THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

Volume 22 · Number 2 Summer 2018

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Vol. 22 • Num. 2
Summer 2018

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Editorial: Reflecting on Priests, Priesthood, and the Glory of Christ

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In this issue of *SBJT* and a forthcoming issue next year, we are going to think through a biblical and systematic theology of priest, priesthood, and the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. The theme of "priests and priesthood" is a rich and important one in Scripture. In fact, the theme of "priests and priesthood" traverses the entire storyline of the Bible from creation to the new creation, and if traced through the biblical covenants, it leads us to a greater appreciation and grasp of Christ's work for us *and* our calling as his people in relation to him.

First, the theme of priests and priesthood reminds us about *who* Jesus is and *what* he has done for us in his entire office of Mediator as our Lord and Savior. By thinking about how the priestly theme unfolds in Scripture, we discover how Jesus *alone* is our Redeemer by virtue of his incarnation, obedient life, and substitutionary, sacrificial death. In fact, by the development

of this theme across redemptive history and through the covenants, we learn how God-given types and patterns reach their fulfillment in Christ and grasp better the nature of his work for us as our new covenant head and great high priest.

It is hard to deny that our Lord's work is presented in Scripture as a priestly work. To make sense of this we must place Christ's priestly work in the context of the OT. Most people begin their reflection on what a priest is by going to the old covenant and comparing and contrasting Jesus' priestly work to the Levitical priest. No doubt this is correct as the entire book of Hebrews teaches us. As the author of Hebrews develops the priestly theme in his letter, he starts by giving a helpful summary of the Levitical high priest. He writes: "Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb 5:1).

In this summary of the identity and work of the Levitical priest, three crucial aspects of the person and work of the high priest are noted: a high priest is selected by God from among the people; the high priest represents a particular people before God as their mediator; and the high priest offers gifts and sacrifices to God on behalf of the people's sin. In all these ways, the author will demonstrate that Christ fulfills the Levitical role perfectly *and* that he also transcends it by inaugurating a new order outside of the Levitical by coming in a new order tied to the figure of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7; cf. Psalm 110).

So just as the Levitical priest came from among the people, so Jesus identified with us in taking on our humanity in order to become our merciful and faithful high priest (Heb 2:5-18). Just as the Levitical priest represented the people before God, so our Lord represents us before the Father, and in his giving of his own life, he offers himself as our penal substitute (Hebrews 9). Yet, in all of these ways, our Lord Jesus is not merely quantitatively greater but qualitatively; he *fulfills* the Levitical order as God the Son incarnate which results in our *eternal* salvation not merely a temporal cleansing (Heb 5:9). Under the old covenant, the Levitical priest provided a relatively efficacious mediation between God and Israel. The sacrifices had a real effect on the relationship between God and his old covenant people. But God never intended the sacrificial system to effect a complete and permanent atonement and thus our eternal salvation. The old covenant priests and

sacrifices functioned as types/shadows of a greater priest and a perfect sacrifice to come (Heb 10:1-18). The OT sacrificial system did provide a means of divine forgiveness, but that forgiveness anticipated the coming of Christ who would achieve a once-for-all-time atonement resulting in the permanent and full forgiveness of our sins.

In fact, this is precisely what the OT prophets anticipated in the announcement of the coming of a new covenant grounded in the work of a better priest (see Jer 31:31-34; Psalm 110). The prophets predicted that the new covenant would result in a number of glorious realities: the dawning of God's kingdom in terms of his saving rule and reign through the Davidic king (Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-16; Ezek 34:1-31; Psalm 2, 72); the outpouring of the Spirit on God's people so that the entire covenant community would be born and empowered by the Spirit (Ezek 36:25-27; Joel 2:28-32); the breaking in of the new creation and the transformation of this fallen order (Isa 65:17-25), and so on.

But, as wonderful as those realities are, none of them can be effected until sin before God is dealt with in permanent way. That is why the central feature of the new covenant is the accomplishment of *the full forgiveness of our sin*. In the OT, forgiveness of sin is normally granted through the priest and the sacrificial system; however, the OT believer, if spiritually perceptive, knew that this was not enough, as evidenced by the repetitive nature of the system and the lack of proper representation and substitution in the sacrifice. But in the new covenant, sin will be "remembered no more" (Jer 31:34). The concept of remembering is not simple recall (see Gen 8:1; 1 Sam 1:19). In the context of Jeremiah 31:34, for God not to remember means that no action will need to be taken in the new age against sin. To be under the terms of the new covenant entails that each covenant member experiences a full and complete forgiveness of sin. Why? Because of the greater work of high priest of the new covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ.

However, what is often missed in thinking about Christ's priestly work is that our Lord not only fulfills the Levitical office but also Adam's role as the covenant head of creation. The Bible's storyline and the concept of priests does not begin with the Abrahamic or old covenant; instead it commences with the covenant of creation under Adam as Greg Beale so aptly demonstrates in his article. Thus to understand rightly the full dimensions of Christ's priestly work *and* how it is applied to us as his people, before we think of Levites

under the old covenant we must first think about Adam's role in creation as the first priest. After we do this, we must then trace this priestly role of Adam through the Patriarchs and to the nation of Israel as a "kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:6) and then wrestle with the relationship between Israel as a corporate priesthood with an individual priesthood within it. David Schrock's helps us think through these relationships as he unpacks Israel as God's corporate "royal priesthood" and the role of the Levitical priest within this structure. All of this is necessary to gain a greater understanding of how priesthood works across the canon and how it reaches its fulfillment first in our Lord Jesus and then in application to his people.

So, second, the theme of priests and priesthood *through Christ* also has application to us, namely the church. We must exercise care not to move too quickly from priests in the OT to the church without seeing how priests and priesthood is first fulfilled in Christ. In his article, Nicholas Perrin gives further grounding to Jesus' priestly work in the Gospels and how priesthood must first be viewed in relation to him. But Scripture does not merely say that Christ is the fulfillment of the priesthood without any consequences for his people. In fact, as Byron Wheaton demonstrates, in Christ, the church is heir of Israel's vocation as a royal priesthood which is important to grasp if we are to understand our vocation as God's redeemed people. Paul Hoskins finishes our discussion of priests by going to end of Scripture and thinking through how priests and priesthood is presented in the book of Revelation which nicely rounds out our discussion from creation to the new creation.

It is my prayer that this issue of *SBJT* will help us think more biblically and thus faithfully about priests and priesthood in Scripture so that we think more about the glory of Christ and come to understand the privileges we have as God's new covenant people.

Adam as the First Priest in Eden as the Garden Temple[1]

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Introduction

At the beginning of my book on *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, I discussed the problematic notion that Revelation 21:1-22:5 portrays the equation of the new creation in 21:1 with the following visions of a city that is temple-shaped and garden-like. Some might attribute the apparent oddness of equating the new cosmos to a garden-like city in the form of a temple to the irrational nature that apocalyptic visions and dreams can have, though this would be hard to accept for a vision that John claims has its origin in God (see, e.g., 21:9 with Rev 1:1 and 22:6). Also, how does this vision relate to Christians and their role in fulfilling the mission of the Church, which has been narrated earlier in the Apocalypse?

In order to solve the problem of this strange equation of the new creation and new Jerusalem with the temple and garden we need to look at the purpose of the temple in the Old Testament (OT) and how this purpose relates to the New Testament (NT) conception of the temple. It becomes evident in pursuing this task that the first tabernacle and temple existed long before Israel happened on the scene. Indeed, it is apparent that the first sanctuary is discernible from the very beginning of history.

The Garden of Eden Was a Temple in the First Creation

The first sanctuary was in Eden. But how could we possibly know this, since there was no architectural structure in Eden nor does the word "temple" or "sanctuary" occur as a description of Eden in Genesis 1-3? Such a claim may sound strange to the ears of many. A number of scholars recently have argued this from one angle or another.[2] The following nine observations, among others that I do not have space to mention, shows that Eden was the first holy sanctuary.

First, the temple later in the OT was the unique place of God's presence, where Israel had to go to experience that presence. Israel's temple was the place where the priest experienced God's unique presence, and Eden was the place where Adam walked and talked with God. The same Hebrew verbal form (hithpael) used for God's "walking back and forth" in the Garden (Gen 3:8), also describes God's presence in the tabernacle (Lev 26:12; Deut 23:14 [15]; 2 Sam 7:6-7; Ezek 28:14).[3]

Second, Genesis 2:15 says God placed Adam in the Garden "to cultivate it and to keep it." The two Hebrew words for "cultivate and keep" (respectively, *ʿābaḏ* and *šāmar*) are usually translated "serve and guard." When these two words occur together later in the OT without exception they have this meaning and refer either to Israelites "serving and guarding/obeying" God's word (about 10 times) or, more often to priests who "serve" God in the temple and "guard" the temple from unclean things entering it (Num 3:7-8; 8:25-26; 18:5-6; 1 Chron 23:32; Ezek 44:14).[4] Adam also is portrayed as wearing priestly attire in Ezekiel 28:13, though some identify this figure as Satan. That this figure is Adam is pointed to by analyzing the description in Ezekiel 28:13. The jewels that are said to be his "covering" in Ezekiel 28:13 are uniquely listed in Exodus 28:17-21, which describe the jewels on the ephod of Israel's high priest, who is a human and not an angel. In fact, either the Ezekiel list is an allusion to the human priest's bejeweled clothing in Exodus 28 or Exodus 28 has roots in an earlier tradition about Adam's apparel, which is represented by Ezekiel.[5] Furthermore, since the figure in Ezekiel 28:11-19 is addressed to a figure standing behind "the king of Tyre" (v. 11), who has sinned like the human king, it is more likely that the figure in Eden is also human.[6]

Therefore, Adam was to be the first priest to serve in and guard God's

temple. When Adam fails to guard the temple by sinning and letting in an unclean serpent to defile the temple, Adam loses his priestly role, and the two cherubim take over the responsibility of "guarding" the Garden temple: God "stationed the cherubim ... to guard the way to the tree of life" (so Gen 3:24). Their role became memorialized in Israel's later temple when God commanded Moses to make two statues of angelic figures and station them on either side of the "ark of the covenant" in the "Holy of Holies" in the temple. Like the cherubim, Israel's priests were also to "keep watch" (same word as "guard" in Gen 2:15) over the temple (Neh 12:45) as "gatekeepers" (2 Chron 23:19; Neh. 12:45).

Third, the "tree of life" itself was probably the model for the lampstand placed directly outside the "Holy of Holies" in Israel's temple: it looked like a small tree trunk with seven protruding branches, three on one side and three on the other, and one branch going straight up from the trunk in the middle.

Fourth, that the Garden of Eden was the first temple is also suggested by observing that Israel's later temple had wood carvings which gave it a garden-like atmosphere and likely were intentional reflections of Eden: 1 Kings 6:18, 29 says there was "cedar ... carved in the shape of gourds and open flowers" (v. 18); "on the walls of the temple round about" and on the wood doors of the inner sanctuary were "carvings of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers" (v. 29, 32, 35); beneath the heads of the two pillars placed at the entrance of the holy place were "carved pomegranates" (1 Kgs 7:18-20).

Fifth, just as the entrance to Israel's later temple was to face east and be on a mountain (Zion, Exod 15:17), and just as the end-time temple of Ezekiel was to face east (Ezek 40:6) and be on a mountain (Ezek 40:2; 43:12), so the entrance to Eden faced east (Gen 3:24) and was situated on a mountain (Ezek 28:14, 16).

Sixth, the ark in the Holy of Holies, which contained the Law (that led to wisdom), echoes the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (that also led to wisdom). The touching of both the ark and this tree resulted in death.

Seventh, just as a river flowed out from Eden (Gen 2:10), so the post-exilic temple (*Letter of Aristeas* 89-91) and the eschatological temple in both Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Revelation 21:1-2 have rivers flowing out from their center (and likewise Rev 7:15-17 and probably Zech 14:8-9).[7] Indeed, Ezekiel generally depicts latter-day Mt. Zion (and its temple) with descriptions of Eden in an attempt to show that the promises originally inherent in Eden

would be realized in the fulfillment of his vision.[8] Fertility and "rivers" are also descriptions of Israel's temple in Psalm 36:8-9:

> They drink their fill of the abundance of your house [temple];
> And you give them to drink of the river of your delights [literally, "the river of your Edens"!].
> For with you is the fountain of life;[9]
> In your light we see light [perhaps a play of words on the light from the lampstand in the Holy Place].

Jeremiah 17:7-8 also compares those "whose trust is the Lord" to "a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream," with the result that "its leaves will be green" and it will not "cease to yield fruit" (cf. also Ps 1:2-3). Then vv. 12-13 refer to "the place of our [Israel's] sanctuary" and virtually equates it with "the fountain of living water, even the Lord."[10]

Eighth, like Israel's later temple, the Garden of Eden may be discerned to be part of a tripartite sacred structure. In this respect, also in connection with the presence of water, it may even be discernible that there was a sanctuary and a holy place in Eden corresponding roughly to that in Israel's later temple. The Garden should be precisely viewed as not itself the source of water but adjoining Eden because Genesis 2:10 says "a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden."

Therefore, in the same manner that ancient palaces were adjoined by gardens, "Eden is the source of the waters and [is the palatial] residence of God, and the garden adjoins God's residence."[11] Similarly, Ezekiel 47:1 says that water would flow out from under the Holy of Holies in the future eschatological temple and would water the earth around. Similarly, in the end-time temple of Revelation 22:1-2 there is portrayed "a river of the water of life ... coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb" and flowing into a garden-like grove, which has been modeled on the first paradise in Genesis 2, as has been much of Ezekiel's portrayal.

If Ezekiel and Revelation are developments of the first garden-temple, which we will argue later is the case, then Eden, the area where the source of water is located, may be comparable to the inner sanctuary of Israel's later temple and the adjoining Garden to the Holy Place.[12] Even aside from these later biblical texts, Eden and its adjoining garden formed two distinct

regions. This is compatible with our further identification of the lampstand in the Holy Place of the temple with the tree of life located in the fertile plot outside the inner place of God's presence. Additionally, "the bread of the presence," also in the Holy Place, which provided food for the priests, would appear to reflect the food produced in the Garden for Adam's sustenance.[13]

I would add to this that the land and seas to be subdued by Adam outside the Garden were a third distinct region roughly equivalent to the outer court of Israel's subsequent temple, which is, indeed, symbolic of the land and seas throughout the entire earth.[14] Therefore, one may be able to perceive an increasing threefold gradation in holiness from outside the garden proceeding inward: the outermost region surrounding the garden is related to God and is "very good" (Gen 1:31) in that it is God's creation (= the outer court); the garden itself is a sacred space separate from the outer world (= the Holy Place), where God's priestly servant worships God by obeying him, by cultivating and guarding; Eden is where God dwells (= the Holy of Holies) as the source of both physical and spiritual life (symbolized by the waters).

Ninth, in the light of these numerous conceptual and linguistic parallels between Eden and Israel's tabernacle and temple, it should not be unexpected to find that Ezekiel 28:13-14, 16, 18 refer to "Eden, the garden of God ... the holy mountain of God," and also allude to it as containing "sanctuaries," which elsewhere is a plural way of referring to Israel's tabernacle (Lev 21:23) and temple (Ezek 7:24; so also Jer 51:51). The plural reference to the one temple probably arose because of the multiple sacred spaces or "sanctuaries" within the temple complex (e.g., courtyard, Holy Place, Holy of Holies).[15] It is also probable, as we saw above, that Ezekiel 28:14 views the glorious being who had "fallen" to be Adam. Thus, Ezekiel 28:16 is also referring to Adam's sin: "you sinned; therefore, you have been cast down wounded from the mount of God [where Eden was]." That Ezekiel 28:13 pictures Adam dressed in bejeweled clothing like a priest (28:13, alluding to Exod 28:17-20) corresponds well to the reference only five verses later to Eden as a holy sanctuary. Ezekiel 28:18 is probably, therefore, the most explicit place anywhere in canonical literature where the Garden of Eden is called a temple and Adam is viewed as a priest.

All of these observations together point to the likelihood that the Garden of Eden was the first sanctuary in sacred history.[16] Not only was Adam to "guard" this sanctuary but he was to subdue the earth, according to Genesis

1:28: "And God blessed them ... Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that creeps on the surface." As he was to begin to rule over and subdue the earth, he was to extend the geographical boundaries to the Garden of Eden until Eden extended throughout and covered the whole earth. This meant the presence of God that was limited to Eden was to be extended throughout the whole earth. God's presence was to "fill" the entire earth.

In this respect, Walton observes that

> if people were going to fill the earth [according to Genesis 1], we must conclude that they were not intended to stay in the garden in a static situation. Yet moving out of the garden would appear a hardship since the land outside the garden was not as hospitable as that inside the garden (otherwise the garden would not be distinguishable). Perhaps, then, we should surmise that people were gradually supposed to extend the garden as they went about subduing and ruling. Extending the garden would extend the food supply as well as extend sacred space (since that is what the garden represented).[17]

The intention seems to be that Adam was to widen the boundaries of the Garden in ever increasing circles by extending the order of the garden sanctuary into the inhospitable outer spaces. The outward expansion would include the goal of spreading the glorious presence of God. This would occur especially by Adam's progeny born in his image and thus reflecting God's image and the light of his presence, as they continued to obey the mandate given to their parents and went out to subdue the outer country until the Eden sanctuary covered the earth. At this early point, we can already see a beginning answer to our initial question about why Revelation 21:1-22:5 equates the new cosmos with the garden-like temple: because that was the original universal design of the Eden sanctuary. But we must trace the development of Genesis 1-2 throughout Scripture before making final conclusions.

As we know, Adam was not faithful and obedient in subduing the earth and extending the garden sanctuary, so that not only was the Garden-Temple not extended throughout the earth, but Adam himself was cast out of the Garden and did not enjoy anymore God's presence and lost his function as God's priest in the temple.

After Adam's "Fall" and expulsion from the Garden-Temple, mankind became worse and worse, and only a small remnant of the human race were faithful. God eventually destroyed the whole earth by a Flood because it had become so thoroughly wicked. Only Noah and his immediate family were spared. As a result, God starts the creation of the world over again.

It is possible that God started building another temple for his people to dwell in and to experience his presence during Noah's time.[18]

Noah and his sons, however, were not faithful and obedient, so that if God had begun another temple building process, it was immediately stopped because of the sin of Noah and his sons. They followed in Adam's sinful footsteps. In fact, Noah's "fall" is reminiscent of Adam's "Fall:" they both sin in the context of a garden: Genesis 9:20-21 says that "Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunk," and then this led to further sin by his sons.

After the disobedience of Noah and his family, God starts over again and chooses Abraham and his descendants, Israel, to re-establish his temple.

Adam's Commission as a Priest-King to Rule and Expand the Temple Is Passed on to the Patriarchs

As we will see, after Adam's failure to fulfill God's mandate, God raises up other Adam-like figures to whom his commission is passed on. We will find that some changes in the commission occur as a result of sin entering into the world. Adam's descendants, like him, however, will fail. Failure will continue until there arises a "Last Adam" who will finally fulfill the commission on behalf of humanity.

Adam's commission was passed on to Noah, to Abraham and on to his descendents. The following references in Genesis are a sample of this:[19]

> Genesis 1:28: And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'
> Genesis 9:1, 6-7: And God blessed Noah and his sons ... 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth ... be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.'
> Genesis 12:2-3: And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and

make your name great; and so be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Genesis 17:2, 6, 8: And I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly ... And I will make you exceedingly fruitful ... And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan.

Genesis 22:17-18: Indeed, I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of his [sg. pronoun] enemies. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.

Genesis 26:3: Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.

Genesis 26:4: And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

Genesis 26:24: And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, for the sake of my servant Abraham."

Genesis 28:3-4: And may God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May He also give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you; that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham.

Genesis 28:13-14: I will give it [the land] to you and to your seed. Your seed shall also be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out to the west and to the east ... and in you and in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

Genesis 35:11-12: God also said to him, 'I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you. And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you.'

Genesis 47:27: Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous.

In fact, the same commission given to the patriarchs is restated numerous times in subsequent OT books both to Israel and the true eschatological

people of God. Like Adam, Noah and his children also failed to perform this commission. God then gave the essence of the commission of Genesis 1:28 to Abraham (Gen 12:2-3; 17:2, 6, 8, 16; 22:18), Isaac (26:3-4, 24), Jacob (28:3-4, 14; 35:11-12; 48:3, 15-16), and to Israel (see Deut 7:13 and Gen 47:27, Exod 1:7, Ps 107:38, and Isa 51:2, the latter four of which state the beginning fulfillment of the promise to Abraham in Israel).[20] The commission of Genesis 1:28 involved the following elements:

(1) "God blessed them;"
(2) "be fruitful and multiply;"
(3) "fill the earth;"
(4) "subdue" the "earth;"
(5) "rule over ... all the earth" (so Gen 1:26, and reiterated in 1:28).

The commission is repeated, for example, to Abraham: (1) "I will greatly bless you, and (2) will greatly multiply your seed (3-5) and your seed will possess the gate of their enemies [= "subdue and rule"]. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen 22:17-18).[21] God expresses the universal scope of the commission by underscoring that the goal is to "bless" "all the nations of the earth." It is natural, therefore, that in the initial statement of the commission in Genesis 12:1-3 that God commands Abraham, "Go forth from your country ... and so be a blessing ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Commentators apparently have not noticed, however, something very interesting: that the Adamic commission is repeated in direct connection with what looks to be the building of small sanctuaries. Just as the Genesis 1:28 commission was initially to be carried out by Adam in a localized place, enlarging the borders of the arboreal sanctuary, so it appears to be not accidental that the restatement of the commission to Israel's patriarchs results in the following:

(1) God appearing to them (except in Gen 12:8; 13:3-4);
(2) they "pitch a tent" (literally a "tabernacle" in LXX),
(3) on a mountain;
(4) they build "altars" and worship God (i.e., "calling on the name of the Lord," which probably included sacrificial offerings and prayer)[22]

at the place of the restatement;

(5) the place where these activities occur is often located at "Bethel" – the "House of God" (the only case of altar building not containing these elements nor linked to the Genesis 1 commission is Gen 33:20).

The combination of these five elements occurs only elsewhere in the OT in describing Israel's tabernacle or temple![23]

Therefore, though "occasions for their sacrifices were usually a theophany and moving to a new place,"[24] there seems to be more significance to the construction of these sacrificial sites. The patriarchs appear also to have built these worship areas as impermanent, miniature forms of sanctuaries that symbolically represented the notion that their progeny were to spread out to subdue the earth from a divine sanctuary in fulfillment of the commission in Genesis 1:26-28. Though they built no buildings, these patriarchal sacred spaces can be considered "sanctuaries" along the lines comparable to the first non-architectural sanctuary in the Garden of Eden, which may be enhanced by observing that a "tree" is often present at these sites. It will also be important to recall later that a holy piece of geography or a sacred area can be considered a true "sanctuary" or "temple" even when no architectural building is constructed there.

These informal sanctuaries in Genesis pointed then to Israel's later tabernacle and temple from which Israel in reflecting God's presence was to branch out over all the earth. The patriarch's commission, like Adam's in Genesis 1:28 in connection to Genesis 2, also involved the building of a temple.

That these miniature sanctuaries adumbrated the later temple is also suggested by the facts that "before Moses the altar was the only architectural feature marking a place as holy" and that later "altars were incorporated into the larger [structural] sanctuaries, the tabernacle and the temple."[25] The small sanctuary in Bethel also became a larger sanctuary in the northern kingdom of Israel, though it subsequently became idolatrous and was rejected as a true shrine of Yahweh worship (see Amos 7:13; cf. also 1 Kgs 12:28-33; Hos 10:5).

The result of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob building altars at Shechem, between Bethel and Ai, at Hebron, and near Moriah was that the terrain of Israel's future land was dotted with shrines. This pilgrim-like activity "was like planting a flag and claiming the land"[26] for God and Israel's future temple, where God would take up his permanent residence in the capital

of that land. Thus, all these smaller sanctuaries pointed to the greater one to come in Jerusalem.

The preparations for the re-establishment of a larger scale tabernacle, and then temple, begin at the Exodus, where again God brings about chaos in creation on a small scale and delivers Israel to be the spearhead for his new humanity. Upon them is placed the temple-building commission originally given to Adam.

Israel's Tabernacle in the Wilderness and Later Temple Was a Re-establishment of the Garden of Eden's Sanctuary

Israel's tabernacle and temple was an organic development of the earlier garden sanctuary in Eden. There is much to say here, but we cannot elaborate further, except to say that Israel's temple was a foreshadowing of Christ and his people as the new, end-time temple, which was inaugurated at Christ's first coming and will be consummated at his final coming.

The Problem of John Seeing a New Creation in Revelation 21:1 and Then Seeing in the Remainder of the Vision Only a City in the Form of a Garden-like Temple Is Now Solved

The mystery of Revelation 21-22 we believe is significantly clarified by our preceding survey of the purpose of temples in the OT and the NT. The new heavens and earth in Revelation 21:1-22:5 are now described as a temple because the temple—which equals God's presence—encompasses the whole earth because of the work of Christ. At the very end of time, the true temple will come down completely from heaven and fill the whole creation (as Rev 21:1-3, 10 and 21:22 affirm). The new creation is equated with an escalated Edenic garden-temple because now Christ has finally caused the garden-temple to be expanded over the whole earth. And the new cosmos is also equated with a city because the temple was to be expanded to cover the whole city of Jerusalem[27] before expanding out to cover the whole world.

