1995), 1148.

[34] Attridge, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 216; also Lane, *Hebrews 9–13*, 257–58; Cockerill, "Structure and Interpretation in Hebrews," 179; O'Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 286.

[35] O'Brien, Letter to the Hebrews, 286.

Jesus's sufficient sacrifice and high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary which are predominantly expressed in the central section of Hebrews.[36] The new covenant theme underscores Christ's supremacy.[37]

Hebrews 3–4 is also an integral part of the new covenant theme that deals with the renewal of God's original covenant relationship, promises, and precepts intended for His people for eternity which are being facilitated by the new and perfect ritual system of Jesus Christ the high priest, sacrifice, and mediator of the new covenant.[38]

The section is a theological explanation about faithfulness to enter the promise of rest based on the faithfulness of Jesus, who is mentioned as the "merciful and faithful High Priest" (2:17), "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (3:1), and "a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens" (4:14). Structurally and linguistically, the high priesthood of Jesus serves as the *inclusio*, bracketing the concept of entering God's rest in Ps 95 that is expounded in Heb 3–4. Thus, the exhortation and warning to enter God's rest and the meaning of rest should be understood in the context of Jesus's high priesthood and ministry in the heavenly sanctuary in Hebrews. This concept is elaborated on in the next sections of this paper.

[36] Glenn Jade V. Mariano, "The Newness of the New Covenant: An Exegetical-Intertextual Study of Hebrews 8:7–13" (PhD diss., Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Silang, Cavite, Philippines, 2019), 100. Linguistically, the majority (13) of the seventeen occurrences of the term διαθήκη in Hebrews appear in its central section (chs. 8–10). David Mark Heath explains the difference between climax, peak, and apex: "Climax as 'the central action of a narrative account,' peak as a high point in 'the main theme of an exposition or exhortation,' and apex as a high point in 'the development of the author's feelings and intensity of emotive expression'" (David Mark Heath, "Chiastic Structures in Hebrews: A Study of Form and Function in Biblical Discourse" [PhD diss., University of Stellenbosch, 2011], 333).

[37] The covenant (old/new) has two main dimensions: moral (legal) and ritual (cultic and liturgical) (Scott W. Hahn, "A Broken Covenant and the Curse of Death: A Study of Hebrews 9:15–22," *CBQ* 66, no. 3 [2004]: 423). The moral dimension deals with the promise and the core principles of the covenant regarding the (a) laws of God to be placed in the hearts, (b) lordship and ownership, (c) knowledge of God, and (d) divine forgiveness for His covenant people (see Jer 31:33–34; Heb 8:10–12). This aspect of the covenant is unchanging and continues from the old to the new covenant. The ritual dimension deals with the priesthood, ritual systems, and sanctuary and its services with typological nature from the old covenant to the new covenant. Its role is to actualize and fulfill the moral dimension. Under the new covenant, Jesus takes the place of the old covenant's priesthood, sacrifices, and services in the real sanctuary (8:1–6). See the discussion of moral and ritual dimensions in Mariano, "Newness of the New Covenant," 138–41.

[38] Mariano, "Newness of the New Covenant," Abstract.

2.3.4 Psalm 95:7–11 in the Structure of Hebrews 3–4

Several scholars proposed various structures of Hebrews.[39] Hebrews 4:14–16 and 10:19–25 are the two pillars of the book's structure (exposition). Jesus, the faithful and great high priest, has gone into heaven or entered into the heavenly sanctuary.[40]

Also, Hebrews' pattern of combining theological exposition with application or exhortation is evident. There are five major sections of the exhortation/application. David J. MacLeod explains, "Any presentation of the author's argument must make clear that his expositions lead to exhortations in five major sections (2:1–4; 3:1–4:16; 5:11–6:20; 10:19–39; 12:1–29)."[41] So, Ps 95:7d–11 is discussed in the second exhortation section of Hebrews, which is about Jesus the faithful high priest, and the promise of entering God's rest (3:1–4:16). Hebrews 3–4 can be outlined with ABA' structure:[42]

A—Jesus—Faithful High Priest and Apostle (3:1–6)
    B—Promise of Entering God's Rest "Today" (3:7–4:13)
A'—Jesus—Compassionate High Priest and Son of God (4:14–16)

[39] See proposed structures of Hebrews presented in, e.g., Albert Vanhoye, *Structure and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Subsidia Biblica 12 (Italy, Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1989), 18–42; Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 39–40; O'Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 34; Heath, "Chiastic Structures in Hebrews," 330–31; David J. MacLeod, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Hebrews," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 146 (1989):197.

[40] See George H. Guthrie, *The NIV Application Commentary: Hebrews*, ePub ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 44–45, 63–73; O'Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 30–1.

[41] MacLeod, "Literary Structure," 197.

[42] Hebrews 3–4 is logically, thematically, linguistically, and structurally divided by the inferential conjunctions ὅθεν, "therefore" (3:1); διό, "therefore," "wherefore" (3:7); and οὖν, "therefore," "thus" (4:1, 11, 14). Noticeably, the author presents an idea, expounds it with the supporting OT passage(s), and concludes. Then, from that conclusion, he introduces and expounds on another topic, like a string attachment. In other words, the author logically and stylistically presents Jesus's supremacy with various themes, and yet they are connected. This is the case with Heb 3–4. Hebrews 3:1–6 (with an inferential conjunction ὅθεν, 3:1) is built from chs. 1:1–2:14–18. Hebrews 5:1–10 is the explanation (with an explanatory conj. γάρ, v. 1) of the great high priest in Heb 4:14–16 (οὖν, v. 14), which is a conclusion of Heb 4:11–13 (οὖν, v. 11), etc. The linguistic and thematic parallelism between section A and section A' is also evident concerning the confession (ὁμολογίας) about Jesus: "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession [ὁμολογίας], Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him [God]" (3:1) and "we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession [ὁμολογίας]" (4:14, NKJV).

Sections A and A' serve as the *inclusio* to form a literary unit of Heb 3–4. Both sections begin and end with the *inclusio* markers: "Jesus"(Ἰησοῦς, 3:1 and 4:14), "high priest" (ἀρχιερέα, 3:1, 4:14–15), "confession" (ὁμολογίας, 3:1 and 4:14), and "confidence" (παρρησίας, 3:6 and 4:16).[43] The author builds up his argument on God's rest based on the faithfulness of Jesus as the High Priest and Apostle (A, 3:1–6), which is the conclusion of the preceding passage (2:17–18). Since Jesus is more faithful than Moses over God's house/people, the author exhorts and warns his brethren to remain faithful to enter His rest "today." At the same time, it is still available lest they become like the ancient Israel who did not enter His rest because of their unfaithfulness.

Section B is the literary unit of Heb 3–4 that expounds the concept of entering God's rest in Ps 95:7c–11 that calls to faithfulness and avoid unbelief. God's promised rest is available even "today" (3:7–4:13). It has three logical parts: (a) exhortation to enter God's rest "today" (3:7–19), (b) entering the remaining promised rest by faith "today" in connection to the seventh-day Sabbath (4:1–10), and (c) final exhortation to strive to enter His rest for the word of God is powerful (4:11–13).

The author quotes the OT passage in connection to the preceding statement: "But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (Heb 3:6).[44] When he quotes the passage, he explicitly introduces that it is the Holy Spirit who speaks it (v. 7a). He exhorts and warns the readers about departing from God through unbelief (that causes rebellion) and tells them to exhort one another while it is still "today" (vv. 12–14). Again, he cites Ps 95:7d–8 in v. 15: "Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked me." Then, he explains those who did not enter God's rest because of unbelief and disobedience (vv. 16–19).

Next, the author concludes and explains that there remains a promise of rest for God's people (4:1, 9). He exemplifies and qualifies the available nature and meaning of rest in connection to the first seventh-day creation week when God Himself rested from His works (quoting Gen 2:2 in Heb 4:4b) that the people who enter it should also rest from their labor (C, 4:1–10). In this section, he quotes the final verse (Ps 95:11) in 4:3b and 4:4c as he

[43] See further discussion about *inclusios* in Hebrews in MacLeod, "Literary Structure of the Book of Hebrews," 187–88. Others scholars also see the same *inclusio in* Heb 3–4 as discussed in, e.g., Nunes, "Function and Nature of the Heavenly Sanctuary," 338–40.

[44] Unless otherwise cited, all quoted scriptural texts are taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB95).

explains the remaining promise to enter that rest. Again, he quotes Ps 95:7c–8a in 4:7 about "today," indicating another chance to enter His rest. This time, he mentions σαββατισμός that it is still available for God's people (v. 9). As they enter it, they should rest as God rested from His works (v. 10). Then, he exhorts the readers to be diligent to enter κατάπαυσις so that no one will fall "through following the same example of disobedience" (v. 11); for God's word is powerful and no one can hide from His sight (vv. 12–13). Finally, in the inferential remarks (A', 4:14–16), he encourages them to hold fast their confession because they "have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens " (v. 14). "To hold fast our confession [ὁμολογίας]" (v. 14) is connected to "Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our [ὁμολογίας]" in 3:1 (A, 3:1–6). Hence, entering God's rest is bracketed by the confession regarding Jesus the faithful High Priest "who has passed through the heavens," namely, the heavenly sanctuary which is elaboratedly explained later in Hebrews (as well as in this paper) (see 6:19; 9:11–12, 24).

The use of Ps 95:7c–11 in Heb 3–4 seems to be intentionally inserted to elaborate, exhort, and warn the readers to remain faithful in their confession of faith about Jesus, the faithful and great High Priest who entered the heavens (sections A [3:1] and A' [4:14]) to enter God's rest (section B). The logical flow of the discussion about Jesus's high priesthood from Heb 2:17–3:6 to Heb 4:14–16 is still clear even without the exposition of Ps 95 in Heb 3:7–4:13. Christ's superior high priesthood, sufficient sacrifice, and intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary before God's presence are expounded in Heb 5:1–10:39. Since Heb 3:7–4:13 is stated, the concept of entering God's rest must be understood in the light of Jesus, the faithful and obedient High Priest, who entered the heavens, namely, the heavenly sanctuary, who is now before God's throne of grace for His people (4:14, 16; cf. 9:11–12, 24). Likewise, the faithful and obedient enter God's rest. Thus, entering God's rest and entering the heavenly sanctuary is equated. And the believer/faithful is called to enter the heavenly sanctuary, the throne of God, and find rest.

