



# The Cornerstone

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έποικοδομηθέντες ἐπὶ τῷ θεμελίῳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν, ὅντος ἀκρογωνιαίου αὐτοῦ  
Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (Ephesians 2:20)



## ADVENTIDE, AD 2016

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## *From the Editor*

As noted in the last publication of *The Cornerstone*, this quarter's issue intends to address textual criticism and related topics. The theme was prompted by the Montgomery/Kloha debate back in October, and we hope to have addressed at least some of that controversy.

Kyle Richardson begins with an overview of textual criticism in the Early Church. Next, we provide excerpts from an interview our staff had with Dr. Voelz. You may recognize his name from your introductory Greek textbook or his hermeneutics textbook, "What Does This Mean?" Perhaps you have seen him around campus now that he has moved back to Ft. Wayne.

My own article intends to reflect on aspects of textual criticism and inerrancy using a curious find in our library: Hermann Sasse's personal copy of *Pia Desideria*. A brief overview of Hermann Sasse's life is then provided in a translation of Dr. Thomas Kothmann's recent *Confessio Augustana* article in memoriam of Sasse's death forty years ago.

David Keating addresses the different approaches Christians and Muslims take to their sacred writings, especially the scholarly methodology used to examine them. Jacob Hercamp discusses the eschatological, thematic, and intertextual connections between some of Jeremiah's prophecies anticipated in the Torah and fulfilled in the New Testament.

Outside of the thematic content of this issue, we have also received a pseudonymous letter from a deaconess (Sister Anastasia Aurelia), describing most beautifully the work of her office. Kyle Richardson has allowed us to publish his most recent sermon, on the Commemoration of St. Ambrose, and we are delighted to have another hymn translated from Norwegian by one of our international students, Sondre Øverby.

You will notice that the "New Books List" is more extensive than the last issue. Many of the volumes were donated from the library of Dr. Ronald R. Feuerhahn, longtime professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, upon his death in 2015. There are many titles yet to be catalogued.

Thank you to all who submitted articles, and to all who will take the time to enjoy what has been provided in these pages. We look forward to receiving your work for the next issue on "Christianity and Culture," to be published in February.

Nathaniel S. Jensen



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## The Beginnings of New Testament Criticism

By Kyle Richardson, *Sem II*

According to Paul Wegner, text criticism attempts to establish the correct, or sometimes the most probable, reading among extant variants of a unique autograph based on intuitive (subjective) and technical (objective) knowledge of “types of copyist errors, manuscripts, versions and their authors.”<sup>1</sup> Scholars do not possess any single unique autograph of the New Testament documents and therefore must work with variants to establish the likeliest reading in each autograph.<sup>2</sup> The hypothesis of multiple autographs stands on too little evidence and leads scholars on a wild goose chase for unattainable sources within an autograph.<sup>3</sup> Due to the fact that early Christians treated the Scriptures with reverence, the autographs are not likely to have been lost to a “living stream” or early reworking supporting Christian orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup> In a few cases, scholars cannot provide a definitive reading of the autograph. Conscientious use of internal and external criteria sometimes produces more than one probable reading; the scholar does not dogmatize in this scenario.<sup>5</sup>

Text criticism obviously began when scholars first made emendations to their collection of copies in order to discover “the more plausible reading,”<sup>6</sup> so who made the first emendations? Bruce Metzger alludes to Theodotus, a second century shoemaker, as a potential first case of a “text critic.”<sup>7</sup> Eusebius, using the writing of an anonymous Christian apologist, relates the account of Theodotus and his disciples.<sup>8</sup> Theodotus denied the divinity of Christ, thereby receiving excommunication from Victor, Bishop of Rome around AD 189. Theodotus and his followers applied “syllogistic figures”<sup>9</sup> to the Scriptures in order to support their arguments, possibly drawing from greek philosophy. Theodotus’ first disciples made “emendations” to the Scriptures, and their disciples made copies of these, which could not be correlated with one another,

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<sup>1</sup> Paul D. Wegner, *A Student’s Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Wegner, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Wegner, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Wegner, 39.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 245.

<sup>6</sup> Wegner, 208.

<sup>7</sup> *The Text of the New Testament*, 150.

<sup>8</sup> Eusebius *The History of the Christian Church* 5.28.5-17.

<sup>9</sup> Eusebius 5.28.17

according to an anonymous apologist.<sup>10</sup> Metzger writes that the Theodotians were charged with “abjuring allegorizing” and using “strict grammatical exegesis.”<sup>11</sup> If Metzger alludes to the “syllogistic figures” as an example of “strict grammatical exegesis,” I find this unconvincing given the account in Eusebius. The Theodotians did not practice text criticism according to Wegner’s definition. Instead, they assumed a low Christology and altered the text to fit their view of Greek philosophy. They were not interested in rediscovering the original text, nor in creating a standard form of the New Testament.

Origen’s (c. 184–253) scholarship may provide a better historical starting point for the practice of text criticism. Metzger asserts that Origen engaged in both New and Old Testament criticism.<sup>12</sup> Origen produced his famous Hexapla, a comparison of a Hebrew text, obtained from contemporary Jewish sources<sup>13</sup> (which he treated as original) and four greek translations, including the Septuagint. Assuming Wegner’s definition, Origen did not engage in contemporary textual criticism of the Old Testament text. Rather, because Origen was debating Jewish apologists, he wanted to quote their Greek translations more accurately.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, he arranged these Jewish translations into greek alongside the Hebrew original. According to Ernst Würthwein, the Hexapla intended to bolster the existent Septuagint translation more than criticize the Hebrew original.<sup>15</sup> Origen did not attempt to formulate a better Hebrew or Greek version of the Old Testament text, but used the Hexapla as a tool to defend the proto-Masoretic Text and the Septuagint.

In addition, Origen’s pursuits in New Testament criticism do not entirely resemble modern efforts. Origen, in Metzger’s view, did not attempt to prepare a formal, critical edition of the New Testament.<sup>16</sup> Like scholars today, Origen acknowledged and dealt with variant readings among his manuscripts. Origen complained about the growing differences among NT manuscripts due to copyists who had failed to check over their work, either through laziness or perverse intentions.<sup>17</sup> Unlike scholars today, Origen refused to assert a preferred reading in the majority of

<sup>10</sup> Eusebius 5.28.17

<sup>11</sup> *The Text of the New Testament*, 151.

<sup>12</sup> *The Text of the New Testament*, 151.

<sup>13</sup> Eusebius 6.16.1

<sup>14</sup> Wegner, 95.

<sup>15</sup> Wegner, 95; cf. Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 127.

<sup>16</sup> *The Text of the New Testament*, 151.

<sup>17</sup> *The Text of the New Testament*, 152.

cases.<sup>18</sup> In those cases where he does, his decision reflects considerations of etymology, geography, redundancy and interpretation. Metzger says these considerations are “more or less inconsequential and irrelevant”<sup>19</sup> because they do not refer to the manuscripts themselves, though Origen did refuse to accept manuscripts which came from Marcion’s pen, and numerical weight entered into his consideration at least once.<sup>20</sup> In a certain case, Origen preferred to retain both readings due to their spiritual benefits,<sup>21</sup> a characterizing feature of his method. Over all, modern scholars will not applaud Origen’s methodology, but he did engage in a form of textual criticism, potentially making him the discipline’s earliest example.

The case of St. Jerome (c. 347–420) may provide a much more recognizable picture of modern criticism, or at least a more clever example than Origen.<sup>22</sup> Jerome was tasked to create a definitive Latin version of the four Gospels, which evolved into the fuller project of the Vulgate.<sup>23</sup> Unlike Origen, Jerome wanted to create a standardized, trusted version of the Old and New Testaments in response to issues like local versions, variant manuscripts, and laziness among the copyists, a complaint similar to Origen’s.<sup>24</sup> Jerome collected older Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, considered both external and internal criteria in his decisions, and weighed in on the preferred reading.<sup>25</sup> In regards to the manuscripts, Jerome did not simply prefer older versions, but respected well edited and copied versions too.<sup>26</sup> These activities fulfill Wegner’s criteria, and therefore he affirms Jerome’s activity to be textual criticism.<sup>27</sup> His production of a standard version, taking into account variations among manuscripts, most closely resembles modern textual productions of the New Testament. One could therefore say that textual criticism as we have it today began with Jerome.

St. Augustine (354–430), while not working with the Scriptures like Jerome and Origen, did address a variant reading in the Gospel of Matthew, giving weight to the older manuscripts to decide the reading in question. Metzger comments that Augustine

<sup>18</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, “Explicit References in the Works of Origen to Variant Readings in New Testament Manuscripts,” in *Biblical and Patristic Studies: In Memory of Robert Pierce Casey*, ed. J. Neville Birdsall and Robert W. Thomson (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), 93.

<sup>19</sup> “Origen’s References to Variant Readings,” 94.

<sup>20</sup> “Origen’s References to Variant Readings,” 90.

<sup>21</sup> *The Text of the New Testament*, 152.

<sup>22</sup> *The Text of the New Testament*, 153.

<sup>23</sup> Karl Kelchner Hulley, “Principles of Textual Criticism Known to St. Jerome,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 55 (1944): 87.

<sup>24</sup> Hulley, 88.

<sup>25</sup> Hulley, 92.

<sup>26</sup> Hulley, 93.

<sup>27</sup> Wegner, 209.

foreshadowed the principle of modern text criticism that more difficult readings are preferable to smoother readings.<sup>28</sup> Augustine dealt primarily with variations among Latin manuscripts by applying principles found in modern textual criticism as well,<sup>29</sup> and some of his comments on the Latin variants may lead to potential variants in the Greek tradition.<sup>30</sup> Overall, Augustine did not engage in the type of text criticism outlined by Wegner because he did not question the Greek manuscripts themselves, but dealt primarily with the Latin variants, nor did he seek to produce a new Greek version.

In conclusion, among Origen, Jerome and Augustine we can see some of the principles of text criticism put into practice. Only Jerome attempted to create a formal edition of the New Testament from collated Greek manuscripts, while Origen and Augustine acknowledged variants but had relatively little to say on the preferred reading. It is interesting to note that there was never a question among these men that variants existed among their copies, yet they did not question the authority of these documents or their benefit for the Church. They approached their task with a holy fear and reverence for the text under examination. Jerome fought against detractors who claimed he was doing violence to the text by affirming his belief in inspiration, but he also acknowledged the practical necessity in dealing with variants in manuscripts.<sup>31</sup> Origen confessed his belief that God was divinely preserving the text in His Church and did not fear losing the original meaning of the documents.<sup>32</sup> Let these men be examples for us today in our respect for the Scriptures and for God's providence, that He will not let the light of the Scriptures burn out in His church.

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<sup>28</sup> *The Text of the New Testament*, 154.

<sup>29</sup> Rebekka Schirner, "Augustine's Explicit References to Variant Readings of the New Testament Text: A Case Study," *CT: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 20 (2015): 13.

<sup>30</sup> Schirner, 2.

<sup>31</sup> Hulley, 88.

<sup>32</sup> Grafton, 127.

## What Does This Mean? An Interview with Dr. Voelz

**1. Many of us know you from your books. What motivated you to write *Fundamental Greek Grammar* and *What Does This Mean?***

**A:** The first edition of Fundamental Greek Grammar was produced in 1986, about ten years after I began to teach at CTS (beginning in 1975 when it was still in Springfield, IL!). I had used several books, starting with Machen, an old war horse published in the early 20th century that had gone through many revisions. It was inadequate for three reasons: it contained no Bible passages/assignments; it was *too* basic—when you finished you didn’t know enough; the practice sentences were completely artificial and unrealistic. I then switched to a book by the English lady Molly Whittaker, which was better but had too many quirks, including introducing the εω̄ contract verbs with the basic paradigm at the beginning of the book. My book is now in its Fourth Edition, with a revision of that due out in 2017. Regarding *What Does This Mean?*, there was really no hermeneutics text for general classroom use; all profs put together their own material. I became interested in linguistics in the 1980s when Dr. Eugene Bunkowske came to the CTS faculty. One thing led to another and I decided that a rigorously semiotic approach would work as an overall framework for Lutheran hermeneutics. Key to my approach are two notions: 1. All meaning is signed by *something*, whether it be a single vocable, word order, morphology, etc. 2. Meaning is not signed only by individual signifiers/words but also by deeds, situations, etc. (what I call “level 2” signifiers). Thus one can “read” actions and their relations to one another even as one can read words and their relations to one another (cf. the truism “Actions speak louder than words.”). I still think it works really well.

**2. How would you describe the LCMS's philosophy of textual criticism, if there is one? Is there any philosophy of textual criticism which you adhere to?**

**A:** I don’t know if there is an LCMS philosophy of text criticism, even as there is not an LCMS view on the synoptic problem. I personally am a “reasoned eclectic.” But I also believe that the Greek usage of an individual author is of critical importance in making decisions on readings. An author has a “style,” and that style must be respected. No matter how much a given reading might seem to have given rise to the other readings, if

that reading does not conform in general to an author's basic Greek usage, then it is highly suspect, no matter what the manuscript evidence. Thus, in my view, certain manuscripts generally present a "better" text for given books of the New Testament, because they are better representatives of the given author's Greek usage than are others. For example, for the Gospel of Mark, Ms. B/Vaticanus, along with its allies Aleph, L, Delta, Psi, 565, and 579 (as well as C and 33) are excellent representatives of Mark's Greek as determined by looking at the readings of a cross section of *all* manuscripts from all textual traditions. This is not the usual way in which textual criticism is done, but I believe that it is correct.

### **3. Could you describe and critique "thoroughgoing eclecticism" for us?**

**A:** A thoroughgoing eclectic considers all of the evidence that exists and attempts to determine the reading which is likely to have given rise to the other readings. If one is radically thoroughgoing, one does not really value in which manuscript a piece of evidence exists. Thus, the "best" reading may exist solely in a late date manuscript. (Key here is the thought that very early readings may well survive in much later manuscripts, because the later manuscript may be part of a chain of copies that has a very, very early progenitor.) My basic problem with being "thoroughgoing" is that it is quite unlikely that the sole evidence for a given reading exists in, e.g., one 11th century AD manuscript. It also has a problematic relationship to conjectures; it is too ready to embrace them as the logical readings that explain the rise of the other readings.

### **4. Do you have any comments on the Kloha/Montgomery debate? What about any recommendations for how the church should go about issues that arise in textual criticism?**

**A:** I personally think that Dr. Montgomery and those who support him don't really understand that our only evidence for the text of the New Testament is individual manuscripts. There is no full "New Testament text" somewhere that we have access to apart from the texts of individual manuscripts. Any Greek New Testament text we have is a reconstruction done on the basis of individual manuscripts. And any edited edition such as Nestle/Aland is itself a reconstruction on the basis of individual manuscripts and their readings. This is why I use the Swanson volumes of the New Testament text for the books of the New Testament for which such volumes exist. They present the readings of manuscripts in a holistic fashion, line by line, not piecemeal as a patchwork

text as does Nestle/Aland. Reuben Swanson's study some years ago determined that for the Gospel of Luke, fully 12% of the verses as laid out by Nestle/Aland had no support *in toto* by any given Greek NT manuscript.

## **5. Why should textual criticism matter to the average LCMS pastor? Layman?**

**A:** Because there are some really important variant readings! My favorite is John 7:8, in which some manuscripts say that Jesus states that he is *not* going up to the feast in Jerusalem, while others say that he asserts that he is *not yet* going up to the feast. Since he does, in fact, go up to the feast two verses later—though secretly—you have an interesting interpretive problem with the former reading (though one that is not insurmountable). And manuscripts generally regarded as “very good” by most interpreters support each of the readings! Also, many people have been arguing *for* certain variants recently, e.g., at Mark 1:41, reading “having become angry” instead of “have had deep compassion” with regard to Jesus. The pastor must be able to address this—it makes a real difference in the story!

## **6. Do you have any comments on the Majority Text? Could it be used exclusively in the Church today?**

**A:** Just realize that there is no “Majority Text” as a single entity. It is a compilation of a number of manuscripts, mostly late, and these manuscripts do not always agree with one another! You still have to do textual criticism within the Majority Text! And by what principle do you do that? Well, probably by the basic principles of textual criticism, which you should be using right from the first.

## **7. What role does divine preservation play in your view of textual criticism?**

**A:** This is tricky. You cannot use “divine preservation” as some sort of trump card to avoid doing textual criticism, e.g., by saying that God divinely preserved a particular manuscript or group of manuscripts. How would we know this? I think that the best we can do is to say that God preserved the text in such a way that what we have had at all times and in all places has been sufficient for the preservation and propagation of the Gospel. Consider the fact that some people(s) have the Scriptures only in a translation. Others have only *heard* the Gospel by oral proclamation. What about them? Any divine

preservation of the Greek text does not really affect/help them. The Word of God is not tied to an inerrant manuscript tradition. The Church has never thought that.