In John's portrayal of the consummated condition of the new heavens and earth in Revelation 21:22, he says, "I saw no temple in it, because the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb are its temple." Whereas the container for the divine glory in the OT was often an architectural building, in the new age

this old physical container will be shed like a cocoon and the new physical container will be the entire cosmos. The ultimate essence of the temple is the glorious divine presence. If such is to be the case in the consummated form of the cosmos, would this not begin to be the case in the inaugurated phase of the latter days? The glorious divine presence of Christ and the Spirit among his people comprise the beginning form of the eschatological temple.

The Ethical Imperative of Being the Eschatological Temple of God's Presence Is For Christian Priests to Expand That Temple

In contrast to the first Adam, Christ, the Last Adam and true king-priest, perfectly obeyed God and expanded the boundaries of the temple as a new creation from himself to others (in fulfillment of Gen 1:28). In this respect, note that at the climax of the last vision of Revelation God's "throne" is also now in the midst of God's people (Rev 22:1, 3), whereas previously the "Holy of Holies" (or, more specifically the Ark therein) was the "footstool of God's heavenly throne," and only the High Priest could come before that "footstool" (Isa 66:1; Acts 7:49; cf. also Ps 99:5). Now all are high priests and all are victorious "overcomers" (21:7), who "shall reign forever and ever" with Christ and God in the eternal cosmic temple of the new creation (Rev 22:5).

These inextricably linked themes of kingship, priesthood, temple and new creation, as we have seen above, have their primary roots in and are a consummate development of the same constellation of themes in Genesis 1-2.

We are to continue the priestly task of mediating God's presence to others until the end of the age, when God will cause the task to be completed and the whole earth will be under the roof of God's temple, which is none other than saying that God's presence will fill the earth in a way it never had before. This priestly and cultic task of expanding the presence of God is expressed strikingly in Revelation 11. There the Church is portrayed as dwelling in a "sanctuary" (vv. 1-2), as being "two witnesses" (v. 3), and as being "two lampstands" (v. 4), the latter image of which, of course, is an integral feature of the temple. The mission of the Church as God's temple is to shine its lampstand-like light of witness into the dark world. The mention that the witnessing church is also "two olive trees" indicates their priestly and kingly status:[28] the exercise of their witness is also how the church exercises it mediatorial priesthood and kingly reign. In surprisingly similar fashion,

this mission is expressed in 1 Peter 2:4-5, where Peter calls Christ a "living stone" in the temple and his people are "living stones" are "being built up as a spiritual house." Furthermore, as they are "being built up" and thus expanding, they are a "royal priesthood" (allusion to Exod 19:6 in 1 Pet 2:5 and 9a!) and are to "proclaim the excellencies of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9b). As in Revelation 11 and 21:1-22:5, so also in 1 Peter 2 the notions of God's people exercising their roles as kings and priests in the end-time temple highlights again that the idea of temple is an essential facet of the new creational kingdom.

Ephesians 2:20-22 asserts that the Church has "been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you are also being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." The Church is growing and expanding in Christ throughout the interadvent age (cf. also Eph 4:13-16) in order that God's saving presence and "the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known" even "in the heavenly places" (Eph 3:10). And it is through the exercise of her gifts (Eph 4:8-16) that this expansion takes place.[29] Such gifts are given because all believers, Jews and Gentiles, are priests in the end-time-temple, as the OT prophesied (Isa 56:3-7; 61:6; 66:18-21). The various gifts enable them to exercise their eschatological priestly positions.

How do we first experience God's tabernacling presence? By believing in Christ: that he died for our sin, that he rose from the dead and reigns as the Lord God. God's Spirit comes into us and dwells in us in a similar manner that God dwelt on his throne in the sanctuary of Eden and Israel's temple.

How does the presence of God increase in our lives and our churches? How was this to happen with Adam? This was to occur by Adam's trust in God and his word. Likewise, God's presence will become increasingly manifest to us as we grow by grace in our belief in Christ and his word and by obeying it.

Do we come to God's word habitually, as did Jesus, in order that we may be strengthened increasingly with God's presence in order to fulfill our priestly task of mediation by spreading that presence to others who don't know Christ?

God's presence grows in us by knowing his word, by obeying it, and then we spread that presence to others by living our lives faithfully in the world. For example, a persevering and joyous faith in the midst of trial is an

amazing witness to the unbelieving world. In so doing, the body of Christ during the interadvent period "follows the Lamb wherever he went" (Rev 14:4) as a walking tabernacle during his epoch on earth. We are to realize that the Church's place in the eschatological redemptive-historical story is that of being the inaugurated temple and being priests in that temple, which is designed to expand and spread God's presence throughout the earth. Believers are images of God in his temple, who are reflect his presence and glorious attributes in their thinking, character, speech, and actions. It is this reflection of God's glorious presence that extends out through Christian priests and infects others who do not know God, so that they come to be part of this expanding temple.

How does the notion of the expanding temple of God's presence fit into the NT storyline. I have argued that this storyline is the following: *Jesus' life, trials, death for sinners, and resurrection by the Spirit has launched the fulfillment of the eschatological already and not yet new creation reign, bestowed by grace through faith and resulting in worldwide commission to the faithful to extend that new creation and resulting in judgment for the unfaithful, unto God's glory*. Thus, temple forms that part of the biblical storyline in which the role of Christian "witness" and "missions" is to be understood. The temple is an organic aspect of the kingdom of the new creation. Accordingly, the imperative to expand God's tabernacling presence throughout the world is a priestly imperative and is the main way that the "worldwide commission to the faithful" (a crucial part of the storyline underlined above) is to be carried out.

The focus of this essay has been that *our priestly task as a Church in being God's temple, so filled with his presence, is that we expand the temple of his presence and fill the earth with that glorious presence until God finally accomplishes this goal completely at the end of time!* The first Adam failed in this mission, but the Last Adam succeeded and we will succeed in him. This is our common, unified mission. May we by God's grace unify around this goal.

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1 This essay is a summary of G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 614-648.

2 For a good overview of these works, see Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 47-48.

3 The precise hithpael form that is used is in Gen 3:8 is a participle (*mit̲hallek̲*), which is the precise form used in Deut 23:14 [15] and 2 Sam 7:6. Outside of these three uses, the hithpael participial form occurs only in five other passages, which have nothing to do with the tabernacle or temple.

4 Cf. Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (Overland Park: Two Age Press, 2000), 54,who sees that only the "guarding" has any priestly connotations, particularly with respect to the priestly "guarding" of the temple from the profane (e.g., Kline cites Num 1:53; 3:8, 10, 32; 8:26, 18:3ff.; 1 Sam 7:1; 2 Kgs 12:9; 1 Chron 23:32; 2 Chron 34:9; Ezek 44:15ff.; 48:11).

5 Nine of twelve jewels in Ezekiel 28 overlap with those in Exodus 28. In the LXX, eleven of the jewels in Ezekiel overlap with the Greek version of Exodus 28 (though the Greek of Ezekiel has a total of fourteen jewels).

6 There are additional indications that this figure in Eden is Adam. Not only does the Greek OT clearly identify Adam as the glorious figure dwelling in the primeval Eden in Ezek 28:14 (as does the Targum in Ezek. 28:12) but plausibly so does also the Hebrew text as well (as argued, e.g., by D. E. Callender, *Adam in Myth and History* [HSS 48; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000], 87-135, 179-189). The phrase in the Hebrew of Ezek 28:14a, *ʾatt^{e}-k^{e}rûḇ mimšaḥ hassôḵeḵ* ("you were the anointed cherub who covers"), could well be understood as a mere metaphor, which is a suppressed simile: "you were [like] the anointed cherub who covers," similar to such metaphorical statements as "the Lord is [like] my shepherd" (Ps 23:1). What further points to this figure being Adam in Eden is that Ezek 28:18 says that the sin of the glorious figure in Eden "profaned" Eden. The only account that we have that Eden became unclean because of sin is the narrative about Adam in Gen 2-3. Cf. also Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25-48* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 115, and M. Hutter, "Adam als Gärtner und König (Gen 2:8, 15)," *BZ* 30 (1986): 258-262. For later Jewish traditions referring to the jewels of Ezekiel 28 as "coverings" or "canopies" for Adam and Eve, see G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 1087-1088.

7 Later Judaism understood that from "the tree of life" streams flowed (Midr. Rab. Gen 15.6; 2 En. [J] 8:3, 5).

8 J. D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* (HSM 10; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 25-53.

9 See Levenson, *Ezekiel 40-48, 28*, who sees this phrase as an allusion to the "flow [which] welled up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the soil" from which Adam was created in Gen 2:6-7.

10 Among other commentators, D. E. Callender, *Adam in Myth and History*, 51-52, especially cites Psalm 36 and Jeremiah 17 as examples of Israel's temple being likened to Eden.

11 J. H. Walton, *Genesis*, (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 167, citing others also for sources showing that ancient temples had gardens adjoining them.

12 Discussion of the distinction between Eden and its Garden is based on Walton, *Genesis*, 167-168, 182-183.

13 So Walton, *Genesis*, 182.

14 I will argue this in the next section. See further T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 307-312, for a discussion of other commentators who, in various ways, have identified the Garden of Eden with a temple or sanctuary, in favor of which he offers further evidence (ibid., 457-459).

15 There were even smaller sacred areas in the temple complex, e.g., of Solomon's temple (1 Chron 28:11) and of the second temple (1 Macc 10:43). Philo can refer to "the Holy of Holies" as "the Holies of Holies" (*Leg. All*. 2.56; *Mut. Nom*. 192) or "the innermost places of the Holies" (*Somn* 1.216).

16 See Daniel I. Block, "Eden: A Temple? A Reassessment of the Biblical Evidence," in *From Creation to New Creation, Essays in Honor of G. K. Beale* (ed., D. M. Gurtner and B. L. Gladd; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2013): 3-29, who argues against the view that Eden was a temple. There is not space for a full response to Block, though he fails to acknowledge Ezek 28: 13-14, 16, 18, which is the strongest argument that Eden was considered to be a "sanctuary" and Adam a priest in this temple.

17 Walton, *Genesis*, 186.

18 That this is plausible is apparent from, among other reasons, the affinities of Noah's altar building and associated activities with that of the subsequent similar patriarchal activities, which can actually be viewed as inchoate or small-scale temple-building (on which see further the following section).

19 Underlinings in the following references represent unique verbal and conceptual parallels with Gen 1:28.

20 This was first brought to my attention by N. T. Wright, *Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 21-26, upon which the above list of references in Genesis is based. Wright sees that the command to Adam in Gen 1:26-28 has been applied to the patriarchs and Israel; he also cites other texts where he sees Gen 1:28 applied to Israel (Exod 32:13; Lev 26:9; Deut 1:10f.; 7:13f.; 8:1; 28:63; 30:5, 16). I have subsequently likewise discovered that J. Cohen, "*Be Fertile and Increase": The Ancient and Medieval Career of a Biblical Text* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 28-31, 39, makes the same observation in dependence on G. V. Smith, "Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1-11," *JETS* 20 (1977): 307-319, who both include Noah. See also W. J. Dumbrell, *The Search for Order* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 29-30, 37, 72-73, 143, for the notion that the blessings conditionally promised to Adam are given to Israel.

21 Notice that the ruling aspect of the commission is expressed to Abraham elsewhere as a role of "kingship"

(Gen 17:6, 16), and likewise with respect to Jacob (Gen 35:11).

22 A. Pagolu, *The Religion of the Patriarchs* (JSOTSup 277; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 62.

23 The combination of "tent" (*ʾohel*) and "altar" (*mizbeaḥ*) occur in Exodus and Leviticus only with respect to the tabernacle and associated altar (e.g., Lev 4:7, 18). "Altar" (*mizbeaḥ*) and "house" (*bayiṯ*) occur 28x in the OT with reference to the temple and its altar. Rarely do any of the words in these two combinations ever refer to anything else other than the tabernacle or temple. The building of these worship sites on a mountain may represent part of a pattern finding its climax in Israel's later temple that was built on Mt. Zion (the traditional site of Mt. Moriah), which itself becomes a synecdoche of the whole for the part in referring to the temple. We do not mean to say that "tent" in the patriarchal episodes is equivalent to the later tabernacle, only that it resonates with tabernacle-like associations because of its proximity to the worship site.

24 Pagolu, *Religion of the Patriarchs*, 85.

25 T. Longman, *Immanuel in Our Place* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2001), 16. While some commentators acknowledge that some of these patriarchal episodes involve the construction of small sanctuaries, they do not associate them with Israel's later large-scale temple (so, e.g., H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis II* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1942], 781, 918, with respect to Genesis 28 and 35).

26 Longman, *Immanuel in Our Place*, 20 (and, similarly, Pagolou, *Religion of the Patriarchs*, 70).

27 On which see Jer 3:16-17: 16"And it shall be in those days when you are multiplied and increased in the land," declares the LORD, "they shall say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' And it shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they miss it, nor shall it be made again.17 "At that time they shall call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor shall they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart." Likewise, see Zech 1:16-17; 2:1-5.

28 That the "two olive trees" represent a priestly and kingly figure is apparent from recognizing this as an allusion to Zech 4, where they represent a priestly and kingly figure (see Beale, *Revelation*, 576-577).

29 Note the virtual verbatim parallel wording in Eph 2:21-22, "in whom the whole body being fitted together grows ... in the Lord ... you are being built together," and in 4:15-16, "we should grow in him ... from whom the whole body is being fitted together ... causes the growth ... unto the building up of itself." The latter passage appears to develop the former passage on the temple (I am grateful to one of my research students, Brandon Levering, for this insight). Also the Ps 68:18 quotation in Eph 4:8, which introduces the list of gifts, is part of a context in which God defeated Israel's enemies and dwelt in his temple in Zion (Ps 67 [68]:17-19 [LXX]), a passage applied to Christ as the temple in Col 1:19 (see G. K. Beale, "Colossians," in *A Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* [ed., G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007], 855-857). This enhances the link with the temple in Eph 2:20-22. The Psalm in Eph 4:8 appears to be typologically applied to Christ. Could the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 also be linked to the church as a temple in 3:16-17 and 6:15-19 (there is not space to explore this question)?

Restoring the Image of God: A Corporate-Filial Approach to the "Royal Priesthood" in Exodus 19:6

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> Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. (Exod 19:5–6 ESV)

In the Bible "royal priesthood" or "a kingdom of priests" only appears two times—once in Exodus 19:6 (Heb. *mamleket kohanîm;* Gk. *basileion hierateuma*), once in 1 Peter 2:9 (Gk. *basileion hierateuma*).[1] From such a scant number of occurrences one might assume the subject of royal priesthood is unimportant to storyline of the Bible.[2] Such a conclusion, however, would be premature and misguided, because as this article will demonstrate, the

cohesion of priesthood and kingship, with the conjoining concept of sonship, provides a composite picture of humanity—e.g., Adam, Israel, Jesus, Church—that runs from Genesis to Revelation.

More than being just an idiosyncratic appellation for Israel and the Church, royal priesthood is a *title of status* given to God's chosen people, an *institution* that permeates Israel's history, a *messianic description* which identifies the heart of Jesus' person and work, and a *blessed vocation* conferred on the new covenant people of God. In other words, far from being a title restricted to two passages of Scripture, the twin concepts of priest and king stand at the center of the biblical story, as well as numerous theological doctrines—e.g., Christology, ecclesiology, anthropology, and missiology, to name a few.[3]

Yet, before we can make any doctrinal conclusions or missiological applications about what it means to be a royal priest, we must consider the exegetical details of Exodus 19:6.[4] As with any passage of Scripture, we must understand Moses' words in their textual, covenantal, and canonical contexts.[5] Yet, to avoid turning this exegetical investigation into a full-fledged monograph, this article will focus on the royal priesthood within the Pentateuch. More specifically, it will observe how Genesis 1-Exodus 18 inform the "royal priesthood" conferred on Israel in Exodus 19:6. In the second part of the article, I will continue the investigation of the Pentateuch from Exodus 19 to the end of Deuteronomy.

In this present study, I will make two arguments. First, the appointment of Israel as a "royal priesthood" must be understood in the light of God's endowment of royal priesthood on Adam in Genesis 1-2. Only by relating Eden to Sinai, and tracing the intermediary "sons of Adam" with their variegated priestly and royal duties, can we fully grasp what Moses is saying in Exodus 19:6. Second, the story of the Israel's royal priesthood does not end at Sinai. Rather, this is only the beginning. Accordingly, we need to read the rest of the Pentateuch to discover how Israel as a kingdom *of* priests became in its history a kingdom *with* priests—i.e., a kingdom with a Levitical priesthood.

Indeed, if Exodus 19:6 builds on the concept of the *imago Dei* in Genesis 1, it also lays the foundation of a system of priests to be established in Israel. But what is the nature of that priestly institution? And how does it relate to any system of priesthood before Sinai? The answer to those questions, and hence the meaning of *mamleket kohanîm*, can only be fleshed out as we discover how the "filial priesthood" of the patriarchs (i.e., a priesthood

where firstborn sons followed their fathers to build altars, offer sacrifices, and intercede for the family) is replaced by "the establishment of a professional priestly class," as Jacob Milgrom puts it describing the redemption of the firstborn by the Levites (Num 3).[6] What follows is the first of a two-part study on the development of Israel's royal priesthood from Eden to Sinai with the second part to appear in a forthcoming issue of *SBJT*.

Why This Approach?

There are three reasons why we need to approach Exodus 19:6 and the royal priesthood in this way. First, excellent lexical studies on the meaning of "royal priesthood" (*mamleket kohanîm*) already exist. The most thorough is the 2004 monograph by John A. Davies, who interprets Exodus 19:6 in the context of Exodus, the ancient Near East (ANE), and the remainder of the Bible.[7] Starting with a thorough lexical study of Exodus 19:6, Davies considers the way royal and priestly themes coalesce in passages like Hosea 4:4-9; Micah 4:8; Psalm 114:2; Isaiah 61:6; and Zechariah 3:1-10. Similarly, Jo Bailey Wells, in her book *God's Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology,* also looks in depth at Exodus 19:6.[8] Among the literature on Exodus 19, I will interact significantly with their works.

What is less prominent in the study of Exodus 19:6 and Israel's royal priesthood is the way in which royal priesthood finds its genesis in Eden, not Sinai. While laboring over the meaning of *mamleket kohanîm* (primarily, Davies) and *goy qadoš* (primarily, Wells) and showing how Exodus 19:6 should be understood in its ANE context, they do not substantially ground royal priesthood in the original *imago Dei*. Peter Gentry is one of the few who makes this vital connection between Israel and Adam.[9] Likewise, William Dumbrell makes the connection between Exodus 19:4-6 and Genesis 12:1-3. But because Genesis 12:1-3 restores what was lost in Eden, we need to go back to the beginning.[10]

Therefore, instead of retracing the works of Davies, Wells, and others, this article will bring earlier canonical data to bear on the words of Exodus 19:6. Because what is often lacking in most treatments of the royal priesthood is an appreciation for God's antecedent covenants with Adam, Noah, and Abraham, we need to see how the priestly status of those sons of Adam inform the covenant at Sinai. In other words, we need to see how the patriarchal

understanding of sonship informs the priesthood granted to Israel.[11] Thus, our first step in answering the question—What does royal priesthood mean?—is to read Exodus 19:6 in the context of Genesis 1-Exodus 18. From those chapters we will see how sonship, priesthood, and kingship are three overlapping aspects of the *imago Dei,* and how Exodus 19:6 conjoins those three aspects together in Israel, as a corporate Adam.

Second, because Exodus 19:6 is set in the larger context of Exodus and the five books of Moses, we must consider how the entire Pentateuch informs the idea of a royal priesthood. For instance, how does a kingdom of priests relate to the high priesthood of Aaron (Exod 28-29), the redemption of the firstborn (Num 3), and the duties of the Levites (Num 3, 18)? Again, Davies' work on Exodus 19 is significant as it gives us a lexical and canonical approach to Israel's royal priesthood.[12] But his work and many others do little to explain how the royal priesthood conferred on Israel at Sinai develops (or even changes) over the course of the rest of the Pentateuch. Could it be that some of the debate surrounding Exodus 19 stems from the fact that little attention has been paid to the complicated story of the priesthood as told by Moses himself?[13]

For all Davies contributes to Exodus 19:6, he does not provide an exegetical (read: diachronic and literary) reading of Exodus 25-40 and the remaining books of Leviticus-Deuteronomy. Rather, he draws up a synchronic list of characteristics and duties of the priesthood, but one that does not follow the narrative of the Pentateuch.[14] The trouble with this, as Wells points out, is that the Pentateuch tells a "complicated story" about the priesthood.[15] While historical-critical approaches have gone too far, inventing a story of priestly rivalry (priests vs. Levites) behind the text of Scripture, there is something to be said for the accretion of mediating layers and priestly duties found in the Pentateuch. Accordingly, with an unswerving commitment to the unity, divine inspiration, and inerrancy of Scripture and rejection of multiple sources, it seems necessary to observe how the royal priesthood conferred at Sinai develops through a series of events in Israel's history. John Sailhamer's *The Meaning of the Pentateuch* identifies some of the ways in which the priesthood may have developed in the Pentateuch,[16] but unfortunately he resorts to a "behind the text" approach to priesthood and the law covenant, which Jim Hamilton rightly critiques.[17] Sailhamer's approach is not the one pursued here.

A better approach to the Pentateuch is provided by Michael Morales. In his *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, he shows how the five books of Moses form a literary unit that should be read together and in order.[18] By consequence, a synchronic summation of priestly characteristics cannot discern the development (and degradation) of the priesthood in the Pentateuch. Consequently, someone like Scott Hahn, who suggests that Israel lost their priestly status after the Golden Calf episode, reads the text more carefully than most, even if some of his conclusions are suspect.[19] Nonetheless, I will argue that a diachronic reading of the Pentateuch, what Morales describes as the Pentateuch's "journey" to God's abode, is necessary for understanding how the mediating institution of the priesthood worked in the life of Israel.[20] Because of the sheer volume of material in the Pentateuch, it will not be possible to address every issue, but hopefully I can provide some general contours of the priesthood in Israel's kingdom that will help us understand how a "royal priesthood" worked in Israel. Again, this approach will be pursued in two parts—the first looking backwards from Exodus 19:6, the second looking forward to the end of Moses five books.

Third and finally, from a unified reading of the priesthood from Adam to Israel, we will see how the royal priesthood developed and prepared the way for a New Adam, one who came as a better priest and a greater king. In other words, because the priesthood established at Sinai was given as a copy of the heavenly temple (see Exod 25:8, 40), it was always intended to be a shadow of a later, greater reality (Heb 8:5). Likewise, because Scripture (e.g., John 5:39; Rom 4:23; 1 Cor 10:11; Gal 4:4; Heb 1:1–2) teaches us to read the OT as preparing the way for a better royal priest (e.g., 1 Sam 2:35; Ps 110; Zech 3), we must understand how the concept of royal priesthood is meant to prepare the way for Christ and his new covenant people. In this final section, then, I will show how a canonical understanding of royal priesthood leads us to see its eschatological purpose and typological contours, which ultimately lead us to Christ and the kingdom of priests he is now gathering.

To summarize, here are the three directional aims of these two articles. First, in Part 1, I will demonstrate how Israel as a kingdom of priests reflects the original image of Adam, now marred by sin but restored (if only partially) in the royal priesthood in Israel. This section will show the need to understand priesthood in relationship to sonship, and why any study of priesthood that begins after Eden will suffer because it does not attend to the original pattern

of son-priest-king that is inherent to humanity's *imago Dei.* The goal of this article (Part 1) will be to explicate this triple office of the image of God (son, priest, and king) and how it informs our understanding of Exodus 19:6.

Second, in Part 2, I will outline from Exodus-Deuteronomy how the priestly institution of mediation developed in the legislation of the Mosaic covenant. This section will attempt to explain how Israel functioned as a kingdom with multiple "layers" of priestly mediation. This article will attempt to provide a reading of the Pentateuch which pays careful attention to the diachronic development of the priesthood from Sinai (Exodus 19-Numbers 10) to the Wilderness (the rest of Numbers) to the Land (the book of Deuteronomy).

Third and last, in both parts, I will make a number of connections from the royal priesthood of Adam and Israel to that of Jesus the Messiah and the anointed members of his new covenant community. In this canonical reading of Exodus 19:6, I will show the typological features of this old covenant system that are now fulfilled and exceeded by the high priesthood of Christ and the kingdom of priests he leads. Though this article will not use the language of typology much, it understands the royal priesthood of Israel as a significant ectype standing between the *archetype* Adam, the *antitype* Jesus, and the *supratype* of the Church.[21]

In the end, these studies on Exodus 19:6 will at times be more suggestive than definitive. Among conservative Protestant scholarship, there is much work to be done on a biblical theology of priesthood. As D. A. Carson recently noted, Andrew Malone's recent work is the only whole Bible treatment of the priesthood that he knows.[22] Likewise, Malone notes the way localized biblical studies on the priesthood have proliferated, but laments how few consider the whole Bible.[23] I concur, and it is my aim in these two articles to relate Exodus 19:6, a bedrock text for understanding a biblical theology of the priesthood, in the larger scope of the Pentateuch and then the whole Bible. In so doing, I pray it will help us better understand the biblical storyline of the priesthood and our own calling to be a kingdom of priests (1 Peter 2:9).