Hence, the following section discusses the concept of entering God's rest as His dwelling place (His throne and sanctuary—His domain) about Jesus's entering the presence of God in the heavenly sanctuary.[45] His rest in

[45] Some studies have already argued that God's κατάπαυσις in Hebrews is related or equated with the heavenly sanctuary or God's throne/presence (i.e., resting place), for example, O'Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 163–64; Calaway, "Heavenly Sabbath, Heavenly Sanctuary," 329–63; Nunes, "Function and Nature of the Heavenly Sanctuary," 338–50.

Heb 4:1–11 is not only a state of being saved ("the bliss of salvation"[46]), resting on the Sabbath day, or eschatological rest. It is more on His dwelling place where the people can enter His presence by faith in Jesus, who entered the heavenly sanctuary by His blood and sat at the right hand of the Majesty (8:1; 9:12, 24) on His throne of grace (4:16) to find real rest, mercy, grace, hope, and happiness now and in the future to come. The logical flow of the author's exposition is in line with Christ as King, Priest, and Mediator who entered the sanctuary.

3. Meaning and Nature of Entering God's Rest

3.1 Meaning of Rest

In the NT, the Greek noun κατάπαυσις is mentioned eight times in Hebrews (3:11, 18; 4:1, 3 [2x], 5, 10, 11) and once in Acts 7:49. The word κατάπαυσις is mentioned in Ps 95:11 (εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, "they shall not enter My rest," NKJV) that is quoted in Heb 3:11; 4:3, 5. Its other usages are part of the author's explanation of rest in the passage (3:18; 4:1, 3, 10–11). All these occurrences of κατάπαυσις refer to God's rest. The Greek verb καταπαύω, "to cease," "to (give) rest" (κατέπαυσεν [aorist, active, indicative, 3rd person, sing.], "he rested") is used thrice in Heb 4 (vv. 4, 8, 10) in conjunction to God's rest: God rested on the Creation Sabbath (v. 4), Joshua could not provide rest to the people, and that is why God speaks of "another day" (v. 8) which is "today," and those who entered God's rest should rest from their labor (v. 10) as He did.

Lexically, κατάπαυσις (and καταπαύω) has two shades of meanings.[47] First, it is the state of cessation of work: "to cease one's work or activity, resulting in a period of rest—'to rest, to cease from work.'"[48] Second, it is a place of rest: a metaphor or typology of "the heavenly dwelling of God, which God

[46] William G. Johnsson, "Hebrews," *Andrews Bible Commentary (New Testament)*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2020), 1831.

[47] They are "state of cessation of work or activity" and "place of rest" (Bauer, BDAG, 3rd ed., s.v. "κατάπαυσις").

[48] Louw and Nida, *GELNT*, s.v. "καταπαυω; καταπαυσις, εως" (para. 1). Moreover, "καταπαύω and κατάπαυσις appear to differ in meaning from ἀναπαύομαι and ἀνάπαυσις (23.80) in that the emphasis of καταπαύω and κατάπαυσις is more upon the cessation of activity resulting in rest rather than upon the mere restorative character of rest" (Louw and Nida, *GELNT*, s.v. καταπαυω; καταπαυσις, εως" [para. 1]).

has appointed as the eschatological resting place (cf. Jos. As. 8:9) for his people."[49] This second meaning of κατάπαυσις as a place of rest is attested in Acts 7:49d (quoting Isa 66:1–2) in the context of Solomon building the temple for God. The passage mentions the resting place of God (ἢ τίς τόπος τῆς καταπαύσεώς μου; "or what is the place of My rest?"), which parallels His heavenly sanctuary/throne (ὁ οὐρανός μοι θρόνος, "the heaven is My throne," v. 49a).[50]

Some scholars interpret κατάπαυσις analogously with σαββατισμός, "sabbath rest, sabbath observance"[51] (that only appears once in Heb 4:9). The word σαββατισμός qualifies the meaning of κατάπαυσις as "Sabbath-like rest"[52] in literal and spiritual senses. Erhard H. Gallos, who interprets God's rest in Heb 3–4 as the seventh-day Sabbath, argues that "the substitution of σαββατισμός for κατάπαυσις is meant to define more precisely the character of the rest promised to the people of God."[53] Jared C. Calaway interprets κατάπαυσις as the promised land (space, based on Ps 95), the seventh-day Sabbath (sacred time) of creation (Heb 4:4; cf. Gen 2:2), and the heavenly sanctuary (sacred place/heavenly Sabbath) to be entered at the end of time.[54]

[49] O. Hofius, "κατάπαυσις," *EDNT* 2:265.

[50] In his dissertation, Gallos argues, favoring that rest is the creation Sabbath, that no connection between the heavenly city and rest (καταπαυσις) is documented in Hebrews (Gallos, "Κατάπαυσίς and Σαββατισμός in Hebrews 4," 192, 198). For him, the rest in Heb 3–4 does not refer to the heavenly place/sanctuary.

[51] Bauer, BDAG, s.v. "σαββατισμός." Arguably, it is used figuratively in Heb 4:9 as "a special period of rest for God's people modeled after the traditional sabbath" (Bauer, BDAG, s.v. "σαββατισμός").

[52] Johnsson, "Hebrews," 1832; Gallos, "Κατάπαυσίς and Σαββατισμός," 219.

[53] Gallos, "Κατάπαυσίς and Σαββατισμός," 219. See also Gallos's updated version of his Sabbath rest concept in Erhard H. Gallos, "Sabbath Rest in Hebrews 4," in *The Sabbath in the New Testament and in Theology: Implications for Christians in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Ekkehardt Mueller and Eike Mueller, *Biblical Research Institute Studies on the Biblical Sabbath* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2023), 2:173–214.

[54] Calaway argues that the author of Hebrews is changing the meaning of κατάπαυσις from the promised land (Canaan) in Ps 95 to the seventh-day Sabbath in Heb 3–4 (from space to temporal), that again us understood as the heavenly home/Sanctuary. So, the Sabbath (κατάπαυσις and σαββατισμός), for him, has a multifaceted meaning. Yet, he emphasizes the creation Sabbath, the one that the wilderness generation failed to enter, that is transforms into the "Today"—the inaugurated age or "day of the Lord" (judgment day), "new Day of Atonement," and/or sanctuary Sabbath. Neither unfaithful and faithful have not entered it, since it is a future reality. See Calaway, "Heavenly Sabbath, Heavenly Sanctuary," 329–63. However, this paper argues that κατάπαυσις consistently refers to God's resting place. And σαββατισμός refers to the qualitative nature of rest in God's resting place—the heavenly sanctuary.

He concludes that, "For Hebrews, the Sabbath and the sanctuary become equivalent expressions to enter heavenly life. In both, this spatiotemporal coordination allowed one presently to enter the heavenly realm and approach the enthroned God of creation."[55]

Leonardo G. Nunes purports Calaway's spatiotemporal interpretation of rest in Hebrews. He points out that God's rest is connected to the Sabbath, heavenly sanctuary, and salvation. Unlike Calaway's future reality view, when the believers enter God's rest (now), they are entering the heavenly sanctuary. Nunes concludes that, in Heb 4:14–16, the sanctuary, Sabbath, and salvation meet.[56]

The context determines the meaning of κατάπαυσις with σαββατισμός in Heb 3–4. O. Hofius explains,

> In Heb 4:9 σαββατισμός encompasses both sabbath rest and (cultic) sabbath observance. The word is neither identical in meaning nor interchangeable with a κατάπαυσις (3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 10f.); it designates more closely what the people of God should expect when they enter the κατάπαυσις of God (cf. 4:9 with v. 6a).... Accordingly, the author of Hebrews understands by σαββατισμός the eternal sabbath celebration of salvation, i.e., the perfected community's worship before God's throne.[57]

The word κατάπαυσις is closely related to a place of rest, particularly the dwelling place of God—His throne of grace or heavenly sanctuary in general (cf. Isa 66:1–2; Acts 7:49). Peter T. O'Brien explains the distinction between κατάπαυσις and σαββατισμός: "The resting place (*katapausis*) they are to enter is God's own, where he celebrates his sabbath rest (*sabbatismos*). Together the two terms describe both a place and a state."[58] So, God's rest is the center of worship and praise (cf. Ps 95:1–7). The heavenly dwelling place of God is the ultimate destination of His people where they can finally celebrate the festive Sabbath (σαββατισμός).[59] The next section further explain this spatial concept of God's rest.

[55] Calaway, "Heavenly Sabbath, Heavenly Sanctuary," Abstract.

[56] See the discussion of the Sanctuary, κατάπαυσις, and Sabbath in Nunes, "Function and Nature of the Sanctuary," 341–50.

[57] O. Hofius, "σαββατισμός," *EDNT*, 3:219.

[58] O'Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 171.

[59] The Sabbath (temporal) and its observance portray the foretaste of heaven where God is. The Sabbath is a means that brings His people to a close fellowship with God and with one another before the throne of grace as they worship Him in Spirit and truth by faith on a weekly basis. In that sense, His people enter His presence sitting on His throne in the heavenly sanctuary where they find joy, peace, and rest as they gather

3.2 Entering God's Rest

3.2.1 The Subject of Entering God's Rest

The main topic of Heb 3–4 is not κατάπαυσις in itself. The promise focuses on *entering* God's rest. The lexeme Σήμερον and the *entering* into κατάπαυσις are the emphases in Heb 3–4. These two complementing subjects in the quotation (first and last verses/phrases) are often repeated in Heb 3–4 as the author discusses the entering to God's rest: σήμερον (5x—3:7, 13, 15; 4:7 [2x]) and entrance into the κατάπαυσις (8x—3:11, 18; 4:1, 3 [2x], 5, 10, 11). The meaning of σήμερον is "God's eternal now, not to be shunted aside for a more 'convenient' time (Acts 24:25). It denotes urgency—a challenge for immediate consideration and response."[60] It does not refer to a specific day of the week, like the Sabbath day. It relates to every day ("from day to day" or "daily") of encouraging each other to refrain from hardening the believers' hearts (3:13) and be able to enter God's rest by faith any time as long as it is "today" (3:18–19; 4:7–8).

The emphasis on entering God's rest is now ("today"). This present entrance into His rest denotes a spiritual entrance. The future reality of entering that rest depends on this present reality ("today") of entering it ("let us be diligent to enter that rest," 4:11). In short, only the faithful can enter His rest now (4:3) and finally enter His rest in the future, while the unfaithful will never enter it because of unbelief (cf. 3:19, 4:1 6). So, entering His promised rest is a process that begins today and will continue until its full realization.