## **8. Why does it matter that we try to piece together a text resembling the autographs?**

**A:** Because we want to have a text as close as possible to what an apostle/evangelist actually wrote. We can abide a certain amount of sloppiness (= variant readings), but accurate is always better than sloppy.

## **9. How should a pastor deal with textual difficulties or irreconcilable readings in the variants?**

**A:** See my answer to #7, above. Textual difficulties are not fatal. They present options. The Early Church always felt it could deal with variants. Clement of Alexandria, e.g., specifically discusses the variants of John 1:18, regarding whether we should read “only begotten God” or “only begotten Son.” He exegetes *both* of them! We could learn from this.

## **10. Does one's final decision on preferring a variant come down to subjective criteria?**

**A:** The answer is in many ways, Yes. Consider this: why should we prefer older readings? Or readings that explain the rise of other readings? Or widely attested readings? Or readings found in the Church Fathers? Or any other criterion? The Bible doesn't tell us which criterion to use. While any one or more of these might seem obvious, it really is not. See my answer to #2 above regarding the way I do textual criticism in my Gospel of Mark commentary. Am I right? If not, why not? In many ways, the only method of avoiding any type of subjectivity is to go to Rome, as it were, and to say that the Holy Spirit preserved a given form of the text approved by the Teaching Magisterium of the Church, which approval is divinely sanctioned because the Teaching Magisterium is directly guided by the Holy Spirit, which continues to “lead it into all truth” (John 16). This is Rome's answer for all issues of authority and surety. Please remember that *all* interpretation of any sort has some subjectivity to it. Meaning does not leap off the page at a person. An interpreter assembles data and makes decisions based upon meaning that arises from the signifiers of a text/a situation/an

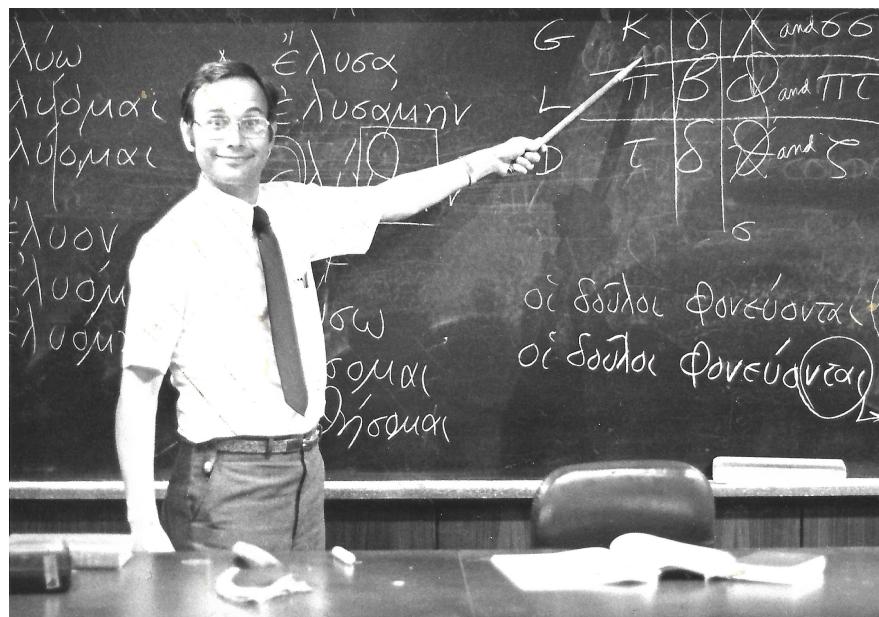
historical setting, etc. Many principles for interpretation that we think are “obvious” are not so: nowhere in Scripture do we find a statement such as “Scripture interprets Scripture,” e.g. We cannot even use Jesus as an example for interpretation, without making some sort of hermeneutical “move.” I had many arguments with Prof. Harold Buls of CTS in the 1980s over parable interpretation on this point. I noted then that Jesus treats parables as allegories, as it were, deciphering each element of the story and giving it meaning (see the interpretation of the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13). We should, therefore, do as he does, I said. His response: No, Jesus could do that, but we cannot! Well, which of us was right—and on what basis would you decide? The New Testament doesn’t answer that question directly; you reach an answer by arguing interpretation.

**11. Who are some great minds in the field of textual criticism today who we should be paying attention to?**

**A:** Kloha is the best—he is world class, believe me. But listen to me argue with him, too. See, again, the answer to #2.

**12. Will textual criticism ever reach an end where it no longer becomes necessary?**

**A:** Not before the Parousia.



*Dr. Voelz circa 1983 Anno Domini*

## Pietism, Inerrancy, and Hermann Sasse

By Nathaniel Jensen, *Sem II*

This issue of *The Cornerstone* is supposed to deal with textual criticism, a focus prompted by October's debate at Concordia Chicago between Jeffrey Kloha and John Warwick Montgomery over "Textual and Literary Judgments on the Biblical Text--What Happens to the Lutheran Commitment to Scriptural Inerrancy?" Responding to that debate—let alone to the entire controversy surrounding it—would be a monumental effort. In this paper, I only attempt to give a reflection of the ongoing debate in terms of an interesting find in our library which I will use to raise a few points and suggest further research, especially in the area of Pietism and textual criticism.

Around the time of the Kloha/Montgomery debate, I had the pleasure of taking Dr. MacKenzie's Church History III course. During the Pietism unit, the class read Philip Jakob Spener's *Pia Desideria*, which is considered the "manifesto of Pietism."<sup>33</sup> Not owning my own copy of Theodore Tappert's translation of that work, I went to the library to check one out. I happened across the German copy beside it on the shelf and soon realized that the German edition, the basis for Tappert's translation,<sup>34</sup> was edited by none other than Kurt Aland, whose name we invoke every time we mention our "Nestle-Aland" Greek New Testaments. In fact, Aland's critical edition of *Pia Desideria*<sup>35</sup> looks rather similar to a Greek New Testament, containing a critical apparatus and manuscript evidence for comparison between the earliest versions. The bibliographical information (and present location) for each of the nine earliest editions, ranging from the years 1675 to 1712, are assigned a letter, A through I. The last page of Aland's critical text notes that manuscript C<sup>36</sup> was chosen as the basis for comparison. He comments that manuscript B was not available in any of the German libraries. Why manuscript A, the "autograph," was not used as the basis of his edition is not made clear. Perhaps the reason is that the first edition, written as a preface to a collection of Johann Arndt's sermons, does not contain Spener's introduction stating the circumstances of his

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<sup>33</sup> *The Pia Desideria (Pious Desires): The Manifesto of Pietism* is the title of an article in the Pietism issue of "Christianity Today," 10 (1986).

<sup>34</sup> Philip Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 15.

<sup>35</sup> Philipp Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria* ed. by Kurt Aland (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1940) in the series "Kleine Texte für Vorlesungen und Übungen" ed. by Hans Lietzmann.

<sup>36</sup> "C= Ausgabe der *Pia desideria* von 1676 (Staatsbibl. Berlin, Univ.=Bibl. Breslau, Marburg, Kiel, Greifswald, Erlangen, Berlin, Brit. Museum usw.)"

writing.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the two critiques of *Pia Desideria*, written by a couple of Spener's sympathizers and found in later editions, are not provided in Aland's edition due to length. He does, though, include descriptions of those letters which appeared in the table of contents of editions subsequent to manuscript C. Tappert's 1964 translation follows Aland's edition, but without explaining the sources in detail. A study of Aland's edition of *Pia Desideria* could perhaps shed some light on his method of textual criticism and use of manuscripts in *Novum Testamentum graece* and the *Greek New Testament*, especially considering his choice of texts in *Pia Desideria* with precise knowledge of their origin. Although any critical edition could be an interesting study in the science of textual criticism (the *Bekenntnisschriften*, for example) as it relates to biblical textual criticism, I would argue even more so here on account of Aland's work on both biblical and non-biblical texts. How Aland analyzes the texts of *Pia Desideria* may shed light on how he analyzes manuscripts of the New Testament.

Kurt Aland, although most well known for his work on the Greek New Testament, was also a church historian with a specific focus on Pietism. He was born in Berlin, Germany in 1915 and studied theology, philology, archaeology, and history there. In 1939, he received a license to teach theology for his dissertation on Philip Jakob Spener (which was expanded and published as *Spener-Studien* in 1943). Aland was badly wounded in France during World War II, but after his recovery he began teaching at the University of Berlin. He was ordained in 1944 and then began teaching as a full professor in Berlin when the University re-opened in 1946 after the war. The following year he moved to Halle to teach Church History and Christian Archaeology. Aland was critical of the East German government because of their suppression of both the Church and academic freedom, and was even imprisoned for ten weeks. After he was fired from the University without notice in 1958 and his travel was restricted, Aland fled to West Berlin. In 1959 he was received at the University of Münster, where he would remain the rest of his life. Since the 1940s he was co-editor and then editor of the Nestle-Aland text and was the first editor of the *Greek New Testament* after founding the Institute for New Testament Textual Research in Münster. In 1964 he initiated the founding of a commission on Pietism. The focus on textual criticism, as well as Pietism, remained dominant throughout his career until his death in Münster in 1994.<sup>38</sup>

Kurt Aland demonstrated his skill as a church historian with his two volume *Geschichte der Christenheit*,<sup>39</sup> published in 1982 and translated into English by James

<sup>37</sup> Kurt Aland, *Spener-Studien* in "Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 28," edited by Emanuel Hirsch and Hans Lietzmann (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1943), 3.

<sup>38</sup> For biographical information, see: <http://www.catalogus-professorum-halensis.de/alandkurt.html>.

<sup>39</sup> Kurt Aland, *Geschichte der Christenheit* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1982).

Schaaf at Trinity Seminary in Columbus, Ohio in 1986.<sup>40</sup> Schaaf remarks in his translator's preface to the second volume ("From the Reformation to the Present") that Aland's numerous earlier studies relating to Pietism, and his interest in New Testament textual studies, formed the basis for his *History of Christianity*. Aland's own preface to that work emphasizes the extensive number of primary sources necessary to gain a true picture of any historical period. This manifests itself in *History of Christianity* in the extensive use of quotations, which Aland considers necessary for the reader to test the conclusions of the presentation.

It is interesting to see Aland's two scholarly emphases, Pietism and New Testament textual studies, come together (as they did in his edition of *Pia Desideria*) in his chapter on Pietism in *A History of Christianity*. He speaks of Pietism as "the most significant movement since the Reformation,"<sup>41</sup> and compares the breakthrough of Spener's *Pia Desideria* with that of Luther's treatises of 1520.<sup>42</sup> The comparison between the Reformation and Pietism is located especially in the *ad fontes* approach to Scripture. As an example, Aland notes that the students in both time periods were notorious for carrying around and discussing theology from their Greek New Testaments.<sup>43</sup> The last few pages of the chapter discuss the effects of Pietism in scholarly theology. Aland contends that Pietism made no real achievement in systematic theology, but that the Pietist faculties (Halle, Jena, and Tübingen) did focus more on the exposition of Scripture than the Orthodox Lutheran faculties.<sup>44</sup>

As far as scholarship in the study of Scripture during the era of Pietism, Aland mentions the Greek New Testament printed at August Hermann Francke's orphanage in Halle. Rather than the Greek New Testament of Adam Rechenberg (Spener's Son-in-law), Francke used John Fell's edition, which at the time incorporated more manuscripts and more variants than any other edition. Francke himself wrote the preface to that edition, which became the official text for students in Halle. Johann Albrecht Bengel was initially irritated by the number of variant readings, but his later, more scholarly edition of the Greek New Testament went on to replace the received text in use since Erasmus.<sup>45</sup> Controversy arose when in 1695 Francke began re-translating the Luther Bible based on better manuscripts and further developments in translation techniques. He quickly quit this task because of the protests from the Lutheran

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<sup>40</sup> Kurt Aland, *A History of Christianity Volume 2: From the Reformation to the Present* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

<sup>41</sup> Aland, *History of Christianity* vol. II, 234.

<sup>42</sup> Aland, *History of Christianity* vol. II, 244.

<sup>43</sup> Aland, *History of Christianity* vol. II, 261.

<sup>44</sup> Aland, *History of Christianity* vol. II, 260-1.

<sup>45</sup> Aland, *History of Christianity* vol. II, 261-2.

Orthodox, and his friends' warnings that it could cost him his position in Halle. Although Francke's translation of the Bible never came to anything, Bengel was later able to publish his own translation of the New Testament.

Whereas Aland takes a rather critical approach to the Lutheran Orthodox, it has been pointed out by recent theologians that Bengt Hägglund's 1951 dissertation, *Holy Scripture and Its Interpretation in the Theology of Johann Gerhard, an Investigation of the Old-Lutheran Understanding of Scripture*, opened the way for future scholars, such as Johannes Wallmann, Karl-Heinz Ratschow, and our own Robert Preus, to explore the often-neglected and maligned era of Lutheran Orthodoxy.<sup>46</sup> We see this at play today especially in the publication of Gerhard's Works through Concordia Publishing House and the recent popular history of Lutheran Orthodoxy, *Lives & Writings of the Great Fathers of the Lutheran Church*, which is intended, at least in part, to motivate some into further study of the era of Lutheran Orthodoxy.<sup>47</sup> In the introduction to that volume, Dr. Robert Kolb mentions the rise of biblical criticism through scholars such as Richard Simon (1638–1712), Hermann Samuel Reimarius (1694–1768), and Johann Salomo Semler (1725–91). He sees their “intended and unintended undermining of the credibility and authority of Scripture” as merging “with arguments from natural theology to further weaken the stand of orthodoxy in Lutheran theological faculties.”<sup>48</sup> Later, he notes the further necessary study of the continuities and discontinuities of Orthodoxy and Pietism, and gives some examples of why those designations may need to be reconsidered.<sup>49</sup> Perhaps one future area of worthwhile study could be the New Testament criticism arising out of the era of Pietism, especially as addressed in the work of Kurt Aland, an expert in both fields. Although the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy may be a neglected and maligned time period in the study of Lutheran history, the same could be said of Pietism, at least in its contributions to New Testament criticism. In the popular Missouri Synod response to Pietism, *Pietism and Lutheranism*, the only discussion of Pietism's relation to Scripture is found in Dr. Ronald Feuerhahn's essay, “The Roots and Fruits of German Pietism.” Though the

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<sup>46</sup> Robert Kolb, *In Memoriam: Bengt Vilhelm Hägglund* in “Concordia Theology” <http://concordiatheology.org/2015/04/in-memoriam-bengt-vilhelm-hagglund/>, 8 April, 2015. Accessed 4 December, 2016.

<sup>47</sup> Timothy Schmeling, *Live and Writings of the Great Fathers of the Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016), 24.

<sup>48</sup> Schmeling, *Live and Writings*, 15.

<sup>49</sup> Schmeling, *Lives and Writings*, 16–7.

criticisms are justified, only the negative aspects of a pietistic view of Scripture are addressed (besides the great emphasis on Bible reading).<sup>50</sup>

The first of six proposals for reform in Spener's *Pia Desideria* consists of three parts, all of which deal with the use of Scripture. Although he does not get into any specifics of New Testament criticism, that topic (as discussed previously) was seen as important by later Pietists, such as Francke, whose primary goal was to give the congregation a dependable text.<sup>51</sup> Besides the importance of Scripture, Spener also addresses the tone of academic disputation, noting that "disputing is not enough either to maintain the truth among ourselves or to impart it to the erring."<sup>52</sup> He also, by way of illustration, notes that "a young man who fervently loves God, although adorned with limited gifts, will be more useful to the church of God with his meager talent and academic achievement than a vain and worldly fool with double doctor's degrees who is very clever but has not been taught by God."<sup>53</sup> This leads me to some reflection on the Kloha/Montgomery debate.

I do not intend to address the general atmosphere of the debate and the salvo of accusations surrounding it, but rather how the history of textual criticism was addressed in a way similar to Kurt Aland's work on Pietism. Kloha, in his paper and in the debate (both of which are available online), stressed that the role of textual criticism is to examine the sources, to go *ad fontes*. He used Martin Chemnitz's arguments against the Roman Catholic teaching on the authority of the Vulgate, especially by noting Chemnitz's analysis of the problem with the Council of Trent's decision, that it "will accept the errors of the translator, the mistakes of the copyists, the additions and mutilations of men as the Word of God, and we shall not be free to believe the pure fountainheads (*puris fontibus*) themselves more than muddy and impure brooks."<sup>54</sup> Kloha notes that the work of textual criticism is the work of "examining the sources," sources of which the extent was not known until the early eighteenth century.<sup>55</sup> He mentions that all the Lutheran Orthodox dogmaticians were active before John Mill's 1707 edition of the Greek New Testament (which contained 30,000 variants), in a way similar to how Aland noted Francke's trouble already in 1675 with his use of John Fell's

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<sup>50</sup> John A. Maxfield, *The Pieper Lectures Volume III: Pietism and Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute, 1998), 59-60.