A Marred Image: Royal Priesthood from Adam to Israel

While studies on the priesthood often begin at Sinai, where the priesthood is first introduced in covenant form, it is better to begin our study of the royal

priesthood in the beginning.[24] As G. K. Beale has argued in his landmark work on the temple and again in this issue of *SBJT*, Adam is presented by Moses as a priest.[25] And specifically, he is a royal priest, one who as God's son (Luke 3:38) is commissioned to "subdue and rule" (royal language), as well as to "serve and guard" (priestly language). Amazingly, little of Adam's identity as priest, king, and son has entered into the discussion about Exodus 19. Yet, it seems almost impossible to understand Israel as God's son (i.e., *segullâ*) and his royal priesthood without paying attention to the way Adam's triple identity as son-priest-king was passed down to his sons—marred by sin as they were.

Therefore, in what follows I will offer three steps showing how Adam and his sons relate to Israel and their identity as son, priest, and king. First, Adam's priesthood will be shown in cohesion with his kingship and sonship. Only when we see how these three concepts contribute to the image of God, or conversely how the *imago Dei* is best understood as a matrix of sonship, priesthood, and kingship, can we rightly see where later "Adams" exhibit or empty the original image.[26] Second, with this priesthood-kingship-sonship matrix in place, I will examine how the patriarchs functioned as "royal priests." And third, I will show how Exodus 19:6 itself is reiterating the claim that Israel, as God's son, is a kingdom of priests.

The Image of God: Son, Priest, King

In Genesis 1:26–27, Adam is called the image and likeness of God. This language carries with it a whole host of cultural and theological reflection. Studies by D. J. A. Clines,[27] Randall Garr,[28] and Richard Middleton[29]—to name only a few—help us assess the fullness of the meaning of God's image and likeness. Still, most important for our study on Exodus 19:6 is a full understanding of how Adam's *imago Dei* conjoins sonship, priesthood, and kingship. On that connection, Stephen Dempster observes from Genesis 5:1 a "link between sonship and the image of God."[30] Similarly, Peter Gentry writes, "The term 'image of god' in the culture and language of the ancient Near East in the fifteenth century B.C. would have communicated two main ideas: (1) rulership and (2) sonship. The king is the image of god because he has a relationship to the deity as the son of god and a relationship to the world as ruler for the god."[31]

Further, Dempster states that Adam, who is God's son, is also a priest and a king. Speaking of the anthropological climax of creation, he states, "It is as if humanity is functioning as a type of priest-king, mediating God to the world and the world to God."[32] Likewise, G. K. Beale who has argued extensively for Adam as priest, notes Adam must be considered a kingly priest. Noting the way "rest" is associated with the Garden (see Gen 2:8, 14), he posits,

> Thus, the implication [of rest being the prerequisite for the formation of a royal temple] may be that God places Adam into a royal temple to begin to reign as his priestly vice-regent. In fact, Adam should always best be referred to as a 'priest-king,' since it is only after the 'fall' that priesthood is separated from kingship.[33]

When all these observations are put together, the resulting "image" of Adam is that of a priest-king-son.[34] Adding support to this threefold image is the way latter revelation speaks of Adam. For instance, Psalm 8 describes Adam in royal terms,

> Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. (vv. 5–8)

Likewise, when Ezekiel 28:12–15 portrays the king of Tyre in his glory, he pictures Adam dressed in the resplendent garments of a priest.

> "Son of man, sing a lament for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'This is what the sovereign Lord says: "'You were the sealer of perfection, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. [13]You were in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering, the ruby, topaz, and emerald, the chrysolite, onyx, and jasper, the sapphire, turquoise, and beryl; your settings and mounts were made of gold. On the day you were created they were prepared. [14]I placed you there with an anointed guardian cherub; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked about amidst fiery stones. [15]You were blameless in your behavior from the day you were created, until sin was discovered in you. (NET)[35]

Last, when Luke writes out Jesus' genealogy, he goes all the way back to Adam, who he calls "the son of God" (Luke 3:38).[36] Altogether, from the cultural background of the ANE we learn that *tselem and demût* often conjoined sonship-priesthood-kingship. Similarly, from later Scripture we see how Adam is variously presented as God's son, God's priest, and God's human king. Finally, when we come to the NT, we discover that when Jesus receives the title "Son" in his resurrection, it comes with royal and priestly authority (see Heb 5:5–10).[37] As Morales puts it, "as the last Adam and true Israel, *the* Son of God dawned, as prophet, priest, and king, now conforming humanity to himself as the image and likeness of God."[38] From this testimony of Scripture, we have strong support for seeing Adam as son-priest-king.[39]

Yet, such a lofty view of humans may be missed because it only flashed across the screen in Eden. As Beale notes concerning Adam, the Fall caused the division of priesthood from kingship.[40] Likewise, we only get a brief glimpse of Christ's glory while on earth (see Matt 17:1–8) and a very distant view of any royal priesthood in Revelation (1:6; 5:10; 20:6). Conversely, what we find after the Fall and in all of Scripture is the disintegration of Adam's original glory. In the sons of Adam, various figures give us truncated combinations of imperfect sons, priests, and kings, but none match the original beauty (Ezek 28:12–15) or glory (Ps 2:5–8) of the first man. And perhaps this explains why so many have not put all three concepts together.

While Dempster speaks of Adam as son and king, and again as priest and king, he does not bring all three together. Yet, it is vital to see that the image of God is a son-priest-king. Moreover, when we see the original unity of these offices, we discover that they do not coalesce in the same "person" again until Israel is named God's son (Exod 4:22; cf. *segullâ* in 19:5). Indeed, in this sense Israel is a "corporate Adam," as much as they are a royal priesthood.[41] In canonical context, Exodus 19:6 is the first instance of a "total," albeit a short-lived, recovery of God's original image. Nevertheless, before making that claim—that Exodus 19 is recapitulation of God's image—we must consider what we find during the generations from Adam to Moses.

Patriarchal Priests: From Seth to Moses

Filial Priests in the Line of Abraham

The genealogies of Genesis (chs. 5, 10, and 49) give us a clear family lineage from Adam to Israel.[42] So great is Israel's family record-keeping, Moses and Aaron can trace their lineage to Levi (Exod 6:14–30) and Aaron's wife can trace hers to Judah (6:23)—a stunning "easter egg" that suggests every son of Aaron is a royal priest.[43] From this history, we can understand how every generation is a "son of Adam."[44] Yet, these generations do more than carry forth the family lineage. They also bring forth the image of God (Gen 5:1), which means they also carry forward the fractured remnants of Adam's sonship, priesthood, and kingship. Accordingly, just as Genesis 9:6 indicates that the image of God continues after the Fall, we will also see how the various elements of Adam's image (his sonship, priesthood, and kingship) are continued in the book of Genesis.

This continuation of the *imago Dei* is an important observation because it links the first son of God (Adam) with the second son of God (Israel). As observed above, Israel is the restoration of Adam's image. To appreciate that fact, however, means we need to see how Seth, Noah, and Abraham (Isaac and Jacob), along with Melchizedek and Jethro reflect various combinations of priest, king, and son on the way to a restoration of God's image at Sinai.

Below, I will argue that no son of Adam gives a full picture of Adam. That said, there are multiple figures who typify the image of God partially. Thus, in what follows, I will quickly trace the themes of son, priest, and king through Genesis and Exodus in order to show the canonical background to God's words in Exodus 19:6.

Seth. In Genesis 5 Adam's likeness to God is repeated (v. 1), but now it is set in the context of his fatherhood. While Adam was made in the image and likeness of God, his son Seth would be made in his own image (v. 3). From this genealogy Seth's sonship is explicit, but nothing is said about priesthood or kingship.

Nonetheless, Genesis 4, which tells the story of Adam's two seeds (Cain and Abel), is suggestive that Adam's sons were called on to offering sacrifices at "the original sanctuary door, the gate of Eden guarded by cherubim."[45] In that chapter, Abel proves his faith by offering an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord (Heb 11:4). Likewise, Seth who took Abel's place is said to "call upon

the Lord" (Gen 4:26), language reflective of dependent prayer.[46] Even more suggestive is the "cultic theology in primeval history."[47] As Morales notes,

> The general picture that emerges through primeval history, therefore, is that of a cosmos constructed as a tabernacle, with a defiled (priestly) humanity driven ever eastward as punishment for sin. Moreover, because humanity's sin had defiled the tabernacle itself (i.e., the cosmos), the earth needed to be purified.[48]

This purification, Morales argues, would be found in the flood.[49] But until then, the sons of Adam functioned as priests making sacrifice to atone for sin. This can be seen in the blood sacrifice offered by Abel,[50] the failure of Cain to bring a "sin-offering" to the Lord,[51] and in the way Seth and his line of called upon the Lord.

Nevertheless, if Seth and his sons have priestly responsibilities, there is no mention of their kingship. In Genesis 4:17 Cain built a city for his son Enoch where his offspring would establish features of civilization that presuppose or prefigure some type of a kingdom. Later, after the flood Nimrod, a descendent of Ham, is presented as a king (10:6–14), but the sons of Seth and Shem are always presented as faithful sojourners (cf. Heb 11:10, 13–16), never kings.

Noah. At the other end of Seth's genealogy, we encounter a man named Noah. The story of Noah is well-known, but what is less obvious is his priestly vocation. Yet, from a careful reading of Genesis 6-9 we can see how Moses presents Noah as a priest.[52]

Consider: After surviving the flood, Noah built the first altar mentioned in the Bible.[53] The language used by Moses to describe the altar-building employs at least three Levitical terms ("clean" [v. 20, 2x], "burnt offerings," [v. 20], "pleasing aroma" [v. 21]).[54] Yet, it is not just linguistic similarities that make Noah a priest. A number of older commentators "hold that the sacrifice" offered in Gen 8:21 "was essentially propitiatory."[55] Observing that "Noah's sacrifice is effective for all mankind," Wenham states, "we can view Noah's offering of sacrifice as a prototype of the work of later priests who made atonement for Israel."[56]

In addition to the Levitical language and offering of sacrifice that propitiates God, there is also the covenantal context of Genesis 6-9.[57] This too adds support for seeing Noah as a priest. As the mediator of this "new" covenant, Noah has the responsibility of enforcing covenantal stipulations (e.g., be

fruitful and multiply and do not shed blood). Accordingly, he would have to teach his children and their offspring the rules of the covenant, just like Adam.

Unfortunately, Noah like Adam, fails in his priestly mission when he gets drunk and is found naked. Yet, this only adds confirmation to his priestly status. After his "fall" (9:25-27), Noah pronounced blessings and curses upon his three sons, an act of covenant mediation that the priests of Israel would come to perform (Num 6:24-–26; Deut 10:8; 1 Chr 23:13).[58] Thus, the priestly contours of Adam can be seen in Noah. As he announces the gospel (cf. 2 Pet 2:5), takes clean animals onto the ark, offers sacrifices (8:20), and mediates God's covenant (9:1ff.), he demonstrates his priestly calling.

At the same time, Noah's reflection of Adam lacks some of his royal characteristics. Significantly, Noah is never seen to possess any specific plot of ground. He plants a vineyard (v. 20), but the location of this garden is unknown. In the context of Genesis 9, this vineyard serves as a foil for his drunkenness and his son's curse. Thus, like Abraham after him, Noah does not have a place to subdue and rule.

In fact, while the commands "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" repeat in Genesis 9:1, the command to "subdue and rule" does not. Rather, as Mathews notes, "This admits that the new circumstances of the sin-burdened world have altered this aspect of the Adamic blessing, which now will be difficult to accomplish the hostile environs of the world."[59] Echoing observations made by Geerhardus Vos, Mathews point is helpful because it attends to the dissimilarities between Adam and Noah.[60] While many scholars have rightly perceived the similarities between these covenant heads, we must also see how Noah's dominion, if we can call it that, is fraught with frustration. Moreover, from the testimony of the NT, until the second Adam, the world lay under the dominion of another king—namely Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2).

From these observations, Noah is presented as a son of Adam and a priest, but his status of king less certain, or at least significantly reduced from that of Adam. Though some have seen in Noah a royal motif, this identification is not as strong as his filial priesthood.[61] Thus, I believe that Noah, like Seth before him and Abraham after him, reflects Adam's original glory in some ways but not in others. And thus the narrative of Genesis takes another step forward towards Abraham and his sons (Isaac and Jacob) who will also demonstrate great priestly characteristics, but who will also lack a full

possession of any kingship.

Abraham and His "Seed." After the fall of Babel, Genesis shifts attention to the man Abram, later renamed Abraham.[62] Elected by God to be the recipient of his blessing, and commissioned to be a means of blessing to the all the families of the earth (Gen 12:1–3), Abraham becomes a central figure for the rest of redemptive history.[63] But was he a priest? God calls Abraham a "prophet" (20:7) and the Hittites refer to him as "lord" and "a prince of God among us" (23:6), but nowhere does Scripture explicitly identify him as a priest.[64] Nevertheless, a number of scholars make a strong case for his priestly function.[65] For instance, Scott Hahn writes, "Canonical evidence points to the existence of a pre-Levitical form of priestly activity before the Mosaic period."[66] In fact, from a close reading of Gen 11:27–25:11, we can observe Abraham's priestly functions in at least five ways.

First, Abraham's call to receive a blessing from God and to in turn become a blessing to his family is by its very nature priestly.[67] Much like Israel's call unto holiness (Exod 19:5–6) and the separation of Levites from all things unclean (Lev 21), Abraham's unique calling prepared him for priestly service. Moreover, the imperative given by God to Abraham to bless others is very similar to that of Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6:24–26. Indeed, the whole idea of pronouncing a blessing on someone is a priestly prerogative.[68] In this way, God's covenant with Abraham puts him in a priestly role where he stands between God and his family as the "mediator of blessing."[69]

Second, Abraham's priestly duties are evident as he builds altars.[70] In Genesis 12-13 Abraham builds three altars (12:7-9; 13:18), places of worship which harken back to Eden and Adam's role as priest.[71] On this point, Gentry and Wellum comment, "Canaan is depicted in Edenic language as a mountain sanctuary," and Abraham is depicted as "fulfilling an Adamic role, [as] he offers sacrifice as a priest and worships God in this mountain sanctuary."[72] While Moses takes little time to develop the theme of these altars, they anticipate the altar on which Isaac will be laid (22:9) and the altars that will be associated with sacrifice and worship in the later stages of Israel (Exod 17:15; 20:24–26; 24:4–6; 27:1–8; 38:1–7).

Third, Abraham's priestly ministry is visible when he intercedes for Lot. As he pleads for God to spare the righteous (18:24), he is maintaining the balance that all priests must. He is holding fast to God's holiness, while pleading mercy from God's coming judgment. As a result, the righteous are

saved from judgment by the prayers of their covenant mediator (19:29).[73] This strongly typifies the intercessory work of Israel's priests, and ultimately Jesus Christ.

Fourth, between the two episodes with Lot, the reader of Genesis observes two distinct but related covenantal ceremonies in Genesis 15 and 17. Related to Abraham's priestly ministry, it is worth noting two things about Abraham's covenant mediation. First, in Genesis 15 Abraham is observed preparing the sacrifices and guarding the holy place of God—the place where God's presence would soon pass. In these twin functions—especially in his driving away the carrion-eating birds of prey[74]—he is acting out the duties that would later be given to the Levitical priests.[75]

Next, as an obedient priest who carries out the duty of circumcision, he is marking out the people who would receive his blessing, and by extension establishing a boundary between God's people and the nations.[76] In fact, Gentry goes as far as to say, "Circumcision symbolised complete devotion to the service of God as a priesthood. The covenant sign underlines Abraham's Adamic role as a priest in his calling to bring blessing to the nations."[77] In short, all who were circumcised in the covenant God made with Abraham would be blessed,[78] but those who broke the covenant (as many in Israel would do) or those who rejected the covenant through non–circumcision (as Ishmael's children would do) would be cursed (cf. Exod 4:24-26). In circumcision then, Abraham leads his family to be in covenant with God, a task that Levites would later perform in order to keep covenant with God (Lev 12:3).[79]

Fifth, and most importantly, Abraham's priestly duties are evidenced in his (near) sacrifice of Isaac.[80] In short order, we can mark out four reasons why we should read in Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac a priestly shadow. First, the location of the sacrifice is clearly associated with priestly sacrifices (vv. 2, 14). The Chronicler indicates that Solomon's temple was built on Mount Moriah (2 Chr 3:1), the same place where David purchased the threshing floor from Araunah (2 Sam 24:18–25). The sacral location of Abraham's/David's/Solomon's altar not only prefigures the location of Christ's own sacrifice, but if "Salem" in Gen 14:18 is really Jerusalem, as Psalm 76:2 suggests, then Abraham would be returning to the dwelling place of Melchizedek in order to carry out a priestly duty of the greatest magnitude.[81]

Next, the language of Genesis 22 suggests a priestly theme.[82] For instance,

Abraham indicates his journey to the mountain of the Lord would result in "worship."[83] Likewise, six times Moses uses the word *olah* (vv. 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13) to speak of Isaac's sacrifice. In Genesis, this term is only used of Noah's offering (8:20), before it is uniformly used in Exodus–Deuteronomy to describe various kinds of "burnt offerings."[84] Moreover, Yahweh's "test" of Abraham's "fear" of God adumbrates Sinai,[85] which in turn became the pattern for the tabernacle service. Thus, the language of Genesis 22 connotes priestly activity.

Finally, the sacrificial nature of Abraham's obedience is unmistakably that of a priest. This is evident in Abraham's obedience to the word of the Lord.[86] He does not sacrifice his son as a father, but in obedience to God, he raises the knife as a God-appointed priest.[87] That Abraham functions as a priest is evident from a comparative reading of Deuteronomy 33:9 which could easily be applied to Abraham: "[H]e disowned his brothers and ignored his children. For [he] observed your word and kept your covenant."[88] The Levites were awarded the status of priest because of their allegiance to God *against* their kinsman, and such is the case with Abraham.

Altogether, these five elements of Abraham's life demonstrate his priestly actions. And they will continue to repeat in the lives of his offspring, Isaac and Jacob. Space does not permit a full study of these patriarchal priests, but it is enough to identify an important but often overlooked factor—namely, the fact that firstborn sons in Israel functioned as priests by right of primogeniture, i.e., the right of firstborn sons to receive the father's inheritance and represent the family.

While the word "primogeniture" is not found in Scripture, the concept is abundantly obvious. It "can be seen in the distinction drawn between the firstborn and other sons (Gn 10:15; 25:13; 36:15), the double portion to be given to the firstborn (Dt 21:17), as well as the paternal blessing given to them (Gn 21:1–14; 27:1–28; 48:18)."[89] Significantly, Genesis shows how priesthood like that of Abraham was passed down from father to son. As Scott Hahn observes, "During the patriarchal age the firstborn son was accorded certain privileges and prerogatives which later would belong to the Levites."[90] Citing a bevy of scholars, Hahn continues, "The cultic-familial nexus of primogeniture, priesthood, and paternal succession is generally recognized in many older Jewish and Christian interpretive traditions, where it is understood to be a natural institution."[91] Some of the sources he cites

include the Targums on Genesis 49:3:

> Reuben, you are my first-born, my might and the beginning of my strength. For you it would have been fitting to take three parts—the birthright, the priesthood, and royalty. (Gen 49:3, *T. Onq.*)
> Reuben, you are my first-born … you would have been worthy of the birthright, the dignity of the priesthood and the kingship. But because you sinned, my son, the birthright was given to Joseph, the kingship to Judah, and the priesthood to Levi. (Gen 49:3, *T. Ps.-Jon.*)

Stepping outside the biblical canon, these Jewish interpretations of Jacob's judgment on Reuben for sleeping with his concubine (49:4; cf. Gen 35:22), teach us how the blessing was (or was not) passed down to the firstborn. "Although Reuben disqualified himself, these texts bear witness that, among his siblings, the firstborn son stands as the senior member for the next generation. He is in the natural position for paternal succession," a position which includes the responsibility to intercede for the family as priest.[92]

More could be said about the patriarchs, priesthood, and primogeniture,[93] but for now we need to see how this familial priesthood serves as the background to all the priestly regulations in Exodus-Deuteronomy. In other words, God's statement in Exodus 19:6 must be read in the light of this earlier, patriarchal priesthood. Indeed, only as we consider how God had already marked out his covenant people as a priestly people do we have the appropriate context for Exodus 19:6.

At the same time, it is important to see how the original image, complete with son-priest-king connotations, was carried forward in patriarchs. While never formalizing another son-priest-king like Adam, we have seen how sons should be seen as priests (i.e., "filial priests"). Likewise, there are hints that these sons will also carry in their DNA royal blood. For instance, Abraham raised an army (318 "trained men," 14:14), goes to war to defeat kings (14:17), and is called a "prince of God" (23:6), all of which hint at Abraham's potential to be a king. Likewise, Abraham and Sarah are told kings will come from their lines (Gen 17:6, 16); Jacob too is a recipient of a royal promise. In Genesis 35:11, Yahweh says to him: "A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body." Next, Joseph is portrayed with the greatest of royal images.[94] Finally, Judah

is promised that a royal scepter will not depart his household (49:9–12).

For all these hints of royalty in the patriarchs, however, Abraham and his sons never possessed anything more than a burial cave in Canaan (see Gen 23:1–20). He is not the ruler of the land, but a "sojourner and foreigner" (23:6), one awaiting a city whose author and builder is God (Heb 11:10). Likewise, Joseph was a ruler in a foreign land. Thus, until Israel is redeemed from Egypt and brought into their own land, there can be no king from the line of Abraham. Thus, the kingly contours found in Abraham and Joseph and the royal promises made to Abraham, Jacob, and Judah are always proleptic and never present. They image Adam in part and God's restoration of his image in part, but in the patriarchs, we do not find a full vision of son-priest-king. Nevertheless, and this is the important point, "the dual capacity of king and priest is implicitly present" in the firstborn sons of Abraham.[95]

Priest-Kings Outside the Family

At the same time, in Genesis and Exodus we do find two priest-kings who are not sons of Abraham. The first is Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem; the second is Jethro/Reuel, the father-in-law of Moses. If the image of Adam is partially carried forward by the priestly sons in Abraham's family; these priest-kings from outside the family of Abraham also advance our understanding of royal priesthood. We see this most explicitly in Melchizedek and then echoed in Jethro, who is found in the immediate context of Exodus 19:6.

Melchizedek. Melchizedek is a priest-king who worships the God Most High. Genesis 14 introduces him after Abraham returns from defeating the armies of Chedorlaomer and three other kings (v. 17). On this return, Abraham encounters two kings, who "represent two different kinds of kingship."[96] Abraham, discerning this difference, rejects Sodom's king and honors Salem's king, even giving Melchizedek a tithe.

As Hebrews 7 explains, every feature of Genesis 14 is valuable for understanding who Melchizedek is and what he contributes to the biblical storyline. For our purposes, it is striking that Melchizedek, unlike the other kings of Canaan, is a king of righteousness (Melchizedek) and a king of peace (king of Salem). Likewise, he is a priest of the Most High God, and may even contribute to Abraham's understanding of who this God is.[97] Still, even more significant is the fact that in a book filled with genealogies and structured by ten *toledôt's,* Melchizedek has no family connection. Remarkably, taking

this observation from silence Hebrews 7:3 states, "He is without father or mother or genealogy" (cf. 7:6). In other words, Melchizedek is a priest and king, but not a "son," nor especially a son in Abraham's family.

Yet, despite standing outside Abraham's family, the patriarch recognizes the greatness of this priest-king. Therefore, Abraham honors him by receiving Melchizedek's bread and wine (v. 18) and returning a tithe to Melchizedek from all Abraham's spoils of war (v. 20).[98] In this exchange, we get a glimpse in Melchizedek of what Adam might have been, what Israel was meant to become, and what Jesus Christ would ultimately be—a glorious royal priest. However, because Melchizedek stands outside the line of Abraham, he cannot be the one; he can only foreshadow the One who will come to be a high priest based on his indestructible life, not the lineage of Levi. This is the point Hebrews makes—that there is a greater royal priest than what the Law supplies. Ostensibly, this promise lies dormant in Israel's history as the Law is put in place, but as the Law unravels and the priesthood of Levi disintegrates (cf. Mal 2:1–9), it will become apparent that Israel's priestly hope lies in a priest-king like Melchizedek (cf. Psalm 110).

For now though, it is enough to recognize that Melchizedek plays an important role in Exodus 19:6 because he is the only explicit priest-king between Adam and Israel. Whereas Noah, Abraham, and Abraham's sons demonstrate filial priesthood (and flashes of kingship) in Genesis, Melchizedek explicitly foreshadows the priestly kingdom that Israel is supposed to have. Whereas other nations rule with Babel-like ambition, Melchizedek shows us another way of priestly service and royal rule. Thus, just as he teaches Abraham the way of true righteousness, so Aaron and the priests of Levi are chosen to model for Israel the way of the Lord.[99]

Jethro/Reuel. The other priest-(king?), Jethro, is less explicit as a precursor to Israel's calling in Exodus 19:6. Yet, because he is more closely associated with Israel at the time that God calls them to be a kingdom of priests, his priestly ministry in Midian is worth considering. In fact, there are at least five ways Jethro's (royal) priesthood is worth noting.