Suppose God's rest refers mainly to the seventh-day Sabbath (temporal) in Ps 95 and Heb 3–4. Entering His rest is only possible every Sabbath day, namely, a believer can only enter His rest once a week (which is contradictory to a daily admonition, 3:13). Since the Sabbath law had been implemented at Sinai until they had settled in Canaan, the Israelites should have already entered or experienced such rest. Even during the NT times, Jews and Christians were keeping the Sabbath religiously; they should have already entered it; and it should not be the main issue in Heb 3–4. However,

and worship on the Sabbath day. Yet the ultimate realization of His rest is yet to come when the people finally gather before His throne of grace in the heavenly sanctuary. Entering His throne now is possible by faith in Jesus because He, as their representative and mediator, entered it by His blood.

60 Johnsson, "Hebrews," 1830.

God said that they did not enter it, and there is still a promised rest to be entered. Contextually, God's κατάπαυσις is not the Sabbath day itself.[61]

Since David mentioned it 500 years after entering the promised land of Canaan, the expression "today" denotes a timeless day or daily (3:13), an unspecified day of the week. "Today" is a day of urgency, exhortation, repentance, faithfulness, and opportunity to enter His rest. It remains open for His people to enter it by faith and cease their unrighteous works in His presence (4:1–11).[62] Therefore, God's rest refers to something beyond Canaan and "the seventh-day" in Heb 3–4. Yet, the essence of κατάπαυσις is illustratively connected to the Sabbath day, especially in the sense of God's cessation from His creation (4:4; cf. Gen 2:2).[63] In other words, the Sabbath day is complementary to God's resting place, where the believers can find σαββατισμός in His presence.[64]

[61] See further argument in "Rest" [Heb 4:9], *SDABC* 7:423. This commentary interprets God's rest as a "spiritual rest," supporting Ellen G. White's interpretation of a remaining rest as "the rest of grace" or "the true rest of faith" ("Rest" [Heb 4:9], *SDABC* 7:423).

[62] Contextually, the meaning of "rested from his works" (v. 10) may refer to the works of unrighteousness as the opposite of the works of righteousness. Johnsson puts it this way: "That is, works (labors) are the antithesis of the way of faith; they are the result of a rebellious, wicked heart of unbelief that has been hardened through sin's deceptiveness (3:16), a heart of disobedience (3:18; 4:6, 11) and unfaithfulness." See Johnsson, "Hebrews," 1831.

[63] The *SDABC* explains that "God's resting on the seventh day of creation week is used, in an illustrative sense, of the 'rest' into which God would have Christians enter" ("Rest" [Heb 3:11], *SDABC* 7:414). The "Sabbath rest" is used in a metaphorical sense that represents salvation in Christ with an eschatological fulfillment. Yet, it does not mean that the Sabbath day is already abrogated but it upholds it. See discussion in Kenneth A. Strand, "The Sabbath," in *Handbook of Seventh-Day Adventist Theology*, Commentary Reference Series 12, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2001), 506–7.

[64] The temporal Sabbath and its observance portray the foretaste of heaven, where God is. The Sabbath is a means that brings His people to a close fellowship with Him and with one another before the throne of grace as they rest and worship Him in Spirit and truth by faith weekly. In that sense, His people enter His presence, sitting on His throne in the heavenly sanctuary where they find joy, peace, and rest. The ultimate realization of His rest is yet to come when the people finally gather before His throne of grace in the heavenly sanctuary. Yet, entering His throne "today" is possible by faith in Jesus that can be accessed any time, not just limited to a weekly Sabbath, because He, as their representative and mediator, entered it by His blood that transcends human time and space. The exhortation "let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace" (Heb 4:16; cf. 10:22) is anytime since Jesus has entered the sanctuary, sat on God's throne, and opened access to it for the worshipers (8:1–2; 9:11–15; 10:19–25).

Moreover, the concept of spatial and spiritual rest (i.e., God's presence or dwelling place) is also embedded in the warning statement in Heb 3:12: ἐν τῷ ἀποστῆναι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ζῶντος, "to fall away from [ἀπὸ] the living God."[65] Contextually, the verb ἀφίστημι, "to fall away, to depart, to leave, to step aside from" God is related to evil and unbelieving heart (v. 12), hardening by the "deceitfulness of sin" (v. 13), and disobedience and unbelief (vv. 18–19; 4:2, 6, 11). These negative characteristics of Israelites forbade them to enter God's rest, which resulted in leaving His presence and shutting out their actual entrance to the promised land. In contrast, through faith/faithfulness, the believers can enter or have entered God's rest (4:3). Faith is a prerequisite: "Without faith, it is impossible to please" and come to God (11:6). God's presence and His rest are parallel and analogous. Falling away from God is leaving or separating from His rest/presence.

3.2.2 Κατάπαυσις as the Spatial Destination

The clause εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, "they shall [not] enter My rest" (Ps 95:11; Heb 3:11) is repeated several times (8x) with varied expressions as the author elaborates and explains the clause in Heb 3–4 (see Table 1). The verb εἰσέρχομαι, "to move into, to come into, to go into, to enter" (with different inflections) denotes a movement "into a space, either two-dimensional or three-dimensional."[66] It is used 17 times in Hebrews.[67] It is theologically loaded concerning the sanctuary and the priestly works in Hebrews.[68] Its context determines its rightful meaning. In Heb 3–4 alone, the noun κατάπαυσις (as direct object) (8x) always appears with the verb εἰσέρχομαι (11x) that entails the subject of the sentence (personal pronoun—"we/they").[69]

Noticeably, the verb εἰσέρχομαι goes with the prepositional phrase εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου (with variations) in all instances with κατάπαυσις as the direct object of entering. The verb εἰσέρχομαι plus the transitive preposition εἰς (acc.—"into from without") denotes a spatial movement from outside into

[65] The preposition ἀπό, "from" (gen.) is a spatial preposition. It denotes separation from place or person. In the passage, it is separation from God through apostasy.

[66] Louw and Nida, *GELNT*, 2nd ed., s.v. "εἰσέρχομαι."

[67] Heb 3:11, 18, 19; 4:1, 3 (2x), 5, 6 (2x), 10, 11; 6:19, 20; 9:12, 24, 25; 10:5.

[68] Several scholars have argued for the theological significance of εἰσέρχομαι with a local sense in connection to the high priest/s and the sanctuary in Hebrews. See, e.g., O'Brien, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 164; Calaway, "Heavenly Sabbath, Heavenly Sanctuary," 310–315; Nunes, "Function and Nature of the Sanctuary," 346;

[69] Heb 3:11, 18, 19; 4:1, 3 (2x), 5, 6 (2x), 10, 11.

an inner place. Hence, κατάπαυσις is a spatial resting place of God,[70] the ultimate destination of the believers that is promised and pointed out in Hebrews. This spatial interpretation of rest is further discussed in the next section of this paper.

3.2.3 Jesus Opens the Way to Enter God's Rest

The object of faith to enter God's rest is related to the gospel that is being preached to the readers and even to the wandering Israelites (εὐαγγελίζω, "to tell/announce the good news," 4:2, 6).[71] In the NT, Jesus Christ is the core gospel message.[72] In Hebrews, Jesus, His life, and works are the good news of salvation. His supremacy is preached in various ways as the Son of God, Apostle, High Priest, and Davidic King. In the immediate context of Heb 3–4, Jesus became like His brethren in all things to suffer for the remissions of their sins, to become a merciful and faithful high priest, to aid them from temptation, and to sympathize with their weakness (2:17–18; 4:14), etc.

Table 1: The Expressions to Enter God's Κατάπαυσις in Hebrews

Text	Expressions
Heb 3:11	εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, "they shall not enter My rest"
Heb 3:18	μὴ εἰσελεύσεσθαι εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ, "they would not enter His rest"
Heb 4:1	Φοβηθῶμεν οὖν, μήποτε καταλειπομένης ἐπαγγελίας εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ, "therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest"
Heb 4:3a	εἰσερχόμεθα γὰρ εἰς [τὴν] κατάπαυσιν οἱ πιστεύσαντες, "for we who have believed enter that rest"

[70] See O'Brien, *Letter to Hebrews*, 164.

[71] The verb εὐαγγελίζω is only used twice in Hebrews (4:2, 6) in the participle: εὐηγγελισμένοι (4:2) and εὐαγγελισθέντες (4:6). In Heb 4:2, the participle εὐηγγελισμένοι is a periphrastic perfect indicative. Perfect "emphasizes the completeness of the evangelization that has taken place, and thus leaves no room for any excuse that evangelization had been inadequate or deficient (Hughes)" (Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998], para. 37256). Hence, the good news about the Messiah had been preached completely even to those wandering Israelites. However, they rejected it because of unbelief and disobedience.

[72] Louw and Nida, *GELNT*, s.v. "εὐαγγελίζω."

Heb 4:3b	εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, "they shall not enter My rest"
Heb 4:5	εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, "they shall not enter My rest"
Heb 4:10	ὁ γὰρ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ, "for the one who has entered His rest"
Heb 4:11	σπουδάσωμεν οὖν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς ἐκείνην τὴν κατάπαυσιν, "therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest"

Entering God's rest for His people becomes a reality through Jesus, the High Priest, who entered into the heavenly sanctuary, which is αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν (sing.), "the heaven itself" (9:24). The heavenly sanctuary itself is part of the heavens (pl.), not the entire heaven.[73] The phrase "heaven itself" is mentioned in contrast to the earthly sanctuary ("copy of the true one" [i.e., heavenly sanctuary], 9:24) in relation to the heavenly place where Jesus entered into when He passed through the heavens (pl.)—not the earthly one made by men. God's rest and His throne of grace in the heavenly sanctuary are logically, structurally, and contextually connected and parallel. This connection is also seen in the three consecutive inferential hortatory commands in Heb 4:11, 14, and 16:

1. "Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest [κατάπαυσιν]" (v. 11).
2. "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (v. 14).

[73] In Heb 4:14, the phrase τοὺς οὐρανούς (pl.), "the heavens," represents the location of God's sanctuary where Jesus, the high priest, passed through or entered into. "The heavens" are the places where the throne of God (ὁ θρόνος τῆς χάριτος, "the throne of grace") is located as stated in v. 16. In Heb 8:1–2, Jesus, the great high priest, is depicted as sitting "at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in the heavens [οὐρανοῖς], a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man." The throne of grace/Majesty is in the heavenly sanctuary. Both the heavenly sanctuary and the throne of grace are in the heavens. So, when Jesus passed through the heavens, He entered into the more perfect sanctuary through His blood (9:11–12), "into the inner veil" (6:19), and sat "at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (8:1; cf. 10:12). The places heavens, sanctuary (two-partite holy place), and throne of God denote from general to specific areas in heaven. Comparatively, similar expressions/words are mentioned (e.g., "throne," "heaven/s," "sanctuary") to point out that Jesus entered the sanctuary as the "heaven itself" (9:24), which is God's dwelling place (spatial).