<sup>51</sup> Aland, *History of Christianity*, 262.

<sup>52</sup> Spener, *Pia Desideria* (Tappert), 102.

<sup>53</sup> Spener, *Pia Desideria* (Tappert), 108.

<sup>54</sup> Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent I*, 203.

<sup>55</sup> Jeffrey Kloha, "Textual and Literary Judgments on the Biblical Text - What Happens to the Lutheran Commitment to Scriptural Inerrancy?", (2016), 10.

New Testament (which made use of over 100 manuscripts).<sup>56</sup> Kloha admits that even though all the manuscript evidence available is more or less corrupted, this in no way mitigates against Scripture's inspiration and inerrancy.<sup>57</sup>

As far as inerrancy, Kloha comments in the same presentation on the Christological analogy of Scripture (in terms of its being both a divine and human book), which has a long history in the Church.<sup>58</sup> He speaks of Scripture as a divine-human book, of which just like Christ, the divine and human natures cannot be separated. Dr. Alvin Schmidt (quoting C. F. W. Walther) argues that this view echoes Zwingli's alioeosis and makes the Bible no better than any other book.<sup>59</sup> This debate on the nature of inerrancy is similar to one Kloha writes about in his essay "Hermann Sasse Confesses the Doctrine *de Scriptura Sacra*" as an appendix to "Scripture and the Church: Selected Essays of Hermann Sasse," edited by Jeffrey J. Kloha and Ronald R. Feuerhahn.<sup>60</sup> In that essay, Kloha outlines the development of Sasse's view of Scripture from his move to Australia in 1949 (where he began studying the doctrine of Scripture in itself) until his death in 1975, leaving unfinished his book entitled *De Scriptura Sacra*.

Four of Sasse's "Letters to Lutheran Pastors" dealt specifically with Scripture (14, 16, 29, and 33) and are all discussed by Kloha in his appendix to Sasse's essays on the Church. Beginning with letter 14, and carrying on through all his later writings on Scripture, Sasse employed the Christological analogy; that the divine/human origin of the Bible is similar to the divine/human natures of Christ, and should be discussed in similar terms.<sup>61</sup> In Letter 14, Sasse criticized the Lutheran Orthodox for drowning the human side of Scripture in the divine, and argued that absolute infallibility can only be applied to questions of faith, not necessarily of history and nature.<sup>62</sup> Kloha's main focus in this appendix is to show how Sasse spent the rest of his career and life trying to alter and abandon the view that he espoused in Letter 14, namely that the Bible contains *errors*. The Christological analogy, however, was used by Sasse throughout his later writings on Scripture.<sup>63</sup> Rather than speaking of 'errors,' the theme of human limitation

<sup>56</sup> Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* translated by Erroll F. Rhodes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 7.

<sup>57</sup> Kloha, "Textual and Literary Judgments," 11.

<sup>58</sup> Kloha, "Textual and Literary Judgments," 23.

<sup>59</sup> Alvin Schmidt, *Theological Problems in Some of Dr. Kloha's Recent Publications* in "The Lutheran Clarion" vol. 9:1 (September, 2016): 2.

<sup>60</sup> *Scripture and the Church: Selected Essays of Hermann Sasse*, Number 2 in "Concordia Seminary Monograph Series," (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1995).

<sup>61</sup> Kloha, *Scripture and the Church*, 348.

<sup>62</sup> Kloha, *Scripture and the Church*, 349–50.

<sup>63</sup> Kloha, *Scripture and the Church*, 348.

(which would lead to ‘errors’ in the modern sense, though not a result of sin) was Sasse’s preferred way of speaking about the human origin of the Bible in virtually all of his later writings on inerrancy.<sup>64</sup> Sasse himself admitted that his view of inerrancy was not in line with the teachings of Francis Pieper and the Fathers of the Missouri Synod (like Schmidt’s charge against Kloha, mentioned above), who he believes rejected the human side of the Bible.<sup>65</sup> Sasse did not consider his view of Scripture as a divine/human book to be in line with either fundamentalism or the Lutheran Orthodox.<sup>66</sup> In this regard, Kloha seems to be in the same camp as Sasse.

So, if one is stuck disagreeing with both fundamentalism and Lutheran Orthodoxy on the topic of inerrancy, where should one turn? Having viewed a considerable amount of manuscripts, Kloha understands that corruptions of a human text, such as the Bible (and this in no way subtracts from its divine character), are inevitable. Whether he uses “internal” or “external” criteria for judging the best manuscript for use in the Church, it is admirable that he is actually looking at the texts that have been handed down to us. If some odd manuscript out there says that Elizabeth sang the Magnificat, I would at least like to know about it. An *Ad Fontes* approach to the Scriptures necessitates such. Even unpopular sources that have been past down must be considered. Kloha’s textual judgments stay within the pool of available texts, and so the work he is doing should be lauded, not maligned. Just as Francke in the age of Pietism had to defend his use of many manuscripts of Scripture against the Lutheran Orthodox, so it goes with Kloha and the arguments he makes in support of analyzing all the available manuscripts, even the unpopular ones. This brings me to my conclusion.

I began this reflection on the Kloha/Montgomery debate by mentioning Kurt Aland’s critical edition of Spener’s *Pia Desideria* that I came across in our library. To tie it all together, that copy of Aland’s *Pia Desideria* also happens to have been the personal copy of Hermann Sasse,<sup>67</sup> who donated part of his library to our Seminary upon his death. You may have noticed some of Sasse’s books in our library (indicated by bookplates inscribed with his name) while perusing books on the shelf. His copy of *Pia Desideria* only has three handwritten notes on the inside back cover, which index the terms “particular church,” “synods,” and “blood of the martyrs.” He also has sentences underlined toward the beginning, with one handwritten comment on the side. Though

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<sup>64</sup> Kloha, *Scripture and the Church*, 359.

<sup>65</sup> Kloha, *Scripture and the Church*, 412.

<sup>66</sup> Kloha, *Scripture and the Church*, 422.

<sup>67</sup> Note: Valentine Ernst Loescher, the last real defender of Lutheran Orthodoxy, was among Sasse’s ancestors. See John R. Stephenson and Thomas M. Winger, eds. *Hermann Sasse: A Man for Our Times?* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998), 14.

his personal copy offers nothing unique or insightful in terms of Pietism, textual criticism, and inerrancy, this artifact in our library does help tie together all the persons and themes I wanted to address.



*He's Back!*

**An Uncomfortable Admonisher:  
In Memory of Hermann Sasse (1895–1976)<sup>68</sup>**  
**By Thomas Kothmann<sup>69</sup>**  
 Translated from the German by Nathaniel Jensen, *Sem II*

Over 40 years ago, one of the most prominent Lutheran theologians of the 20th century—Hermann Sasse—died in faraway Australia. In Germany, the name of the Erlangen church historian is only known to a few, even though every two years the Selbständige Evangelisch Lutherische Kirche (SELK) honors an outstanding work of Lutheran theology with the Hermann Sasse Award. Sasse was an unwieldy Lutheran. His answers to the question of the nature of the Church and her confession, the Lord’s Supper, and church fellowship for the most part lay crosswise to that which at the time appeared fashionable for ecclesio-political reasons. If nothing else, they still remain relevant.

Hermann Sasse belonged to an age which could never play the role in Church and theology that would have befallen it under normal circumstances, as mediator between past and future, because many of his generation lost their lives during the First World War. In the trenches, the survivors lost faith in the moral progress of the religious man, which had been preached to them from the pulpits and lecterns by liberal theologians in the pre-war period.

### Luther Rediscovered in the Trenches

The horrendous wartime experiences on the Western front also led Sasse (who before the war had begun theological study in Berlin) to a change in thinking. When Luther’s writings arrived in the trenches of Flanders in the Reformation year 1917, the young corporal, as other soldiers on the front, began to understand “that it is not with men and that he may thus learn to despair of himself; to hope in Christ.” In the theological reorientation after 1918, the decorated post-war soldier grasped Karl Barth’s “powerful call for a change from the subjective religion to the objective Word of God.” The Lutheran fathers of the 19th century—men such as Wilhelm Löhe (1808–1872) and

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<sup>68</sup> This article initially appeared in *Confessio Augustana II/2016*. CA is “the lutheran magazine for religion, society, and culture.”

<sup>69</sup> Dr. Thomas Kothmann has been a professor of religious education at the University of Regensburg since 2011 and is the editor of *Confessio Augustana*. He has graciously granted *The Cornerstone* permission to translate and publish this article.

August Vilmar (1800–1868)—who “had experienced a change to Scripture and Confession,” were also important instigators for his theological thinking.

### **Fervent Ecumenist**

Sasse was initially active in the ministry in the 1920s in various congregations of the Prussian Union in and around Berlin. As an exchange student at Hartford Theological Seminary in the USA in 1925–26, he became acquainted not only with American church life, but also, for the first time, what it meant to be Lutheran. The reading of Wilhelm Löhe’s *Three Books Concerning the Church* played an important role in that. In 1927, Sasse took part in the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches in Lausanne after he had already participated in the work of the Commission as a pastor in Oranienburg. Sasse was a member of the continuation committee and in 1929 edited the comprehensive official report on the conference. He remained a “fervent ecumenist” for his entire life, even though in the following years he could be quite abrupt and unsparing with “harsh attacks,” as the former Bavarian Bishop Hermann Dietzfelbinger wrote in an obituary.

### **The Doctrine of Original Sin—An Insult to Nazi Moral Sensitivity**

Already, before the takeover of the Nazis, Sasse set himself apart as one of the first Lutheran theologians in Germany to critically examine Article 24 of the Nazi party platform, in which the Nazis professed a “positive Christianity” and declared war on the “Jewish-materialistic spirit.” Sasse’s critical answer to this article (which promised to guarantee “the freedom of all religious confessions in the state” provided “they not as a result offend against the ethical and moral sensitivity of the German race”) left nothing to be desired in terms of bluntness: This “Article makes every discussion with a church impossible,” wrote Sasse in the *Kirchliches Jahrbuch 1932*. “For the Lutheran Church would have to begin her discussion about that with the public admission that her doctrine is a deliberate and permanent insult to the ethical and moral sensitivity of the German race and that she accordingly is not entitled toleration in the Third Reich ... because the Lutheran doctrine concerning Original Sin ... does not leave open the possibility that the German or Nordic or any race is capable by nature to fear God and to love and do His will.” A few months later Sasse, together with Dietrich Bonhoeffer, drew up the Bethel Confession against the heresies of the German Christians. Regrettably, the text could not be established as a common Protestant confession in the incipient church struggle because its character was considered too Lutheran by many.

### **The Question of the Church is a Dogmatic Question**

In 1933, Sasse received an associate professorship for Church History and the History of Dogma in Erlangen. The Church, her confession, and the Lord’s Supper moved at that time totally to the center of theological work. In the internal controversies of the Church struggle as well as in the ecumenical discussions of the following decades, he insisted that the question of the Church “is always a dogmatic question and not only a question of practical Christianity,” and that only Churches which have a confession can speak with each other on questions of faith and doctrine. “This is the reason,” as Hermann Sasse wrote in 1966 in the preface to his collected essays, “why the confessional movement of our century is indissolubly associated with the genuine ecumenical movement.”

The time of the Third Reich and the years of the Church’s struggle made Sasse into a lonely man in Erlangen. In contrast to his colleagues Werner Elert (1885–1954) and Paul Althaus (1888–1966), who welcomed the transformation of the Federation of German Evangelical Churches—founded in 1922—into the German Evangelical Church in the year 1933, Sasse took a highly critical attitude toward these efforts, which he found to be “unionistic” based on the different confessional commitments of the individual state churches. Sasse’s colleagues did not initially share his uncompromising criticism of the new power of the state.

### **In Statu Confessionis—The State of Confession**

Even though Sasse did not bend the knee before the Baal of his time, he was still attacked even from among those within the Confessing Church. Sasse was active early on in the Young Reformation movement as well as in the Emergency Covenant of Pastors that arose from it, and belonged to the leading theologians of the Barmen Synod, but an unconditional solidarity with the Confessing Church was impossible for him because the Confessing Synod of 1934 “imposed a concept of confession upon both churches, the Lutheran and Reformed.” This corresponded, according to Sasse, with neither the self-understanding of the Confessio Augustana nor with the Old Reformed understanding of confession, but with Barth’s conception as a historically relative expression. In contrast to that, Sasse held that a confession such as the Confessio Augustana shares in the timelessness of God’s Word because it “is clearly grounded in Holy Scripture and is therefore to the common Christian Church, indeed also to the Roman Church, neither contrary to nor against it, as is to be noted from the Fathers’ writings.” Because the confession places the church and each individual Christian before

the absolute validity of the Gospel, it is binding and not only “until a further, definitive ... presentation ... of a temporarily given insight,” as Karl Barth thought.

Sasse did not disavow the Barmen Declaration because the evangelical Church addressed the totalitarian state with a common message, but because the Barmen Declaration made it “in the form of a common confession.” A mixed Synod “of which one part cannot recognize the other as orthodox,” according to Sasse’s conviction, was not entitled, according to Lutheran ecclesiastical law, to dogmatically answer questions of doctrine. For Sasse did not see the necessary agreement given in the understanding of the Gospel and the Sacraments, according to Article VII of the Confessio Augustana, particularly with regard to the different understandings of the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper of the Lutherans and the Reformed. Because these differences were neither understated as “differences of opinion” between the theological schools, nor should they have been pragmatically postponed in light of the ecclesiastical threat, the “status confessionis” was a given for Sasse at Barmen. He left the Synod early—according to old church tradition—in order to not endanger the unanimity of the synodical decree. For the same reason, Sasse also distanced himself from the Confessing Synod in Halle after the communion fellowship was declared between the Lutherans, the Reformed, and the Unionists in 1937. This occurrence was the catalyst for Sasse’s primary essays on the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper in the following years.

### **The Lord’s Supper and Church Fellowship**

In 1938, “Church and the Lord’s Supper” appeared at Barth’s publisher, Christian Kaiser, in Munich. It was soon out of print, however, Karl Barth “did not want a reprint.” The anthology “On the Sacrament of the Altar,” which Sasse published in Leipzig in 1941, suffered a similar fate. This work, too, would not be reprinted after the war. Sasse’s last great work on the Lord’s Supper, the volume “This is my Body,” appearing in 1959, was unwanted in Germany, just like both preceding works. He found no publisher, so Sasse was forced to publish it in the United States.

A distinct break in his biography is marked by the year 1945, the year in which the EKD was founded. In 1967, Sasse wrote retrospectively in the *Lutheran Theological Journal*: “When in 1948 the new Evangelical Church in Germany (EKiD) was established (which comprises all territorial churches of Germany: Lutheran, Reformed, and United), the decisive hour of the churches of the Reformation in the world had struck.” Because of “reasons of conscience, bound by Scripture and the Confessions,” he could recognize neither the legitimacy of the Council nor the EKD represented by it, that

is, a federation that at the same wants to be Church. Hence, Barth's ecclesiology prevailed in Germany.

The old controversies in Christology and the doctrine of the Lord's Supper were—as already at the time of the Church struggles—treated “as important scholastic questions, but not as divisive questions of faith.” Already in 1937, Sasse had admonishingly alluded in a writing to Wilhelm Freiherr von Pechman (1859–1948) to the ramifications of the Union policies, which the current observer, in looking back at the ecclesiastical developments during the previous decade, could at least make fathomable: “Please do not forget that the day Karl Barth sees completed his Union of Confessions in Germany means the end of the Reformation. Then Calvinism has prevailed and the re-catholicization of Germany no longer stands in the way. We are just as responsible as the Reformed and Unionists to maintain the position that was given us by the Augustana.”

### **A New Homeland Down Under**

In a moral dilemma, Sasse gave up his professorship at Erlangen and left the Bavarian State Church. He then became a member of the Old Lutheran Church and finally took a call in 1949 as a church historian at Immanuel Seminary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (UELCA) in North Adelaide. Church unions and ecumenical efforts had to orient themselves, according to Sasse, to the “*Una sancta ecclesia perpetua mansura*, of which the ecumenical program speaks, which is located in the seventh article of the Augustana,” and allow themselves to be critically measured. Therefore, Sasse also boycotted the Arnoldshain discussions which, in 1957, led to the Arnoldshain Theses. He could not go along with a path that moved in the direction of a supplementary or synthetic ecclesiology. For him, a federal understanding of church unity was and remained a leading point which he had encountered with his teachers Adolf von Harnack and Friedrich Loofs (1858–1928), as well as in the Orthodox Church.