First, like Melchizedek, whose name means "king of righteousness," Reuel (Jethro's other name) may mean "friend of God."[100] Thus, while Reuel's priestly allegiance is not as explicit as Melchizedek, his name is suggestive that he serves the true God. Likewise, Reuel lives in a place where Moses, tending Reuel's flock could come to "Horeb, the mountain of God" (Exod

3:1). Thus, Reuel's name and place open the possibility that Reuel is a priest like Melchizedek, one who knew the true God.

Second, a comparison of Genesis 14-15 and Exodus 17-24 shows many textual similarities. For instance, both covenants (Abraham's and Israel's) are preceded by the same order of events—war with the nations (Gen 14:1–12 || Exod 17:8–10); divine victory (Gen 14:14–17 || Exod 17:11–13); and the emergence of priest-king from the nations who will bless God's people (Gen 14:18–20 || Exod 18:1–12).[101] Only after these parallel events occur are the covenants ratified (Gen 15 || Exod 19–24). Moreover, stressing the intentional literary shaping of these two covenants, Sailhamer observes fifteen points of connection between Melchizedek and Jethro.[102]

Third, when we first encounter Jethro in Exodus 2:16, we learn he is "the priest of Midian." While we do not know the content of Midian's religion, Davies observations are worth considering,

> Rather than being 'a priest of Midian' (Exod 2.16 NIV), the construction (construct state followed by proper noun) requires that he be *the* priest of Midian, and he appears to enjoy something like a general authority, civil and religious, in his community that the Israelite patriarchs, as portrayed in Genesis, did in theirs.[103]

If Davies is correct, then Jethro should be seen as more than just a priest, but a priest who rules, or a priest-king. Certainly, the similarities between Melchizedek and Jethro add to this belief, as does Jethro's counsel to Moses to organize a system of elders in Israel (Exod 18). Maybe this is too pragmatic an observation, but such counsel demonstrates the wisdom of ruler.

Fourth, Jethro is mentioned again in Exodus 3:1, where we discover Moses is working for him and tending his "father-in-law's" flock. This identifies a close relationship between Moses and Jethro. With that relationship in mind, Exodus 2:21 says "Moses was content to dwell with the man [Jethro]." If Hebrews 11 bears any witness to this relationship, we can deduce that if Moses turned against Egypt because he sought to identify with the God of Israel, his stay in Midian for 40 years indicates a place hospitable for his faith. Could Jethro's priestly ministry play a part in that? It's plausible, especially because of what happens when Moses return to Horeb (Exod 18).

Fifth, when Moses comes to Sinai with the redeemed people of Israel, Jethro joins him in worshiping Yahweh. This is, in my estimation, decides

who Jethro worships and how we should assess his priesthood. As Exodus 18 recounts, after hearing all God did in Egypt, "Jethro rejoiced for all the good that the Lord had done to Israel" (v. 9). Then he turned and blessed Yahweh,

> Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. [11] Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people." [12] And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to God; and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God. (vv. 10–12)

Of significance is this priest's worship of Israel's God and the covenant-like meal that Jethro ate with Moses, Aaron, and all the elders in the presence of God. Foreshadowing another meal eaten in God's presence (cf. Exod 24:9–11) with these same priestly leaders, we get a glimpse of Jethro's royal priesthood in the presence of God. Again, this harkens back to Adam and Melchizedek, and it glimpses what is to come in Israel. Still, because Jethro is not a son of Abraham by way of Isaac, the image is not yet fully restored.

Envisioning the Image: A Summary of What We Have Seen So Far

From this survey of Genesis and Exodus, we find at many times and in many ways sonship, priesthood, and kingship interweaving the generations between Adam and Israel. Yet, after the Fall, no one individual (or people) captures all of these facets of image-bearing the way Adam did. Therefore, what Exodus 19:6 says is something new for the people of God. That Israel would be called God's firstborn son (Exod 4:22) and a royal priesthood (19:6) indicates Yahweh's intention for Israel to recapitulate the image of God.

This conclusion becomes all the stronger when we realize that in the context of Exodus 19:6, the language of *segullâ* relates to sonship.[104] As we will see below, the grammar of Exodus 19:1–8 leads us to see "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation" qualifying and/or describing God's "treasured possession" (*segullâ*). Thus, like Adam, Israel receives in Exodus 19:5-6 a threefold calling—they are (1) God's son, who will become a (2) kingdom of priests and a (3) holy nation, *if* they keep covenant with God.

A Kingdom of Priests Consecrated Unto God: Exodus 19:6 in Its Covenantal Context

The context of Exodus 19:6 is that of the introduction to the Sinai Covenant.[105] As John Davies and Brevard Childs observe, Exodus 19:1-8 functions like an index of what follows in 19:9-24:18.[106] While displaying a prominent chiastic structure, where the covenantal promises of 19:4-6a are placed in the center, we can subdivide the eight verses according to the three parts of Exodus 19-24.[107]

19:1-2	Mountain (19:9-23)
19:3-6	Covenant (20:1-23:33)
19:7-8	People's Response (24:1-18)

In addition to this structure, we also find that the introduction of Exodus 19:1-8 is balanced by a concluding section in Exodus 24:1-11. Observing the way "descend" (*yrd*) is used seven times in chapter 19, and "ascend" (*ylh*) is used a corresponding seven times chapter 24, Davies writes, "This is an extraordinary *inclusio* which would serve to bind the two chapters as an anticipation and realization."[108] Likewise, there is lexical support for believing that the covenant is "proposed" in 19:3b-8 and "consummated" in 24:3-8.[109] Only in these two sections (of Exod 19-24) does the word *brt* occur, and significantly, it is in Exodus 24:3-8 where the people undergo a "priestly ordination," as Moses sprinkles blood on them (v. 8). The only other place where such an event happens is Leviticus 8-9, where Aaron and his sons are set apart as priests.[110] Again, citing Davies, "As we have been expecting some form of priestly inauguration of the whole congregation of Israel [in the wake of Exodus 19:6], it is difficult to escape the fact that the double application of blood to the altar (representing Yhwh) and to the people constitutes such a rite."[111] The point I want to make with these literary features is singular: Exodus 19-24 presents the nation as kingdom of priests (i.e., a corporate priesthood), *with no original sense* that one tribe would represent them as priests.

Who is Israel? A Restored Corporate Adam, Not a Jewish Missionary Society

While it is often assumed that Israel is to be a nation with a priesthood, or that the corporate priesthood is meant to be a missional society to the

nations. From what we have learned already and now summarize, it seems better to assert Israel's royal priesthood is corporate and consecrated (i.e., set apart for the Lord), and not yet Levitical or missional. On this point, Timothy Ashley goes so far as to say that a straightforward reading of the Pentateuch, "Levi was originally a secular 'tribe.'"[112] Likewise, to see Israel's priestly calling as one and the same with the Church's Great Commission is to read Exodus 19:6 anachronistically. Therefore, it is better to see Israel as a nation that "functions as *another Adam* through whom the promised offspring of Eve and Abraham will come to restore God's kingdom that was corrupted by the sinful rebellion of the first Adam."[113] Included in this restoration is the corporate re-imaging of God's likeness, which includes sonship, priesthood, and kingship.

Therefore, just as Adam and Eve, along with their offspring, were designated God's image and likeness, so now in a newly ratified covenant, the offspring of Abraham would together image God's likeness to the world as one "corporate Adam."[114] In fact, Exodus 24:3 identifies "all the people with one voice" as entering into covenant with Yahweh through the mediation of Moses—a point that stresses the corporate nature of this covenant and Israel's status as a kingdom of priests.

Moreover, at no time in this "priestly ordination" is there a designation or separation of Levites as a priestly tribe. Rather, it is all the people, from all the tribes. Accordingly, if Sinai serves as a paradigm for the way in which Israel would approach the Lord in worship, then what we see in Exodus 24, which stands in textual connection with Exodus 19:4-6, is a covenant mediated by Moses, who represents the entirety of Israel. And from this ordination ceremony, he is anointing the entire nation as a royal priesthood.

This corporate priesthood is, in fact, the very conclusion Davies arrives at in his study. Considering the various possibilities of *mamleket kohanîm* (e.g., passive, active-elite, active-corporate),[115] he concludes that Israel is called to be a "royal house of priests or a priesthood with royal characteristics."[116] From a synchronic look at this Exodus 19:6, Davies conclusion seems best. He rightly appreciates the way in which Israel's calling in Exodus 19 is unto the Lord, and not to the nations.

> Yet the thrust of the passage in Exodus 19 is about the promise of a divine grant, a great privilege which is being bestowed on Yhwh's treasured people, provided

> that they continue faithful to him. That grant is preeminently one of relationship with him. The other nations are not in view as objects of Israel's attention. The expression "all the earth is mine" (v. 5) will not serve this role of marking the nations as the beneficiaries of Israel's service. It is simply the backdrop for the divine election of Israel. The nearest reference to the nations in relation to Israel as an active agent in the wider context is at Exod. 17.14-16, which concerns the obliteration of the memory of the Amalekites! The Sinai pericope simply contains no direct reference to Israel's responsibilities towards the nations.[117]

Whereas others make Israel a priesthood *to the nations*, he rightly observes that the direction of service is *unto the Lord*.[118] As Aaron and his sons will be set apart in Exodus 28-29, Israel as a whole community is first consecrated as priestly people to the Lord. Wells make the same point, saying "In contrast with those individuals who are described as priests, the use of the term here describes the totality of God's people."[119] Unlike Davies, however, Wells (like C. J. H. Wright, Kaiser, and Voss) argues for the missional function of Israel to the nations. Yet, such a reading imports too much from the missional thrust of the new covenant and overlooks the more evident way God is setting apart his people from the nations in Exodus 19.

One of the most helpful ways to observe this is in the way *segullâ* is used throughout the rest of the Pentateuch. First, in the two of the three other places where *segullâ* is used by Moses (Deut 7:6; 14:2), God's treasured possession is consistently set apart from the nations as "chosen" (*bhr*). For instance, in Deuteronomy 7:6 *segullâ* explains why God chose Israel and set his love on them. The rationale is similar to Exodus 19:5. Though Yahweh possesses all nations, he chose Israel because of his particular love for them (cf. Amos 3:2). In context, Deuteronomy says nothing about Israel being set apart *for the nations*. Rather, Israel is set apart *from the nations*.[120]

The use is similar in Deuteronomy 14:2, where Yahweh's special possession are "sons of the Lord," chosen and holy (vv. 1-2). In this context (vv. 2, 21) Israel is called "a people holy to the Lord your God." Strikingly, two of three appellations give to Israel at Sinai ("treasured possession" and "holy nation") are reapplied to Israel as they prepare to enter the land.[121] "Royal priesthood," however, is conspicuously absent. Thus, Deuteronomy 14:2 confirms the argument of this article, that Israel's corporate priesthood has been altered, while God's purpose of Israel's holiness remains.

At the same time, because Israel's holy calling puts stress on their separation, it also seems unlikely Israel has been given a priestly mission as in 1 Peter 2:1-10. Such unqualified comparisons between Exodus and Peter only flatten out distinctions between the old covenant and the new. Therefore, without denying God's global purposes for redemption (cf. Gen 3:15; 12:1–3), it is important to let the story of Scripture unfold at its own pace. As Timmer makes clear, "Prior to Christ's coming, proactive transmission of testimony about the God of Israel's person and work was not a clearly corporate task."[122] While many lobby for Israel as priesthood to the nations, one first must prove that they retained their national status as kingdom of priests—something more assumed than argued—and that their original calling was a corporate missional priesthood.

Deuteronomy 26:18, the last place Moses uses *segullâ*, also points against Israel's mission as a priesthood to the nations. Like before (7:6; 26:18), Moses uses the word to separate Israel from the nations saying "that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you ... and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that he has made, and that you shall be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised" (vv. 18-19). Coming at the end of his exposition of the Decalogue, Moses reminds Israel of his promises to them.[123] Here again, he swears allegiance to making them a holy people "above the nations." At this point, Israel is being set aside for God, not commissioned as a priestly people unto the nations. Such global purposes will come, but only in the Prophets when they look forward to the eschatological advance of new covenant priesthood.[124]

Second, as the grammar of Exodus 19:5-6 indicates, "treasured possession" and "royal priesthood" and "holy nation" are mutually interpretive. Because the intention of this article is not the grammar of Exodus 19:5-6, I will not specify the debated relationship of these three terms, but this much is certain, from the narrow context of Exodus 19:1-8 and the wider context of Genesis and Exodus—Israel is called to be God's firstborn son and royal priesthood. This conclusion can be drawn from reading Exodus 4:22 and 19:6 together. However, by cross-referencing *segullâ* with its uses in Scripture, we also learn that *segullâ* refers to a treasured son.

For instance, in Malachi, a book with many priestly themes, the prophet speaks of a day coming when the Lord will again claim the people who will serve him. He says in Malachi 3:17 "They shall be mine, says the Lord of

hosts, in the day when I make up my treasured possession [*segullâ*], and I will spare them as a man spares his son [*ben*] who serves him." From this reading, and the way sonship and priesthood are developed in Genesis and Exodus, we find strong support for seeing sonship and priesthood in Exodus 19:6. Thus, one important point, often missed in Exodus 19, is that God is saying to Israel: "You are my chosen son who will be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation if you keep my covenant." As Gentry concludes, "When Yahweh calls Israel to be his personal treasure, he is speaking of the kind of devoted service given by a son," a kind of sonship, he continues, which goes back to the first royal priest in the Garden.[125]

From these considerations, therefore, Exodus 19:6 is not first and foremost a calling for Israel to go to the nations. Rather, from the nations, God is adopting Israel as his treasured possession. He is making a covenant with them for the purpose of restoring what Adam lost. And while this will have massive implications for the nations, as they will see "the image of God" in Israel (cf. Deut 4:5-8), it will take the rest of the Bible to reach final destination in God's plan of redemption—a great commission to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20). Therefore, it is premature to make Israel's priesthood an immediate missionary command to the nations. Rather, the calling was unto priestly service in the presence of God, which was designed to restore to Israel something of humanity's original blessing in Eden.[126]

The Conditional Nature of Exodus 19:5-6

That said, such a calling was not without conditions. As Gentry and Wellum have observed, every covenant must be read on its own terms.[127] And in the case of Sinai, we discover that the offer of priesthood was offered conditionally to the nation of Israel. Again, the text reads,

> Now therefore, *if* you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.

Importantly, Israel's status as treasured possession and corporate priesthood depends on their obedience to the Lord. If they will "obey my voice and keep my covenant," then like Abraham (who obeyed God with Isaac) will

receive the right to be his treasured possession (son) and royal priesthood (cf. Gen 22:18b; 26:5). However, if they do not keep covenant, then their relationship with the Lord is in jeopardy.[128] To say it differently, if the people called to be God's son prove themselves worth of the title, they will keep the status of royal priesthood. However, if they fail to live as God's children, then their national priesthood will be lost (cf. Deut 14:2).

Sadly, the weakness of the Israel's obedience is proven throughout the rest of the OT. Ultimately, God is forced to drive them out from the land because they seek live as the surrounding nations, rather than God's holy nation. Yet, what is often missed in this reading of Israel's history is the way in which Israel's sonship and royal priesthood is also threatened, indeed altered, *while Israel remains at Sinai*. In other words, it doesn't take the exile to prove the failure of Israel to keep the conditions of Exodus 19:4-6, although it reinforces the point.[129] Rather, this fracturing of God's image and hence Israel's loss of corporate priesthood will begin in the book of Exodus itself.

This is what Davies and others have not fully appreciated—namely, the way in which the priesthood develops in the Pentateuch. Thus as we close this study, there are three observations we must make as we seek to define Israel's royal priesthood—one that looks back and one that looks ahead. First, when we read Exodus 19:6 in light of the filial priesthood which precedes it (Gen 1-Exod 18), we discover how the image of God is being restored at Sinai. Instead of being an immediate commission to take God's light to the nations at Sinai (like Isa 49:1-7), Exodus 19:6 is a restoration of what was lost at Eden. Before we can consider Israel's mission unto the nations, this restoration needs to be further established and appreciated. Israel's corporate calling was to image God's likeness, not (yet) bring his Word to the nations.

Second, as we keep reading the rest of the Pentateuch and especially the section of time where Israel remains at Sinai (Exod 19:9-Num 10:10) we learn how the "Levitical priesthood"—which is only so called in the book of Deuteronomy—develops through a series of accretions after Israel sins with the Golden Calf. In fact, as Part 2 will show, it is response to multiple sins in Israel's Wilderness wanderings that a system of priestly mediation is created.

Third, only as we hold together what comes before Exodus 19:6 and what comes after it, we can rightly grasp the tension of God's covenant with Israel. As his treasured possession and beloved firstborn son, God will make them a royal priesthood *if* they will keep covenant with him. In this gracious

promise, Yahweh is offering to restore humanity's divine image to Israel. Sadly, however, this offering will not come to full fruition, and, as the rest of the Pentateuch reports, before Israel leaves Sinai that covenant will already be shattered like the stone tablets on which it was written.

The Import of Having Filial Priests at Sinai

As noted in the introduction, this article only completes half of the diachronic reading of the Pentateuch necessary to understand the fullness of "royal priesthood" in Exodus 19:6. This means some of the assertions made above will only hold up as we consider the rest of Moses five books. That is what Part 2 will seek to accomplish in my forthcoming article in *SBJT*. But for now, at this point of intermission, let me offer five theological conclusions we can draw from our survey of Genesis 1-Exodus 18.

First, as with any passage of Scripture, we must read Exodus 19:6 in light of its redemptive-historical context and antecedent theology.[130] While priesthood as an institution originates in some respect at Sinai, it is clear from a diachronic reading of Genesis, that priesthood fills the generations leading up to Sinai. Therefore, when Yahweh pronounces Israel a kingdom of priests, we must consider the priestly background of Adam, Abraham, Melchizedek, and Jethro, not just the ANE side-ground. At Sinai, God is not introducing priesthood to Israel for the first time. Rather, as with everything at Sinai he is restoring what was lost in Eden.

Second, when we read Exodus 19:6 in the context of previous patriarchal priests, we discover that before the priesthood was legislated by Moses, it was a covenantal mediation associated with the sons of Abraham. In other words, priests were sons and firstborn sons were priests. We saw evidence for this in this from Genesis and Exodus, and this background gives rise to an interpretation of Exodus 19:6 which understands the language of *segullâ, mamleket kohanîm,* and *goy qadoš* as repeating the original office of image-bearer. In symbiotic relationship, then, Exodus 19 confirms what we have seen partially in Noah, Abraham, and Melchizedek. Now in Exodus 19, it also aims to restore God's image to the nation of Israel as a whole.

Third, if this reading of image-bearing is correct and the language of sonship, priesthood, and kingship explicate what it means to be God's chosen vessel to bear witness to his glory among the nations, then it leads us to

interpret Exodus 19:6 less as an evangelistic commission and more as a restoration of covenant blessing to God's people. Certainly, God has set apart his people Israel from the nations and will see individuals from other nations come into covenant with them (e.g., Rahab, Ruth, etc.), but from a canonical reading it seems unlikely that Exodus 19:6 gives Israel a mission to the nations. This confuses the nature of the Old Covenant and the New; it imports, anachronistically, the calling of Jesus's disciples to the nation of Israel; it fails to see the significant eschatological difference between Christ's royal priesthood and that of ancient Israel; and it misses the calling of Israel to be God's restored image displaying to the world the wisdom and glory of God.

Fourth, the chronological development of the priesthood from firstborn sons to Israel as God's firstborn son, which in time will result in a priestly tribe—the tribe of Levi—may also reflect a certain priestly logic that is repeated in the NT. Today, scholars debate whether Jesus is a priest in his earthly life.[131] In the Gospels particularly, there is a measure of ambiguity about his priesthood. While many have observed Jesus doing priestly things, he is never called a priest—and hence the debate continues. I would suggest that if we see a movement from sonship to priesthood in Genesis and Exodus, then perhaps this gives us a typological pattern for understanding how priesthood is established in the New Covenant.

In Hebrews, the book which most clearly identifies Jesus as royal priest (i.e., a high priest like Melchizedek), we find the first two chapters establishing the sonship of Christ. Rather than beginning with the Law, which in its fullness identifies the priesthood with Levi, Hebrews begins with the greater Sonship of Christ. And once that is established by his resurrection (Heb 5:5-10), it then explains *how* Jesus can be a priest like Melchizedek (Heb 7). On its own, we understand that there existed before the Law a greater priesthood, but in our study of Genesis and Exodus, we come to see more clearly the original logic of sonship and priesthood, and how the former relates to and antedates the latter—at least in Israel's redemptive history. Therefore, by paying closer attention to development of the royal priesthood in coordination with sonship, it helps us understand what the author of Hebrews is saying. And it may also help us understand the Gospels better—for while the Gospels do not explicitly call Jesus a priest; they do repeatedly identify him as a son. And if a son, then might they implicitly be identifying him as a priest? It is worth further exploration.

Fifth and finally, by understanding Exodus 19:6 as a restoration of God's image, we also come to better understand 1 Peter 2:9. Meaning, if Exodus 19 aims to restore (and expand) the image of God to Israel as a nation, then when those words are applied to Christ's people, the same logic is at work. In the new covenant, God establishes in Christ's death and resurrection a people redeemed to reflect his glory. And unlike the people of Israel, whose sonship, priesthood, and kingship were in question because of the weakness of their flesh; the new covenant, with its gift of the Holy Spirit, secures God's people as the image of God. Hence, the new covenant royal priesthood is both similar to and greater than short-lived royal priesthood of Israel. Indeed, because the priesthood of the believer is derivative of Christ's new covenant work, its strength and security depends on the power of his indestructible life and not the weakness of Israel. This, as Hebrews 7 highlights, may be the most valuable lesson for us in this study and the reason why rightly understanding the foundations of the royal priesthood from Genesis 1 to Exodus 18 is so important.

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1 Exodus 23:22 (LXX) also includes the phrase "royal priesthood" (*basileion hierateuma*). This occurrence is clearly "a Septuagintal expansion based on Exod 19:5–6" (John A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19:6* [New York: T&T Clark, 2004], 64n8).

2 In this article, I will use the terms "royal priesthood" and "kingdom of priests" in complementary fashion. Conceptually, the former stresses the unity of priestly order; the latter stresses the plurality of the priesthood. While Davies's extensive lexical study of *mamleket kohanîm* renders it a "royal priesthood" (63–102), he does admit some flexibility in the language (101–02). Moreover, his work does not trace the development of the priesthood which I seek to do in this article and in a forthcoming article. Therefore, anticipating my argument, I believe we should understand royal priesthood as biblical-theological mold which develops over time and that exercises various functions in redemptive history. Hence, there may be times when stress should be laid on the unity of the priesthood as a people before God and other times when the stress should fall on the plurality of the priests with their institution of mediation in Israel. Still, there is also evidence in Scripture for individuals who are or function as a priest and king. All of these factors should be considered as we explicate Exodus 19:4–6.

3 See, e.g., Stephen J. Wellum, *Christ Alone: The Uniqueness of Jesus as Savior: What the Reformers Taught and Why It Still Matters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017), 127–55; Alex T. M. Cheung, "The Priest as the Redeemed Man: A Biblical-Theological Study of the Priesthood," *JETS* 29 (1986): 265–75; Uche Anizor and Hank Voss, *Representing Christ: A Vision for the Priesthood of All Believers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016).

4 Exodus 19:4–6 is repeatedly used as a pillar text for evangelism and mission in the OT. Cf. Walter Kaiser, *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 22–24, C. J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006], 252–64; Andrew S. Malone, *God's Mediators: A Biblical Theology of Priesthood* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017), 134–37.

5 On the three horizons of biblical interpretation, see Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 293–309, and before him Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961; repr. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 16.

More recently, Stephen J. Wellum has outlined the importance of these three horizons in the introduction to Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 92–102.

6 Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 432.

7 Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*. Davies provides a thorough list of commentaries, monographs, essays, and theological works on the Sinai periscope, the priesthood in general, and Exodus 19:4–6 in particular (3–14).

8 Jo Bailey Wells, *God's Holy People: A Theme in Biblical Theology* (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), see esp. 98–129.

9 See Peter J. Gentry's work with Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 322. Cf. Peter J. Gentry, "Kingdom through Covenant: Humanity as the Divine Image," *SBJT* 12 (2008): 16–42. Likewise, J. Richard Middleton (*The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005], 90) makes a connection from Adam to Israel: "The human vocation as imago Dei in God's world thus corresponds in important respects to Israel's vocation as a 'royal priesthood' among the nations (Exod. 19:6)." Still, many have not made this important connection, and consequently their exposition of Exodus 19:4–6 suffers as a result.

10 William J. Dumbrell, *Creation and Covenant: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1984), 89–90.

11 Two recent examples of interpreting Exodus 19:4–6 sans sonship are the otherwise fruitful studies of Andrew S. Malone (*God's Mediators*) and W. Ross Blackburn *(The God Who Makes Himself Know: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012]). To be specific, Malone, at the behest of Matthew Emadi, mentions the connection of sonship to priesthood (132), but it does not play a role in his conception of Israel's priesthood. Likewise, Blackburn (89¬–95) makes no connection between Israel's priesthood and sonship, even though we find in Exodus clear evidence that Yahweh calls his people by both names ("firstborn son," 4:22) and ("royal priesthood," 19:6). One counter-example to this filial priesthood is the important work of Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), esp. 132–175.