3. "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace" (v. 16).

Verse 11 (and vv. 12–13, B') concludes the preceding verses about the promise of rest (3:1–10). It is an exhortation to enter God's rest while it is open diligently. Verses 14–16 (A') are the bracketing conclusion of the section (Heb 3–4) built on vv. 11–13. The admonition to hold fast the confession refers to the confession of faith and hope in Jesus, "the Apostle and High Priest" (3:1; 10:23). Verse 16 is thematically parallel with v. 11 in the sense of moving to a place: "let us be diligent to enter [God's] rest"[74] and "let us draw near to the throne of grace." The verb προσέρχομαι, "to move toward, to approach, to come near to," denotes moving "toward a reference point,"[75] namely, toward the throne of grace. In other words, the author of Hebrews invites the readers to approach God's throne with confidence that the heavenly temple's door is wide open to welcome them.[76] Jesus opened access to the heavenly sanctuary for His people when "he has passed through [διεληλυθότα][77] the heavens" (v. 14).

The admonitions suggest entering God's rest *now* in Heb 3–4 with future hope. The full realization still awaits in the future. His faithful people can now enter the throne of grace with confidence (by faith—spiritual entrance)[78] because Jesus, their High Priest, is in the very presence of God and sitting at the right hand of His throne, mediating on their behalf (1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2). But when He comes for the "second time for salvation . . . to

[74] The subjunctive σπουδάσωμεν (aor., subj., act. of σπουδάζω, "to be in a hurry, to make haste, to be in earnest, to concentrate one's energies on the achievement of a goal, to endeavor") "is hortatory expressing a command ('let us')" (Rogers and Rogers, *New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, para. 37314).

[75] Louw and Nida, *GELNT*, s.v. "προσέρχομαι."

[76] Johnsson, "Hebrews," 1834.

[77] The perfect verb διεληλυθότα (act. part. from διέρχομαι, "to pass through, to go through") "indicates that he [Jesus] has passed through the heavens and is still there" (Rogers and Rogers, *New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, para. 37346).

[78] Profound examples of "already-not-yet" experiences of God's people that is connected to faith are expounded in Heb 11–12, but not in Heb 3–4. In Heb 12:18, 22–24; 13:14, the believers are portrayed as that they "have come" (προσεληλύθατε, perf. ind. act.) already to the untouchable place, namely, "to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than *the blood* of Abel."

those who eagerly await Him" (9:28), they will fully experience such entrance to His rest in a face-to-face fellowship.

Furthermore, the clause εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου, "they shall not enter My rest" is comparatively parallel with the following phrases in other passages:

1. εἰσερχομένην εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος, "one which enters within the veil" (6:19).
2. εἰσῆλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια, "He entered the holy place" (9:12).
3. οὐ γὰρ εἰς χειροποίητα εἰσῆλθεν ἅγια Χριστός . . . ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν, "for Christ did not enter a holy place . . . but into heaven itself" (9:24).
4. ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὰ ἅγια, "the high priest enters the holy place [sanctuary]" (9:25).[79]

The majority of the remaining occurrences of εἰσέρχομαι in Hebrews (6x—6:19, 20; 9:12, 24, 25; 10:5) refers to the entrance of Christ into the heavenly sanctuary to secure eternal redemption through His blood (6:19, 20; 9:12, 25). One refers to the entrance of the Levitical high priest to the earthly sanctuary yearly (9:25). Then, one refers to Jesus's entrance to the world (10:5) to fulfill God's will concerning the sacrifices and offerings of the old covenant to establish the new covenant by His once for all sacrifice (see 10:1–10). Through His sufficient sacrificial blood, He entered the heavenly sanctuary before the presence of God and sat on His throne as High Priest, King, and Mediator (1:3; 8:1–2; 9:12, 24; 12:2). These substantial pieces of evidence strongly suggests that God's κατάπαυσις is parallel to His throne and/or sanctuary.

Additionally, Heb 10:19–25, structurally and linguistically parallel to Heb 4:14–16 (and 3:1–6), reiterates and clarifies the concept of entering God's rest as His dwelling place. Hebrews 10:19 explicitly states that the believers can enter into the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus: "Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus." The present active participle ἔχοντες (from ἔχω, "to have, hold")

[79] Regarding the interpretation of τὰ ἅγια as the whole sanctuary (with two apartments), see the discussion in Alwyn P. Salom, "*Ta Hagia* in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook, *Daniel and Revelation Committee Series* (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1989), 4:219–27; A. Ganoune Diop, "Does Hebrew 9:8 Refer to the Most Holy Place in the Heavenly Sanctuary?" in *Interpreting Scripture: Bible Questions and Answers*, ed. Gerhard Pfandl, Biblical Research Institute Studies (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2010), 2:412–15.

denotes "a continual possession"[80] of confidence to enter, namely, the εἴσοδος, "entrance" of the sanctuary. This assurance gives the believers free access to God's sanctuary even at the present time.[81] Such access to the sanctuary becomes possible through the sacrifice of Jesus, as "a new and living way," which He inaugurated (v. 20); thus, He also became "a great High Priest over the house of God" (v. 21).

The following exhortations in Heb 10:22–25 (cf. 4:11, 14, 16) reveal the attitudes and characters of those who have the confidence to enter the presence of God in the heavenly sanctuary because of Jesus's blood and high priesthood:

1. *Draw near to God with a sincere heart:* "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (v. 22).
2. *Hold fast the confession of hope:* "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (v. 23).
3. *Motivate to love one another and encourage them to continue assembly meeting:* "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another;* and all the more as you see the day drawing near" (vv. 24–25).

Therefore, the promised rest in Heb 3–4 refers to the heavenly dwelling place of God (sanctuary) where His throne of grace is located (4:16). It is the resting place where Jesus does His highpriestly ministry. This place is still open for the believers. To enter it and "draw near" to Him (10:22), they need to be faithful, confident, and diligent (4:11) through the blood of Jesus.[82]

4. Conclusion

The entering into God's rest is the same as Jesus's entering the heavenly sanctuary as the promise of rest, based on Ps 95:7–11 in Heb 3–4. The innerbiblical and Christological reading of Ps 95:7–11 in Heb 3–4 provides the basis for the ongoing availability of entering God's rest as spatial rest for His people with a salvific sense. The author of Hebrews warns them against

[80] Rogers and Rogers, *New Linguistic and Exegetical Key*, para. 38283.

[81] O'Brien, *Letter to Hebrews*, 363.

[82] So, this paper agrees with the conclusion of O'Brien, Calaway, Nunes, and other scholars (though with different explanations) regarding God's rest as His domain or resting place/sanctuary in Heb 3–4.

unbelief and apostasy and exhorts them to remain faithful and confidently strive to enter His rest while it is still "today." God's κατάπαυσις and σαββατισμός in Heb 3–4 should be understood in the context of Jesus's supremacy, faithfulness, high priesthood, and entrance to the heavenly sanctuary to be in God's presence. Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary through His blood and sat down at the right hand of God's throne as the High Priest, King, and Mediator of the new covenant, applying the benefits of His atoning sacrifice on the cross to the believers to boldly approach and worship Him.

Jesus is the bridge to understanding the relationship between God's κατάπαυσις and His sanctuary: Christ in His sanctuary. He is the key that unlocks the entrance to God's heavenly rest. Therefore, believers' entering God's rest and Jesus's entering the heavenly sanctuary are parallel, suggesting that κατάπαυσις refers to God's throne/sanctuary, the center of His governance and salvation—the ultimate destination of His people. Through faith in Jesus—the anchor of their souls (6:19), the author and perfecter of their faith (12:2)—the believers can now boldly come to the throne of grace (spiritual entrance) to worship God and find true spiritual rest, salvation, hope, mercy, and grace in times of need (4:16). To enter His rest can be fully experienced at the second coming of Jesus and beyond when His people will dwell in the final resting place with God face to face to celebrate σαββατισμός for eternity.

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Thesis and Dissertation Abstracts

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A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences of the Seventh-day Adventist Second-Generation Genocide Survivors in Rwanda: Towards A Strategy of Inner Healing from Generational Trauma

Researcher: Olivier Kayitare, DMin, 2023
Research advisor: Dioi Cruz, DMin

Twenty-nine years after the genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda, the Rwandans have made collective efforts to recover and heal from the genocide's effects. However, many Rwandan survivors are still coping with the genocide's trauma. Given the limited mental health resources of the country, it is practically impossible to meet all the needs of the traumatized. There is, therefore, a pressing need for an inner healing strategy to help the genocide survivors in Rwanda heal, for unresolved trauma has been transmitted across generations.

This project looked at the experiences of Seventh-day Adventist second-generation genocide survivors in Rwanda. The existing literature related to the problem— books, articles, encyclopedias, and Scriptures—were reviewed to develop an effective inner healing strategy. An inner healing strategy was developed to contribute to the emotional healing of Seventh-day Adventist second-generation genocide survivors in Rwanda. This strategy emphasizes seven inner healing tools. The practice of this inner healing strategy also emphasizes five steps.

The inner healing strategy developed in this study will help me and the church leaders-trainees to develop skills for inner healing from generational trauma. It will provide awareness about the strategy for emotional healing to pastors and elders to help others find emotional healing. The church leaders' training will help Seventh-day Adventist professionals in their job of promoting emotional healing. It will help the Rwanda Union Mission of the

Seventh-day Adventist Church and the country in general reduce the number of people suffering from generational trauma and facilitate reconciliation.

Kinship in the Context of Discipleship in the Gospel of Matthew: An Exegetical and Sociocultural Study

Researcher: Sanned P. Lubani, PhD, 2023
Research advisor: Hector O. Martin, PhD

This dissertation examines the relationship between kinship and discipleship in the Matthean Gospel. New Testament scholars agree that kinship is perhaps the primary sociocultural domain of the circum-Mediterranean region and that discipleship is one of the major themes in the Gospel of Matthew. Some NT scholars have studied these two components of the Gospel as separate entities, while others attempt to connect them. In the Gospel, kinship appears to permeate relational expressions, and such permeation occurs in the context of discipleship in the following selected texts (Matt 4:18–22; 8:18–22; 10:5–42; 12:46–50; 19:27–30 and 20:20–23). This investigation notes an intersection of kinship and discipleship where the following sociocultural deviations occur: devolution of kinship nomenclature; abandonment of the family, inheritance, roles, and responsibilities; redefinition of a family; and breach of kinship customs and traditions. The deviations in the Gospel suggest a sociocultural crisis in the Matthean community.