In Australia, Hermann Sasse resumed his research with the same level of intensity. He focused on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper because, for him, the Sacrament of the Altar was inextricably linked with the question of the unity of the Church. In his new homeland, he remained in personal union as a “theologian and man of the Church.” Along with teaching at Luther Seminary in Adelaide, various other obligations came up. As “Australia's most distinguished acquisition from the Continental theological scene,” as the Australian theologian Robert Banks once phrased it, Sasse was also a popular man in the media. In the ecclesiastical dialogues between the Roman and Lutheran Church in Australia, he remained engaged into his old age and

maintained contact with Cardinal Augustin Bea (1881–1968) from his time as the Unity Secretary until his death.

Of especial importance was Sasse's influence on the two separated lutheran churches in Australia. He contributed significantly to the fact that in 1966, the two Lutheran synods—the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia—united to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia on the basis of the Theses of Agreement adopted in 1956.

### **Champion of Confessionally Faithful Lutheranism**

During the last years of his life, Sasse pursued extensive studies of the doctrine of Holy Scripture, which he could not complete. A few months before his death, he took leave of theological discussion with a last admonishing word to Leuenberg, where the church-divisive confessional differences of the Reformed churches in Europe were abolished with the so-called “Leuenberg Concord” in 1973. On 9 August, 1976, Hermann Sasse—one of the champions of confessional Lutheranism—died in his adopted home in Adelaide. Upon his tombstone is written: “Tui fidelibus, Domine, vita mutatur, non tollitur”—“For those who believe in you, Lord, life is changed, not ended.”

Hermann Dietzelbinger concluded Sasse's obituary by citing an excellent note that it was a special gift of Hermann Sasse “to open up views and give perspective.” As a defender of Reformation Lutheran theology, he understood that his task was to “call Christianity back from the dreams of a ‘utopico-oecumenica ecclesia’ to the reality of the Church of Jesus Christ, which lives under the cross of Christ and is certainly hidden but still in the presence of her Lord.”

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## Fundamental Texts in Islam and Christianity

By David Keating, *Sem I*

As the world has become more globalized—given technological advancements, one might even say hyper-globalized—dialogue, debate, and conflict have expanded between religions. The days of major theological conflicts being centered on interdenominational discussions seem long gone. Rather, the theological dialogues of import today are happening between the major world religions.

As Islamic conversion rates have skyrocketed, Christianity has been forced to articulate the fundamental disagreements that it has with the religion of Islam. Through this dialogue, one wonders if common ground might be found between the ways that modern-day confessional Lutheranism views its own Scriptures and the way that Islam has traditionally viewed the Quran. At the very least, by discussing the nuances of each religion's view of their Scriptures, the two faiths might be able to see exactly from where the disconnect in religious philosophy stems.

Christianity has had to wrestle with the way that it views its Scriptures for a number of years. Thanks to the rise of higher criticism, many of the assumptions about Scripture that the Church has traditionally accepted have been called into question by these critics. In contrast, however, Francis Pieper summed up the Lutheran view quite well by saying, “The Bible is a book truly unique. It is, in distinction from the millions of other books in the world, God’s Word. It is in a class by itself.”<sup>70</sup> The struggle that Christians have been wrestling with is to what extent the Bible is God’s Word. Is it God’s Word *carte blanche*? Does it simply contain God’s Word? Or is there perhaps a more complex answer to this seemingly simple question?

The answer that much of confessional Lutheranism has settled on today is to view Holy Scripture as something that is received through verbal inspiration. The Christian Scriptures are unique in the sense that they tell readers how to view them. They have internal clarity, so if the Bible is read on its own terms, then one understands how Christians ought to understand their origination. Pieper does a wonderful job summarizing this idea by suggesting that the inspiration stems from Scripture being “God-breathed.”<sup>71</sup> Due to the fact that Scripture is God-breathed, Christians are to understand that Scripture is inspired neither because of the inspiration of the writers, nor because of the inspiration of the subject matter only. Instead, the Scriptures are

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<sup>70</sup> Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* Vol. 1, 216.

<sup>71</sup> Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* Vol. 1, 217.

inspired because there are two authors that are working together to write the biblical canon. The writer is the apparatus whose style is utilized fully as part of the literary styling of any given book of the Bible; however, the Holy Spirit is also understood as an author who is weaving a coherent narrative throughout the canon.

In the eyes of Lutherans, the Christian Scriptures are not merely a dead document either. The Christian Scriptures are living documents that are dynamic things in and of themselves. Martin Chemnitz argues that, “inspired writings [were] later transmitted to posterity by a perpetual succession from hand to hand and diligently preserved in reliable histories of antiquity in order that the subsequent church might be the custodian of the witness of the primitive church concerning Scripture.”<sup>72</sup> While this may seem like an insignificant thing, it has very big implications for the Christian Church today. The orthodox Church has always adhered itself to the Scriptures very diligently, and because of that diligence, they have been able to faithfully transmit, preserve, and pass down the biblical canon.

What does this mean for those who practice the Christian faith today? Christians can rest assured that they are receiving God’s Word through translation today, despite the words themselves not being the same as those used by the original Gospel writers. The Church has diligently studied the Word of God and translated the meaning so that it might be accessed by millions of Christians all around the globe. The Holy Spirit is still daily and richly active in Christian congregations, and He uses the means of the Scripture in order to work faith in the hearts of individuals. The key idea here is that the Holy Spirit did not operate at select moments in history. He did not descend from on high in order to transmit the Scriptures and then retreat to heaven, never to be heard from again. Instead, the Holy Spirit participates in the Church from the beginning of time through the end of time. The Holy Spirit was there as part of the creation and transmission of the Scriptures, and continues to participate in the Church through the faithful translation and proclamation of the Gospel today.

Importantly, Christian Scripture is also understood as the rule by which the Christian faith is guided. As such, it was necessary for Christianity to adopt a canon in the first place. How then does this view differ from the Islamic faith’s view of the Quran? It is important to understand that the word “canon” cannot apply to the Islamic texts. This may cause some amount of confusion amongst the Christian faithful. After all, the Quran, at face value, seems very similar to the Bible and to Jewish Scripture. It is comprised of many individual books, and is the authoritative document for Muslims across the globe.

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<sup>72</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent. Part 1*, 177.

The key difference lies in the authorship of the Quran versus the authorship of the Holy Bible. The Islamic faith believes that God gave the Quran verbatim.<sup>73</sup> In this sense, there is only one author who is at work behind the entirety of the Quran. Individuals may have received the Islamic scriptures, however, Muslims believe that the writer himselfs received word for word from God what the Quran says. Many social theorists have tried to cajole Islam into the religious philosophy of the West when attempting to categorize it, however, this view would seem to create a very distinct divide. After all, Christians, and specifically Lutherans, have traditionally held that God works from within the finite in order to complete the works that He has set out to do. Therefore, this means working alongside the writers of the Old and New Testaments through the Holy Spirit, in a kind of symbiotic relationship wherein the two work together, as in a symphony, in order to bring the Word of God to the fore. The key difference is that the Holy Spirit chooses to speak through concrete situations, by acting in history. This view would be entirely lost on a follower of the Islamic faith, as, for them, God has already directly intervened into the ear of the prophet in order to give his teachings to his followers. These sayings were preexistent, and did not require God's action in history.

Another interesting facet of Islamic scripture is the way in which it is authoritative. For Muslims, the most authoritative version of scripture is the scripture that is spoken.<sup>74</sup> In this sense, when their words are proclaimed, they have the most potent effect, as they are word-for-word what God had given to them when the Quran was originally written down. Now, there is some common ground here for Christians to dialogue over. Lutherans have long held that the Scriptures are there in order that they might be proclaimed. After all, it would seem that Jesus gives a clear command in Matthew 9 to go out into the fields and proclaim the Word of God. However, as much as the Holy Spirit transmits faith through hearing and proclamation, there is a difference in the view of how the holy writings of the faith are transmitted. It would seem as if Christian Scriptures, when they were written, were not initially proclaimed by God and then copied down. Instead, when the Holy Spirit worked alongside the writers of the Bible, an impulse to write came with the Holy Spirit.<sup>75</sup>

When comparing the differences between these two, it is important to note that the method by which God's word is communicated is fundamentally different. The method by which God communicates with His people throughout time is very important. For Christians, the means that have been chosen are written means. For

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<sup>73</sup> Richard C Martin, *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, 29.

<sup>74</sup> Martin, *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies*, 30.

<sup>75</sup> Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*. Vol. 1, 228.

Muslims, the means that have been chosen are the words that are proclaimed to the people. The emphasis, therefore, is on the way that a voice is able to carry God's message, rather than the way a text can carry God's message. Despite the written means, however, the Bible can and should be translated. Christians claim that the Gospel message is powerful, meaning that it can be proclaimed in any language and it will still be effective. For Muslims, the true power of the Quran is found in its original language alone.

Arthur Jeffery writes in his book *The Quran as Scripture*: "Here we approach something that is fundamental to the thought of Scripture in the Quran. The *megillath sepher* which was handed to Ezekiel was a heavenly book, but it was not Scripture in the sense that the canonical Book of Ezekiel is Scripture."<sup>76</sup> This is a fundamental difference in religious thought and philosophy. For Christian and Jewish philosophies, there is a distinction between what God has handed down Himself and the means that He works through in order to communicate with His people throughout all time. For Islam, there is no such distinction. Within Islam, the scriptures that are passed down are passed down from God Himself. In this sense, they have no understanding of the means through which God works. The Quran's sole heavenly origin has no equivalency in Christianity. For some, this idea may be quite appealing as there seems to be more of a direct link between God and man, with less of an intermediary source diluting the religious teachings. Of course, in order to accept this view, one would have to discard the historical critical problems that arise with such a claim. If one is examining how both religions understand themselves, however, this is an important distinction to consider.

Another important divide between the religious philosophy of Christianity and the philosophy of Islam is the source upon which the Scriptures are based. For Christianity, the major focus is upon the events to which the Christian Scriptures attest. The basis of faith in the Christian life is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When one looks at the Christian faith it is easy to see that these things have authenticity to them, and they are the foundation upon which the faith is built. In this sense, the Christian faith is a historical faith, in the sense that its teachings are based upon things that are external to the Scriptures themselves. The Council of Trent argued that the purity of the Gospel may always be preserved because of this very idea. Despite scribal errors and textual variations, there are still historical events that can be used as the rule and norm within Christianity.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Arthur Jeffrey, *The Quran as Scripture*, 13.

<sup>77</sup> H. J. Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 17.

Islam on the other hand, has a more complicated basis for the religious teachings that it professes. Religious thought in the Near East held to the idea that God or gods could speak directly to individuals and, when they did, it was the obligation of those individuals to share that teaching with the people around them.<sup>78</sup> To American audiences, it would seem outlandish for one man to claim to have heard the Word of God and have received special revelation to which only he can attest. Of course, Mormons and some of the dregs of Christianity would buy into this, but, traditionally, orthodox Christianity has not. With direct revelation, there are no external events to which one can point to in order to verify the authenticity of one's claims. However, when Muhammad came forward with his revelations and his ideas, this concept would not necessarily have been new, that is, religious philosophy in this area of the world would have already understood direct revelation and would not have been averse to the idea as some other audiences would have been.

Therefore, Islam's claims to authenticity did not have to stem from historical happenings. Instead, Muhammad's proof would have had to stem from his message being consistent with teachings that had come before him in religious tradition.<sup>79</sup> For this reason, Islam required the ability to connect itself to the thought of earlier religious movements. When Islamic scholars revere Jesus and include him as an important prophet in their religious tradition, they are including him as proof that what Muhammad was teaching was not a new phenomenon, but rather, fit with the direct revelation that God had continuously given throughout time.

Given that Islam's religious tradition is built upon the direct revelation given to Muhammad, and its modern day power of conversion stems from the spoken word, one must wrestle with the question as to why Muhammad pushed for a written volume of any kind. The answer lies in the religious world that the Quran was competing with during its development. Swedish scholar Geo Widengren argues that "by committing his revelations to paper, [Muhammad] purposely aimed at creating a Holy Book in competition with the Torah and 'Evangel'."<sup>80</sup> This is important because the written nature of the Quran is incidental, instead of being something central for the faith.

For Christians, the written Scriptures were integral during almost all eras of the faith. Congregants were encouraged to read the Scriptures and getting back to this principle was a primary reason for the Lutheran Reformation.

For Islam, the goal was to establish a kind of legitimacy that other religions already had thanks to their written text. By setting up a fundamental written text, one

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<sup>78</sup> Jeffery, *The Quran as Scripture*, 18.

<sup>79</sup> Jeffrey, *The Quran as Scripture*, 15.

<sup>80</sup> Daniel A. Madigan, *The Quran's Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture*, 13.

could hope to win over followers of other texts by comparing them side-by-side. Yet, the claims made about the Quran were able to flesh out a distinctive character for the book. By leaving the book without translation Muslims have been able to claim that the words supposedly spoken to Muhammad by God have been kept pure and unadulterated. Even when the Quran is put into the letters of other languages, the translation is merely meant to replicate the sounds of the original text, instead of translate the meaning into a new language.<sup>81</sup> This seems to indicate that the focus should be on the text being read aloud, instead of the text being available for private reading in one's own tongue.

Even the transliteration of the Quran has proven to be problematic inside of Muslim communities. Deeply pious Muslims argue that the letter and the grammar of the Quran are holy and miraculous.<sup>82</sup> If the syllables and letters themselves have a miraculous quality to them, in the sense that the words themselves hold power to convert a non-believer, then changing even small things like the letters used in transliteration would adulterate the power of the Islamic faith. This may come as a small surprise to Christian scholars who have consistently embraced the tools of lower criticism in order to get back to what the original autographs resembled. Translation has always been as readily accepted by the Christian faith in order to reach as many individuals as possible on their own terms. For Islam, there is no such evaluation of their manuscript's tradition.

If the Quran's most pure form is not readily accessible to the average layperson, then how has Islam been so successful in winning converts to their faith on the world's stage? The answer may lie with the conviction of the claims that they have been making as a collective faith. The fundamentalist adherence to their core doctrines and the rigorous preservation of their texts seems to indicate a certain confidence in their beliefs and in the truth of what they are presenting, which agnostic or atheistic people may not see with Christianity. This is deeply troubling as Christianity continues to face a long, uphill battle in missions work across the globe.

In terms of religious teaching and doctrinal understanding, Christianity and Islam could not be any further apart. For Christianity, revelation is made most clear with the historical events surrounding the life of Jesus Christ. For Muslims, the way that God has spoken to Muhammad through the descent of the Quran into his heart is the foundation for their faith. Even the way that these two faiths approach their texts is fundamentally different.

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<sup>81</sup> William J. Hamblin and Daniel Peterson, *Muslims View the Quran as Purely Divine*, 1.

<sup>82</sup> Victor Danner, *The Islamic Tradition: An Introduction*, 59.

One similarity, though, is that both faiths want to adhere as closely to their foundational documents as is possible. For Christians, the goal and the struggle will be to articulate the centrality of Holy Scripture through translation, lower criticism, and personal study of the Bible. The endgame is to deliver even more faithful adherence to the texts, rather than to undermine them. Given the claims that Islam continues to make about the preservation of the Quran, such an effort could be very difficult to articulate to the average Muslim as the Islamic faith spreads across the globe and it becomes more difficult for non-Middle Eastern people to understand the teachings of the Quran. Perhaps a door will be opened into conversation concerning textual criticism, but, for now, the approaches to texts in both of these faiths is quite different. If a dialogue is unable to be reached, this gap will only continue to widen, leading to even more division as further radicalization occurs on the side of Islamic textual criticism.

## Towards a Biblical-Theological Understanding of Jeremiah's “Righteous Branch” and “New Covenant”

By Jacob Hercamp

When one reads the Prophets one should begin by reading the Torah. The Prophets write in light of what YHWH has done for His people within the Torah. The Prophets recall and reflect upon the promises and the saving acts of YHWH. This is especially true for Jeremiah, and this theme is of special focus within his eschatological prophecies. The prophecies speak of those things which were given in the first five books of the Bible. Jeremiah asks questions such as: What is meant by the “new covenant”? What is meant by the “righteous branch”? What are these “latter days” of which Jeremiah speaks? Only by understanding the covenantal promises of the Torah, especially the events of Sinai, can one understand Jeremiah’s prophecies. Adding this information together with the narrative of Jesus Christ’s life and death as depicted in the Gospels shows how these prophecies reach their ultimate fulfillment.