12 By canonical, I mean everything after Exodus 19.

13 The primary debate I have in mind relates to whether Israel, as a "kingdom of priests," is a functional mission God's elect nation or an ontological status. Davies (*A Royal Priesthood*, 70–76) provides the best entry point into this debate, as he presents three approaches to the title *mamleket kohanim* (e.g., passive, active-elite, and active-corporate). Andrew Malone picks up this debate (*God's Mediators*, 126–37), and cautiously concludes that "We can retain confidence that God has missiological intentions for Israel even as he pronounces their privileged status" (136). As I will argue below, this missiological intention seems premature with respect to God's designs in the biblical covenants. Better is the careful work of Daniel Timmer (*A Gracious and Compassionate God: Mission, Salvation, and Spirituality in the Book of Jonah* [NSBT 26; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011), 23–39), who differentiates the missiological roles of the nation and individuals under the old covenant as being centripetal and centrifugal, respectively.

14 See Davies' chapter 6, entitled, "Modeling the Royal Priesthood: The Cultic Model of Exodus 24.12 to 40.38" (*A Royal Priesthood*, 138–69). Instead of following the literary structure and logic of Exodus 25–40, Davies amasses a list of priestly traits found in Exodus 25–40. Certainly, his observations are helpful, but they miss the Spirit-given order of these chapters, which center on Israel's covenant-breaking idolatry, Aaron's creation of the Golden Calf, and Moses' "priestly" intercession.

15 Wells, *God's Holy People*, 98–101.

16 John H. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition, and Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 379–99.

17 Jim Hamilton, "John Sailhamer's The Meaning of the Pentateuch" A Review Essay," *SBJT* 14.2 (2010): 70–71.

18 L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015), 23–38.

19 Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 142–47.

20 Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 37.

21 For a discussion about the unfolding of such biblical types, see my "From Beelines to Plotlines: Typology That Follows the Covenantal Topography of Scripture," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 21.1 (2017): 35–56.

22 "There is, as far as I know, no previous book-length canonical study of priesthood" (Malone, *God's Mediators*, ix).

23 Ibid, xi.

24 Remarkably, many studies on the royal priesthood fail to begin in the beginning. As Hank Voss notes, N. T. Wright's biblical theology of the royal priesthood in *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New

York: Harper One, 2010): "is the first in recent history to begin a biblical theology of the royal priesthood with Adam (citing Beale)" (16). Voss, *The Priesthood of All Believers and the Missio Dei: A Canonical, Catholic, and Contextual Perspective* (Princeton Theological Monograph Series; Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 16. Voss and Uche Anizor also correct this trend in their chapter-length biblical theology of the priesthood in Representing Christ, 26–56.

25 G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (NSBT 17; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 81¬–121. Beale is not alone in this assessment of Adam's royal priesthood. See also, Meredith Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 83–90; idem. *Images of the Spirit:* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980; reprint: Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996), 35–56; Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 81–90; J. V. Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis 1-3 with the Christ of Eschatology* (Fearn, Scotland: Mentor, 2007), 57–75; T. D. Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 20–31; Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 51¬–53.

26 On Noah and Abraham as "second Adams," see Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 163–65, 235. Cf. C. John Collins, "Adam and Eve in the Old Testament," in *Adam, The Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives* (ed. Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 7.

27 D. J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man." *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 53–103.

28 W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Likeness: Humanity, Divinity and Monotheism, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 15*, (ed. B. Halpern et al.; Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2003).

29 Middleton, *The Liberating Image.*

30 Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 58–59.

31 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 192. Two other recent dissertations at Southern Seminary have also made this connection of sonship-priesthood-kingship. The first is that of Juan Sanchez, "The People of God: Toward an Evangelical Ecclesiology" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), esp. 25–53; the other is Matthew Habib Emadi "The Royal Priest: Psalm 110 in Biblical and Theological Reflection" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015), 32–49.

32 Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 62.

33 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 70.

34 Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?*, 232–36, also makes this connection.

35 The NET (The NET Bible [Richardson, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 2005] provides a better reading of verse, as it comments on Ezekiel 28:14:

> In the Hebrew text the ruler of Tyre is equated with a cherub, and the verb "I placed you" is taken with what follows ("on the holy mountain of God"). However, this reading is problematic. The pronoun "you" at the beginning of verse 14 is feminine singular in the Hebrew text; elsewhere in this passage the ruler of Tyre is addressed with masculine singular forms. It is possible that the pronoun is a rare (see Deut 5:24; Num 11:15) or defectively written (see 1 Sam 24:19; Neh 9:6; Job 1:10; Ps 6:3; Eccl 7:22) masculine form, but it is more likely that the form should be repointed as the preposition "with" (see the LXX). In this case the ruler of Tyre is compared to the first man, not to a cherub. If this emendation is accepted, then the verb "I placed you" belongs with what precedes and concludes the first sentence in the verse. It is noteworthy that the verbs in the second and third lines of the verse also appear at the end of the sentence in the Hebrew text. The presence of a conjunction at the beginning of "I placed you" is problematic for the proposal, but it may reflect a later misunderstanding of the syntax of the verse.

Others who have seen Ezekiel as an evidence for a priestly Adam include William J. Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1-17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation," in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect & Prospect* (ed. Scott J. Hafemann; Downers Grove: IVP, 2002), 61; Beale, *The Temple and Church's Mission*, 75; Emadi, "The Royal Priest," 44–45. With different theological concerns, Collins "Adam and Eve in the Old Testament," 24–25 also sees Ezekiel 28 as dependent on Adam's historical fall in Genesis 3, and Daniel I. Block, *Ezekiel 25–48*, (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 99–112, 117, also connects Ezekiel 28 to the original Adam in Eden.

36 For a biblical-theological explanation of how Luke came to call Adam God's son, see Graeme Goldsworthy, *The Son of God and the New Creation* (Short Studies in Biblical Theology; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), esp. 61–66.

37 See my article, "Resurrection and Priesthood: Christological Soundings in the Book of Hebrews," *SBJT* 18.4 (2014): 89–114.

38 Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 236.

39 As the quotation from Morales suggests, we could also include the office of prophet in this portrait of God's image. The inclusion of the prophet, however goes beyond the purview of this article and the language of Exodus 19:4–6. For a study on how prophet, priest, and king relate and develop in the OT, see Gerard Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990; reprint: Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), esp. 32¬–38.

40 "Adam should always best be referred to as a 'priest-king,' since it is only after the 'fall' that priesthood is separated from kingship, though Israel's eschatological expectation is of a messianic priest-king (e.g., see Zech. 6:12–13)." Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 70.

41 Ibid., 120–21.

42 The *toledôt* structure of Genesis and the nature of God's covenant with Abraham also argues for a familial-oriented history in Genesis.

43 Andrew Malone, *God's Mediators*, 63. Exodus 6:23 reads, "Aaron took as his wife Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab." Amminadab is a descendent of Judah by Perez as multiple genealogies attest (Ruth 4:19, 20; 1 Chr. 2:10; Matt. 1:4; Luke 3:33).

44 Gentry and Wellum even refer to Noah and Abraham as "second Adams." Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*, 223¬–30.

45 Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 57. Morales goes on to argue plausibly that Genesis 4:7 should be translated as "a sin offering lies at the door/entrance [*petah*]" (rather than 'sin crouches at the door,' as in the door of Cain's heart or tent)" (ibid.).

46 See Graeme Goldsworthy, *Prayer and the Knowledge of God: What the Whole Bible Teaches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 20003), 72, 110–11.

47 Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 64–67.

48 Ibid., 66–67.

49 Ibid.

50 William Symington, *On the Atonement and Intercession of Jesus Christ* (Pittsburgh: United Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864), 66–92, esp. 80–83.

51 Morales, *Who Shall Ascend?*, 56–57.

52 What follows is abbreviated from my dissertation: "A Biblical-Theological Investigation of Christ's Priesthood and Covenant with Respect to the Extent of the Atonement" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

53 Longman, *Immanuel in Our Place*, 15-16. Ross notes, "The word altar (*mizbēkah*) is related to the verb 'to slaughter for sacrifice.'" And thus, "an altar was the 'place of the slaughtering the sacrifice'" (*Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 138).

54 Speaking more broadly of the covenant with Noah, Scott Hahn observes what other critical scholars have attributed to the P redactor, "From a critical perspective, Gen 6–9 is replete with terms characteristic of Priestly covenant theology (e.g., 'everlasting' [*'ôlām*—9:16]; "sign" [*'ôt*—9:12, 13, 17]; 'remember' [*zākar*—9:15, 16])" (Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 96). Cf. David Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant: Transformations of Genre in the Growth of Biblical Literature* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987), 292-93.

55 Gordon J. Wenham, "The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice," in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995; reprint: Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 80.

56 Ibid., 81.

57 O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980), 109–25; William J. Dumbrell, *Creation and Covenant: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1984), 11¬–46; Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 93¬¬–100; Gentry and Wellum, *Kingship through Covenant*, 147-76.

58 Richard D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 44¬–46.

59 Ken Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, (NAC, vol. 1A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 400. Cf. T. D. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch, 2nd ed.* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 118–19.

60 "Originally, there was a supremacy of man (Gen. 1:26, 28), but, as instituted by creation, this was of a nature of a voluntary submission. This may be seen from the eschatological pictures given of it by the prophets, on the principles of a return of paradise at the end (Isa 11:6–8). In the state of sin the result is obtained by fear and dread instilled into the animals." Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948; reprint Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2000), 53.

61 "The larger context of the Genesis narrative suggests at least three aspects of Noah's privileged [covenantal]

grant. These may be classified as priestly (8:20), kingly (9:1–3), and prophetic (9:25-27)" (Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 389). Likewise, Meredith Kline outlines the civic duties of Noah's dominion in Genesis 9:1–7 (*Kingdom Prologue*, 252–53).

62 For simplicity, Abraham will be the singular appellation used for this man.

63 T. D. Alexander, "Abraham Re–Assessed Theologically: The Abraham Narrative and the New Testament Understanding of Justification by Faith," in *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12–50*, (ed. R. S. Hess et al.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 7–28.

64 Hahn cautions, "To avoid the danger of anachronism, it should be stated that the patriarchs are called neither 'priests' nor 'kings' although such terms are applied to others" (*Kinship by Covenant*, 408). Still, as Hahn continues, "This does not annul the cultic nature of [the patriarchs] actions" (409).

65 John Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 373; Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament*, 221.

66 Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 136.

67 Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 133.

68 "The priest functioned as an intermediary between God and people. This [function] is most clearly seen in his role as one who declares or imparts divine blessing and as one who intercedes with God on behalf of the people. The priestly blessing found in Num 6:23–27 (cf. Deut 10:8) is also reflected in the text of two amulets found in Jerusalem. To invoke the divine blessing on Israel to place the name of God on them (Num 6:27), that is, Israel is to have a privilege analogous to that of the high priest, who physically displays the divine name on his person" (Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 163).

69 Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 68.

70 "The name given to the place of worship between the Fall and Exodus is the altar" (Longman III, *Immanuel in Our Place*, 15). See also, Jeffrey J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 142–80.

71 Longman asserts that the construction of altars by trees (Gen 12:6–7; 13:18; cf. 21:33) evokes images of Eden (*Immanuel in Our Place*, 21). This echo adds weight to Abraham's role as a priest like Adam.

72 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 235. Likewise, T. D. Alexander notes of Abraham: "his special relationship with God suggests he enjoys a status equivalent to that of a priest, although he is never designated as one." T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 83.

73 Gen 19:29 reads, "So it was that, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he overthrew the cities in which Lot had lived." This summary statement explains that Lot is preserved for Abraham's sake; Abraham is "remembered" and Lot is spared. Harkening back to the promise of Gen 12:3, Lot's "blessing" is mediated through the man Abraham and his prayers. (Sailhamer, *Genesis*, EBC, 2:158–59; John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis, vol. 1*, in *Calvin's Commentaries* [trans. John King; Edinburgh: 1843; reprint: Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 516–17).

74 Ken Mathews comments, "The appearance of Abram as defender of the animal portions may refer to his obedient piety that confirmed his loyalty and ensured Israel's future (e.g., 22:16–18) or his intercessory function as prophet (e.g., 18:16–33; 20:7, 17)" (Genesis 11:27–50:26, 172). While Matthews posits a prophetic function to Abraham's 'defending' the animal pieces, it is just as likely, if not more fitting, for him to function as a priest because the animals "are the standard types of sacrificial animal" and frequently represent priests in Israel (Gordon J. Wenham, "The Symbolism of the Animal Rite in Genesis 15: A Response to G. F. Hasel, *JSOT* 19 (1981): 61–78," *JSOT* 22 (1982): 135. Cf. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 53–57.

75 That his priestly duties have more significance than just driving off birds, see Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, 172–73), who remarks, "In the context of the prophecy (vv. 13–16), the animal portions represent Abram's descendents, and the birds of prey are the nation (Egypt) that enslaves them." Such symbolism anticipates the way the Passover sacrifice separated Israel from Egypt (Exod 12:21–27), and helps support a particular view of the atonement (see also, Williamson, "Because He Loved Your Forefathers," forthcoming).

76 Bill T. Arnold, *Genesis*, NCBC (New York: CUP, 2009), 169–70.

77 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 275.

78 As Dumbrell observes, Abraham "becomes the mediator of blessing for mankind" (*Creation and Covenant*, 68).

79 For more on the priestly nature of circumcision, see John Meade, "Circumcision of Flesh to Circumcision of Heart," in *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (ed. Stephen J. Wellum; Brent E. Parker; Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016), 130–31.

[80] Many have bound themselves in an exegetical thicket, because they like Origen have sought to find a "hidden treasure" in every detail of the account (*Genesis 12–50*, ACCS, vol. 2, ed. Mark Sheridan [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002], 101). While this passage is pregnant with types and shadows related to Christ and the gospel (Gal 3:8), the method taken here will follow that propounded in chapter three—seeking scriptural evidence at the textual, epochal, and canonical levels. For a history of interpretation on Gen 22, with an extensive bibliography, see E. D. Noort and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002).

[81] "'*Salem*' is an ancient poetic name for Jerusalem." Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1990), 261; cf. Wells, *God's Holy People*, 102–03.

[82] R. W. L. Moberly, "Christ as the Key to Scripture: Genesis 22 Reconsidered," in *He Swore an Oath*, 154–61.

[83] On the cultic significance of "worship" (*hwh*), see Terence E. Fretheim, "*Hwh*" in *NIDOTTE*, 2:42–44.

[84] Highlighting the continuity (and discontinuity) between the patriarchal and Levitical sacrifices, Averbeck comments, "The same external worship system to which the Israelite people were already accustomed before Sinai was tailored to fit into the tabernacle system, where, however the key features of the rituals could be performed only by the Aaronic priests, not the offerers themselves" ("*Olah*," in *NIDOTTE*, 3:408).

[85] Moberly comments that "the two primary words for interpreting the story are 'test' in 22:1, ... and 'fear' in 22:12." He continues by noting a "conceptual linkage" between these terms (Deut 5:29; Job 1:1; 28:28), and that the "specific juxtaposition of 'test' and 'fear' comes in only one other passage, Exodus 20:20, in which Moses explains to Israel the purpose of God giving to Israel the Ten Commandments, the heart of Torah" ("Christ as the Key to Scripture," 155).

[86] Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 39–41.

[87] Affirming the divine nature of this strange command, Wenham following Delitzsch suggests, "In the first half of the story where God is acting in a strange, remote, and inexplicable way, he is called *elohim* [vv. 1, 3, 8], but when he is revealed as savior and renews the covenant promises, his personal name, 'the LORD,' is appropriate and reintroduced [v. 11]" (Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, 103).

[88] Merrill suggests that the Levitical loyalty foreshadows the call Jesus has on his later disciples (*Deuteronomy*, 439). Indeed, Jesus' imperative to let the "dead bury their dead" (Matt 8:22) may carry an allusion to the priestly command to separate themselves from the dead (see Lev 21:1–2, 11)

[89] W. A. Elwell and B. J. Beitzel, "Primogeniture," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 2:1764. In the same article, primogeniture is defined as "the exclusive right of inheritance which belonged to the firstborn male" (ibid.).

[90] Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 136.

[91] Ibid., 137.

[92] Ibid., 138.

[93] Ibid., 136–42. Gerard Van Groningen offers a helpful discussion on the firstborn in Israel (*Messianic Revelation*, 218–21). Cf. Voss, *The Priesthood of All Believers*, 9.

[94] James M. Hamilton, "Was Joseph a Type of the Messiah? Tracing the Typological Identification Between Joseph, David, and Jesus," *SBJT* 12.4 (2008): 52–77. For a full description of Joseph's royal imagery, see Sam Emadi, "Covenant, Typology, and the Story of Joseph: A Literary-Canonical Examination of Genesis 37–50" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016), esp. 57–81.

[95] "The idea of a son representing God to the people brings out the royal concept—the firstborn was a son of the royal family of God. As such, he was called to serve as leader for the family and as evidence of God's claim on and presence among his people. In addition, the firstborn evidenced the strength of the father, represented the people before God, and served in a mediatorial role in that capacity. In the firstborn the dual capacity of king and priest is implicitly present." Van Groningen, *Messianic Revelation*, 221. Emphasis mine.

[96] Gentry, 237. "The king of Sodom of represents the notion that one acquires goods and rules by might ... Melchizedek, king of Salem, represents a different kind of kingship. He acknowledges a supreme God who is Creator/Possessor of everything. Therefore all rule must acknowledge the sovereignty of the Most High God and must consider that everything one owns is a gift from him."

[97] Observe the way in Genesis 14, Melchizedek is identified with God Most High (v. 18), pronounces a double blessing on Abraham from the God Most High (vv. 19, 20), and then Abraham responds (for the first time) Yahweh as "God Most High" (v. 22). Cf. Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 369–74.

[98] Matthew Emadi makes the astute observation, "Just as Adam failed in the garden by disobeying God's law, Noah fails in his garden-sanctuary by becoming intoxicated with wine. For Melchizedek, however, wine is a means of blessing for victorious Abraham. It is also significant that the only other occurrence of "bread" prior to Genesis 14 is found in Genesis 3:19, where God's curse on Adam means that man will have to eat

bread by the sweat of his brow." This quotation comes from Emadi's forthcoming NSBT volume on Psalm 110, which is based upon his 2015 dissertation.

99 Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 240.

100 J. Crichton, "Jethro," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ed. Geoffrey Bromiley; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 3:1055.

101 Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 369. I credit Matthew Emadi for introducing Sailhamer's observations to me. Much of what follows depends the observations Emadi makes in his forthcoming NSBT volume *The Royal Priest*.

102 Ibid., 370–71

103 Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 152–53.

104 Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 317.

105 On the structure of Exodus, see Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 32–60; cf. Wells, *God's Holy People*, 35–45.

106 Davies, 36. Brevard Childs can say of Exodus 19:3–8, "The passage now serves as a topical introduction to the chapter, ... The passage actually anticipates by way of summary the action of the next chapters, and presupposes the ratification of the covenant which only comes in 24.3ff." Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 360.

107 Davies structures Exodus 19:1–8 in this way (*A Royal Priesthood*, 35):

A People of Israel camp at the mountain (third person plural verbs) (vv. 1–2)
B Moses' ascent and Yhwh's summons (third person singular verbs) (v. 3a)
C Divine instruction regarding delivery of message to Israel (second person singular verbs) (v. 3b)
D Divine declaration concerning Israel (second person plural verbs) (vv. 4–6a)
C' Divine instruction regarding delivery of message to Israel (second person singular verbs) (v. 6b)
B' Moses' descent and summons to the elders (third person singular verbs) (v. 7)
A' People of Israel respond (third person plural verbs) (v. 8a)

108 Davies, 116.

109 Ibid.

110 See "The Blood Rites as a Priestly Initiation: Exodus 24:3–8," in Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 119–24.

111 Ibid., 121–22.

112 "From the point of view of the text as it stands, Levi was originally a secular 'tribe' that was later set apart for sacred service" (Timothy Ashley, *The Book of Numbers*, NICOT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 86–92).

113 Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 139.

114 Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 120–21.

115 Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 70–76.

116 Ibid., 76. Later, he adds, "It is difficult to see how the notion of rule by a priest-king, or a priestly elite suits the cotext ... the emphasis is on the mode of Israel's belonging to Yhwh, not on its mode of government" (81). Again, this is right in the immediate context of Exodus 19–24, but other factors must be considered as we move beyond this initial covenant formulation.

117 Ibid., 97.

118 Cf. Peter Leithart, "Attendants of Yahweh's House: Priesthood in the Old Testament," *JSOT* 85 (1999): 7–12. Following Aelred Cody (*A History of Old Testament Priesthood* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1969], 29), orients the priests as God's "personal attendants" (12).

119 Wells, *God's Holy People*, 52.

120 Digging a bit deeper into the context. In Deuteronomy 7 there is a division between those who love God and those who hate him (vv. 9–10). This separation goes back to the beginning of time, where humanity is divided between the lines of Seth and Cain, and it does not imply any sort of missionary activity (yet!). Rather, the refrain through Deuteronomy 7 is one of Israel's unique blessing: "You shall be blessed above all peoples" (v. 14); "you shall consume all the peoples that the LORD your God will give over to you" (v. 16); and "the LORD your God will send hornets among them, until those who are left and hide themselves from you are destroyed" (v. 20). From these context clues, it is best to see Israel's corporate priesthood as one that restores the original image of Adam, without (yet!) having the mission of reaching the nations.

121 The word for people has also changed from "nation" (*goy*) to "people" (*am*). This too may suggest the national loss of corporate priesthood, as the former word is typically more associated with an organized nation-state. Cf. Blackburn, *The God Who Makes Himself Known*, 92–93.

122 Timmer, *A Gracious and Compassionate God*, 38.

123 J. Scott Redd, "Deuteronomy," in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised* (ed. Miles V. Van Pelt; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 150.

[124] To read Exodus and Isaiah synchronically or to import the theology of 1 Peter back into Exodus without due attention to the eschatological develop of the covenants only confuses and conflates our understanding of royal priesthood. Far better is the eschatological-sensitivity of Andrew Malone, *God's Mediators*, 126–46 and Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 168–72.

[125] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 318.

[126] For a nuanced discussion of the complicated relationship between Israel and the nations, see Timmer, *A Gracious and Compassionate God*, 21–39.

[127] Gentry and Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant*, 129–35.

[128] See further Gentry's discussion of Israel's breach of covenant like that of Adam. Citing Hosea 6:7, he writes, "Israel's covenant violation was in her role as king-priest" (ibid., 321–22).

[129] See Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 120–21.

[130] On the importance of considering antecedent theology, see Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 14–18.

[131] See the opening discussion in Nicholas G. Piotrowski and David S. Schrock, "'You Can Make Me Clean': The Matthean Jesus as Priest and the Biblical-Theological Results," *Criswell Theological Review 14.1* (Fall 2016): 3–14.

The Church as Heir of Israel's Vocation as Royal Priesthood

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Before the advent of higher criticism, students of scripture took it for granted that one read the Bible as a whole. With the introduction of higher criticism in the 19th century, this "naïve assumption" was roundly rejected. In its place, the scholars argued there were many "sources," some of which provided competing approaches to an array of different topics[1]. In the mid-20th century, Brevard Childs championed the idea of "canonical" criticism. While not rejecting source criticism outright, he argued that the canon was the authoritative set of documents that the church accepted as its scripture.[2] As such, it needed to be examined and studied as a whole. Later, other scholars argued that the literary merits of the text demonstrated far more cohesiveness than had previously been recognized.[3] Hence, reading scripture as a cohesive unit found new traction.

Scholars who worked from a presupposition of biblical inspiration and authority, welcomed this renewed interest in the canon of scripture and contributed to the discussion by showing how various key themes of biblical teaching developed throughout scripture. Hence, the discipline of biblical theology was given renewed attention in scholarly circles.

One theme that has perplexed Old Testament (OT) scholarship over the last century has been the idea of and role for the priests in Israel's religion. Source criticism argued that Israel had an evolving view of priests. Originally when its religious ideas were in their infancy, every head of the household served as the priest of his own family. This was represented in Israel's early documents such as J and E. But as the nation evolved and its government became more complex, there was a concurrent development in the nature and role of the priesthood. This specialization is portrayed in the P documents which reveal a well-developed and organized priesthood, serving the nation at a central location. This priestly community wanted to protect their territory and hence needed to eliminate the idea that worship could take place anywhere. Laws centralizing worship and restricting those who could officiate at the altar appeared at the instigation of this priestly community. Religious complexity was introduced to protect the interests of the specialist community. Does this theory do justice to the biblical record especially when read from a canonical perspective? I do not believe that it does. This paper will endeavor to argue, that when read canonically, scripture always intended that all God's people participate in priestly activity as servants of God.

Two key texts that establish this trajectory are Exodus 19:4-6 and its NT use in 1 Peter 2:9-10. Before exegeting these texts, it is important to observe that while the biblical canon gives us a chronological view of salvation history, it does not reflect the order in which Israel received these texts. Israel received the stories of their forefathers, the patriarchs, after they had experienced the redemption of God from Egypt and most probably after the covenant was formed at Sinai. Their early history is provided to give perspective to their redemption and to enable them to understand who they are and why this happened to them. In a sense, the primeval and patriarchal history is prologue to their redemption experience. This is an important observation if we are to read the scriptures accurately.[4]

Israel's Calling as a Royal Priesthood

After Israel was delivered from Egypt, Moses, at God's direction, led the people to Sinai. There, as they camped before the mountain, God summoned Moses to ascend the mountain and God gave to him a message for the people. The message is bracketed by the similar clauses "thus you shall speak to the sons of Jacob and you shall report to the sons of Israel" (v. 3) and "these are the words which you shall say to the sons of Israel" (v.6). The clauses emphasize the importance and the content of the message which God is entrusting to Moses.