This investigation employs an exegetical and sociocultural analysis in examining the intersection of kinship and discipleship in the selected texts. Chapter 1 proposes the intersection of kinship and discipleship. Hence, it delineates the statement of the problem, methodology, purpose, significance of the study, and delimitations. Chapter 2 discusses kinship as a sociocultural domain, the conceptual background of kinship, and discipleship. Chapter 3 is the exegetical and sociocultural analysis of the study. Chapter 4 is the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

This study offers, first, a sociocultural interpretation of the selected texts in Matthew and better reflects his usage of kinship and discipleship notions which convey the intersection. Second, it shows that Matthew developed the intersection of kinship in the context of discipleship thematically. Third, the research also concludes that the tension between the two components is due to the itinerant type of discipleship Jesus adopted. Fourth, it also finds

that Jesus's form of discipleship reminisces the itinerant prophetic ministry and the Qumran lifestyle of figurative brotherhood. Fifth, the study concludes that the factors leading to the departure from one's family cannot be applied generally but on a case by case basis. Finally, Jesus honored family and marriage but demanded absolute allegiance from the disciples, which subordinated kinship.

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Book Reviews

Steffen, Tom and William Bjoraker. *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics: As Good Today as It Was for the Hebrew Bible and First-Century Christianity*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2020. Pp. xxx + 357. Paperback $45.00, Hardback $63.00, eBook $42.00.

Tom Steffen and William Bjoraker both have experience working missiologically with non-Christian and non-Western groups. Fifteen years Steffen worked among the animistic Ifugao in Luzon, Philippines, while Bjoraker served as a missionary to the Jewish people for over 35 years. Therefore, they both come to the topic with practical experience. Their ministry made them rethink their approach as they saw more clearly the deficiencies of traditional textual-teaching models and the utility of more oral-teaching models (pp. xvii–xxii). They vocalize a disturbance with the apparent discrepancy between how the Bible is taught in Seminaries and what students seem to need for the work in the field (pp. 1–4). *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics* is an argument for the need of oral hermeneutics to be included—not to the exclusion of textual and literary approaches—but as an essential

ingredient in the proper training of theologians and pastors. As R. Daniel Shaw writes in the foreword, "the book models the authors' intent to help nonoral processors rediscover the art of storying on the one hand, and hearing God's word on the other" (p. xii).

I remember when we were asked to go and do rural ministry in Vesterålen, North of Norway. Traditionally, farming and fishing have been the central sources of income, and the population is rather pragmatic in its outlook on life. I experienced having to hide my academic background, since this distanced me from the people I was supposed to work with. I also experienced that my academic training had poorly equipped me for work in this setting. Those who performed decently in school often left for higher education in other cities, never to return, and it was not uncommon for individuals to struggle with dyslexia. While here we invited Svein Tindberg. Tindberg is an actor who was a non-believer turned a believer when he prepared a performance of the Gospel of Mark. Today, he is one of the foremost Bible communicators in Norway, and it is fascinating to see how he again and again can fill the seats in urban and rural secular settings by simply retelling the Bible stories using oral techniques from the theatre. *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics* is a more systematic reflection of such effects and how oral teaching models appeal to persons in various settings.

The Return of Oral Hermeneutics consists of three parts: Part 1 "Demonstrations," Part 2 "Propositions," and Part 3 "Echoes." The first and last parts consist of examples in the form of transcripts of oral teaching of the narratives about Elisha combined with further reflections on oral hermeneutics. Part 2, the main section of the book, "lays out [their] *propositional proposals* on oral hermeneutics" (p. xxvi, italics original). The chapters in this section discuss how orality influences text and teaching, suggest corrections to textual hermeneutics, Hebrew hermeneutics, attempt to present a more holistic model that does not discard systematic theology, biblical theology, or narrative theology, but tries to go beyond these, and discuss different models for communicating the Bible.

The authors state the purpose of the book as follows: "The book builds the case for *the return of oral hermeneutics* to better understand, interpret, and teach the Bible ('the book') in the twenty-first century at home and abroad, using oral means" (p. xvii, italics original). They formulate the book's central question: "*Why is it important to know and practice oral hermeneutics to ascertain and communicate biblical meaning?*" (pp. xxiii, 105, and 294, italics original).

While it is often assumed that a text-oriented analytic and methodological approach should be the privileged approach in biblical studies, they find

that it tends "to elicit shallow content, abstract ideas, and be driven by the legal value-moral system of innocence and guilt generally preferred in the West" (p. xx). They summarize "textual hermeneutics" (TH) as it "tends to focus on fixed documents, preferably the earliest Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, grammatical analysis, lexical tools requiring linear, line-by-line, word-by-word studies, definitions. This is then packaged clearly and crisply in systematic categories after hours of often private study and little immediate feedback." It privileges "trained professionals" as needed for the proper elucidation of the Bible and a spectator role, "values rigid rightness anchored in specificity and preciseness, often separated from events in which they are embedded," and favor "rigid modes of investigation that are highly informed by Western culture." It "prefers to define and explain rather than describe and portray." And transformation, internal change and spiritual formation, "may or may not transpire" (pp. 15–16).

In contrast, they define oral hermeneutics (OH) as tending "to focus on the communal oral telling, demonstration, discussion, interpretation, repetition, and application of the biblical grand narrative and all the smaller stories that compose her. There is (un)planned collective telling, interpretation, with various applications, all unfolded and unpacked through discussion of the Bible characters. Interaction in the group tends to be extemporaneous, experiential, intutitive, verbal, and visual." The Bible stories are heard through performance, and witnessed as an interaction between text and audience, with a focus on the characters of the story and discoveries unfolding nonsequentially. It "champions collectivism, volunteerism, the big picture, comprehensiveness, fulsomeness, and the progressive repetition of repeated themes." It "advances shades of ambiguity, the affective and intuitive, and the subjective." It invites participation, and "those who exit the stage are changed people; they are never the same because they just lived someone else's life" (pp. 16–18). On pp. 133–34 they provide a summary of "the multiple components that comprise orality," as the authors see it, and p. 307 for the oral-textual hermeneutic continuum as they outline it. On pp. 224–28 they list helpful questions focusing on the character and their values in narratives as they can be used in oral teaching.

The Return of Oral Hermeneutics is a helpful challenge and reflection around the need of oral hermeneutics. They argue that it is an essential element together with other traditional approaches. Oral hermeneutics places the prime emphasis upon reliving and experiencing the Bible characters in our own lives. They claim that we often read Bible passages abstractly rational and analytical, while they are essentially presented as character-oriented and calling for a response first and foremost with our hearts. They

ask: "*Why do we Westerners usually assume philosophical and systematic theology is the most profound expression of truth?*" (p. 9, italics original).

For Steffen and Bjoraker it should be a continuum between oral and textual hermeneutics. Both are needed. They write: "OH is *not* a rival to TH, rather it is its *source spring of living water.* OH is *not* a substitute hermeneutic, rather it has a *signature shared role in a specific sequence.* OH is *not* a supplemental hermeneutics, rather it serves as a *catalyst*. OH is *not* just an addition to TH, rather it is its indispensable *bedrock and cornerstone*. OH is *not* a simplistic hermeneutic, rather it is as *complex as TH.* OH is *not* an inferior hermeneutic, rather it is a *different type of hermeneutic that fills in missing gaps found in TH*" (p. 298, italics original). Undoubtedly, Steffen and Bjoraker challenge how we often think about biblical studies and theological training. Working at an institution that trains students who will work in cultures that are more oral than textual, I find myself pondering how I can better prepare my students so they can more effectively communicate the Bible in such settings. But it also leaves me reflecting on how we can use oral hermeneutics to better reach people in Western post-Christian societies, where many no longer read longer texts.

A classical dichotomy is between theory and practice, often ending with practitioners not solidly grounded in the Bible and preachers entertaining the audience with stories that do not transform character. Here, I find the tension between textual and oral hermeneutics presented by Steffen and Bjoraker more helpful and constructive. Theirs is not an argument for simplification and conveniently avoiding deeper reflections. On the contrary, they embrace the complexity and offer a model that has the potential to stay clear of the pitfalls the church often suffers from. While it is easy to see how this may work for teaching biblical narratives, and their point is well taken that other biblical texts also operate in the more oral register, there is still a need to reflect on how more abstract reflections in the Bible should best be communicated.

I felt the text was repetitive and redundant at several points in the reading. They frequently give questions in italics throughout the text, and it feels very much like basically the same questions are asked again and again. I am unsure whether the circularity and repetitions were intended or not, as I did not see the authors reflecting on their own style of writing. Are they trying to demonstrate how orality can be done in written texts? At points in the text, we are given serial quotes from various authors without any deeper engagement with the secondary literature. In my studies of repetition with variation in the Bible, it seems that the biblical authors were fond of repetition, but it is typically combined with creative variation. I would suggest

that the use of the oral register in writing should not lead us into simple repetitions, but we should simultaneously seek creative repetition with variation, so as to drive the reflection forward, as is frequently seen in the biblical text.

Further, while the significance of the Gutenberg printing press is obvious, I also feel they "blame" the shift too much on the poor man (pp. xviii, 11). The general move towards our current textual mindset was gradual and took place over centuries.

It seems evident that oral teaching is a good way to communicate the Bible stories to children, and engage them with the biblical characters. However, I did not see reflections on how oral hermeneutics should be adapted for children. More reflection around this would be helpful, and *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics* will be a valuable resource for those willing to do so.

I found *The Return of Oral Hermeneutics* to be a refreshing read that challenged me as a biblical reader and teacher of the Bible. Steffen and Bjoraker call their book an introduction, and it requires more thinking around how we can incorporate oral hermeneutics in our studies and teaching of the Bible. They have given us a good starting point for such a reflection.

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Mueller, Ekkehardt, and Elias Brasil de Souza, eds. *Sexuality: Contemporary Issues from a Biblical Perspective*. Silver Spring, MD: Review and Herald, 2022. xvii + 608 pp. ISBN 978-0925675-34-7. Paperback, $25.00.

Ekkehardt Mueller, ThD, DMin, a retired associate director of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, holds a doctorate from Andrews University and has authored numerous scholarly articles and books in English and German. Elias Brasil de Souza, PhD, serves as the institute's current director. With a PhD in Old Testament Studies from Andrews University, he has held roles as a pastor, professor, and dean, contributing extensively to academic publications in English and Portuguese.