When one examines Jeremiah’s eschatological prophecies, the new covenant and the righteous branch are immediately points of interest. The question is, what is their biblical and theological significance within the greater narrative of Holy Scripture? Rather than using a diachronic style of reading the text of Jeremiah, which would question Jeremiah’s authorship and the *sitz im Leben* of the book, a synchronic reading of the book will be preferred. When one adopts this method, it is easier to see the intertextual connections between Jeremiah, other Old Testament books, and the events of the New Testament. Intertextual connections may exist where there are linguistic, thematic, or conceptual congruence between one or more passages of Scripture. Willem A. VanGameren offers the image of a web to understand this method.<sup>83</sup> Of course, linguistic congruence would be more highly favored over conceptual congruence, but none of these connections should be ignored because they help us form a better understanding of the biblical-theological significance of the passages in question. However, due to the scope of this topic, we will only give a small sampling of these intertextual connections. There are many other connections that can be made that this paper will be unable to examine. This presentation is a small contribution to a much larger topic of the study of Jeremiah.

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<sup>83</sup> Willem A. VanGameren, *Our Missional God: Redemptive-Historical Preaching and the Missio Dei*, in “Living Waters from Ancient Springs: Essays in Honor of Cornelis Van Dam,” ed. Jason Van Vliet (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 198–217.

Before going any further it is appropriate to define eschatology. Some theologians shy away from using the term because of the baggage that comes with it. For instance, Yair Hoffman laments the fact that no one definition appears to have risen above the rest.<sup>84</sup> Others shy away from defining the word by holding up the word “hope.” There may be many different ways to define the term, however, for the purposes of this study we will borrow William Dumbrell’s method of understanding “biblical eschatology.”<sup>85</sup> We, with Dumbrell, include both the Old and New Testaments under the term “biblical”. These terms would remain vague without proper definition. A Jew would understand the term “biblical” differently than a Christian would. Yair Hoffman is correct when she writes, “Anyone preconditioned to consider the ‘Book of Revelation’ as an integral part of the ‘Bible’ will be likely to understand ‘biblical eschatology’ differently than the one whose ‘Bible’ has always been detached from ‘Revelation.’”<sup>86</sup> In *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus*, Dumbrell argues that the entire Bible is eschatological in the sense of its “ushering in of the kingdom of God, the fulfilling of the divine intention for humanity and society.”<sup>87</sup> He argues, convincingly, that the “biblical sweep is from creation to new creation by way of redemption, which is, in effect, the renewing of creation.”<sup>88</sup> He is also quick to point out that the new creation is not purely a return to the original Garden of Eden. Dumbrell’s book is quite intriguing because it follows this thread of creation to new creation through both the Old and New Testaments. Only in understanding ‘biblical eschatology’ as encompassing both New and Old Testaments will one arrive at a proper understanding of eschatology that keeps Jesus Christ at the center of the activity that brings forth new creation.

Yet, there seems to be an apparent flaw in Dumbrell’s statements. He does not speak as fully as he could on Jeremiah’s “new covenant” and, furthermore, he does not connect this idea to an understanding of a “new creation.” Missouri Synod Lutherans believe that through the new covenant, new creation arises. There is little said concerning the seemingly obvious congruence between Jeremiah’s use of “new covenant” and Jesus’ use of “new covenant” in the upper room on the night in which He was betrayed. Dumbrell also says little to develop an eschatological understanding of

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<sup>84</sup>Cf., e.g., Yair Hoffman, *Eschatology in the book of Jeremiah* in “Eschatology in the Bible and in Jewish and Christian Tradition,” ed. Henning Graf Reventlow, JSOTSup 243 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 75–97.

<sup>85</sup> W. J. Dumbrell, *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001).

<sup>86</sup> Yair Hoffman, *Eschatology in the book of Jeremiah*, in “Eschatology in the Bible and in Jewish and Christian Tradition,” ed. Henning Graf Reventlow, JSOTSup 243 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 77.

<sup>87</sup> Dumbrell, *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus*, 9.

<sup>88</sup> Dumbrell, *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus*, 9.

the “righteous branch” in bringing forth the new creation motif that he sees as the focal point of Scripture. Therefore, it would be advantageous to build upon Dumbrell’s work in order to better understand the eschatological role that the “new covenant” and “righteous branch” play.

Having defined the term ‘biblical eschatology,’ we will look back at the Prophets in light of the Torah. We will begin by examining some of the major “covenant[s]”<sup>89</sup> established between God and man. It is evident that when reading Jeremiah, he understands the major covenant to be grounded in the promises of Sinai.

The Torah affirms that “the bond between YHWH and Israel is not one inherent in nature but one YHWH deliberately brought into being.”<sup>90</sup> YHWH first made the promise to the patriarch Abram that he would be the father of many nations. Through Abram’s seed the world would be blessed (Genesis 12, 15, 17), and his descendants would dwell in the land in which Abraham sojourned.<sup>91</sup> The covenant promise was later made to Abraham’s descendants through Isaac, as well as Jacob and his sons. At the end of Genesis, the sons of Jacob have grown into a large nation in the land of Egypt. It is in that moment in the book of Exodus that we find the hermeneutical key to understanding the Exodus event and the covenant made at Sinai. In Exodus 2:23–25, we learn that the people of Israel were under duress. YHWH heard (אל-האלהים) their crying and groaning under the weight of Egyptian rule, and He remembered (וַיִּזְכֶּר) His covenant (את-בריתנו) that He made with Abraham. “The ‘great nation’ promised by God to Abraham is about to emerge onto the world stage. Indeed, this is the very purpose of the exodus event: to bring to birth the nation with whom God will establish a special relationship (Ex 6:7; cf. Gen 17:7–8).”<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, s.v. “Covenant” (InterVarsity Press, 2010), and Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, s.v. “Covenant” (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012). Both articles help us to better understand the term covenant. It is debated among scholars exactly how many covenants have been made between YHWH and man. For instance, some see the covenant relationship starting from the beginning of creation, and every “covenant” is a further revelation of what the relationship between YHWH and man should be. Other scholarship sees multiple covenants that are related to each other but are not in complete agreement with each other. In this paper, we assume that YHWH made different covenants that all revealed the relationship between YHWH and man. Each covenant works together to bring forth YHWH’s eschatological reality.

<sup>90</sup> John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2, *Israel’s Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 182.

<sup>91</sup> We read the account of YHWH’s covenant with Abraham in a synchronic fashion, understanding the “staged revelation” in terms of Abraham’s developing relationship with YHWH.

<sup>92</sup> P. R. Williamson, “Covenant,” *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 150.

YHWH saved His chosen people by way of signs and wonders, specifically in the plagues done by Moses in the sight of the Pharaoh of Egypt (Exodus 7:14–12:32). He worked through creation to deliver His chosen people. YHWH delivered Israel to safety through the Red Sea, and He drowned the Egyptians (Exodus 14). “It is a moment of new creation, when YHWH creates or shapes Israel as a people (Isaiah 43:1).”<sup>93</sup> In Exodus 15, the people of Israel sing a song that is of great importance because the song speaks of the saving act of YHWH. Moses and all of Israel sing, “You have led in your steadfast love and faithfulness (*בחסדך*) the people whom you have redeemed (*גאלתך*). By your strength, you have guided (them) to your holy (*קדשך*) habitation” (Exodus 15:13).<sup>94</sup> The act of YHWH saving Israel from the Egyptian army is brought up time and time again at Sinai and throughout the rest of the books of Moses. It is also a constant refrain of the Prophets. Recalling and reporting this salvific act on Israel’s behalf was how YHWH was to be made known to the world. He is the One who saved Israel and gave them the Promised Land.

YHWH’s people are commanded and made to be priests as well as a holy nation (Exodus 19:6a) for all other nations to emulate. YHWH reminds Israel of what He did to save them in Exodus 19 by saying, “You yourselves have seen (*ראיתם*) what I have done to Egypt and [how] I have raised you up (*וְאָשַׁא*) on wings of eagles and have brought you to myself.”<sup>95</sup> What YHWH did for Israel was solely out of compassion for His chosen people. At Sinai, the promise of Exodus 6:7 is fulfilled. YHWH made Israel His own people, making them to be a holy nation of priests. Israel is “not only to be a recipient of God’s redemptive work but also to be a channel of that blessing to others. Participation in God’s salvation necessarily entails participation in his mission to the world. God’s renewing work is always *in a people for the sake of the whole world.*”<sup>96</sup>

After Israel received its new identity in YHWH, the people were given the expectations that come with being YHWH’s priests on earth. They are called to be a people who exhibit a holy life before the nations, one that sheds light on the original intention for human life.<sup>97</sup> The Israelites responded in one voice: “All the words which YHWH has said, we will do” (Exodus 24:3b). At these words the people of Israel were

<sup>93</sup> John Goldingay, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, *Israel’s Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 313.

<sup>94</sup> My translation.

<sup>95</sup> My translation.

<sup>96</sup> C. G. Bartholomew, ed., *A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016), 16.

<sup>97</sup> Bartholomew, *A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation*, 16.

sprinkled with blood that Moses calls, “the blood of the covenant that YHWH sealed with you on the basis of these words” (Exodus 24:8). YHWH appears to recall this event in Jeremiah 2:2, “I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.” One can understand the event by way of a marriage ceremony; YHWH and Israel are joined together as husband and wife. Marriage imagery can be found throughout the entirety of the Old Testament. Jeremiah follows the prophet Hosea who extensively uses the image. The covenant at Sinai was a joyous time, and it appears to have been consummated with a meal on the Mountain of God (Exodus 24:11). However, the joyous time would not last long. Israel, like the first father and mother (Genesis 3), would forget and walk away from its relationship with YHWH, desiring other gods (Exodus 32). The theme of turning away from YHWH (רוֹז) only perpetuates further throughout the Torah and the rest of the Old Testament. Jeremiah 5:23 is one such place where the act of Israel turning away is addressed and confronted. Even before Jeremiah, YHWH’s prophets were calling for the house of Israel to return (וּבָא) and repent.

Jeremiah finds himself preaching to the people of Israel who have been called YHWH’s people (Exodus 24), yet they constantly turn from His way (דֶּרֶךְ יְהוָה). YHWH even knows that Israel will do this in Deuteronomy 29:1–29. Israel will be no better than other nations because they will continually abandon their vocation as a light to the nations (Deuteronomy 30:1). It is interesting to note that YHWH tells Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1:5 that Jeremiah has been set apart by YHWH and called to be a prophet to the nations (הַקָּדוֹשׁ תִּרְאֵן נָבִיא לְגּוּיִם נָתַתִּיךְ). It appears the Israelites, the people whom God brought up from the land of Egypt, no longer are given the title “my people,” (עַמִּי). When YHWH speaks about “my people,” He does so in unflattering ways, with few exceptions.<sup>98</sup> The people of Israel gave up their characteristic distinction as God’s chosen people. Because they turn away from the ways of YHWH, Israel will be punished with exile. It is part of Jeremiah’s job as a prophet to preach the coming destruction to the city of Jerusalem, specifically the destruction of YHWH’s Temple.

Jeremiah was in a long line of prophets who preached doom to Israel. A century before Jeremiah, Isaiah also preached of a time when YHWH’s judgment would be brought to fruition against the house of Israel. In the first chapters of Isaiah, the prophet denounces Jerusalem for its apostasy. YHWH will no longer receive the sacrifices or the prayers of the people because of their blatant surrendering of their designation as YHWH’s holy nation (Isaiah 1:11). “Jerusalem must be cleansed, and judgment must be visited upon her. But the assurance is given in the eschatological oracle of Isaiah 2:2–4

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<sup>98</sup> Exceptions concerning the usage of “my people” might include Jeremiah 12:6; 23–24, 30–33.

that once this has been done, Jerusalem will emerge again as the divine world center—“Zion the city of Righteousness.”<sup>99</sup> Isaiah makes it very clear that Judah and her inhabitants would be exiled to Babylon (Isaiah 39). However, Isaiah’s prophecies do not end on a note of death and destruction. Rather, Jerusalem would be inhabited again. The nations would gather at YHWH’s holy mountain, and on that mountain YHWH’s armies (*יְהוָה צֹבָא*) will prepare a feast for all peoples (Isaiah 25:6). The feast is notably similar to the account in Exodus 24. After destruction there is restoration. That is YHWH’s way to bring forth his eschatological reality of a new creation.

Like the words of Isaiah a century earlier, the word of YHWH (*דבר־יהוה*) that Jeremiah spoke was not only a word of impending destruction. Jeremiah also speaks words of comfort and promise. Although Israel “turned and went after other gods,” YHWH forgives their sins. The first promise of comfort coming to Israel is in the form of the “righteous branch” who comes like a “good shepherd.”

The beginning of Jeremiah 23 gives a picture of the religious climate in Jerusalem. The *רְעֵנִים* who have been put in charge of overseeing religious affairs and worship life of the people of YHWH have not been doing their job. Lundbom argues that the term “shepherd” was a “general term for leaders in the ANE (Ancient Near East), but here refers primarily to Judah’s kings.”<sup>100</sup> However, more often than not, Jeremiah appears to use it to indicate priests. A possible Hebrew parallelism occurs in Jeremiah 2:8 where the word “shepherd” first appears, tying “shepherd” to “priests” and “prophets”. “The priests did not say, ‘Where is YHWH?’ And those handling the Torah did not know me; and the shepherds rebelled against me and the prophets prophesied in Baal and walked after those things that do not profit” (Jeremiah 2:8).<sup>101</sup> Then again, YHWH promises in 3:15 shepherds after His own heart (*כֹּלֶבֶת*), who will shepherd (feed) them with knowledge and understanding.

The first two times that Jeremiah uses the term “shepherds,” he has only priests on his mind and not kings. That does not mean that the kings could not be understood later in this group. David is said to be a king that kept YHWH’s commandments and followed him with his whole heart (1 Kings 15:3). Lundbom could make a stronger argument by reading Jeremiah 6:3 in this light, but that verse speaks of the Babylonian kings as shepherds, not the kings of Judah. Lundbom maintains the indictment in Jeremiah 23 is kept general but focuses indirectly on the royal houses of Jehoiakim and

<sup>99</sup> W. J. Dumbrell, *The Search for Order: Biblical Eschatology in Focus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001), 80.

<sup>100</sup> Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: Anchor Yale Bible Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 261.

<sup>101</sup> My translation

Zedekiah.<sup>102</sup> He may be correct. Either way, the sheep of YHWH have been scattered. They have not been led in the way of YHWH, and they have forgotten their identity in YHWH.

Earlier, in Jeremiah 11:1–13, YHWH brings forth charges against the people for breaking the covenant. Israel has not listened to YHWH’s voice. The shepherds, priests, or kings, have led the people to do exactly the opposite of what they ought to have been doing. Yes, there were good priests and some good kings, but the majority of the time Judah and Israel had leaders who went after other gods, forsaking their designation as the people of YHWH.<sup>103</sup> “They have returned to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear my words. And they, they went after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant that I made with their fathers” (Jeremiah 11:10).

Jeremiah begins chapter 23 with הֵן. This woe is not a woe of lament; rather it is argued to be a prophetic invective.<sup>104</sup> It is as if judgment has come down upon the people’s heads in the prophet’s utterance. Jesus speaks similarly in the Gospel of John, “Whoever believes in him [the Son of Man] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the Only Son of God” (John 3:18). These shepherds are מְאָבִדִים וּמְפַצִּים, not gathering their sheep on good pasture, namely, the truth that is YHWH’s Torah. They are not speaking YHWH’s Word. Rather, they say their own word (Jeremiah 23:16). Ezekiel, who was a contemporary prophet of Jeremiah, also prophesied against the shepherds of Israel (Judah and Israel) in like manner. Here we offer a thematic intertextual connection. Ezekiel 34 and Jeremiah 23 put forth similar charges and judgments against the bad shepherds, and then they offer eschatological promises where YHWH will act to bring about the salvation of His people. YHWH Himself will gather His people.

Jeremiah 23 holds the shepherds responsible for driving YHWH’s flock away. Ezekiel 34 charges the shepherds with feeding themselves rather than the sheep. In so doing, they have scared and scattered the sheep. Both prophets pronounce the same judgment. YHWH says, “Behold, I will attend (תַּקְרִב) to your deeds of evil, declares YHWH” (Jeremiah 23:2). “I will require my sheep at their hand ... ” (Ezekiel 34:10). One can also see this thematic, intertextual connection of YHWH’s wrath coming in Ezekiel

<sup>102</sup> Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36: Anchor Yale Bible Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 167.

<sup>103</sup> Hezekiah was a good king, but not a great king. Josiah sought reformation of worship practice in Judah as king. Unfortunately, his reforms did not last as his life was taken in battle. Jeremiah witnessed the initial reforms as the altars to the idols were destroyed, but the people did as they saw fit, even sacrificing their own children to false deities.

<sup>104</sup> Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 21-36*, 166–7.