The message began with a reminder of God's gracious intervention in deliverance for his people. Israel had witnessed God fighting against the Egyptians who had so callously enslaved and oppressed them. They had seen how God had ravaged Egypt's land, destroyed their herds and decimated their people by destroying all of the firstborn of Egypt. By the end, Pharaoh and the people had begged the Israelites to leave Egypt, even giving them their jewelry as they left.[5]

Israel had also experienced the kindness of God towards them. The image used to describe this care is that of a mother eagle bearing her young on her back to bring them to a place of safety. God's demonstration of that parental care had included feeding them with manna when they had no food, providing water in the dry land of the wilderness, protecting them against marauding bands, and giving them a leader in Moses to guide them into God's future for them. Against the background of God's grace to them demonstrating a relationship already formed, God then sets before Israel the stipulation that there will be protocol for enjoying this relationship for the future.

The pattern reflected in this order is that which marks Hittite, suzerainty treaties. After stating the overlord's title, the treaties then narrated the ways in which this overlord had acted in the interests of the covenant partner. This signified a *de facto* relationship that was to be formalized by the treaty being established. It included stipulations which described the protocol for the ongoing relationship.[6]

Moses' message was preparing Israel for the formal treaty that was to come. "If Israel will obey [God's] voice and keep his covenant" references the formal stipulations that will be laid down. In what followed, the nature of the relationship was outlined; "you shall be my treasured possession

among all peoples for all the earth is mine; you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exod 19:5-6a). Wright points out that this is a programmatic statement with the chiastic structure of these words showing the nature of the relationship between God and Israel and the reason for it.[7]

Three phrases are used to describe the substance of the relationship. First Israel was to be "God's special possession." The Hebrew word used here is *segulla* and is used secularly to describe the king's personal treasure as opposed to the national treasure (1 Chron 29:3). The qualifying phrase, "for all the earth is mine" is intended to designate the unique status that is being granted to the nation over against God's general possession of the world at large. Israel is being favored as the people who bring God particular delight and pleasure because they share God's character and his purposes.[8]

The second description identified Israel as a "kingdom of priests" (*mamlaket cohenim*). It is not simply that Israel has special status with God but they also share a unique task for God. The idea of "priests" in the ancient world was linked to mediation between people and the deity. That is true in the OT as well, where priests were charged with the responsibility of teaching the law of God so people could live in relationship with God and attending to the sacrificial protocols that enabled those who offended the deity to be restored to him. "God confers on Israel as a whole people the role of being his priesthood in the midst of the nations. As the people of YHWH they would have the historical task of bringing the knowledge of God to the nations and bringing the nations to the means of atonement with God."[9] This calling is tied to God's plan to reclaim his world for his glory.

But the task required Israel to be in a particular state to be able to take on this role. They themselves had to be holy. Hence they are called to be a holy nation. Their fulfilling this would not only prepare them for their role to others but would also sanctify their world to God, since holiness extended beyond simple moral purity.

Following this description God met with Israel to formalize his covenant with them. This is found in what is called the covenant code in Exodus 20-24. The initial section included the principal stipulations for living in the presence of God. These were unique in that they were delivered by the voice of God himself to the Israelite people. They set the broad boundaries for living in the presence of God as the people of God. At this point the people asked Moses to mediate God's word to them because they were overwhelmed by

the voice of God. This request introduced a tension into the narrative since the priestly role involved living in the presence of God.

The rest of the code was given through Moses as the mediator. The laws that followed were in the form of case laws. They dealt with social matters, physical matters and spiritual directions that pertain to worship. In the code, there is an expectation that the people will draw near to God. For instance, the law of the altar described how to make an altar for worshipping the Lord either of dirt or of uncut stone (Exod 20:24-26). Direction was given about the firstfruits offerings that were to be made (22:29-30), about keeping sabbaths and the major pilgrimage feasts (23:10-17) and about not offering anything leavened with the blood of the sacrifices. Clearly these instructions assumed that the people would be serving at altars before the Lord. In fact before the elders ascended the mountain to meet with God in a covenant meal, Moses offered sacrifices and sprinkled the people with blood. The sacrifices were made by "the young men of the people of Israel" (24:5) who were likely the firstborn of families representing the people. Thus the nation is acting in its role as a priestly people at Sinai.

Priesthood in the Primeval and Patriarchal Period

The calling of Israel to this task was not something new in God's purposes. A review of the primeval and patriarchal history demonstrates this. God created Adam to be a priest-king in the Garden of Eden. The Garden is portrayed in language that is subsequently used of Israel's places of worship.[10] Adam is placed in that garden environment and charged with the task of "cultivating and guarding it." These two Hebrew words when used elsewhere together "refer either to Israelites 'serving' God and 'guarding' [keeping] God's word (approximately 10 times) or to priests who 'keep ' the 'service' (or 'charge') of the tabernacle."[11] The writer clearly intended to portray that Adam was created to be a priest in the dwelling place of God. The assumption is that his offspring would serve with him in this calling.

But sin entered the world and the man and his wife are excluded from the garden temple and removed from their role as priest kings. While they continued to physically live, they were separated from God and his presence. They had forfeited their role because they have not served the interests of God in his world and protected it from evil. Instead of bringing God's blessing

to the world, they brought God's curse upon it.

God was not done with his people. Arising from Adam and Eve came a line of descendents who were God fearers. They "call[ed] upon the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26). Though that line is all but lost in the expanding corruption of the society of that period, a few righteous do remain who guard God's interest in the world. They are represented by Noah, of whom it is said, "he was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God" (Gen 6:9). He mediated God to the world by proclaiming God's righteousness and guarding God's world through his building the ark (Heb 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5). After the world was cleansed through the judgment of the flood, Noah and his family, together with the animals that had been preserved in the ark, were appointed to repopulate it. God's covenant was renewed with them. Prior to the renewal, one of the first acts that marked Noah upon exiting the ark is the priestly task of building an altar and offering sacrifice to the Lord (Gen 8:20). The renewal of the covenant may even be said to be in response to the worship offered. It is with this priestly family that the future is entrusted. But again, Noah failed and allowed sin to enter his world. It expanded its corrosive influence into humanity, finding expression in the rebellion of Babel.

Once more God intervened to call out Abram from that world to form him into a new Adam, who would be the head of a new society of faithful priests. His calling was to be a blessing to the nations as he brought God to his world and his world to God. Abram responded in faith to the call of God to leave his old world and to follow God to the place he would show him. Upon entering that place that God identified as his inheritance, we are told that "Abram built there an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him" (Gen 12:7). What characterized Abram while dwelling in the land is that he built altars and called upon the name of the Lord (13:4, 18; 21:13). Moreover Abram engaged in other priestly activity. He protected the land from evil as he delivered it from the kings of the east, interceded for Abimelech regarding the curse that had come upon he and his family after having taken Sarah into his harem, and he taught his children God's ways (Gen 18:19).

Similarly, Isaac and Jacob acted as priests, building altars and calling upon the name of the Lord (Gen 26:25; 33:20, 35:7; 46:1). All of their worship took place in the context of the Promised Land, the "new Eden" or place identified with God and his dwelling. They served God in his place as a priestly community.

It is this background that is provided by Moses to Israel to give to them an understanding of their calling as a priestly people. They are the legitimate heirs of the patriarchs to bring the blessing of God's presence to the world. God would call them his "first born son" (Exod 4:22-23) who were given the responsibilities of mediating God's blessing to their world.

The Place of the Levitical Priesthood in Israel

So then why does the Levitical priesthood emerge in Israel if the whole nation was to be a priesthood and all might offer sacrifices? It seemed that God was aware of the limitations of his people, signaled earlier by their fear of being in his presence. Immediately after the covenant code is given to Israel through Moses, God again called Moses to ascend the mountain and receive instruction about the building of the tabernacle and the making of its furnishings that were to represent God's presence in Israel. In the description of the building, furnishing and staffing of the tabernacle that is provided, the place of Aaron and his sons is described. They were to be chosen out of Israel, attired in garments that distinguished them from the people and were to be consecrated to God for tabernacle service. God was "to dwell among the people of Israel and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them" (Exod 29:45-46). The preparations that God was instructing Moses to make including the sanctification of Aaron and his sons, had in view facilitating God being present with his people.[12]

Before Moses could bring this to the people for implementation, the people grew fearful and anxious about Moses' absence. They thought that he was lost on the mountain and demanded that Aaron make gods who could lead them into their future. They too wanted God present but they wanted him on their terms and in their timing. Consequently Israel committed the great sin of the golden calf. Whether the calf was to represent God or to replace God is not of great consequence. What is of significance was that Israel's effort to bring God into their presence violated the specific protocols that God had given for his dwelling in their midst. Those actions made God angry with his people. Hahn writes,

> Because they have "corrupted" (*sihet*) themselves, Yahweh threatens to destroy them. The Hebrew word for "corrupted" (*sihet*) in 32:7 is significant. The word is used in Leviticus 19:7 to describe a defect which disqualifies a man from priestly service in the sanctuary ... God had promised Israel at Sinai: 'If you keep my covenant ... then you shall be a kingdom of priests' (Exod 19:5-6). Israel failed to fulfill its vocation; it failed to 'keep covenant'. Consequently Israel loses the right to serve God as a 'kingdom of priests.' The expression 'kingdom of priests' is not applied to Old Testament Israel as a nation ever again (see 1 Pet 2:9).[13]

When Moses descended from the mountain and saw the idolatrous worship going on, he called for those who were on the Lord's side to come to him. It was the sons of Levi who responded to him and they were sent to inflict God's judgment upon their sons and brothers. As a result, "they were ordained for the service of the Lord" (Exod 32:29). This movement from all Israel as priests, represented by the firstborn, to the tribe of Levi who replaced the first born resulted from the golden calf incident. Having demonstrated themselves committed to the holiness of God, the Levites were conscripted to serve the function of guarding God's holiness within the community. Summarizing his discussion of the events at Sinai, Hahn comments,

> After the golden calf, Moses, Aaron and the Levites are elevated to positions of mediation, at the expense of the other tribes and their firstborn sons. As a result, Israel's firstborn status and royal priestly vocation to be a holy nation before God and the nations was dramatically changed (at least temporarily). This reconfiguration included the addition of various cultic laws having a penitential purpose.[14]

Was it God's intention that the Levitical community should entirely replace the priestly role of the nation and formalize it as an institution? I suggest that it was not. Rather this tribe was to serve in the midst of the people as an example of what holy living and serving was all about. Their presence was intended to facilitate the restoration of the nation to this priestly task. One text of scripture that bears this out is that found in Leviticus 10. Just after the Aaronic family is consecrated to their priestly functions, Nadab and Abihu took their censors and apparently put fire in them that was not taken from the altar. Likely other failure to heed the instruction Moses had provided about this task was also involved. God blazed forth in a fire

that killed them both. Moses' comment to Aaron is telling: "This is what the Lord has said, 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before the people I will be glorified" (Lev 10:3). It seems clear that Moses is emphasizing the modeling role that the priests had before Israel. They were to demonstrate what holiness entailed for those who served God so that the people would be instructed in it. Wenham makes the point well: "The whole nation was called to be holy but how much more responsibility rested on the priests whose duty was to perform the sanctifying rituals and to teach the people the way of holiness."[15] Immediately following this stunning event, God said to Aaron that the priests were to "distinguish between the holy and the common and between the unclean and the clean, and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the Lord has spoken to them by Moses" (Lev 10:10-11). This fits with their task of restoring the people to holiness and faithfulness to God so as to fulfill their calling as priests to the nations.

What followed this was a series of laws that were intended to spell out what holiness involved for God's people. These laws, known as the holiness code, touched every area of life. Worship, sexuality, farm practices, dietary laws and much more were all included in these instructions for all of one's behavior mattered. A major refrain in this instruction was "You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy" (Lev 19:2; 20:7, 26; etc). These directions had in view the people's holiness which enabled them to serve as God's representatives in the world. The Levites were entrusted with the book of the law and commanded to teach it regularly to the people (Deut 31:26; 33:10).

When the first generation sinned by failing to trust God to give the land, God condemned them to die in the wilderness. After forty years of wandering, that generation has passed and a new generation that was supposedly committed to God was raised up. As they approached Moab, Balak sought to have Balaam curse them. But his curses were turned to blessing. Balaam then advised Balak to bring curse upon Israel by instigating idolatrous immorality and inviting Israel to participate. They did as he advised and God's wrath erupted against his people. It was only halted when Phinehas the high priest speared an Israelite leader and the Moabite cult prostitute that he was involved with. Phinehas' zeal for God earned him and his family a lasting position as priests who guarded God's holiness. Hahn comments, "Phinehas' high priestly grant is comparable to the levitical grant in Exodus 32:29 (see Mal

2:4-8) though narrower in scope and loftier in dignity ... At the same time, the grant to Phinehas serves to purify, preserve and strengthen the *Levitical* covenant of priesthood."[16]

Later, when Moses had led the people to the Plains of Moab prior to their entrance into the Promised Land, he warned them repeatedly to keep the laws and instructions that had been entrusted to them (Deut 6:1-2, 24-25; 8:1; 10:12-13; 11:8; etc). If they obeyed, they would enjoy the blessings of God upon them. Failure to obey would bring curse upon them and they would be removed from the land (Deut 30:11-20), once again forfeiting their role of blessing the world. Moses ensured that all his instruction was written in a book and this book was given to the Levites to be placed by the ark of the covenant both as a witness against Israel but also so that it could be taught to the people of each new generation (Deut 31:25-27).

The Priestly Role in the Prophets

It is the prophets who document Israel's loyalty to the commandments of God and hence how effectively they serve as a priesthood. The Former Prophets trace the failure of the people to keep his covenant and to obey his commandments. Comparatively little is said about the priestly leadership role in the narratives of Israel's history. Nevertheless, when mentioned, the priests are usually censored for their failure to lead the nation in holiness.

One of the final two stories in the Book of Judges is that of the idol shrine that Micah set up. It is intended to illustrate the growing apostasy in Israel. Micah stole his mother's silver and ended up using it to make a household idol. He first appointed his son to be priest, probably something that had precedent in Israel's earliest history, but when a Levite came along, he displaced his son and ordained the Levite. What is shocking here is that a Levite, charged with guarding the holiness of God, would consent to serving at an idol shrine. Subsequently the Levite conspired with the Danites to accompany them on their mission to displace the people of Laish and establish the new city of Dan. He then became their priest officiating at their religious high place with Micah's idol as its center piece. The story ended with the revelation that this was a descendent of none other than Moses.

Following this, we are given the story in Samuel of the behavior of the sons of Eli the high priest. They disrespected the sacrifices of YHWH, insisting

on the best portion of the sacrificial animal for themselves before they were sacrificed. Instead of facilitating Israel's worship of God they corrupted it by their selfish behavior. Moreover, they also engaged in sexual immorality with the women who came to worship. These accounts point to the fact that those called to model holiness before Israel and to lead them in lives of holiness were instead corrupting the people and defiling the holy place. In his oracle of judgment against Eli's house, God promised to "raise up for myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever" (1 Sam 2:35).

During Saul's reign, the priests and Levites are seldom mentioned. What is recorded is the tragic murder of the High Priest, Ahimelech and his family because he was accused of aiding and abetting David on his flight from Saul. Abiathar, the only son to escape Saul's treacherous murder of the priestly family, joined David in exile and played a more positive role in encouraging David in seeking the Lord. Subsequently he served as priest in David's tenure as king along with Zadok (2 Sam 8:16-17). But after the coronation of Solomon, Abiathar is relieved of his duties in fulfillment of the prophecies against the house of Eli.

In the rest of OT history, the priests do not play a major part. The focus seemed to be upon the leadership of the king in covenant keeping. It is true that at times certain priests served as counselors to the kings such as Jehoiada did for Joash or Azariah did for Uzziah when he tried to block him from burning incense in the temple. But they did not actively lead the people in holiness as they had been mandated to do.

In the post exilic Books of Chronicles, more attention is given to the priestly function of leading worship and offering the sacrifices. The Chronicler described how David had the Levites and priests bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and instituted the worship of YHWH there. The priests and Levites were assigned to their courses to lead worship and to offer sacrifices. More formal organization was established as David neared the end of his life in anticipation of the building of the temple under Solomon (1 Chron 23-26). The chronicler suggested that this organizational structure was implemented when the temple was finally completed.

But it wasn't long before formal worship was compromised. When the northern tribes broke away from Judah and Benjamin, Jeroboam made golden

calves and set them in Dan and Bethel. He appointed priests from whoever wished to serve and corrupted the worship of YHWH. Then in the south under Rehoboam and his successors, syncretism found its way into Judah's worship too. There were times of renewal under Asa and then Jehosaphat, Joash and Uzziah. The climax of restored worship came with Hezekiah and Josiah who both cleansed the defiled temple and rededicated the priests and Levites in their service. But these changes always seemed to be initiated by the king. Does this suggest that the historian is in fact preparing his readers for the demise of the Levitical priesthood and the rise of another priestly influence?

In fact the writing prophets condemned the priests for failing to teach the people the word of God. For example, Hosea contended with the priests,

> "Because you have rejected knowledge,
> I also reject you as my priests;
> because you have ignored the law of your God,
> I also will ignore your children.
> 7 The more priests there were,
> the more they sinned against me;
> they exchanged their glorious God for something disgraceful (Hos 4:6-7).

Much later, Jeremiah also condemned them:

> "A horrible and shocking thing
> has happened in the land:
> 31 The prophets prophesy lies,
> the priests rule by their own authority,
> and my people love it this way.
> But what will you do in the end? (Jer 5:30-31; cf. Micah 3:1; Ezek 22:26).

And again,

> "From the least to the greatest,
> all are greedy for gain;
> prophets and priests alike,
> all practice deceit.
> 14 They dress the wound of my people

as though it were not serious.
'Peace, peace,' they say,
when there is no peace. (Jer 6:13-14).

Throughout the period of the kings then, the priests and Levites were negligent in their responsibility to attend to the task of guarding God's holiness and teaching the people to follow God's commandments. Israel's disobedience finally led to the exile in 722 BC by the Assyrians and Judah followed beginning in 603 BC under the Babylonian regime.

One would have thought that after the people returned from exile and rebuilt the temple, the priests would be conscientious about instructing the people in God's ways. The pattern that Ezra set of reading and teaching the law to the people would be adhered to (Neh 8:8). Indeed the priests and Levites were assigned their roles in the reconstructed temple and expected to fulfill them. But even before Nehemiah had ended his tenure as governor, Eliashib the high priest had compromised himself with Tobiah the Ammonite by preparing him a place within the temple confines. Nehemiah dealt severely with him because of this.

Within a few years of this, Malachi would carry God's word of judgment to the priests:

> The lips of the priest should guard knowledge and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is a messenger of the Lord of Hosts. But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi says the Lord of Hosts, and so I make you despised and abased before all the people inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instructions (Mal 2:7-9).

Joyce Baldwin notes that "God was misrepresented first by [the priests'] unworthy lives and then by their erroneous teaching."[17] This would result in judgment.

But this is not the end of the story. Isaiah did indeed prophesy that judgment would come upon the people of God but he also foresaw a time when God's servant would bring change to the world. Anointed by the Spirit, he would proclaim liberty. The fortunes of God's people would be reversed and instead of sadness there would be joy and rejoicing. Foreigners who once

oppressed would now serve them and God's people would be called "the priests of the Lord; they shall speak of you as the ministers of our God" (Isa 61:6). Motyer writes, "The hitherto unrealized ideal of Exodus 19:6 [is] fully realized in the priesthood of all believers."[18]

Similarly Jeremiah saw a day when God would make a new covenant with his people. In that time "David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offering and to make sacrifices forever" (Jer 33:18). God compared the certainty of this to his covenant with the day and the night. "As the hosts of the heaven cannot be numbered and the sands of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the offspring of David my servant and the Levitical priests who minister to me" (Jer 33:22). The multiplication of the priests is what is so important for our theme. It appears that there is merging of the people as a whole with the community of the priests. The prophet described the people with whom this new covenant is established as those who no longer need the law of God taught to them because "they all know me from the least of them to the greatest" (Jer 31:34). The work of teaching the people will have come to its fruition for all will know and do the will of God. That is precisely what the work of the Levitical tribe was to accomplish.

Ezekiel concluded his prophecy with a lengthy vision about the restoration of true worship in a new temple and with a purified priesthood. They serve under a new Davidic prince who himself serves in a priestly role. Hahn says, "For Ezekiel, the Davidic messiah is destined to embody the royal priestly ideal of Israel as "a kingdom of priests."[19]

Malachi too, after indicting the priests and Levites for their failure, spoke of a time coming when "the Lord whom you seek would suddenly come to his temple and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold he is coming ... He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years." (Mal 3:1, 3). Baldwin's comment is to the point:

> The refiner who sits and concentrates all his attention on the metal in the crucible depicts something of the concern of the Lord for the holiness of his people. He begins at his sanctuary (cf., Ezk 9:6) with *the sons of Levi* to purify them . . .

> Only then will the rest of the population, who no doubt undergo the purifying process, be able to offer what is *pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old*. The last phrase is indefinite, being used to refer both to the time of Moses (Is. 63:9, 11; Mt. 7:14) and of David (Am 9:11).[20]

A time is coming when a purified people will again embrace their calling as faithful priests. It is with this future in view that the NT opens.

Jesus and the Priestly role

The beginning of the gospel narrative in Luke starts with the birth of John the Baptist. Zechariah, his father is a priest so that John is from the tribe of Levi. He is explicitly linked to the one who prepared the way for the coming of the Lord by restoring the people to right relationship to God, thus fulfilling the role of the priests (Luke 1:17, 76). That task included teaching the commandments of God and calling for repentance.

Jesus then came as the messenger of the covenant spoken of by Malachi. He did take up his work as a refiner. That began with confronting the religious leaders of Israel. At the age of twelve, he is found in the temple in discussion with the teachers (Luke 2:46). Later, throughout his public ministry, Jesus was in conflict with the religious leaders. Jesus said that they were blind guides (Matt 15:14) and accused them of laying "burdens too hard to bear upon their hearers" (Luke 11:46; Matt 23:4). By contrast, Jesus embraced the role of "rabbi" teaching the people what God's commandments were intended to communicate. Matthew presents Jesus as the teacher of the law *par excellence*. In the sermon materials recorded in Matthew 5-7, Jesus specifically said that while his hearers had heard the interpretation of various commandments, he was imparting to them the real intent of it.

As Jesus inaugurated his ministry in Nazareth, he specifically cited Isaiah 61:1-2 and declared that this text was being fulfilled in their hearing (Luke 4:18-21). This is the same passage that spoke of the day when foreigners would serve Israel and call them the priests of God. Jesus, by his ministry, was inaugurating this new reality.

Moreover Jesus as the perfect Israelite took seriously his role as a member of the royal priesthood. He demonstrated what it was to restore people to God as the priests were to do. For instance, to the woman who entered Simon's

house at the time when Jesus was eating there, he could say "Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48). The same is true of Jesus' encounter with the paralytic who was brought to him by his friends. He too is forgiven by Jesus and then healed (Luke 5:20-25). He mediated the reconciliation of sinners to God.

Ultimately Jesus was the one who offered the perfect sacrifice for sins. The writer to the Hebrews elaborated on this task. He contrasted the sacrifices of the high priests which had to be repeatedly offered to that of Christ who offered one sacrifice and then took his place at the right hand of the Father (Heb 9:25-26; 10:11-12).

The superiority of Jesus as priest is established by the author of Hebrews in that he connected him with Melchizedek, who is said to be both king and priest. His eternal life gives him an eternal position which trumps that of the Levitical priests. As the writers comments, "He holds his priesthood permanently because he continues forever" (Heb 7:24).

Christians and their Priestly Calling

It follows that just as the Levitical family received the responsibility to mediate God to the community, those who belong to the family of Jesus, the great high priest are part of the priestly community too.[21] The NT writers develop this theme.

One of the crucial texts is 1 Peter 2. Peter has been teaching his readers, who are called the "chosen ones" scattered among the people of the world that they are to live holy lives. He cited as evidence, the frequent statement from Leviticus that "you shall be holy because I am holy" (1 Pet 1:16) to undergird his command. That was given to Israel in the context of their being assigned the priestly task of mediating God to the world. Now the believers that Peter addressed are required to act in a similar way. Two reasons for this are provided.

First, holiness is the right response to the grace of God that has redeemed us. Believers have been born again through the atoning work of Christ and the promise of God's word that is imperishable (1 Pet 1:18-23). Holy living is the right response to "having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth" (1 Pet 1:23).

Second, holiness is right because of who we have become. Peter says that first we are "living stones" that are formed into a holy temple. The component

parts of a temple were to be carefully formed and dedicated so as to create a holy space for God to dwell in. Cleansing rituals were carried out in both the tabernacle and temple at the time of their dedication (Exod 40:9-16; 1 Kgs 8; 2 Chron 5) and God's presence filled them demonstrating his acceptance of these places of his dwelling. That image is now applied to the church as community to indicate that it too is the dwelling place of God. As such it must be holy.