Sexuality: Contemporary Issues from a Biblical Perspective, edited by Ekkehardt Mueller and Elias Brasil de Souza, offers a thorough examination of sexuality through a Seventh-day Adventist biblical framework. As the second volume following Marriage: Biblical and Theological Aspects, this

608-page work features contributions from multiple scholars across 20 chapters. It explores a wide range of topics, including marriage, cohabitation, polygamy, sexual addiction, rape, and queer theology, providing a robust foundation for understanding contemporary sexual ethics. This review is structured in paragraphs, each covering three chapters, except for the final paragraph, which addresses two chapters.

"*Chapter 1*: *Humans as Sexual Beings*" Laurentiu Ionescu employs a linguistic-cognitive approach to argue that biblical sexuality is rooted in the binary of "male and female" (zakhar uneqevah), emphasizing non-interchangeable Hebrew gender terms. His rigorous exegesis provides a compelling foundation for the biblical binary framework. However, the conservative tone may alienate readers who view gender as socially constructed, limiting engagement with broader gender discourses. "*Chapter 2*: *Porneia: Sexual Immorality*" Ekkehardt Mueller examines porneia (sexual immorality) in the Septuagint and New Testament, defining it as sexual sins outside heterosexual monogamous marriage and advocating repentance. The study's textual depth is notable, but its focus on prohibition could be balanced with scripture's affirmative views on intimacy. Engaging contemporary ethical debates would enhance its relevance. "*Chapter 3*: *Does Sexual Intercourse Constitute Marriage*?" Richard M. Davidson and Mueller argue that sexual intercourse does not constitute marriage, which requires covenantal commitment, deeming premarital sex sinful. Their emphasis on covenantal ethics aligns with biblical principles, but the analysis lacks guidance for cultures without formal marriage ceremonies. Practical strategies to promote commitment across diverse contexts would strengthen the chapter.

"*Chapter 4*: *Uncommitted Relationships*: *Cohabitation*" Johannes Kovar traces the historical and biblical disapproval of cohabitation, offering pastoral guidance. His historical context is insightful, and practical suggestions are valuable. However, addressing socioeconomic drivers of cohabitation and balancing biblical principles with empathy for cohabiting couples' realities would enhance the argument. "*Chapter 5*: *Singleness and Sexuality*" Gerhard Pfandl, Demóstenes de Silva, and Luiz Carlos Gondim present singleness as a biblical blessing, offering strategies for managing sexuality. The positive portrayal is refreshing, but actionable church-based support for singles navigating sexual desires requires further development. "*Chapter 6*: *Having a Wife and a Mistress*" Boubakar Sanou explores marital infidelity's global prevalence, proposing prevention and restoration strategies from an Adventist perspective. The focus on consequences and practical approaches is compelling, but greater cultural sensitivity to norms that normalize infidelity would deepen the analysis.

"*Chapter 7*: *Polygamy, Scripture, and Marriage*" Ron du Preez argues that scripture favors monogamy over polygamy, providing guidelines for addressing plural marriage. His biblical analysis is thorough, but navigating polygamous cultures without cultural imposition requires more nuance. "*Chapter 8*: *Reclaiming the Gift of Sexuality*" Deena A. Pitchford defines sexual addiction, particularly internet-based, and outlines recovery paths. Her empathetic suggestions are practical, but addressing social stigma and creating safe church spaces for those struggling with shame would strengthen the approach. "*Chapter 9*: *Prostitution and Human Trafficking*" Vanderlei Domeles and T. P. Kurian evaluate human trafficking biblically, emphasizing God's image in victims and Christian responsibility to oppose it. The theological grounding is powerful, but specific local advocacy strategies for churches are underdeveloped.

"*Chapter 10*: *On Rape*" Dragoslava Santrac and Aleksandar Santrac analyze rape's prevalence and biblical references, offering trauma alleviation suggestions. Their comprehensive approach is commendable, but long-term support strategies for survivors need elaboration. "*Chapter 11*: *Female Genital Mutilation*" Martha D. Duah argues that female genital mutilation contradicts biblical sexuality, proposing steps to curb it. Her human rights perspective is compelling, but exploring church partnerships with secular organizations would enhance practical applicability.

"*Chapter 12*: *Reproduction, Population Control, and Abortion*" Richard M. Davidson asserts that the fetus is human biblically, opposing abortion and life-terminating population control. His sanctity-of-life stance is robust, but addressing maternal health risks or rape-related pregnancies and engaging ethical complexities, such as declining population rates in Western countries, would add depth.

"*Chapter 13*: *Abortion: Terminating Pregnancy*" Ekkehardt Mueller opposes abortion as contrary to biblical principles, urging church support for women facing such decisions. His call for support is commendable, but practical mechanisms for ministering with compassion need further detail. "*Chapter 14*: *Child Sexual Abuse*" Antonio Estrada, Nisim Estrada, and Stephen Bauer condemn child sexual abuse as incompatible with God's character, urging church protection of children. Their moral stance is clear, but specific prevention policies to address social challenges are limited. "*Chapter 15*: *Queer Theology and Sexuality*" Stephen Bauer critiques queer theology's redefinition of biblical marriage and sexuality. His analysis is thorough, but pastoral approaches informed by medical and mental health perspectives would better engage marginalized communities while upholding biblical principles.

"*Chapter 16*: *Homosexuality and Scripture*" Ekkehardt Mueller argues that scripture opposes homosexuality, urging adherence to biblical sexual ethics. His scriptural focus is strong, but pastoral sensitivity to minister to homosexual individuals without alienation requires enhancement. "*Chapter 17*: *Transgenderism*" Elias Brasil de Souza and Larry L. Lichtenwalter critique transgenderism as a social construct, emphasizing biblical sexual complementarity. Their theological stance is clear, but practical pastoral care for transgender individuals needs more attention. "*Chapter 18*: *Towards an Adventist Approach to Transgenderism*" Kwabena Donkor proposes an Adventist response to transgenderism through biblical anthropology. His framework is insightful, but practical engagement strategies balancing doctrine and empathy are limited.

"*Chapter 19*: *Cybersex and Robotic Sex*" Vanderlei Domeles critiques cybersex and robotic sex as artificial, advocating for sexuality within marriage. His biblical critique is clear, but addressing technology's allure among youth would enhance relevance. "*Chapter 20: The Seduction of Forbidden Intimacy*" Alberto R. Timm argues that scripture restricts sex to monogamous heterosexual marriage, offering ethical counsel. His practical guidance is valuable, but addressing emotional drivers of temptation without shame would add depth.

Sexuality: Contemporary Issues from a Biblical Perspective is a significant contribution to Christian sexual ethics within the Seventh-day Adventist framework. Its strengths include: (1) Biblical Fidelity: Each chapter grounds its argument in Scripture, with detailed exegesis (e.g., Ionescu's linguistic analysis, Mueller's porneia study); (2) Comprehensive Scope: The volume addresses a wide range of issues, from marriage to societal challenges like trafficking and transgenderism; and (3) Practical Orientation: Many chapters (e.g., Kovar, Pitchford) offer actionable guidance for pastors and churches. However, the book has limitations: (1) Conservative Bias: The consistent conservative stance may limit dialogue with readers holding progressive views on gender and sexuality (e.g., Bauer's critique of queer theology); (2) Limited Cultural Engagement: Some chapters (e.g., du Preez on polygamy) lack nuance in navigating cultural diversity; and (3) Pastoral Sensitivity: Discussions of controversial topics (e.g., homosexuality, transgenderism) could better balance doctrine with empathy to avoid alienating affected individuals.

This volume is a valuable resource for pastors, scholars, and church members seeking a biblical perspective on contemporary sexual issues. Its scholarly rigor and practical focus make it a significant contribution, though its conservative lens and limited engagement with progressive views may

narrow its audience. The appendix of Adventist statements enhances its utility for church leaders. I recommend it for those navigating these complex topics within a biblical framework, with the caveat that supplementary resources may be needed for broader cultural and pastoral engagement.

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Ngwa, Kenneth N. *Let My People Live: An Africana Reading of Exodus*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2022. Pp. x + 218. Paperback $35.

Kenneth N. Ngwa, PhD, is Professor of Hebrew Bible at Drew Theological School and the Director of the Religion and Global Health Forum.

This book has been written to add clarity to the modern topic of liberation by raising consciousness to the three major tools of imperialism: erasure, alienation, and singularity. Ngwa argues that this consciousness is an antidote to imperialism. This book offers a new dimension of a reader-centered approach to the Exodus narrative. By replacing go" with "live," this book proposes an Africana reading of the Exodus narrative that charges the African to stand against rather than run away to escape the imperial grip. The book is poetic. It is not a theory of disembodied fantasy without historical and geographical specifics. Ngwa has used technical terms sparingly. He uses the persuasive and expository methods to get his points across.

The present book includes the following sections: (1) Prologue: When Your Children Ask You, (2) Introduction: Hermeneutics after Erasure, Alienation, and Singularity, (3) Tears of Redesign: Birthing Exodus and Badass Womanism, (4) Triple Consciousness and the Exodus Narrative, (5) A Postcolonial Africana Reading of Exodus 2, (6) Afroecology and Exodus, (7) Miriam: The Water-Woman and Exodus Ecology, (8) Facing and Backsiding the Mountain and, (9) Conclusion: Let My People Live.

In the prologue, Ngwa describes this volume as a monologue representing the stirring and toiling of his interpretative spirit. Ngwa describes Africana as encompassing the various intersecting ways of understanding, theories, and practices related to collective meaning-making and identity development among individuals of African descent throughout history and across different regions. He constructs a comprehensive theoretical framework incorporating diverse Afro-diasporic conversations, merging them be-

yond geographic and ideological boundaries. These conversations come together under a hermeneutic framework that embraces multiple methodologies. Ngwa employs narrative, postcolonial, and ideological hermeneutics to analyze the Exodus, interpreting it as both a Biblical tale and a literary and liberation symbol. In this work, Ngwa illustrates the extensive and nuanced nature of Africana hermeneutics, engaging with Afrodiasporic voices and critical issues relevant to Africana history, current realities, and future potential. Ngwa claims that the struggle in Exodus' narrative involves three interrelated but distinct experiences with repressive governmental, environmental, and religious institutions: First death-erasure; second, social, ecological, and geographical exile; and third, restricted confinement that stifles multiplicity. Let My People Live, according to Ngwa, is the hermeneutical and material transition from an erased, marginalized, and singularized existence to creative freedom, wholeness, and community that enshrines the full flourishing of the material and interpretive soul/life. These contribute to the hermeneutics of liberation storytelling.