20:34. Because of the poor job the shepherds were doing, there were no good shepherds to gather the flock of YHWH, so YHWH promised that He would take on this responsibility. The often quoted Psalm 23 of David brings forward the image of YHWH as “Good Shepherd.” David says, “YHWH is my shepherd, I lack nothing, in grassy pastures He causes me to lie down. Besides waters of restfulness, He leads me to rest” (Psalm 23:1–2).<sup>105</sup> YHWH, in shepherding His people, acts in a salvific way for His people, He gathers them from the ends of the earth where He drove them and brings them to Himself. We understand this as an eschatological prophecy which finds its ultimate fulfillment in and through Jesus Christ. “I will gather the remnant of my flock out of the countries where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall any be missing, declares YHWH” (Jeremiah 23:3–4). John, in his Gospel offers commentary on Jesus being killed to “gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad” (John 11:52), giving us a picture of how Jesus’ death was understood to fulfill the promises of YHWH gathering His people like a shepherd gathering sheep.<sup>106</sup> The flock will fear no more when YHWH raises up for David a “righteous branch.” It is through this “righteous branch” that YHWH works the salvific act of gathering together His people.

The construction of the term צדיק נסח is unique to Jeremiah 23:5 (MT). In Jeremiah 33:15 (MT) the phrase gets repeated, albeit it is now found in a construct chain: צדקה נסח. What does the “righteous branch” or “branch of righteousness” mean? What is its significance? What can be learned through this linguistic, intertextual connection? Both Jeremiah 23:1–8 and 33:14–16 look forward to the rule of a righteous Davidic monarch, who will bring justice to the land and enable the people to live securely. Sweeney notes, “Although the oracles are formulated differently (23:1–8 envisions a restoration of exiles from Israel and Judah and 33:14–26 envisions an everlasting covenant for the house of David and the Levitical priesthood) their common material indicates that they are somehow interrelated.”<sup>107</sup> Sweeney, a form critic who holds to interpreting each layer of redaction because of its individual *sitz im leben*, later agrees that the verses in 33 are “an interpretive reworking of the earlier oracle of

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<sup>105</sup> My translation.

<sup>106</sup> Also see John 15 for further New Testament connections. The work spoken of in the Old Testament is assumed by Jesus.

<sup>107</sup> Marvin A. Sweeney, “Jeremiah’s Reflection On The Isaian Royal Promise: Jeremiah 23:1–8 In Context,” in *Uprooting and Planting: Essays On Jeremiah For Leslie Allen*, ed. John Goldingay (New York: T&T Clark International, 2007), 309.

23:1–8,”<sup>108</sup> rather than a true prophecy given to Jeremiah by YHWH. We disagree with some of Sweeney’s opinion, but gladly see the intertextual connection between the two passages that Sweeney brings forward. We would argue that by reading them in a synchronic fashion we learn much more about YHWH’s eschatological salvific work. Could we understand the Davidic Monarch as playing a role in gathering YHWH’s people? Could the righteous branch be the good shepherd?

From Ezekiel 34, we learn that this Davidic monarch actually will be the “shepherd” through whom YHWH gathers His flock. “And I will cause to rise up over them one shepherd (*רעה*), my servant David, he will feed (*ירעה*) them and he will feed them (*ירעה*) he will be to them a shepherd (*לרעיה*)” (Ezekiel 34:23).<sup>109</sup> The work of the Davidic monarch will be that of the “good shepherd” of Psalm 23, leading the sheep of Israel to good pasture. David calls YHWH “shepherd”. It appears that YHWH is in the “righteous branch,” working to bring Israel back into the relationship that He established with them. Jeremiah says the “righteous branch’s” name will be *הוּא זָקֵן*. He will feed them *טֹשֶׁת* in the same manner that YHWH does *טֹשֶׁת*. The promised “righteous branch” will execute justice in the land. Some commentators, such as Clements see Jeremiah 23 as being three distinct prophecies.<sup>110</sup> However, when reading Ezekiel 34 we begin to see that the three prophecies really are all one prophecy in which we find YHWH working as the “righteous branch” to shepherd His people. One also begins to see the revelatory nature of these eschatological prophecies. YHWH will be in the midst of His people, shepherding them to Himself.

Sweeney’s opinion that Jeremiah 23:1–8 is only speaking to a restoration of the historic Israel and Judah appears to be short-sighted. Of course, there is historic validity to the rebuke that Jeremiah brings from YHWH to the priests and kings in his day. They were leading YHWH’s people astray, into apostasy. Keown tells us that the kings were expected to live and rule with justice and righteousness.<sup>111</sup> He cites Isaiah 9:7 to bolster his claim. We would argue Isaiah 9:7 to be a description of the coming eschatological king or “righteous branch” from David, in using Jeremiah’s terminology. Being righteous and acting justly is not something man can do. It was a demand of YHWH that his kings be righteous and act justly, but even David, the king after YHWH’s own heart, was not completely righteous.

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<sup>108</sup> Marvin A. Sweeney, *Jeremiah’s Reflection*, 309. For more on form criticism and his particular method, see Sweeney, Marvin, *Isaiah 1–39: With an Introduction to Prophetic Literature*, vol. 16 in “The Forms of the Old Testament Literature” (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 1–60.

<sup>109</sup> My translation.

<sup>110</sup> R. E. Clements, *Jeremiah*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988) 174.

<sup>111</sup> Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26–52*, vol. 27, “Word Biblical Commentary” (Dallas: Word Book, 1995), 174.

The “righteous branch” could not be just another man from the line of David. Isaiah understands David’s line being so corrupt that the shoot comes from the “stump of Jesse” (Isaiah 11:1). Bringing forth this “branch of righteousness” is another salvific act that YHWH does on behalf of His people. David’s line of kings is dead; only YHWH can bring life to the dead line. Jeremiah also gives us the name of this man: “YHWH is our righteousness.” YHWH plays a prominent role in the man that is to come. Jeremiah appears to be looking forward to the day when the second Person of the Trinity, through the incarnation, is made man and takes His place on His throne gathering all people to Himself in His death on the cross. It is at the cross that He, Jesus Christ, gathers His one flock (John 10:16). The promise of the monergistic work of YHWH in finding His sheep is eschatological according to our definition because YHWH is working to bring forth His intended outcome for humanity. This is, first and foremost, a clue that the “righteous branch” from David’s line will not be a regular man. He will be YHWH incarnate.

When one reads Jeremiah 33, it is easy to see the connections to both Jeremiah 23 and Ezekiel 34. But there are some differences that need to be discussed. YHWH continues to reveal his eschatological intention. “In those days and at that specific time I will cause a branch of righteousness to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land” (Jeremiah 33:16).<sup>112</sup> This is nearly a verbatim quotation of Jeremiah 23:5–6.<sup>113</sup> Verses 14–25 reflect on what has been spoken in Jeremiah 23:1–8, but there is more than just that going on. The interesting, yet mysterious saying: “YHWH is our righteousness,” appears again. Only this time, the designation is not the name of the king to come; it is the name given to Jerusalem. In Ezekiel 48:35 Jerusalem also receives a new name: “YHWH is there.” YHWH is in Jerusalem because He is the very “righteous branch” and “good shepherd” that Jeremiah and Ezekiel prophecy. Again, the major key to understanding this is YHWH’s promise that the righteous branch will execute justice and righteousness in a way that only YHWH executes them. Isaiah gives us an idea of what this justice and righteousness looks like (Isaiah 11:3–4). At this time there will be peace between YHWH and man. YHWH is at work bringing salvation to His people. In bringing forth this righteous branch, YHWH offers comfort and hope to a people who are being driven from their land. YHWH will bring them back to the city of Jerusalem. Once again, He will gather His people. Songs of joy and praise will be in the air. Something new will enliven their hearts, a gift from YHWH that offers grace and comfort. The new covenant will be in the hearts of YHWH’s people.

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<sup>112</sup>My translation.

<sup>113</sup>The only difference is the use of the construct state noun phrase rather than an adjective.

Jeremiah's prophecy concerning the "righteous branch" appears to bring with it YHWH's promise of a new covenant. Above, we gave a brief picture of the old covenant where YHWH designates Israel to be His people, a nation of priests. It followed in the footsteps of the promises that YHWH made to Adam and Eve, and the Patriarchs. We understand the new covenant to be ushered in by the "righteous branch," Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, or better, YHWH incarnate. Jesus' death ushers in the age of the new covenant. But before going too far, it would be best to spend time with the prophecy contained in Jeremiah.

The new covenant comes within the so-called book of comfort or consolation.<sup>114</sup> This section comes right after Jeremiah's letter to the exiles already in Babylon. The controlling theme for chapters 30–33 is that there is reason to hope for restoration through new and ongoing covenants.<sup>115</sup> This section of Jeremiah "stands as a refuge amid the storm of divine wrath that blows through the rest of the book of Jeremiah."<sup>116</sup> The promises that are contained in this section echo the promise that YHWH will gather His people and bring them to safety in their own land. Clements brings clarity to the chapters when he says, "what we have here is the literary deposit outlining the message of hope that derived from Jeremiah's central conviction given in the hour of Judah's deepest crises."<sup>117</sup>

The Word of YHWH (דְּבָרֵי־הָוה) tells Jeremiah to speak, "For behold, the days are coming, declares YHWH when I will return (וְשׁׁׁבֶתִי)<sup>118</sup> the captivity (אַתְּ־שִׁבְתָּה) of my people, Israel and Judah. YHWH says I will return them to the land which I gave to their fathers and they shall possess it" (Jeremiah 30:3).<sup>119</sup> We already see similar language and themes between this and Jeremiah 23. YHWH is the agent who will bring about Israel's deliverance. As before in the Torah, He was the One who brought them up out of the land of Egypt. Their exile in Babylon will be ended only by Him. This is an eschatological promise because with it YHWH promises to bring forth David from their midst. The promise of David is like the promise that Moses makes to the people in Deuteronomy 18. There, the prophet will come from their midst. Here, it is their king. The word "shepherd," as argued by Lundbom, was used to describe both "priest" and "king" in Jeremiah. Perhaps we should consider the king that YHWH promises will also be the priest.

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<sup>114</sup> Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, 97.

<sup>115</sup> Clements, *Jeremiah*, 175.

<sup>116</sup> Keown, et al. *Jeremiah 26-52*, 83.

<sup>117</sup> Clements, *Jeremiah*, 176.

<sup>118</sup> It is interesting how this word is also translated as "repent," a term that Jeremiah speaks to Israel a number of times.

<sup>119</sup> My translation.

Another eschatological, thematic, intertextual connection that should be mentioned is Hosea 3:5. Hosea prophesies, “After the children of Israel will return (ישבו) and seek (ובקשו) YHWH their God and David their king, and in the latter days, to his goodness they will come in fear (תתנו) to YHWH.”<sup>120</sup> Both Jeremiah and Hosea see the unification of Israel and Judah by way of a divinely ordained restoration of the Davidic monarchy. Clements argues that verses 10 and 11 are apocalyptic<sup>121</sup> and a later addition because of the use of “full end.”<sup>122</sup> We would argue for a reading that understands YHWH bringing forth salvation for His people and creating them anew in Him. Therefore, it follows our definition of eschatology. Israel will not be lost. The promise first looks to the immediate fulfillment but also to a further fulfillment later in time. The city of Jerusalem, destroyed in the siege by Babylon, will be rebuilt by those men who return from the exile in Babylon. However, the Jerusalem they rebuild, as discussed in the books Nehemiah and Ezra, is not the final Jerusalem. It does not fulfill the descriptions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The rebuilt Jerusalem is not the Jerusalem that is made new by YHWH. But the term “latter days,” or for Jeremiah “in those days,” pushes the the people to look even further into the future. Their hope is placed in the coming of David, the “righteous branch,” who will rule with righteousness and justice. This is only done by YHWH. The hope of Israel is placed in YHWH, who has made Israel His people. This is Israel’s identity. YHWH will neither leave nor forsake them, even though He disciplines them via the exile and destruction of Jerusalem. In Jeremiah 31:2–6, we find YHWH speaking about the love with which He loves Israel. “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I extended loving kindness to you.” His people will not remain in exile forever because of breaking the covenant with YHWH, rather YHWH promises His new covenant that cannot be broken by man.

“Behold the days are coming, declares YHWH, when I will make with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant, not like the covenant which I made with their ancestors on the day when I grasped them by their hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. It was they who broke my covenant, I was over them like a husband declares YHWH” (Jeremiah 33:31–2).<sup>123</sup> These words are the hinge point of a chiasm.<sup>124</sup> The first and last prophecies are about Jerusalem, and the second and fourth

<sup>120</sup> My translation.

<sup>121</sup> For a better history and understanding of the term, see Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, s.v. “Apocalypticism, Apocalyptic Literature.”

<sup>122</sup> Clements, *Jeremiah*, 170–7.

<sup>123</sup> My Translation.

<sup>124</sup> Keown et al. *Jeremiah 26–52*, 126–7.

form a contrasting pair. YHWH has created something new to signify the new age. It is in the new covenant that the new age comes. It is when David is raised up and when YHWH gathers His people that this new covenant comes. YHWH has created (**אָבִרְבָּן**) something new.

Clements offers a reason for why these verses appear in Jeremiah:

It represents a concern to express the authoritative word of hope given through Jeremiah concerning the restoration of Israel (cf. 31:1–15) and to set this out in carefully theological terms. It endeavors to make clear and precise what restoration will mean for the future of Israel in regard to the nature and conditions of her relationship to God. The unspoken question that underlies what it has to declare is this: If Israel's sins in the past brought such fearful judgment upon the nation so that it came close to total annihilation, what assurance can there be after a future restoration has taken place the same fate will not befall Israel again?<sup>125</sup>

The assurance is in the Word of YHWH that He loves His people with everlasting love. But a question that should be asked now is, “Who are YHWH’s people?” Are Israel and Judah only those who make up the tribes of each nation? It appears that the nature of YHWH’s people changes in the coming of the new covenant. At Sinai, we see the creation of the nation of priests, Israel, YHWH’s people. Even before Sinai, the circumcision of boys was a sign YHWH’s covenant. But like YHWH said, the people broke the covenant. This new covenant affects the heart. When reading Ezekiel, we find that YHWH replaces their heart of stone (Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26). In Jeremiah, YHWH says, “I will put my law on their hearts.” The same idea is implied. YHWH can bring anyone, even Gentiles, into His flock by acting on their behalf, writing His law on their hearts. YHWH will give His people a new spirit, His Spirit. The people of YHWH then are no longer a people or race defined by blood. In the new covenant, YHWH’s people are made a people because of their common faith and trust in the Word of YHWH.

Is the new covenant that Jeremiah prophesies really new? That is the question that numerous commentators have taken up. Dumbrell notes that the Septuagint translates the word “new” with a word that carries with it a qualitative aspect. However, the Hebrew is more nuanced, having both a qualitative and temporal sense.<sup>126</sup> It certainly has connections to the events that took place at Sinai. YHWH says the same phrase as He did then, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33). But “the new covenant, while having continuity with the past, will be both a

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<sup>125</sup> Clements, *Jeremiah*, 190.

<sup>126</sup> Dumbrell, *The Search for Order*, 99.

qualitative advance upon the Sinaitic and Davidic covenants and a temporal advance in the course of salvation history.”<sup>127</sup> It will be new because it will come in the fullness of time, as Saint Paul writes in Galatians 4:4. It is also new because, in the new covenant, sins will be remembered no more.

The age of the new covenant is the age that is brought forth in Jesus Christ. Even Jesus’ name conveys the message of YHWH acting in a salvific manner. “Salvation will signify the presence of God with us.”<sup>128</sup> As we saw earlier in the prophecy of Jeremiah, YHWH will affect the heart of His people. That is how YHWH will make people His people. Jesus then redefines for us the meaning of “Israel.” As was hinted at by Jeremiah and the other prophets, Israel will be reconstituted as a people who have faith in Jesus as their savior and Lord. Jesus appears to identify the New Israel with the Church, the gathered people of God. Let us examine how Jesus fulfills the eschatological prophecies of Jeremiah. We will begin by looking at Jesus’ birth. In the first chapter of Matthew, we learn who Jesus is. Matthew’s genealogy makes it clear that Jesus came to revive the hopes of Davidic kingship. Jeremiah’s prophecy is in the background.<sup>129</sup> A “righteous branch” for David has been raised up in Jesus.

The promise of a Davidic king is not forgotten when we leave the section of Matthew’s genealogy. Instead, it is intensified in the next chapter when the magi visit Jesus. When the magi visited the child Jesus and προσήνεγκαν gifts to him, which is a verb consistently used in the Septuagint for presenting gifts or sacrifices to God,<sup>130</sup> King Herod is no longer identified as king.<sup>131</sup> YHWH’s long promised and long awaited David has arrived. In Matthew 2, we also see a reference to Jeremiah 31:15, which encourages us on to read into the new covenant. Rachel, the wife whom Jacob (Israel) loved, weeps over the children of Israel who depart on their exile. The mothers of Jesus’ time wept in the same manner over the death of their sons. The mothers’ crying over their sons, though horrible, will soon be turned into praise and song because the Son of David, Israel’s true king, is taking up residence on His throne. Matthew hints at the coming of the new covenant by utilizing Rachel’s weeping in his narrative of the killing of the innocents.