But Peter transitions from the temple image to a priesthood image. The believers are a "holy priesthood" too with the task of offering "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God" (1 Pet 2:5). At this point in his argument, he borrowed the text of Exodus 19 to apply to these believers.[22] They are a "chosen race, a royal priesthood a holy nation, a people for his own possession." Their priestly function is to offer sacrifices of praise to the one who had delivered them from a world of darkness (i.e., hostility to God) to a world of light. This work is done in the "Gentile" world. Their conduct there is crucial to the impact that their praises will have on that world. It is clear that the work of these priestly peoples will have the effect of leading the Gentiles to glorify God as they are brought near to him.

And Peter is not alone in describing the church's role in priestly terms. Paul for instance, after describing God's great salvation, spoke about "presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship" (Rom 12:1). The writer to the Hebrews called believers to "continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name" (Heb 13:15). In addition they were "to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" (Heb 13:16). In the same vein, Paul said that the Philippians' gifts to him were sacrifices that were pleasing to God (Phil 4:18).

Finally in his doxology, John praised Jesus as the one who "has loved us and cleansed us by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father" (Rev 1:5). Again he recorded the song of praise offered by the elders, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our to our God . . ." (Rev 5:9-10). In keeping with this, John concluded his revelation with the people of God in the presence of God, in the world where there is nothing unclean bringing him glory.

Implications for the Church today

Reformed theologians have often stressed the "priesthood of all believers." In light of what we have said, this is an important truth. But what are the implications of this for the church today? First, we must take seriously our priestly calling. We must own this calling as the people of God. Second, it is crucial that we be serious about living holy lives. Peter's emphasis upon being holy is because we are a royal priesthood. As we have seen, the priestly role is compromised by unholy living. We cannot show the world the character of God by impure living. Has the failure to appreciate this role led to an indifference to sin and holy living? Is that why the evangelical church is increasingly tolerant of sin in its midst? Paul instructed the Corinthian church to take action to root out sin from its midst. That meant church discipline. That is still a necessary function of the church if we are to be a holy community.

Second, just as the priestly community of the past was charged with the instruction of the nation in God's commandments, so the people of God today must instruct one another. We are not yet at the point where this is unnecessary because the law of God is fully written in our hearts. Sin still blinds the hearts of believers and the community is needed as a corrective. Discipleship is about teaching one another "to obey everything that [Jesus] has commanded us" (Matt 28:19).

Third, as priests there is worship that is to be offered by the people of God. We are to "declare the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9). This is not only a reference to gathered worship. It is a declaration that all of life is to be about worship. In the same way that Paul called the Romans to present their bodies (whole lives) as living sacrifices, the church must take seriously the business of offering all of life to God. Our relationships, our work, our leisure, our resources are all part of what we offer. This is about removing the sacred/secular divide.

Finally, while the church no longer offers sacrifice for sin because Jesus has provided a once for all, we do still have a role in co-operation with the Savior as those who call people to reconciliation with God. Paul said that he was entrusted with a ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18). That entails announcing the news that "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Cor 5:19). As his ambassadors, we declare this news and implore people to be reconciled to

God. Evangelism is a priestly as well as a doxological work.

Such actions are part of what it means for the church to begin to fulfill its role as the heir of Israel's calling to be royal priesthood. What the *eschaton* promises is even more exciting as believers fulfill what Adam was intended to be from the beginning. We shall realize our calling as those who reign with God in his new heavens and new earth (Rev 5:10).

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1 See John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament Method in Biblical Study* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984) for a description and assessment of various approaches to reading the OT.

2 See Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) for his approach.

3 E.g., Robert Altar, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981; Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985) provide descriptions of this reading strategy.

4 Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 174-6.

5 W. J. Dumbrell, *Creation and Covenant: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 85, writes "Verse 4 thus refers to the particular election procedures which have now resulted in the relationship to which vv. 5-6 refer."

6 Walter Kaiser, *Exodus* (EBC, ed., Frank E. Gabelein; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 415-16.

7 Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 330.

8 Ibid, 256-7.

9 Ibid, 331; cf. Terrence Fretheim, *Exodus* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 263.

10 Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 255-56; cf., Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical Theological Understanding of Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 211-213.

11 G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2004), 67; cf., Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 67.

12 Kaiser, *Exodus*, 471.

13 Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 144.

14 Ibid., 154-5.

15 G. J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 155-6.

16 Hahn, Kinship by Covenant, 159.

17 Joyce G. Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (TOTC; ed. D. J. Wiseman; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972), 236.

18 J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah* (TOTC; ed. D. J. Wiseman; Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1999), 379.

19 Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant*, 166. Hahn summarizes, "To use an architectural metaphor, the whole Levitical economy was a scaffolding erected around the House of Israel in order to repair it. The divine architect was free to use the Levitical priesthood for as long as it took to restore the House of Israel fully to the covenant. Thus in the eschatological age when Israel's idolatry (e.g., the sin of the calf) would be definitely overcome and the hard-hearted sinfulness of the people completely removed (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:25-27), the Levitical economy would no longer be necessary, precisely because it had served its purpose. The scaffolding could be removed, since the house had been repaired: the people would be restored to their original royal priestly primogeniture promised them before they sinned with the calf (Exod 4:22; 19:6).

20 Baldwin, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*, 243-4.

21 M. H. Shepherd, Jr., "Priests in the NT," in IDB, vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 890.

22 J. N. D. Kelly, *The Epistles of Peter and Jude* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1969), 91.

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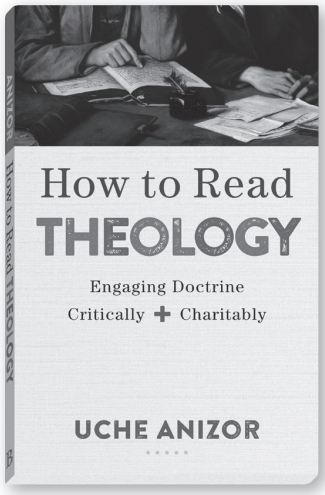

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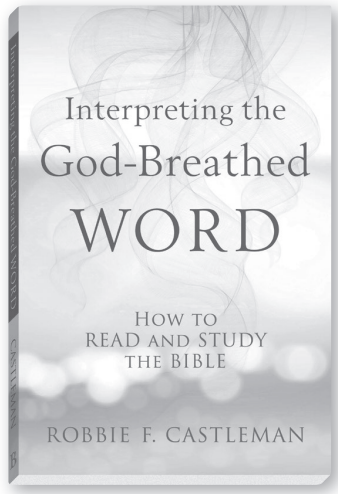

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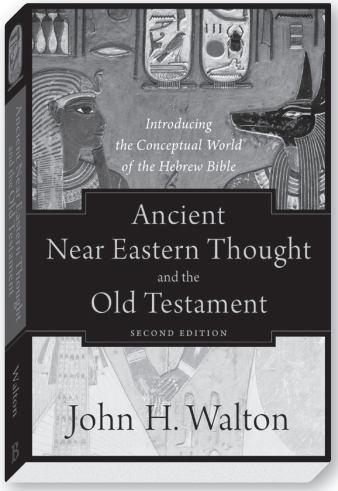

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Jesus as Priest in the Gospels

Nicholas Perrin

Nicholas Perrin is the Franklin S. Dryness Chair of Biblical Studies at Wheaton Graduate School and the former Dean of Wheaton Graduate School at Wheaton College. He earned his PhD from Marquette University. Most recently, he is the author of *Jesus the Priest* (SPCK/Baker Academic, 2018) and will also be publishing *The Kingdom of God* (Zondervan) in early 2019. A husband and the father of two grown sons, Dr. Perrin is a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church in America.

To the extent that New Testament (NT) theology is concerned to convey the theologies of the NT writings as these have been critically interpreted, the project by nature entails a good deal of interpretative retrieval, that is, an up-to-date recounting of standard arguments and familiar paradigms for understanding the discrete canonical texts. One such "familiar paradigm," easily demonstrable from the past hundred years or so of scholarly literature, holds that the Epistle to the Hebrews is unique by virtue of its emphasis on Jesus' priesthood. From here, especially if one prefers to date Hebrews after the destruction of the temple, it is a straightforward move to infer that the concept of Jesus' priesthood was entirely a post-Easter *theologoumenon*, likely occasioned by the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, and almost certainly limited in importance so far as first-century Christian belief was concerned. Whatever factors "in front of" the biblical text may have helped pave the way for this recurring interpretative judgment (here one may think, for example, of the fierce anti-sacerdotal character of so much nineteenth- and twentieth-century Protestant theology), it almost certainly mistaken. Although I believe a case can be made for a broad interest in Jesus' priesthood across the NT canon, in this essay I will take up a more focused task by arguing that the authors behind the canonical gospels, as well as the hypothetical hand

behind the equally hypothetical text of Q, were not only convinced of Jesus' priesthood, but also—though to varying degrees—concerned to lace their texts with narratival arguments along the same lines. By exploring different strands of the gospel tradition, so it is hoped, we will be in position to draw some fresh historical and theological inferences regarding the significance of Jesus' priesthood in early Christianity.

Gospel of Mark

That Mark's gospel is vitally concerned with the theme of temple is now virtually beyond question.[1] The narrative's very plotline bears this out. No sooner does Mark's Jesus submit to his inaugural baptism than he encounters protracted opposition from the temple authorities (Mark 2:1-3:6). This sequence of *Streitgespräche* anticipates Jesus' final week, when he resumes debates with the leading religious stakeholders (Mark 11:27-12:34). The underlying question throughout these conflicts, it seems, is "Who represents God's true temple—Jesus or his adversaries?" Early on in his final week, Mark's Jesus stages a triumphal entry on the model of Solomon, who—in anticipation of Jesus himself, Mark appears to say—rode a donkey *en route* to his own coronation and temple-building project (1 Kgs 1:38). Jesus follows this up with the so-called "cleansing of the temple" (Mark 11:15-19), an act which, together with the Olivet Discourse (Mark 13), presages the destruction of the temple. As far as we can tell, Mark sees the removal of the temple not as an end unto itself but rather as the requisite transition toward a new sacred space, constituted through Jesus' death and resurrection (Mark 15-16) and sealed by the transfer of sacerdotal authority to his disciples (Mark 12:1-12). The evangelist's interest in this cultic conflict, involving two sets of competing claims as to who rightly stewards the divine space, does not relativize the messianic theme but rather gives it fuller definition.

Much of this has already been anticipated by Jesus' programmatic seed parables (Mark 4:1-34). All three of these parables, culminating with an abundant eschatological harvest bound up in the implanted seed, asks to understood as a symbolic rehearsal of the ancient Jewish hope of a fructiferous new Eden. In the scriptures, Eden was the primordial sacred space, maintained by the primordial royal-priest Adam. Accordingly, Mark's

images of eschatological fruitfulness (Mark 4, 11:12–14, 20-25; 12:1-12) hints that through Jesus the people of God are now finally in position to worship in a repristinated sacred space (Isaiah 55, 61). All throughout, Jesus remains the key figure.

If Mark's Jesus is presented as the founder of renewed sacred space, then we should not be surprised by clues that he is also the true high priest. This is not to say that Jesus' priesthood is anywhere explicitly asserted. Rather, in keeping with his overall approach to elaborating Christology, more allusive and parabolic than discursive, Mark's portrayal of a sacerdotal Jesus remains oblique throughout. Such intimations first begin to emerge in the defining baptism scene (Mark 1:9-11). True, while Mark undoubtedly intends the baptism to function as authorization for Jesus' messianic vocation, the heavenly voice's citation of Ps 2:7b ("You are my Son; today I have begotten you") points not just to a royal messiah but also – and perhaps all the more so – a priestly figure tasked with renewing the temple.[2] This, combined with the same citation's verbal links with Genesis 22, a passage which (for Ancient Judaism) secured Isaac as the foundational sacrificial victim in Judaism's cultus system, implies that Jesus' symbolic anointing through John was in fact no more a royal acclamation than *a priestly consecration*. This is little wonder: cleansing by water was in fact a staple component of priestly ordination (Lev 8:6; Numbers19) and John's baptism seems to have implied no less.[3]

Not long after his baptism and subsequent temptation, Jesus encounters a demon-possessed man in the synagogue, crying out: "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24). The title "Holy One of God" (*ho hagios tou theou*) is striking, since in the scriptures the "holy one of God" is a title ordinarily reserved for Israel's high priest.[4] Obviously, the demon is identifying Jesus not with the regnant priest but the eschatological high priest who would one day—so the faithful hoped—destroy the demonic forces.[5] When the demons first recognize Jesus for who he is, they address him not with a royal title but a priestly title.

One of the exegetical quandaries associated with Mark's cleansing of the leper story (Mark 1:40-45) is Jesus' seeming immunity to cultic impurity. More exactly, whereas one might expect Jesus to have contracted ritual uncleanness after touching the leper, the absence of any note along these lines invites readers to speculate on the possibility that Jesus transcended

cultic contamination—a plausible achievement if he was in fact the human embodiment of sacred space! Jesus' instructions after the cleansing ("See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them" [Mark 1:44]) are equally telling. Ordinarily, the leper would have had to consult the priest prior to his having been declared clean (Leviticus 13-14). That Jesus essentially skips this step, however, implies that he has taken this priestly judgment on himself. Meanwhile, the cleansed leper is sent off as a witness to—or possibly *against*—the priests (*eis martyrion autois*).

In the very next pericope, Mark's Jesus publicly declares forgiveness for an unnamed paralytic (Mark 2:5). While some interpreters (prompted by the scribes in vv. 6-7) are quick to assume that Jesus' act of forgiveness identifies him with God, I suspect that Jesus' hostile observers are vexed not because they perceive Jesus to be drawing a one-to-one correlation between himself and Yahweh but because he is usurping a function normally delegated to the high priest under God's authority. As far as the Jewish leaders are concerned at that moment, Jesus' blasphemy consists in his having disrupted the chain of authority set into place by God and operationalized by the high priest. It is also worth considering, as I have done elsewhere, that the paralytic's mat (the focal point of forgiveness and "carried by four") is actually meant to function as the antitype of the ark of the covenant (also the focal point of forgiveness and carried by four).[6] If so, then Jesus' instructions that the healed paralytic pick up the mat and go "into your house" (*eis ton oikon sou*, my translation [2:11]) may be a kind of reenactment of Solomon's charge to the priests to bring the ark "into the house" of the newly built temple.

In another conflict scene, Jesus defends his disciples' Sabbath-day practice of plucking grain by appealing to the example of David who, with the high priest's consent, partook of bread that was lawful only for the priests (Mark 2:23-28; cf. 1 Samuel 21:1-9). While there are a number of exegetical difficulties in this passage, one might begin sorting through them by noting two virtually incontrovertible points. First, Jesus defends himself by drawing an implicit comparison between himself and his disciples, on one side, and David and his men, on the other. Second, neither the narrative of 1 Samuel 21 nor Mark's Jesus gives the slightest hint that David's consumption of sacred bread was somehow transgressive. On the basis of these observations, it

may be argued that David-plus-his-men and Jesus-plus-his-disciples are not temporary exceptions to the cultic stipulation but are fully entitled priests. This much may be gathered from his cultic activities (all performed without a hint of reproach), as well as from Mark 11:35-37, where Jesus' citation of Psalm 110 tacitly affirms himself as the Son of David *qua* priest in the order of the priest-king Melchizedek.[7] In the light of Mark's fuller narrative, Jesus' mysterious grain field saying now comes into retrospective focus: because priests—unlike the general population—can legally work on the Sabbath, the disciples' work of plucking of grain cannot be considered a violation of the Sabbath, since they, like Jesus himself and because of Jesus himself, are in fact priests.

In the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mark 12:1-12), Jesus tells a thinly veiled allegory serving both to denounce the current laborers/priests and to identify new laborers/priests for a newly constituted temple. Meanwhile, though his barely concealed identification with both the "son" (v. 6) and the "cornerstone" (v. 10) of the temple, Jesus positions himself as both the heir of the covenantal promises and the atoning basis for this new temple. In all this, the ordination of a new priesthood would be hardly imaginable unless Jesus' role as "son" also included the right to establish such a priesthood—exactly what one might expect from a royal priest.

In the next scene (Mark 12:13-17), Jesus' opponents attempt to bait Jesus into publicly airing his views on paying taxes to Caesar. In response, Jesus circumspectly weighs in by telling a kind of audio-visual parable revolving around a Roman denarius as a prop. Here, I think, Jesus beckons his audience to draw a contrast between the image and inscription (*epigraphē*) of Caesar with the image and inscription of God (vv. 16-17). In the Roman world, when the populace applied "image" to Caesar, the term spoke (as it does, for example, in the famed Prienne inscription) to the Emperor's role as the mediator between the gods and humanity. Meanwhile, the inscription on the coin set forth the same status in propositional terms. (For example, in Jesus' day, the reverse side of the coins belonging to the Emperor's largest currency issue would have read: "Caesar Augustus Pontifex Maximus," that is, "Caesar Augustus Chief Priest.") Notably, the only other occurrence of "inscription" (*epigraphē*) in Mark's gospel is in reference to the titulus, which declares Jesus "King of the Jews" (Mark 15:26). The two inscriptions are almost satirically juxtaposed, together suggesting that Caesar's so-called

priesthood, symbolized through the idolatrous image and asserted through the blasphemous inscription, was about to meet its match in the crucified Jesus, who is the true image of God and whose own *epigraphē* declares him to be the king of the Jews. Since in Ancient Judaism, the high priest was considered not only an atoning figure but also *the* image of God *ex officio*, the evangelist's carefully constructed contrast speaks for itself: as the crucified image of God, Jesus—and not Caesar—is the true *Pontifex Maximus*.

In Mark's gospel, the climactic revelation of Jesus the high priest comes to fore in his interview with Caiaphas before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:60-65). The connections between this passage and the story's first disputes are unmistakable. If in Mark 2:1-12 the scribes privately speculate that Jesus had committed blasphemy by arrogating to himself the priestly prerogative, now the high priest Caiaphas publicly declares Jesus a blasphemer (Mark 14:64). Whereas in Mark 3:1-6 Jesus poses questions to the temple representatives only to be met with a stony silence, now it is Jesus who responds in silence to his priestly interrogators (Mark 14:61). That the evangelist intends the so-called trial scene as a climax to the disputes of Jesus' final week, while also creating an inclusio with the dialogues of Mark 2:1-3:6, is almost certain. Mark's editorial decision is hardly arbitrary, for the interview with Caiaphas is meant to provide closure to the questions raised earlier in the narrative. This occurs, in the final instance, by Jesus informing Caiaphas in the double citation of Mark 14:62 that "you will see" a figure, who is at once the Son of Man and the royal-priestly figure of Psalm 110, coming on the clouds. As has been argued elsewhere, this coming on the clouds is in fact shorthand for the high priest's incense-shrouded entrance into the temple on the Day of Atonement.[8] True, Jesus does not so much come and say, "I am the eschatological high priest." Instead, Jesus' citation implies that Caiaphas and his colleagues will not live out their time before the true priest accedes to his rightful office. For directly challenging the high priest's authority this way, Jesus indeed makes himself wide open to charges of blasphemy. In turn, by turning Jesus over to the Romans, the ruling council unwittingly ensures that his predicted accession to the high priesthood comes to pass.

From start to finish, the Gospel of Mark is centrally concerned not only with a new community as the new temple, but also with Jesus as the new high priest. Having been anointed for the office through his baptism (Mark 1:13), Mark's Jesus closes out his career in a climactic confrontation with

Caiaphas, a confrontation which would have the effect of sealing Jesus' priesthood. While Markan commentators will regularly talk about the evangelist's presentation of Jesus as a royal Davidic messiah (or something of the sort), in truth the royal aspect takes a backseat to the priestly emphasis. Mark's Jesus is decidedly a *priestly* messiah.

Gospel of John

In recent years, a mounting stack of scholarship has devoted itself to exploring John's coupling of Christology with themes of temple, as these strands have arguably converged in more than a half dozen pericopae.[9] Here, one need go no further than the Prologue (John 1:1-18), where John's explication of Jesus as the Word occurs within a richly allusive context that ultimately identifies the Word-become-flesh as the new tabernacle (1:14). Or again, whatever the Samaritan Woman's intentions in raising the bitterly contested issue as to whether Jerusalem or Gerizim was the divinely sanctioned cultic space (4:20), her comment is quickly converted into a point of departure for Jesus' predictions of a transcendent temple, one characterized by "worship in spirit and truth" (4:24). Yet perhaps the clearest association between Jesus and temple in the Gospel of John is contained in Jesus' challenge following the temple-cleansing incident (2:13-22): "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19). The temple Jesus has in mind is of course his own resurrected body. Impressed by texts like these (to name just a few), a scholarly consensus shows signs of coalescing on this point: skillfully deploying a range of scriptural images, the author of the Fourth Gospel set out to co-identify the Risen Jesus with the eschatological temple.

While the association between the Johannine Jesus and the eschatological temple does not prove that John also regarded Jesus as a (high) priest, it does make render such a construal plausible, not least on account of the close conceptual connection between sacred space and priests in Jewish antiquity. Like its Ancient Near Eastern neighbors, Ancient Israel correlated the body of the officiating priest, on the one side, and the architecture, accessories and rituals of the temple, on the other. This was a natural move, since the high priest was the human embodiment of the temple, even as the temple encapsulated the cosmos in miniature form. The homologous relationship between the high priest and the temple can be further illuminated against the background of

the iconically-oriented Ancient Near Eastern religions. To be more exact, as Crispin Fletcher-Louis puts, "*in Israel's Temple (and Tabernacle) the role of the cult statue is played by the high priest who is the visible and concrete image of the creator within the Temple-as-microcosm*."[10] Though modern Western thought might perceive only an incidental connection between sacred mediators and their sacred spaces, Ancient Judaism by contrast assumed their virtual reciprocity. For all we know, then, Jesus' identity as the eschatological temple (an all but established truism in Johannine studies) in the Gospel of John may, for the evangelist's first readers, may all have all but ensured his also being recognized as eschatological high priesthood.

The surmise is justified soon enough, right in the Gospel's opening lines, where John identifies Jesus as the Word, linking him to Wisdom. Like Wisdom, Jesus was in God's presence and that from the beginning; like Wisdom, too, Jesus the Word is at once the source of revelation and a central agent in creation (John 1:1; Prov 8:22-31). When the evangelist goes on to say that the Word "pitched his tent and lived among us" (*eskēnōsen en hēmin*, my own translation) (John 1:14), for at least his well-versed readers, this almost certainly would have brought to mind Sirach 24:

> Then the Creator of all things gave me a command,
> and my Creator chose the place for my tent.
> He said, "Make your dwelling in Jacob,
> and in Israel receive your inheritance."
> Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me,
> and for all the ages I shall not cease to be.
> In the holy tent I ministered before him,
> and so I was established in Zion. (Sirach 24:7-10)

For the author of Sirach, Wisdom's eternal ministry ("before the ages") parallels the ministry of the high priest in the Mosaic tabernacle: "in the holy tent I ministered before him" (Sir 24:10). This is to be explained by the assumption that Wisdom was in some sense embodied in the high priest, even she remained the high priest's chief source of knowledge (Mal 2:7); even as, paradoxically, she is finally locatable in the eternal temple, the prototype of the Mosaic "tent." As the curator of the eternal temple, Wisdom was, for all intents and purposes, the eschatological high priest behind the

regnant priest.[11] On John's terms, then, Jesus' representation as the Word implies his eternal high priesthood.

At the close of the same chapter, Jesus encounters Nathaniel, who receives the high compliment that he is a true Israelite "in whom there is no deceit" (John 1:47). While this by itself might not suggest a point of contrast with the notoriously deceitful Jacob (Gen 25:19-34; 27:1-41), Jesus' enigmatic statement regarding angels "ascending and descending" (*anabainontas kai katabainontas*) on the Son of Man does call up the account of Jacob's dream where angels are also also "ascending and descending" (LXX: *anabainontas kai katabainontas*) on a ladder reaching to heaven (John 1:51; Gen 28:12). The presentation of Nathaniel as a kind of "new and improved" Jacob (and thus as a continuation of true Israel) (John 1:47), together with an implicit equation between Jacob's ladder and the Son of Man, almost forces us to conclude that Genesis 28:10-22 is being brought to bear in order to shed light on Jesus' role as the Son of Man (1:51).

Though ancient Jewish interpreters of Genesis 28 (living around the time of the gospel-writer) seem to have different opinions as to whether Jacob's ladder represented the temple or Jacob himself, I suspect that John adhered to the latter interpretation, only then to see all this pointing forward to Jesus. In John's text, it is virtually beyond doubt that John's mysterious Son of Man, playing the role of the ladder, is to be identified with Jesus. Moreover, when the Samaritan Woman of John 4 dismissively asks whether Jesus could possibly be greater than Jacob (John 4:12), the question is designed to be ironic, underscoring the fact that Jesus *was* in fact greater than Jacob; as the embodiment of Israel, all that Jacob stood for is now fulfilled in Christ. Accordingly, when John's Jesus speaks of angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man (John 1:51), he is setting himself up as the fulfillment of Jacob (notwithstanding the fact that Nathaniel is also the new and greater Jacob), even as he is the fulfillment of Jacob's ladder.