Ngwa contends that the Exodus liberation movement's catalyst ("Let my people go") serves a larger goal. This change, rather than a need to recall or interpret an original story, guides the Africana reading in this book, which is based on the children's inquiry, "What does this service mean to you?" He adds that telling the story is in order to name and resist the structures of erasure, marginalization, and isolation. He sees the bitter life of Exod 1:13 as genealogical, economic, and political life under the stranglehold of subjugation. His encounter with a friend who was theorizing about the new African diaspora, coupled with his son's experience with blackness as isolation, underpins his interpretative metaphor. This book holds that for Africana, Exodus is more than a liberating movement of one group of people out of Egypt to the Promised Land; it is also about transforming structures of oppression.

Ngwa's adoption of this hermeneutics of interlocution is based on the biblical Exodus story and Africana exodus theories of identity formation that emphasizes power that grants access to and control over nephesh, the life force. Ubuntu, the complex Bantu-derived idea of political, social, psychological, and spiritual communal belonging, most widely popularized and implemented by Desmond Tutu, is Ngwa's philosophical and hermeneutical framework for exploring these concerns. He changed the hermeneutical frame from Exodus–exodus (story–motive) to exodus–Exodus (motive-story). The motif, a genre, foregrounds a collective endangered body, investigates and listens to its articulation of survival in between shattered histories and narrative lacunae, and persists to ensure that the tale born

from this motif is fundamentally different from the story to which it reacts. Liberation is more than a reaction to oppression. Ngwa compares the search for life in its fullness to a story of the unending midwifery of badass womanism.

In "Triple Consciousness and the Exodus Narrative," Ngwamaintains that Africana and the Exodus story use consciousness as an ideological and narrative construct to resist erasure by necessity. Displacement and rescue create a second consciousness. Imperialism's or patriarchy's ability and tendency to force global and gendered multiplicity into monologic modes of being and belonging that materialize as homogenizing enclave mentalities and space that support the empire's claims to totalizing supremacy is a third consciousness.

In "A Postcolonial Africana Reading of Exodus 2," Ngwa identifies three Exodus 2 scenarios that try to convert the postcolonial nightmare back into a dream: the blending of private and public identities; the role that an oppressed subgroup played in forming communal identity; and institutional response to Moses' involvement with a marginalized subgroup.

In "Afroecology and Exodus," Ngwa links the depiction of oppression and embittering distress, of fragmentation and interregional survival, of environmental disaster and the transition into the wilderness and mountain area in the Exodus with the growth of extraction economies. He emphasizes the significance of land as a central element in the Exodus story and highlights the importance of recognizing the changing ecological and material resources within African-descended communities. This viewpoint invites Africana readers to examine their complex connections with land, whether in Africa or the diaspora, while reflecting on the intertwined issues of land dispossession and agricultural practices. By applying this lens to the Exodus narrative, Ngwa urges readers to confront the ecological devastation that occurred in Egypt during the Exodus and the ideological rationalizations present in biblical scholarship.

In "Miriam–The Water-Woman and Exodus Ecology," he sees Miriam's name and narrative character to represent the eco-political transformation of alienation, the transformation of erasure, and the manifestation of communal identity over and against single hero narrative.

In "Facing and Backsiding the Mountain," he asserts that the mountain is not just the sight where Exodus imagination starts but also a site that needs to be transformed by the linking objects of liberation work.

In his conclusion, Ngwa argues that oppression is a choking mechanism and that the Exodus story is a narrative about the audacious claim that life can be created out of death. This creation is not just as a function of moving

from one place to another. It is also a function of process, of redesign, that transforms, to varying degrees, national, global, and imperial structures of oppression.

Ngwa posits that the Hebrew identity emerged as a reaction to efforts at erasure and was influenced by migration. Given that this migration originated in Africa, this Hebrew community in the diaspora should be recognized as part of the African diaspora. This perspective introduces new questions for interpretation, such as: Are there parallels between this historical African diasporic community and modern African diasporas? Additionally, how would our understanding of Ancient Israel's history change if we viewed the experiences of the Exodus community through the lens of an African diaspora?

Let My People Live provides a tangible instance of culturally relevant biblical interpretation within the realm of biblical studies that integrates Africana and womanist interpretations, allowing African diaspora readers to understand their interests and issues through the lens of Africana history, literature, art, and figures. Using an allegory based on the Exodus story, Ngwa shows how Africans in the diaspora currently deal with their circumstances and presents a fresh perspective on the Exodus narrative to combat tyranny on multiple fronts, including political, social, economic, and ecological. Let My People Live, apart from its reader-centered reading of the Exodus narrative, can serve as a crucial reference point for contemporary postcolonial struggles and enrich the significance of the Exodus story for Africana. I recommend it as a piece of academic reading for anyone concerned with freeing Africa and African people from oppression, both within the continent and throughout the rest of the world. This book would be suitable for a class of that nature.

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Tooman, William A. *The Torah Unabridged: The Evolution of Intermarriage Law in the Hebrew Bible*. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2022. Pp. 150. Paperback $33.

In his book *The Torah Unabridged,* Tooman begins with an introduction followed by three chapters in which he explores in detail intermarriage laws.

This is the main topic of his book. The first chapter deals with explicit intermarriage laws in the Torah; the second chapter explores the deployment of intermarriage laws in Joshua and Kings; and the third and last chapter discusses the deployment of intermarriage laws in Ezra-Nehemiah. The book ends with a conclusion recapitulating all his discussions.

Right at the beginning of the introduction, Tooman notes that the laws in Torah are incomplete since biblical codes dealing with many everyday legal issues are absent. He mentions, for example, that the Torah does not regulate the marriage institution, legitimate or illegitimate divorce (p. 1), prayer (p. 2), what activities were or were not permitted on the Sabbath (p. 5), etc. He notices "the gapped quality of the Torah's law codes" and finds that for the Torah law codes to be operative, interpretation was necessary. Consequently, exegetes expanded the parameters of the application of the laws. Laws on a particular topic appear in multiple law codes. One law could widen the relevance of another by making it applicable to additional situations, circumstances, or persons (p. 5). Exegetes could explain, expand, or adapt laws. This process was achieved through the reformulation, adaptation, interpretation, and application of those laws (p. 7).

In the first chapter, Tooman traces the evolution of the explicit intermarriage laws within the Torah and indicates that explicit prohibitions against intermarriage appear only in Exod 34:11–16 and Deut 7:1–6 (p. 11). The source of the intermarriage prohibition, as Tooman points out, derives from the law found in Exod 23:20–27 dealing with the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. It prohibited covenants with the land's inhabitants. Canaanites would be driven out bit by bit, and worshiping their gods would be a snare to the Israelites (p. 12). This law was maintained but with significant adaptations in Exod 34:11–16, through the addition of a law prohibiting marriages between Israelites and Canaanites, after Israelites failed to drive out the Canaanites in a single generation. Exodus 23:32–33 indicates that Israelites and the six nations present in the Promised Land would continue to coinhabit in Canaan (p. 22). Judges 2:1–3 also rewrites Exod 23:20–33 and warns that Israelites and Canaanites would continue coinhabiting due to the failure to exterminate the Canaanites. As a result of the revision of Exod 23:20–33, Exod 34:10–12, 16 introduced the intermarriage prohibition law for the first time. This evolution from a covenant ban to an intermarriage ban was rather a legal extension of the interdiction of making covenants with the six nations (Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Cannanites, Hivittes, and the Jebusites) which were to be destroyed in Exod 23:23. Exodus 34:10–12 also reinterprets "snare" not as worshiping Canaanites gods, but as Canaanite women who will lead Israelites men to worship Canaanite gods.

Tooman indicates what happened in the subsequent stage. Deuteronomy 7:1–6 combined with Exod 23:20–33 and Exod 34:10–16 and brought together the contradiction between extermination command and the ban of making a covenant with the six nations and intermarriage. In Deut 7, the prohibition of intermarriage law expanded the logic of intermarriage prohibition and added to the six nations (Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, and Cannanites, Hivittes, and the Jebusites), a seventh nation to be banned., namely the Girgashites (p. 36). The intermarriage law at that stage included Israelite women who were not mentioned before. They could not marry Canaanite men. The danger of intermarriage was reinterpreted as an individual religious cultic threat (sons and daughters) and it was extended to the threat of Israel's purity and even to the threat of the destruction of all Israel by God. The development of the intermarriage law was due to three main factors. The first is the failure to eradicate the Canaanites; the second factor is the need to preserve the various laws like that of eradicating the six nations and the Canaanite religions and practices (Exod 23:20–27), the prohibitions of making a covenant with the Canaanites (23:32–33); and the third and last factor is the persistent presence of the land's people in Canaan (p. 37).

In the second chapter, Tooman discussed the deployment of intermarriage law in Joshua and Kings where he found that Joshua 23 and 1 Kgs 11:1–11 fit in the evolution of intermarriage laws (pp. 54–55). As he noticed, Josh 23 seems to be close to Exod 23:20–33, 34:10–12, and Deut 7:1–6. Joshua 23 prohibited all marriage with the nations without naming them, and this change expanded the intermarriage ban from six nations in Exod 23:23–33; 34:11 to seven nations in Deut 7:1 and finally to all Canaanite nations in Josh 23. In 1 Kings 11, the author extended the trajectory taken by his legal predecessors, hence, the intermarriage law was extended to include the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians, Idumeans, Chettites, Amorites, and Edomites. This extension is informed by Deut 23:4–9, which excluded Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, and Egyptians from the congregation of the Lord, an exclusion understood in 1 Kings 11 as an intermarriage prohibition. Joshua 23:12 also increases the number of intermarriage laws by putting the verb "enter" in parallel with "marry," which makes it possible for the command of Deut 23:4–9 to be part of intermarriage laws (pp. 55–56).

The third chapter deals with the deployment of intermarriage laws in Ezra–Nehemiah. The author indicates that Nehemiah used Deut 7:3 retroactively and applied it to existing marriages, not just preventively to potential future ones. Nehemiah believed that the Torah gave him the power to apply the law even to already established marriages (p. 63). For Nehemiah,

intermarriage is not evil because of its consequences, but intermarriage itself is an "act of great evil" and a "treachery" to the God of Israel. In Ezra 9:1–2, the charges of some officials brought to Ezra indicate that the people had failed to separate themselves from the Moabites, Egyptians, and Edomites (Deut 23:4–9), which implies that officials esteemed Deut 23:4–9 to be an intermarriage regulation (p. 81). In Ezra-Nehemiah's time, it was not a matter of regulating interaction with specific people, considering how the author extended Lev 18:24–30 and magnified the threat of gentiles by their behaviors, as permanently prone to "abominations" (p. 82). Therefore, it was necessary to separate themselves from all the Gentiles. The rationale behind this separation was that holy and profane things could not be mixed because the mixture of the holy seed with gentiles was an "evil deed" and "great guilt," a sin that would lead to the destruction of Israel. Not only intermarriage with any gentile was proscribed, but all intermarriages were also to be dissolved and gentile spouses and illegitimate children had to be expelled from the community(p. 83).