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<sup>127</sup> Dumbrell, *The Search for Order*, 99.

<sup>128</sup> Dumbrell, *The Search for Order*, 158.

<sup>129</sup> Though we must admit Jeremiah’s prophecies are certainly not the most apparent to the common reader. There are many other prophecies that come to mind much quicker for most readers. For instance, Isaiah 9 is one such prophecy that can be seen quickly.

<sup>130</sup> Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 9, 10th edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984) s.v. προσφέρω, 67.

<sup>131</sup> Upon searching, Herod is identified as “Herod the king” for the last time in Matthew 2:3. After Matthew 2, Matthew mentions Herod eleven more times. It is also striking that Matthew does not mention Jesus’ trial before Herod.

With the visit of the magi, we are also reminded of the vocation that Israel is to have. Israel was called to recount the salvific wonders of YHWH to the nations. Israel is still to be a nation of priests, a holy nation. The magi's reception of Jesus indicates that He is the long-awaited king, but Jesus is also the priest that the nation of Israel was to be. In the Old Testament, we see Solomon, the last king of the unified Israel who acted as both king and priest. We see this most distinctly in Solomon's "priestly prayer" of 1 Kings 8, when the glory of YHWH entered into the temple of Jerusalem.<sup>132</sup> Jesus also follows Solomon in riding the donkey into the city of Jerusalem, signifying again that a son of David has taken up residence there. The cries of Rachael change to songs of praise upon Jesus' entrance, except Jesus' throne is the cross. Jesus, the One who is greater than Solomon, came. He fulfills both roles in a better way than Solomon ever could. Jesus is YHWH incarnate, the very righteousness of YHWH.

YHWH also promised that Levitical priests would be forever offering sacrifices to Him. Jesus fulfills the role of the priests who are ever before YHWH. "And the Levitical priests shall never lack a man before my face offering up whole burnt offerings and make sacrifices smoke, to make sacrifices all of the days" (Jeremiah 33:18).<sup>133</sup> The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not call Jesus a priest after the priesthood of Aaron, but a priest in the priesthood of Melchizedek. The Levitical promise still holds, but might we say that an even better priest has taken his place before the throne of YHWH, since it is YHWH Himself performing the priestly act? "Jesus is the 'great high priest' permanently superseding the priestly scheme described in the Old Testament, and able 'for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them' (7:25)." <sup>134</sup> He is the mediator of a κρείττονος διαθήκης. ἐν ᾧ θελήματι ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμὲν διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφάπαξ (Hebrews 10:10).

*"Dieser Plural, 'Gesetze,' νόμοι, schließt eine neue Liturgie ein, nämlich jene im Himmel und einen neuen Hohenpriester, Jesus, Hebr 7, für das Zelt oder Heiligtum im Himmel, das nicht ein Mensch, sondern Gott aufschlägt, Hebr 8,2."*<sup>135</sup> Schenker notes

<sup>132</sup> There we also hear that the Temple is to be a place for the foreigner to pray to YHWH because YHWH hears his prayers too.

<sup>133</sup> My translation. There is much to question about this covenant with the priests of Levi. For instance, does Malachi 4:2–4 revoke the covenant of Jeremiah 33:18? Bernard Cooke, "Synoptic Presentation of the Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice," *Theological Studies* 21, no. 1 (March 1960): 1–44, points us to T. Chary, *Les prophètes et le culte à partir de l'exil* (Paris, 1955), where this passage of Malachi is discussed further.

<sup>134</sup> Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 502.

<sup>135</sup> Adrian Schenker, *Das Neue am neuen Bund und das Alte am alten: Jer 31 in der hebräischen und griechischen Bibel, von der Textgeschichte zu Theologie, Synagoge und Kirche* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 72. It must be noted that Schenker sees a difference between the MT and LXX, so he

that the Septuagint appears to be followed by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews because of the plural νόμοι in Hebrews 8:10. But is this truly the case? Is it a new liturgy? Or does Jesus as *Hohenpriester im Himmel* perfect the liturgy of the Temple on earth? A sacrifice is still offered, but it is no longer the blood of bulls and goats. Instead, it is the very body and blood of the Son of God. In the perfect liturgy of the new covenant the very sacrifice offered to God is also given to the believers in Christ to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus says to His disciples in the *Kelchwort*,<sup>136</sup> “τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καὶνὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἷματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον” (Luke 22:20). By eating and drinking Jesus’ body and blood, we see a connection to Jeremiah’s promise that YHWH’s law will be written on the hearts of YHWH’s people.<sup>137</sup>

The Israel that Jeremiah speaks of at the time of the new covenant begins in and with Jesus. He is born of the Spirit of YHWH and of the flesh of Mary. He has YHWH’s Spirit within Him, just as Jeremiah says the Israel of the new covenant would have. Jesus knows YHWH intimately, again, just as Jeremiah prophesied. Jesus is the first of the Israel of the new covenant. He is Israel reduced to one person. He will do what the Israelites of the old covenant could not. He will be the beacon of light and hope. He will be the holy priest that the entire nation was called to be.<sup>138</sup> He is the “righteous branch,” a “king” and “priest” exemplar. Jesus knows His identity, being called not YHWH’s people, but called Son at His baptism in the Jordan. We, at our baptisms, have the same name placed upon us, not just being called YHWH’s people, but a child of YHWH, by grace.

With the new covenant as described in Jeremiah, YHWH promises that sins will be remembered no more. That is, sins will be paid for once and for all. There will be no need for continual propitiation. “Sins will be dealt with so comprehensively that no

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follows the language of the LXX for his argument. We on the other hand are following only the MT rendering of Jeremiah.

<sup>136</sup> Schenker uses this term to speak about the words concerning the chalice of Jesus’ blood. Schenker, *Das Neue am neuen Bund und das Alte am alten*, 73.

<sup>137</sup> Cooke offers some profound thoughts on this subject concerning both Jesus’ body and blood. “Thus, at the Supper, Christ’s use of the word ‘body’ signifies His entire self. He gives His disciples the concrete totality that is Himself, therefore all the divine power of the life of which His body is the external manifestation. In this sense His body is the sacrament of that divine *dynamis* that is essentially opposed to sin and death and that is, therefore, essentially salvific; His body can truly be called the *doxa theou*.” Cooke, *Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice*, 26. Cooke adds concerning Jesus’ blood: “Jesus’ uses of the word ‘blood’ at the Supper must be taken in a concrete sense as referring to Himself in His totality as a living being, but with the living force ‘within’ Him. At the same time, His act of sharing this blood means that He is sharing His soul, His spirit, that He is establishing a brotherhood based upon community of intention.” Cooke, *Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice*, 27–8.

<sup>138</sup> See Cooke, *Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice*, 2–15 for a much fuller treatment of how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament priesthood, temple, and sacrifice.

further action regarding sin will be necessary.”<sup>139</sup> This is, indeed, the case in the work of Jesus at the cross. Jesus Himself speaks about His death on the cross in such terms, particularly in the upper room on the night when He was betrayed. Jesus acts as the priest who goes on behalf of the world to YHWH, as prophesied in Jeremiah 33:18.

We cannot and must not separate Jesus’ meal with His disciples from His sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus even says that the body and blood that the disciples partake of is that body and blood which will be broken and shed in the way of a sacrifice. This looks back beyond Jeremiah to Sinai, replacing the blood of the lamb (Exodus 24:8). His death has not taken place, but the reality of His crucifixion already yields fruit in giving this meal, which ushers in the new covenant that Jeremiah prophesies. The meal can only forgive sins if Christ’s death on the cross takes place. That is how YHWH will remember the sins of His people no more, as Jeremiah says. The payment that Jesus makes is more than enough to satisfy. Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises made by Jeremiah. Through Him, the old age passes away and the new age comes. In the reception of the meal of the new covenant, the believers in Christ receive the blessings that come with it. They are gathered to YHWH around Jesus’ table, and peace is made with YHWH for eternity because of the sacrifice that was made once, for all, on their behalf.

This paper has been an attempt at furthering a biblical-theological understanding of Jeremiah’s eschatological prophecies. We desired to follow an understanding of eschatology in which YHWH reveals His plan for His people throughout the entire biblical narrative. Every time that YHWH performed an act of salvation, we understood this eschatologically, in the sense that it revealed more about how YHWH would bring His people to Himself once and for all. In this paper we paid particular attention to Jeremiah’s prophecies concerning the salvific act of YHWH gathering His people like a shepherd, the “righteous branch” that YHWH would raise up for David, and the promise of a new covenant through which sins would no longer be remembered. Let us then review our findings and give an effort in summarizing the significance of Jeremiah’s eschatological prophecies.

Because of the nature of such an undertaking, we began with a brief overview of the covenant made between YHWH and the people of Israel at Mount Sinai. Everything that took place at Sinai became the most influential moments of the Old Testament. Sinai was where YHWH acknowledged that He made Israel His people and He their

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<sup>139</sup> Dumbrell, *The Search for Order*, 102.

God. YHWH was the God who carried Israel out of exile<sup>140</sup> from the land of Egypt. We saw at Mount Sinai YHWH calling Israel not only to be His people, but specifically to be a nation of priests. However, Israel continually turned away from their calling. They walked away from the identity they had in YHWH. The rest of the Old Testament follows this narrative, and Jeremiah is one of the many prophets who called to Israel to repent and return to YHWH, their God, their husband.

Jeremiah prophesied to the nations concerning the coming destruction of Jerusalem and YHWH's temple. At the same time, Jeremiah prophesied of exile to Babylon, and a new Exodus event. YHWH would, once again, gather his people. The shepherds over the people, kings and priests, had not done their job in following YHWH's demands that Israel be a nation of priests, recalling to the nations the salvific acts that He had performed on Israel's behalf. With YHWH's promise to act as a good shepherd, we saw the promise that He would raise up a "righteous branch" for David. It was determined with the intertextual connections of Ezekiel that this Davidic monarch would be YHWH incarnate. With the help of Ezekiel, as well as many other passages concerning YHWH as shepherd, we understand Jeremiah 23 and 33 to be eschatological prophecies.

The prophecies contained in Jeremiah's Book of Consolation (Jeremiah 30–33) come when David is raised up from the midst of the people of YHWH. We see the Davidic monarch before and after the new covenant language of Jeremiah 31:31–34. With this in mind, we understand the salvific work of YHWH to be done through this eschatological Davidic monarch. With the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we see these promises from Jeremiah fulfilled. We should also note that the entirety of the Old Testament speaks to Jesus. He not only fulfills Jeremiah's prophecies, but He also satisfies the anticipation of all the Law and the Prophets. As we saw from the book of Matthew: Jesus comes from the midst of YHWH's people, as a son of David. He also follows in Solomon's footsteps by entering into Jerusalem on a donkey the week before His crucifixion.

It is in the upper room that Jesus makes the explicit reference to the new covenant of which Jeremiah speaks. The new covenant comes in Jesus' blood, which is shed for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus offers Himself as a sacrifice to YHWH at the cross, once and for all, for the sins of the world. Jesus dies in the place of the world so that YHWH will remember the sins of His people no more. In the act of Christ' death, the

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<sup>140</sup> We argue that one can understand the Exodus event as an exile. YHWH was the one who brought them up and placed them in the land He promised, thus acting in the same manner which we see Him in light of the Exile. If one desires to understand the return from Babylon as a new Exodus, it serves the same purpose. We understand Exodus and Exile to be interchangeable.

new covenant comes. Jesus, the Davidic monarch, the Good Shepherd, and the author of the new covenant in His blood for the forgiveness of sins, is the one to whom Jeremiah looks. Eschatologically speaking, we find peace and rest in the new covenant, but we await yet the full commencement of the new covenant. The feast we partake of in the Eucharist is but a foretaste of the feast to come. We await Jesus' return to finally gather us to Himself, to be with Him in the place that He has prepared for us (John. 14:2). He will gather us so that we might partake of that Marriage Feast of the Lamb, where the bride might yet again be united to her bridegroom (Revelation 19:6–9; 21:1–7).

## Future and Present Mercy in the Body of Christ

By Sister Anastasia Aurelia

It is written: “No man has ever hated his own body,” and so it is imperative that we not hate anybody, but love and care for everybody, in their body. This is the duty of every Christian and is particularly integral to the identity of a deaconess, who exists to care for the poor and needy, the sick and broken, and to embody the love of Christ to them. She is to see in the broken, aching, and suffering world the broken, bloodied body of Christ and care for it with the tenderness and gentleness that they have for the Lord himself. The deaconess, and every Christian, is to see in the face of the one who is suffering the very face of Christ.

In Christ we see One who has not disdained human weakness or suffering, but has taken it into Himself and made it holy and beautiful. The frailty of humanity is not an embarrassment to Him, but rather He embraces it as he took it up into Himself. “Tu ad liberandum suscepturus hominem, non horruisti Virginis uterum.” God’s own Son has taken on the weakness of human flesh, not despising it but perfecting it. His strength shines through weakness as he hangs broken on the cross and yet shouts his victory over death with a loud voice before giving up his Spirit.

As the ones whom God has created, we are all made in His image. As the baptized, we are freed to grow into the likeness of Christ. Our weakness makes us subject to change and God uses it for our good, growing us into something more than we are now. “What we will be has not yet appeared” (1 John 3:2). Our weakness also forms virtue in us. It produces patience as God shapes us unto our *telos*, and we must learn to endure while we wait, for what we are is not to be revealed until the Last Day. The virtue of humility develops as we learn to despair of ourselves and our own frailty, but find our only consolation and hope in God.

This same weakness, which allows us to grow, also calls forth mercy from us as the very voice of God calls to us through the one who suffers. The suffering of our neighbor compels us to love and shapes us in righteousness. God uses this for our neighbor's good and for our own. For their good, in that their bodily needs are cared for and they are pointed beyond their need to find fulfillment in Christ. For our good, for God continues to shape us into His likeness and continually calls forth righteousness from of us.

To have mercy is to help the one who suffers to see, beyond unfortunate circumstances, their identity as one made in the image of God. Only the Church can see

people as unique and precious in the mind of God and bearers of His image. *Diakonia* apart from the Church defines the sufferer solely by his need; but it is not poverty, pain, or sickness that defines a person's life. When the State is responsible for mercy work, it always dehumanizes those it tries to help. It defines the sufferer only by his need. When the Church sees a suffering person, she sees his identity as created in the image of God. We are to help those suffering look through their present need into eternity, where the fulfillment of every need comes from the glorified body of Christ. Love sees the *eschaton* in the one who suffers and recognizes that each person is growing into the likeness of Christ. Love sees that the person is more than they are at the present moment and even that the present moment demands it of them.

Mercy directs the suffering person to find the his full identity in Jesus, which relationship is realized in the Lord's Supper. The answer to every prayer is in the Lord's Supper where every prayer is answered *yes*. The Lord answers our prayers with a *yes* in the Supper even though we still continue to suffer in this life. A hungry person finds in the Supper the Bread from Heaven and the fulfillment of his hunger. The broken body of the sick and suffering receives the medicine of immortality and in it his resurrection has begun, although it remains hidden from his eyes. One who is lonely finds the true fulfillment of his longing to be known and understood as he is incorporated into the Body of Christ.

At the same time, bodily needs need to be met. It will not do to say "be warmed and filled' without giving the things needed for the body" (James 2:16). Thus, the deaconess works to care and to assist the Church in its care for the physical needs of our neighbor. As we can only relate to this world through the body, the Church must not neglect the pain and suffering in the world that the body inhabits. Although, at the same time, she points to the true fulfillment of every passion and need in Christ.

Mercy flows from the Father through the altar, font, and pulpit into the world through the hands of the Church. At the Lord's table, we gather to eat His body and drink His blood, and in so doing we are united as brothers and sisters. They say that blood is thicker than water, but the Blood is thicker than blood. That which unites us is thicker than any familial blood, for it is the very blood of God. Through the Lord's Supper we are flesh of each other's flesh and blood of each other's blood. Since the same blood of Christ flows in your veins and in your brother's, your brother's sufferings have become your own. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Corinthians 12:26).

*Carthago delenda est.*

**A Sermon:**  
**The Commemoration of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (John 1)**

By Kyle Richardson, *Sem. II*

On this evening we as the Church commemorate the life and teachings of a truly commendable saint. His name was Ambrose, and he was the Bishop of Milan in Italy. St. Ambrose is considered to be one of the four great doctors, or teachers, of the Western, or Latin Church. Another of those four great teachers of the Church, St. Augustine, whom St. Ambrose baptized, esteemed St. Ambrose very highly, and called him an oracle of God. Tonight, we with St. Augustine and the whole Church give thanks to God for the gift of St. Ambrose and rejoice with this dear saint in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh.

But why? Why this man? Well, because he was a saint! And what does it mean to be a saint? It means to be born of God through baptism, to be set apart to live as a child of the Heavenly Father. Alongside this, Scripture tells us to imitate the faith and life of the saints, who were rich in good works, a very good reason to commemorate them in our churches. So, what wonderful things did our Lord work through St. Ambrose, and what kind of example did our Lord leave us in him? Who was this highly estimable man of God?

There is no doubt that Ambrose lived a life of selfless service to the Church, even selling all his property when he became a bishop. However, we will not focus on that aspect, as commendable as it is. We will not focus on his great bravery before emperors, nor on the example of his great self-discipline, nor on his great humility when he refused to take the office of bishop, even though the crowds offered it to him with resounding acclaim. No, tonight we commemorate St. Ambrose primarily as a preacher, because, fundamentally, Ambrose was a preacher and confessor. We commemorate Ambrose as a confessor of our Lord's incarnation.

But this was not just some doctrine or teaching for St. Ambrose. He was at his core affected by our Lord's incarnation, and the truth of our Lord's taking on our flesh permeated his whole being, bringing about the fruits of his godly life. His bravery in the face of death, his courage before powerful and imposing emperors, and his strength before the enemy of temptation, these all came from his joy in the incarnation of his Savior, who bore St. Ambrose's weaknesses in His own body, as he bears your weaknesses even now.

St. Augustine, that faithful teacher of the Church previously mentioned, found himself struggling to understand the source of St. Ambrose's joyful discipline. Augustine had lived a profligate life, one tormented by temptations and perplexed by heresies. He had been trapped in a false view of who Jesus was and could not grasp the meaning of the incarnation, that God could take on our flesh, let alone our sin. Yet, God in his mercy provided a light for Augustine. This light was the preaching and pastoral care of St. Ambrose, who led Augustine out of his personal darkness by the light of the Word incarnate, Jesus Christ. After his time of instruction, Augustine received the sacrament of Holy Baptism by the hands of St. Ambrose. Newly reborn, Augustine was newly enabled to confess and bow before the mystery of God in the flesh, "the Father's Son, who in flesh the victory won."

Tradition holds that at the occasion of Augustine's baptism, Ambrose composed a very fine hymn, with which you are all familiar, I'm sure. We call this hymn the *Te Deum*. It is a stunning confession of the Holy Trinity, the perfect hymn for a baptism into the Trinity. In that hymn we sing, "When you took upon yourself to deliver man, you humbled yourself to be born of virgin." In this baptismal hymn, Ambrose clearly proclaims the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. He sings with joy over the one who in His divinity overcame the sharpness of death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Alongside this, Ambrose composed another very familiar hymn, one which we sing today thanks to Martin Luther and his German translation of the Latin original. We call this hymn "Savior of the nations, come" or in the Latin, "*Veni, redemptor gentium.*"

In this hymn, Ambrose richly expounds upon the deep mystery present in the words of tonight's Gospel. "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**" Oh precious Word, second person of the Trinity, in the beginning with the Father, who himself was God! This Word, through whom "**all things were made,**" chose to save His creation by becoming a creature, and the One who was not made was made man to save man.

Marvel now oh heaven and earth at the manner of this lowly birth! Why, "here a maid was found with child, yet remained a virgin mild!" In divine wisdom, He came by the womb of a virgin "not by human flesh and blood," not by "**blood or the will of the flesh or the will of man,**" but by "the Spirit of our God."

He chose this virgin birth so that we might live as children of God, born of God, we who were subject to death because of our sins against God. We did not trust our Creator, who cared for us. We were jealous of the authority of God, wishing to be like

God on our own terms, rejecting the order and law of God. We worshiped ourselves and the works of our hands, making idols which could not give life, let alone new birth.

In view of our sins, our Lord chose this birth because it was *not* one of human superiority, nor of sinful human passion, nor of great pomp and circumstance. No, it was the way of divine birth—His way. He came in this way, that the fruit of the womb might flourish again. The womb which was cursed by sin becomes now the womb which God makes his bridal chamber, his royal hall.

What a marvel, that in this bridal chamber of the virgin Mary's womb, the Word and those who were made through the Word are united in holy matrimony. Do you marvel at this, O heaven and earth? Indeed, for therein the Son of God united himself with human nature to redeem it, producing offspring of God. Yes, we are no longer fallen creatures, but the Bride of Christ, the children of God who are born of God, “virgin’s offspring pure and fresh.”

St. Ambrose, along with the whole Church, rejoiced over the incarnation of the Son. He held fast with joy to the apostolic teaching that our Lord Jesus is both true God and true man. In all this, Ambrose understood that if Jesus were not true God and true man, he could not “by his mighty power make whole all our ills of flesh and soul.”

But, our Lord does possess the mighty power of God and the flesh of man, and thereby he made clean all your filth and made whole all your diseases. Through your baptisms, bestowed through the ministrations of a faithful pastor like St. Ambrose, you too, just like St. Augustine, are born again to confess our Lord’s birth as your own birth. You are now “pure and fresh,” offspring of God, your sins washed away by the blood of God, finally united with your bridegroom.

Let us praise the Father’s Son, “who in flesh the victory won!” May you rejoice this day that you are bound up with God, perfect in the Father’s sight for the Son’s sake, freed from your idols, and will one day behold with your own eyes the full **“glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”**

In the name of + Jesus. Amen.

## Pharaoh reached us with all of his forces

T: Børre Knudsen ca. 1970. Tr.: Sondre B. R. Øverby 2016 M: Ansbach 1664

Pha - raoh had reached us with all of his for - ces, we lay en -

4  
camped there by Pi - ha - hi - rot. Charged by the

6  
sol - diers on char - iots and hors - es, trapped in our grave as we

9  
cried to our God. Just one way we could e -

11  
scape from the slaug - ter: In - to a bap - tis - mal

13  
death in the wa - ter, All-e - lu - ia - a-a, all - e - lu - ia!

**2.** Then, in that last and most desperate hour,  
For us burst open that vast, deadly sea.  
We who were dead, now by God's mighty power,  
Out of our grave, through the waters walked we.  
God's way brought us and our sons and our daughters  
From death to life in the baptismal waters!  
Alleluia, alleluia!

**3.** We now rejoicing give thanks to the Savior;  
We who for good would have perished in death;  
Praising this act of his merciful favor,  
Praises we'll sing as long as we have breath!  
And Canaan's sacred fruit is for our taking:  
Wine we'll be pouring and bread we'll be breaking!  
Alleluia, Alleluia!

## New Books List

*Selection of new books added to our library since the last issue of The Cornerstone.*

Abraham, William J. *Waking from doctrinal amnesia*. Abingdon Press, 1995. (BX8331.2 .A27 1995)

Aejmelaeus, Anneli. *The Westminster Confession in the Church Today*. Saint Andrew Press, 1982. (BX9183 .W43 1982)

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Baker, Ellen K. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. Cobblestone Pub, 2001. (BM487 .D42 2001)

Baker, Nicholson. *Human Smoke*. Simon & Schuster, 2008. (D741 .B255 2008)

Bann, Stephen. *Romanticism and the Rise of History*. Twayne Publishers, 1995. (D16.9 .B355 1995)

Barna Group. *Church Startups and Money*. Barna Group, 2016. (BV770 .B376 2016)

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Bea, Augustin. *The Church and Mankind*. Franciscan Herald Press, 1967. (BX1746 .B413)

Beckwith, Carl L. *The Holy Trinity*. The Luther Academy, 2016. (BT111.3 .B43 2016).

Bellamy, Richard. *Liberalism and Modern Society*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992. (HM276 .B39 1992)

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Bible. *The Comparative Psalter*. Oxford University Press, 2007. (BS1419 .K64 2007)

Bible. *Thesen über Martin Luther*. VOB Eichsfelddruck, 1981. (BR325 .T43 1981)

Böhmer, Karl Edwin. *August Hardeland and the 'Rheinische' and 'Hermannsburger' Missions in Borneo and Southern Africa (1839-1870)*. Edition Ruprecht, 2016. (BV3705.H37 B64 2016)

Bouwsma, William J. *The Waning of the Renaissance, 1550-1640*. Yale University Press, 2000. (CB401 .B59 2000)

Bradley, Anthony B. *Aliens in the Promised Land*. P & R Pub., 2013. (BV652.1 .B734 2013)

Braun, John A. *Luther's Protest*. Northwestern Publishing House, 2016 (BR333.3 .B738 2016)

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Broch, Hermann. *Geist und Zeitgeist*. Counterpoint, 2002. (PT2603.R657 A6 2003)

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Bryant, K. Edwin. *Encounters with Luther*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2016. (BR333.3 .E53 2016)

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- Cangelosi, Gary S. *Others and the Construction of early Christian Identities*. Finnish Exegetical Society, 2013. (BR162.3 .O84 2013)
- Cartledge, Paul. *Thermopylae*. Overlook Press, 2006. (DF225.5 .C37 2006)
- Cassirer, H. W. *Our Naming of God*. Fortress Press, 1989. (BT180.N2 O95 1989)
- Catholic Church. *Catechism of the Council of Trent for Parish Priests*. Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., 1923. (BX1958 .E5 1923)
- Catholic Church. *The Rites of the Catholic Church as Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI*. Pueblo Pub. Co., 1983. (BX2035 .A4 1983)
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- Connor, Steven. *Postmodernist Culture*. B. Blackwell, 1989. (PN98.P67 C66 1989)
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- De Pril, Ward. *Theological Renewal and the Resurgence of Integralism*. Peeters, 2016. (BX1747 .D46 2016)
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- Gross, Arthur W. *Exploring Biblical Kinship*. The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2016. (BS511.3 .E96 2016)
- Grube, Aaron. *Reading the Bible Missionally*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016. (BV2073 .R43 2016)
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- Harlan, David. *The Degradation of American History*. University of Chicago Press, 1997. (E175 .H37 1997)
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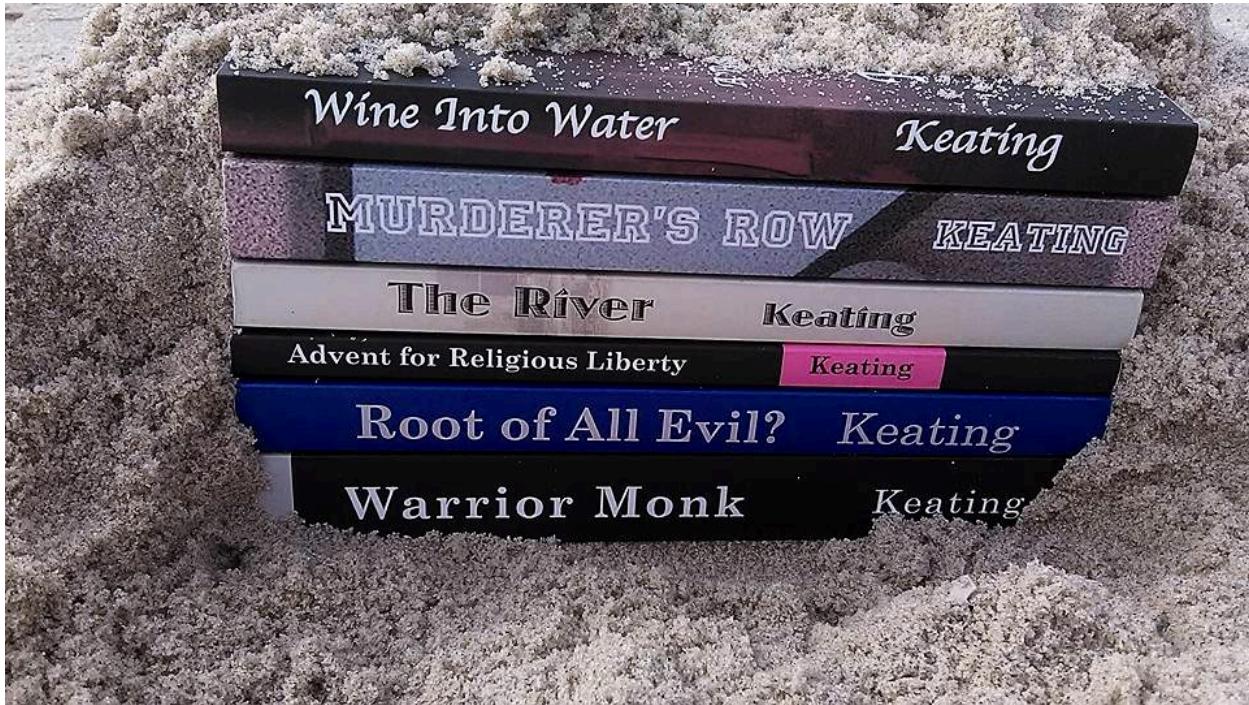
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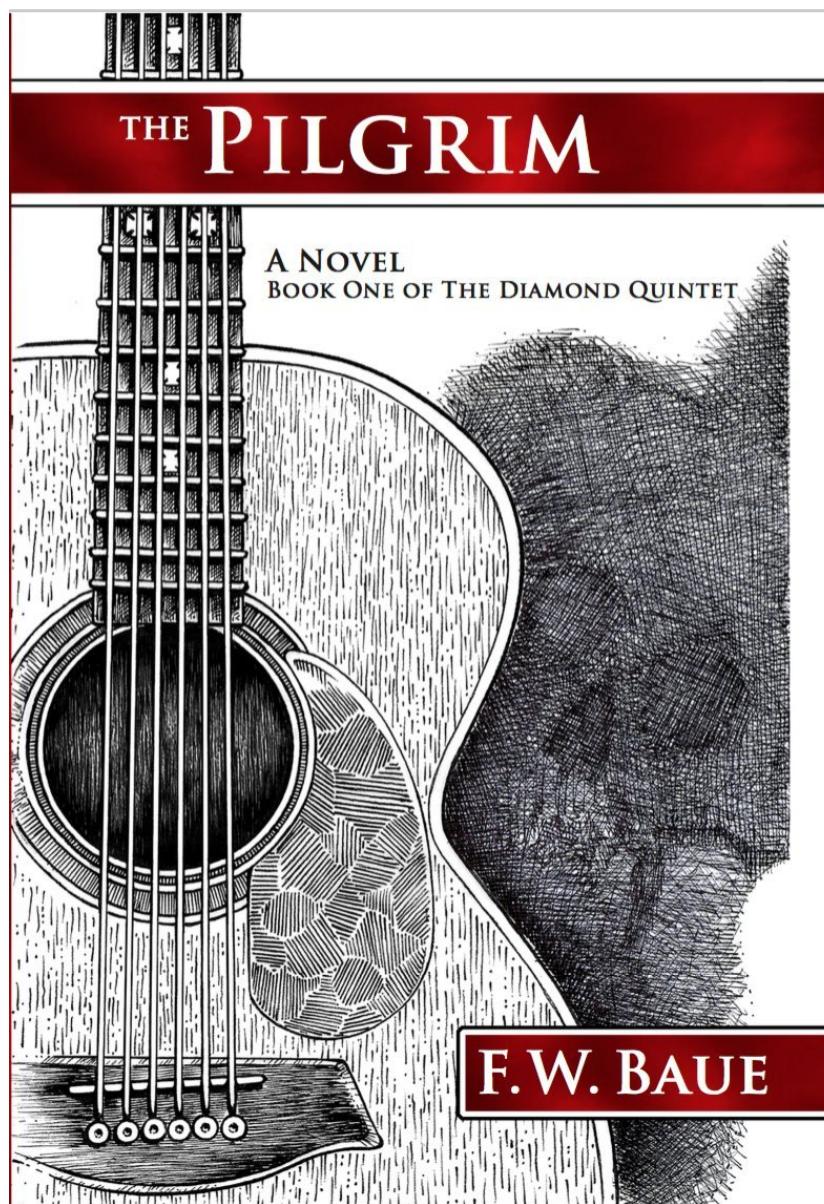
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*by Rev. Dr. Gifford Grobien, General Editor*



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# THE PILGRIM

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The Pilgrim is the first of five projected novels in The Diamond Quintet. All the characters in all five books are related; all five books are concerned with Missouri Synod/East Perry County people, theology, and culture. And cooking. And baseball (*auf Deutsch*).

Author Frederic W. Baue is a retired LCMS pastor with deep roots in Perry County. He and his wife, Jean (with whom he co-wrote the communion hymn, "What Is This Bread" LSB 629) live in St. Louis; they have three grown children and two mischievous cats.

The Pilgrim can be ordered through Amazon.com or from the author fbaue@sbcglobal.net. Cost is \$28.00 postpaid. All books autographed.

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