The main feature of the evolution of intermarriage laws is the continual widening of restrictions. Tooman noted that each time there was an intermarriage restriction, "it expanded the sphere of relevance, gradually prohibiting marriages with more Canaanite nations, more neighboring nations, and finally with all Gentiles" (p. 84). As a synopsis of the logical operation in the evolution of intermarriage law, the failure to drive out Canaanite nations required an adaptation of the law regulating Israel's interaction with the Canaanites. Yahweh's prohibition against making covenants with Canaanites and the ban of Canaanite religions (Exod 23:28–33) was adjusted and became a prohibition against marriage with Canaanites. Later, the image of the snare of Canaanite religion (Exod 23:33) was reinterpreted and applied to Canaanite people (Exod 34:12). In the following stage, Deut 7: 1–6 extended the applicability of the intermarriage prohibition to both Israelites and Canaanites. Joshua 23 added other Gentile nations, and Deut 23:4–9 became part of the intermarriage laws. After the exile, Nehemiah dissolved existing marriages, a stage which demonstrated an evolution in the understanding of the intermarriage law in Nehemiah's time. Eight exegetical operations were used: explication of implicature, inclusion, specification, gap filling, coordination, semantic modification, transfer of referent, and analogical reasoning (pp. 85–87). Tooman found that the main hermeneutical assumptions for the biblical exegetes or legal redactors were: (1) the content of a law cannot be reduced to the sum of its explicit semantics; (2) the sphere of force exerted by a law was very malleable in the hand of a biblical writer; and (3) the diverse laws in Torah are coherent (pp. 88–89).

Tooman's book contains many insights in relation to the evolution of the intermarriage law. He clearly traces the different stages of the intermarriage law in the Old Testament and touches on all important biblical texts dealing with intermarriage in chronological order from the settlement to the post-exilic period. His conclusions and all the points he makes are text-based and derive from a clear and deep exegetical analysis.

However, Tooman's assumptions are based on the documentary hypothesis as it is revealed through his mentioning of certain texts as belonging to E or J sources. He classifies Exod 23 and Exod 34, respectively, in E and J sources (p. 12), tearing apart the unity of Scripture. Though he denies it, Tooman's assumption guides his reasoning on this subject of intermarriage, and makes questionable some of the points he makes in this book. For example, his assumption that Deut 7:1–6 derives from Josh 23 and not vice versa (p. 55) defies biblical internal evidence, which makes questionable his conclusion. Furthermore, Tooman's stratigraphy of the Scripture, especially that of Neh 13:1–3 and Neh 13:4–31 (p. 62) can affect the reliability of some of the points he makes.

To conclude this review, it is worth asserting that Tooman provides a good discussion which offers a deep and comprehensive study of the evolution of intermarriage laws in the Hebrew Bible. *The Torah Unabridged* is a scholarly work conducted with a diachronic approach and an exegetical analysis of most relevant biblical texts on intermarriage. Despite the scholarly aspects of this book, Tooman used a style that can be read and understood by both scholars and biblical students at the undergraduate or graduate level. It contains many insights regarding the evolution of intermarriage laws in the Hebrew Bible and can help whoever needs to explore more about this topic.

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Mbuvi, Andrew M. African Biblical Studies: Unmasking Embedded Racism and Colonialism in Biblical Studies. London: T&T Clark, 2023. Pp. 228. Paperback $31.75, Kindle $27.16.

Andrew M. Mbuvi is a visiting Near East History Chair in Religious Studies and Associate Professor in the Religious Studies Department at Albright College, USA.

The colonial presumptions of universal norms that serve to undercut Africans' interpretive agency in Bible studies are well-exposed in this work. To decolonize and exorcise the demon of racism in academic biblical studies, the writer has employed a limited number of technical terminologies. African Biblical Studies takes the reader on an upsetting journey through the historical context of academic biblical studies, illuminating how it is intertwined with contemporary colonialism. It provides a thorough and well-informed overview of the major theories in African biblical studies by tracing the connections between the development of the field of biblical studies and European colonialism. In doing so, the author discusses the history of colonialism and provides some examples of how biblical studies may be decolonized.

The book is divided into three parts to contribute to the decline of Western hegemony in biblical studies. Part I, The Bible, Colonialism, and Biblical Studies, contains three chapters: Chapter 1, "Introduction"; Chapter 2, "Colonialism and the European Enlightenment"; and Chapter 3, "Western Biblical Study and African Colonialism." Part II, The Bible, Colonial Encounter, and Unexpected Outcome, also contains three chapters: Chapter 4, "Bible Translation as Biblical Interpretation: The Colonial Bible"; Chapter 5, "The Bible and African Reality"; and Chapter 6, "Emerging African Postcolonial Biblical Criticism." Part III, African Biblical Study: Setting a Postcolonial Agenda, contains eight chapters: Chapter 7, "Decolonizing the Bible: A Postcolonial Response"; Chapter 8, "The Bible and Postcolonial African Literature"; Chapter 9, "Rewriting the Bible: Recasting the Colonial Text"; Chapter 10, "Eschatology, Colonialism, and Mission: An African Critique of Linear Eschatology"; Chapter 11, "Ordinary Readers and the Bible: Non-Academic Biblical Interpretation"; Chapter 12, "Gender, Sexuality, and the Bible in Africa"; Chapter 13, "Christology in Africa: 'Who Do You Say I Am?'"; and Chapter 14, "Conclusion: Towards a Decolonized Bible Study." The book concludes with a bibliography, author name, subject, and biblical references indices.

In the introduction, Mbuvi bemoans the assumption that there is a single, standardized discipline of biblical studies that everyone follows and agrees upon and that this discipline is assumed to represent an accurate, unbiased interpretation of the Bible. This viewpoint has been prevalent since the advent of biblical studies in Europe more than a century ago. He says that as Europe rose to become a superpower with the ability to conquer, rule, and name far-off regions, it provided the tools and the language that the academic community used to create an interpretation of the Bible. According to Mbuvi, colonialization solidified this process by establishing a

link between the center and the periphery and the colonizer and the colonized. Then, the European "center" could pen the history of its foundation, growth, and conquest of remote centers of the then-known world. He goes on to say that the colonial ambition to civilize, market, and Christianize others in the colonies also became justified by the Europeans' racist vision of the African peoples and their religio-cultural reality as lacking in reason and virtue. The Europeans served as the morally acceptable messengers of God, the empire, and the Bible. To give a "universal" reading of the Bible that would speak for all peoples everywhere, biblical studies adopted the imperializing mission.

The relationship between colonialism, the Enlightenment, and biblical studies is established in Part 1 of the book. Mbuvi argues that the Bible was central to Western literature, distinguishing between enlightened Europeans and unenlightened Africans. It was considered un-Christian and uncivilized in a "dark continent" setting, labeling native religious practices as unredeemable. This colonial thinking, to Mbuvi, aimed to impose a Westernized Bible on the colonized, distorting and destroying their historical heritage. Hence, incorporated into the missionary fundraising was the urgent need to illuminate African communities from their "deep darkness."

Mbuvi argues that because of the discipline's continued failure to recognize or meaningfully confront its deeply ingrained racist origins, biblical studies is deeply entangled with, and still promulgates, a Western colonial vision. He pointed out that missionary proficiency in Africa is generally questionable due to a lack of academic credentials, with exceptions like Dr. Schweitzer, Kraft, and Livingstone. Mbuvi closely examined the twentieth-century Western icon Albert Schweitzer in this part. He argues that Schweitzer personifies the triple nexus of colonialist, missionary, and biblical scholar, and that his academic, medical, and missionary work was motivated by racism and white supremacy. Similar to many European missionaries in Africa, Mbuvi argues further, Schweitzer displayed a mix of contradictory views about Africans. He saw them as individuals who could receive the Bible and achieve salvation. Yet, he also depicted them in derogatory and racist ways, regarding them as inferior to white Europeans and even as having animal-like characteristics.Even though Schweitzer actively participated in the colonization and dehumanization of Africa, he is nevertheless hailed as one of the finest Bible scholars of the 20th century.

To expose the cover of colonial kindness as a mere travesty of imperial imposition of meaning, part two begins by exposing the unrecognized harmful effects of the colonial translation of the Bible into the African vernacular. Via the vernacular Bible translation, it exposes the vilification of

African religious reality and the imposition of Eurocentric texts, translations, and perspectives. The final chapter in this portion includes postcolonial African biblical criticism, which not only challenges the attempt to translate the Bible into vernaculars but also pushes back with its critical assessment and hermeneutic of restoration.

The foundation of African biblical studies is incorporated in part three as a postcolonial strategy that fundamentally reacts to the colonial project, rejecting the limited biblical scholarship advocated in Western academia. That is a rejection of any direct imposition of presuppositions governing Biblical Studies in the West in addressing African concerns. African biblical studies encourage accepting a wide range of biblical interpretation strategies. This section, which is broken up into seven chapters, highlights the various tenets of African biblical studies. It begins with its decolonization of the Bible and moves on to cutting-edge approaches to Bible reading exemplified in creative African literature. Finally, it rewrites the Bible with the goal of liberating and decolonizing the biblical text. Alongside resistance to the colonial imposition, methodologies that emphasize "ordinary" readership, gender, and sexuality and African Christology illustrate the unique approach that African biblical scholars have propounded in the last half a century, working from the "margins."A glossary defines the book's technical terms. A specialist's understanding is not needed to follow this book's ideas.

One weakness of this book is Mbuvi's over-generalization. For instance, he states that nearly all PhD candidates in Biblical Studies at Western academic institutions find that proficiency in the German language is the principal modern language prerequisite for the degree. Also, he seems to be more focused on identifying racist behavior or statements from European missionaries to Africa to the almost neglect of their contribution to Christianity on the continent. In my opinion, he needs to be more balanced.

This volume should interest all who practice biblical studies today. I recommend it as a must-read for all academics interested in reclaiming the field of biblical studies for the historically marginalized non-Western readers and biblical scholars, particularly those of African origin. Even beyond the realm of biblical studies, this book has the potential to become a touchstone for contemporary postcolonial struggles. It forces academic biblical research to engage in self-interrogation by investigating its reading, interpretation, and education practices and the relationship between the Bible and oppressive systems worldwide. However, care should be taken not to

see Western biblical studies as a mere colonial project, thereby throwing the baby with the bath water.

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