Judging by the relevant targums and rabbinica, it seems that Gen 28:10-22 was primarily interpreted as an aetiology of sacred space. This makes sense especially given Jacob's conclusion on awakening that this "place" was "none other than the house of God" (Gen 28:17). The problem here, however, is that the location of Jacob's dream is not Jerusalem (which we tend to associate with the house of God) but Bethel. In order to mitigate this embarrassing tension, ancient exegetes speculated that Jacob was quite

right, except that "house of God" in this case was not the Jerusalem temple but the eschatological temple. More than that, so this line of interpretation continued, Jacob's vow to build God a house (Gen 28:22) was not finally rejected (as the non-event of Jacobean temple construction project would seem to imply) but only delayed. As the authors of *Jubilees* and *11QT* (among countless others one suspects) would see it, Jacob will inherit the honor of building the eschatological temple, and then presumably serve as its high priest.[12] John's point, then, is not simply that Jesus, as the one who would reconstitute Israel around himself, is greater than Jacob. More significantly, Jesus is the true eschatological high priest—the one in whom Jacob's dream finds its fulfillment, precisely as the Son of Man.

In John 5, Jesus heals a paralytic and soon finds himself persecuted, "because he was doing such things on the Sabbath" (John 5:16). Rising up in his own defense, Jesus insists that his Sabbath work is legitimate because the Father is still working and he too was working (John 5:17). Irked all the more by this response, the Jews set out to kill Jesus "because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God" (5:18b). Here two observations are in order. First, the Jews perceive Jesus to be claiming divine co-equality but this perception follows not on Jesus' justification for his Sabbath practices but on his calling God "Father." Second, though Jesus claims not to be innocent of the charges that the Jews lodged against him, his opposition is not impressed by his defense and remains all the more adamant about his guilt. The Jews are disagreeing, in other words, with the premise that Jesus was doing the work of the Father.

Whatever else is going on in this curious interchange, it is all but certain that Jesus is framing his remarks within what had become a niggling theological conundrum within Ancient Judaism: how was it possible for God to obey the Sabbath without reneging on his obligation to run the universe? It seems that for most interpreters, the most compelling answer to this question had to do with the argument that divine work was in some sense exempt from Sabbath regulations. By a related logic (not to mention practical exigency), Ancient Judaism also granted priests the right to work on the Sabbath. Thus, there were two kinds of permissible work on any given Sabbath: unobservable work done by God and observable work done by his priests.[13] Since the Jews patently did not interpret Jesus' Sabbath defense as an assertion of divinity (though exactly this point was gathered on other

grounds), it can only be the case that the Jews either dismissed his defense as pure nonsense or recognized Jesus' words as staking an implicit claim to share the priestly exemption. In any event, that the Jews continue to charge Jesus with violating the Sabbath, despite his apologia, means that they reject Jesus' priestly claim outright.

Shortly before his death, Jesus is anointed by Mary at Bethany (John 12:1-8). While commentators often opine that this anointing with a "messianic anointing" in some non-descript sense, this conclusion has an initial awkwardness about it, not least because according to standard interpretations of Jesus' baptism in the Synoptic tradition, Jesus had already been anointed as messiah at his baptism. To be sure, we cannot rule out the possibility that Mary's anointing was also a kind of messianic anointing without any specifically cultic payload. But since John links this anointing specifically with Jesus' death, it makes far more sense to regard this as a kind of high priestly anointing, akin the oil anointing that the high priests would undergo (Exod 28:41; 29:7, 21, 29; 30:30; 40:13, 15; Lev 7:36; 8:12, 30; 10:17; 21:10; Num 3:3. 35:25; Ps 133:2). As the ensuing plot clarifies, Jesus must undergo such an oil anointing because he is about to enter the atoning space of the unseen temple – through his death.

Having been anointed for the high priestly task, Jesus now extends the priestly prerogative to the disciples through the act of the footwashing in the next chapter (John 13). In Judaism, it was standard protocol for priests to wash their feet before entering sacred space. The sacred space in question is none other than the space surrounding the cross, where, according to John, Jesus will purchase atonement for Israel. In his exaltation to the cross, Jesus reveals the name and glory of the Father, even as the tabernacle revealed the name and glory of Yahweh. That Jesus himself does not require footwashing means that, like the high priest of the Mosaic cult, Jesus needs no one outside of himself for atonement.

As Jesus commences his Farewell Discourse (John 14-17), he alludes to his impending mission, following his death:

> In my Father's *house* (*oikia*) there are *many dwelling places* (*monai pollai*). If it were not so, would I have told you that I go *to prepare a place* (*hetoimasai topon*) for you? And if I go and *prepare a place* (*etoimasō topon*) for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:2-3)

Here when Jesus talks about preparing "a place," he likely has the eschatological temple in view. This is demonstrable on at least three lines of evidence. First, earlier in the narrative, when Jesus speaks of his Father's house (John 2:16), he is ostensibly referring to the temple. So, when John 2:16 is taken together with Jesus' promises in John 14:2-3, one reasonably surmises that the Father's house pertains not so much to a brick-and-mortar edifice but, more generally, to Yahweh's appointed space. Second, if the Jerusalem temple famously had many "rooms" (1 Chron 28:11-12), Jewish expectation held that the eschatological temple to have been at least comparably equipped (Ezek 40:17) – just as we have it in Jesus' prediction.[14] Third and perhaps most decisively, this reading of John 14:2–3 naturally commends itself by the repetition of "place." In the scriptures, *the* "place" (LXX: *topos*) is the appointed temple space (Exod 15:17; Deut 12:5, 11; 2 Sam 7:10; 1 Kgs 8:29, 11:36, 14:21; 2 Kgs 21:4, 7; etc.). Likewise in John's gospel: when the Sanhedrin holds council after the raising of Lazarus, its members express fear that the Romans will remove "*both our place and our nation*" (*kai ton topon kai ton ethnos*) (John 11:48, my translation). Therefore, when Jesus speaks of preparing a place, he is not referring to heaven, but the fulfillment of the Sanhedrin's "place," the eschatological temple.[15]

While this interpretation of John 14:2-3 is hardly new, I am not aware of any exegesis along these lines that takes this conclusion another step by exploring the implications of Jesus' role as preparer of the future temple space. While verbs of preparation take a wide range of different objects in the scripture, it is consistently the case that when this language occurs in a cultic context, it involves an act of consecration. For example, in the lead-up to the Sinai theophany, Yahweh instructs Moses to ready the people: "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and *prepare* (LXX: *ginesthe etomoi*; MT *nĕkōnîm*) for the third day, because on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people" (Exod 19:10-11). Similarly, although Solomon "builds" the temple (1 Kgs 6:16), he "prepares" the inner sanctuary (v. 19); the latter area of course would require special consecration as the holding place for the ark of the covenant (cf. 2 Chron 15:1, 3; 2 Chron 1:4). Or again, it is only after the temple has been operationalized (2 Chron 8:12-15), that the Chronicler is prepared to comment: "Thus all the work of Solomon was *prepared* (LXX: *hētoimasthē;*

MT *wattikkōn*) from the day the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid until the house of the Lord was finished completely" (2 Chron 8:16; NRSV adapted). In this context the work of "preparation" must include not only the construction of the temple, but also its culminating consecration. In short, wherever verbs of preparation are used in cultic context, there may be something more than consecration in view, but there is certainly not anything less.

Noting Jesus' consecratory role is in John 14 important, if only because consecration is typically reserved for the priests. This is true not only of the Ancient Near East in general, but in Israel's story in particular. In the above examples, the people of Israel are instructed to prepare themselves for a theophany but this is precisely in the context of their ordination as a "kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:4). Likewise, by the time Solomon has prepared his temple, he (like David before him) has already functioned as a priest in numerous regards.[16] On this logic, when Jesus announces his intentions to prepare the eschatological place, he is declaring not only his mission but also his identity as priest. More exactly, John 14:2-3 attests to Jesus as a kind of proleptic priest, whose priesthood will be fully realized on the far side of the cross.

Even so, the boundary line between Jesus' earthly and post-Easter identities should not be overstated, for the distinction is blurred in John's Farewell Discourse—both for Jesus and the disciples.[17] So, by the time we come to Jesus' so-called high priestly prayer in John 17, it is not entirely clear which elements of that prayer have already been perfected and which remain (though described in aorist aspect) to be accomplished. In any case, that John sought to frame Jesus in high priestly terms follows from at least two considerations. First, in offering intercessory prayer of a cosmic scope, Jesus is undertaking a role typically associated with a high priest. Second, twice in this prayer, Jesus refers to the name of God (John 17:11-12). Jesus has received this name from the Father (vv. 11, 12), and expects it to be a source of protection for he disciples (vv. 11, 12). The name which Jesus has received assuredly refers back to Jesus' recurring self-designation with the phrase "I am" (John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5; etc). As both the "I am" of the Exodus (Exod 3:14) and the "I am" of Isaiah's new Exodus (Isa 42:6, 8; 43:3, 5, 10, 11, 13, 15; 43:25; 44:6,

24; 45:5, 6, 18; 46:4, 9; 48:12, 17; etc.), Jesus has essentially inherited the name of the Father. At the same time, during the Exodus, Yahweh had promised to put the divine name in the pillar cloud, an extension of the divinity that had protected itinerant Israel (Exod 23:21). Since only the high priest bore the name of Yahweh on his person (Exod 28:36-37), and since the high priest alone offered Israel protection by putting Yahweh's name on Yahweh's people (Num 6:22–27), the transaction Jesus describes implicates him as the new high priest.

This brief study has not touched on the full range of literature seeking to make an argument similar to the one made here: namely, an argument for Jesus' priesthood in John.[18] Having briefly examined the gospels of Mark and John, we find that both evangelists assume that Jesus was a kind of high priest, even if—as we might expect—the two gospel-writers had varying levels of interest in making this Christological element explicit.

The Double Tradition and *Sondergut*: Q, Matthew and Luke

On examining the so-called Q-source as well as redactional additions in the form of special Matthean and Lukan material, we continue to find indications that Jesus' priesthood was a controlling concept. Such indications sit just below the surface in the familiar passage known as the Beatitudes, beginning with the first makarism (as recorded in Luke): "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20). Because for most Bible-readers the Beatitudes are familiar territory, it is all too easy to overlook the possibility that when Jesus blesses his audience, he is assuming the posture of a priest. True, while many commentators will opine that Jesus here is simply describing the felicity of those who will inherit the kingdom, I suggest that this purely "experiential reading" of the Beatitudes fails to do justice either to their eschatological trust (which speaks to an objective redemptive-historical shift in the present) or to the scriptural subtext which the blessings presuppose. Whether we are concerned with the Beatitudes as they occur in Q, Luke, or Matthew, Jesus is depending on a sequence of concepts and terms drawn from Isaiah 61, a passage in which the eschatological high priest announces a Jubilee of restoration. By declaring that the kingdom of God is now available in the here-and-now, Jesus is effecting a kind of speech act by which he not only announces the present fulfillment

of Isaiah 61 in his own person, but also actualizes the very blessings itemized in the same chapter ("binding up" (v. 1), Jubilee (v. 1), "release" (v. 1), "comfort" (v. 2), restoration (v. 3–4) etc.).[19] Moreover, by including the poor as primary stakeholders in the kingdom, Jesus is also – again through the logic of Isaiah – implying that these "poor" are one and the same as the Isaianic poor who will share the messianic herald's priestly role in the eschaton (Isa 41:17; 58:17; 61:1). According to Isaiah, once such poor are restored the land, they will themselves take on the function of priests (Isa 61:6). Needless to say, Jesus' invocation of Isaiah 61 through the Beatitudes has significant Christological implications: if the proclamation of Jubilee was a responsibility unique to the high priest (Isa 61:1), the granting of priesthood is no less a high priestly prerogative (Isa 61:6). This holds true for Q, Luke, and Matthew.

For his part, Matthew strengthens the connection with Isaiah by adding Isa 61:1's term "spirit": "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*" (Matt 5:3).[20] The insertion suggests a heightened interest in Isaiah 61, along with a relatively greater concern to tap its theological potential. In this connection, I suspect it is no accident that Matthew arranges for nine makarisms, in contrast to Luke's four, and that these are initiated from an elevated space (Matt 5:1) and capped off with a note of joy (Matt 5:12). As any first-century reader would have been aware, if Jesus' Beatitudes were a declaration that the Jubilee of Isaiah 61 was now being fulfilled, then he was also announcing that this day was the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9), characterized by a sense of joy.[21] Thus, when Matthew's Jesus invites his hearers to rejoice (Matt 5:12), he is inviting them to take up an attitude appropriate to the very day is announcing. Meanwhile, in the pre-70 C.E. era, it was standard practice that on the Day of Atonement the high priests would arrange the building of an scaffold (*duchenen*) from which he would bless the people with the Aaronic blessing (*Sotah* 15b, 38a). The point was for the high priest to be able to bless the people from an elevated position. True, while there are certainly other considerations that compelled Matthew to note Jesus' position "up the mountain" (Matt 5:1), the topographical note would have also been a wonderfully graphic way of driving home Jesus' high priesthood. While the Aaronic blessing (Num 6:22-27) contains three elements, Matthew's Jesus offers a triplicate of threes, as if to claim that Jesus' priestly blessing both fulfills and outstrips the Aaronic blessing.

Following the lead of Q, Luke also builds on Jesus' priestly identity in the paraenetic materials that follow the Beatitudes. According to Luke's Jesus, the disciples are to "bless those who curse you", as well as "pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6:28). They are further instructed: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). The convergence of blessing and forgiveness in Jesus' eschatological ethic is not insignificant, for as E. P. Sanders matter-of-factly summarizes the sacerdotal job description, "the priests blessed the people and asked God for forgiveness."[22] The point is this: those who claim the kingdom as their own must prove that kingdom membership by executing a priestly office. The very conferral of such an office would have been virtually inconceivable apart from the presupposition of Jesus' own priesthood. In this respect, Q and Luke are on the same Christological page.

Famously, Luke closes out his gospel right where he begins it: within a cultic setting. In the opening chapter, Luke's readers meet Zechariah as he encounters Gabriel in the Holy Place. Soon thereafter the lost little boy Jesus scolds his parents for not realizing that he must be at temple, busy with his Father's things (Luke 2:49). By gospel's end, Jesus' priestly identity is unmistakable:

> Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God. (Luke 25:50-53).

After leading his disciples to Bethany, significantly, the "house of God," the Risen Jesus reenacts a transaction familiar from the temple grounds. Yet now, Luke implies, the temple space has been extended; the temple personnel has been reconfigured around the person of Jesus. That Jesus should carry out a blessing immediately before ascending to heaven also suggests that he will continue to carry out his priestly role in the heavens, much as the writer of Hebrews strives to argue.[23]

Though brief, this survey of relevant texts from Q, Matthew, and Luke reveal that all three texts reflect some consciousness of Jesus as high priest. Given the very nature of Q, it would be extremely difficult to prove a "narrative

logic" that would show that the so-called Q community had a strident interest in this point. At the very least, so far as Q is concerned, Jesus' priesthood was a matter of assumption. Meanwhile, both Matthew and Luke reflect a keen interest in developing the notion.

Conclusion

In this article, I have examined various pericopae from five different strands of the gospel tradition (Mark, John, Q, Matthew, and Luke) with a view to teasing out intimations of Jesus' priesthood, either as an unstated premise or as a christological assertion in its own right. This examination does not pretend to be comprehensive either in scope or in depth. Much more has been said elsewhere and could be said, either toward advancing further examples or toward offering a more holistic assessment of each author's handling of the theme. All the same, this review is not without its own pay-offs. First, given traces of sacerdotal Christology is such diverse witnesses as the Mark, John (who may or may not have been familiar with the synoptic tradition), Q (a putative source independent of Mark), Luke, and Matthew, it follows that Jesus' high priesthood was no sectarian hobby-horse but was widely embraced in the broader Christian milieu. Second, the notion seems to have reached back to the earliest stages of the church. While the dating of the Gospel of Mark remains *sub judice*, his Christological thematization certainly depends, at least in part, on early pre-Markan materials. Furthermore, if we accept the possibility of Q, then we must also acknowledge it as one of the earliest Christian "texts" on record. That Q reflects a theological commitment to Jesus' priesthood (not to mention the fact that this commitment is re-articulated by Matthew and Luke) suggests an early and sustained trajectory. On the likelihood that at least some of the gospel traditions examined in this essay trace their origins to the historical Jesus himself (an argument I make more extensively elsewhere), we conclude that Jesus' priesthood was no post-Easter construct but remained core to the identity of the historical Jesus himself.[24] Widespread and early, the notion of Jesus' priesthood goes well beyond and arises well before the Epistle of Hebrews.

If nothing else, such findings call for a little disciplinary self-reflection. NT studies has relegated Jesus' priesthood to the cellblock of theological obscurities for far too long—and this error needs atoning. It is high time we

declare Jesus the priest's release and make right our debts for any theological distortions incurred. Just what distortions these might be is a separate but nonetheless crucial question.

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1 See, e.g., Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (SBLDS 31; Missoula, Mont: Scholars Press, 1977); Emilio G. Chávez, *The Theological Significance of Jesus' Temple Action in Mark's Gospel* (Toronto Studies in Theology 87; Lewiston: Mellen, 2002); Timothy C. Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Its Narrative Role* (WUNT 2.242; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

2 This is certainly the case when it comes to contemporary texts (*4Q174* and *Psalms of Solomon 17*) that also draw on Psalm 2; see my *Jesus the Priest* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic; London: SCPK, 2018), 71–73. On the "problem" of David's priestly role, see Carl E. Armerding (1975), "Were David's Sons Really Priests," in G. F. Hawthorne (ed), *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C Tenney Presented by His Former Students* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,1975): 75–86; Gordon J. Wenham, "Were David's Sons Priests," *ZAW* 87 (1975): 79–82; Karl Deenick, "Priest and King or Priest-King in 1 Samuel 2:35," *WTJ* 73 (2011): 325–39; Daniel S. Diffey, "David and the Fulfilment of 1 Samuel 2:35: Faithful Priest, Sure House, and a Man after God's Own Heart," *EvQ* 85 (2013): 99–104.

3 See Robert L. Webb, "Jesus' Baptism by John: Its Historicity and Significance," in Darrel L. Bock and Robert L. Webb (eds), *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Content and Coherence* (WUNT 247; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck: 2009): 95–150 (116).

4 As far as I know, this observation was first registered by Gerhard Friedrich, "Beobachtungen zur messianischen Hohepreistererwartung in den Synoptikern." *ZTK* 53 (1956): 256–311 (275–8).

5 See, e.g., *T. Levi* 18.12; *T. Dan* 5.10–11. For other references in the primary literature, see Craig A. Evans, "Inaugurating the Kingdom of God and Defeating the Kingdom of Satan." *BBR* 15 (2005): 49–75.

6 Jesus the Priest, 187; on four ark bearers, see 1 Kgs 8:1–6; Ezek 1:5.

7 David performs sacrifices (2 Sam 6:13, 17), wears the ephod (2 Sam 6:14), sets up the tabernacle (2 Sam 6:17, and blesses the people (2 Sam 6:18) – distinctively priestly activities (Exod 28:4; Num 3:6–8; 4:1–33, 47; 6:22–27).

8 Above all see, Crispin Fletcher-Louis, "The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible : Dan 7:13 as a Test Case," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1997 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP 36; Atlanta: Scholars Press: 1997): 161–93 (166–72). Also see André LaCocque, *The Book of Daniel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979), 124–25; Perrin, *Jesus the Priest*, 174–78.

9 James McCaffrey, *The House with Many Rooms: The Temple Theme of Jn. 14, 2–3* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1988); Johannes Frühwald-König, *Tempel und Kult: Ein Beitrag zur Christologie des Johannesvangeliums* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1998); Mark Kinzer, "Temple Christology in the Gospel of John," *Society of Biblical Literature 1998 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press: 1998): 447–64; Judith Lieu, "Temple and Synagogue in John," *NTS* 45 (1999): 51–69; Mary L. Coloe, *God Dwells with Us: Temple Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2001); Alan R. Kerr, *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (JSNTSup 220; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002); Stephen T. Um, *The Theme of Temple Christology in John's Gospel* (LNTS 312; London/New York: T. & T. Clark, 2006); Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2006); Margaret Barker, *King of the Jews: Temple Theology in John's Gospel* (London: SPCK, 2014); Huub Welzen, "The Transformation of the Temple in the Fourth Gospel." *HvTSt* 72 (2016): 1–8.

10 "God's Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest: Towards a Theological and Historical Account of the Incarnation," in Alexander T. Desmond and Simon J. Gathercole (eds), *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004) 81–99 (89, emphasis original). See also G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (New Studies in Biblical Theology 17; Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004) 81–121.

11 The equation of Wisdom with the Word, and both of these with the High Priest is discernible, for example, in Philo, *Somn*. 1.215; *Fug*.108; *Leg*. 1.65.

12 *Jub*. 32.16–24; *11QTa* 29.9–10. I develop this point in *Jesus the Priest*, 213–18.

13 For references, see M. H. Burer, *Divine Sabbath Work* (BBRSup 5; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns) 30–34.
14 See Coloe, *Temple Symbolism*, 160–62; Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic; London: SPCK, 2010), 54–55.
15 See also Kerr, *Jesus' Body*, 303–06.
16 See J. A. Davies, (2011), ""Discerning between Good and Evil': Solomon as a New Adam in 1 Kings," *WTJ* 73 (2011): 39–57.
17 On this whole discussion, see Kerr, *Jesus' Body*, 314–70.
18 See e.g. John Paul Heil, "Jesus as the Unique High Priest in the Gospel of John," *CBQ* 57 (1995): 729–45; Wally V. Cirafesi, "The Priestly Portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of John in the Light of *1QS*, *1QSa* and *1QSb*," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 8 (2011): 83–105.
19 This is also the point of *Q* 7:22//Luke 7:22//Matt 11:4–5.
20 The addition is regularly see as redactional, having been inspired by Isaiah 61; see, e.g., Robert A. Guelich "The Matthean Beatitudes: 'Entrance-Requirements' or Eschatological Blessings?" *JBL* 95 (1976): 415–34 (427–31); Martin Hengel, "Zur matthäischen Bergpredigt und ihrem jüdischen Hintergrund," *TRu* 52 (1987): 327–400 (351–53).
21 As *m. Ta'an*. 4.8 has it, "there were no happier fast days for Israel than the fifteenth of Ab and Yom Kippur."
22 *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE* (London: SCM Press, 1992), 203.
23 See Andrews George Mekkattukunnel, *The Priestly Blessing of the Risen Christ: An Exegetico-Theological Analysis of Luke 24, 50–53* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).
24 See my *Jesus the Priest*.

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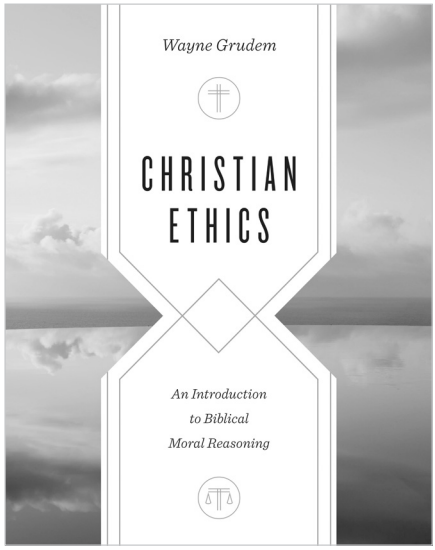

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Priesthood in the Book of Revelation

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A careful reader of Revelation will see some connections between temple and priesthood. Both words occur several times in the book. As with so many other themes, the extent of Revelation's connections to temple and priesthood increases significantly for the interpreter who is attentive to John's many allusions to the Old Testament (OT). In Revelation, temple and priesthood both have to do with typology and the fulfillment of OT types. It is impossible in a brief essay to deal adequately with both temple and priesthood, although they are intertwined. Therefore, I will concentrate my attention on the priestly elements of Revelation, while touching on relevant aspects of the book's temple theme. Given the book's many priestly elements, it is prudent to focus attention even further to include those elements that have to do with the people of God as his priests or priestly servants. The people of God's role as priests has aspects that relate to both realized (the already) and consummated (the not yet) eschatology. It seems best to begin by examining John's three uses of the term priests. Then, I will look at John's presentation of the priesthood of the people of God in the future, after the return of Jesus. This is the logical way to proceed because the future aspects of their priesthood are more developed and will shed light upon their priestly

service in the present time. The third section of the paper will synthesize what Revelation suggests about the priestly service of the people of God in the present time. In the fourth section, I will look briefly at other priestly figures in the book, like angels and Jesus himself, and suggest a few connections between the priestly roles of these figures and the priestly roles of the people of God. As this essay will show, Revelation portrays the people of God as his priests, who begin serving him now and who will have the privilege of serving him forever in the New Jerusalem.[1]

"Priests" in Revelation

The term "priests" occurs three times in Revelation, all with respect to the people of God (1:6; 5:10; 20:6). In all three cases, the mention of "priests" is part of an allusion to Exodus 19:6. These are not isolated allusions. Rather, Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 are the beginning of a common pattern. In Revelation, the priesthood of God's people has multiple connections to the Exodus from Egypt, the covenant at Mount Sinai, and the setting apart of priests for dedicated service to God later on in Exodus.[2] The coherence of these connections will become clearer below.

Revelation 1:6 follows immediately after the end of Revelation 1:5, which says, "To the one who loves us and set us free from our sins by his blood." Through the Passover, the people of God were freed from Egypt. As the antitype to the Passover lamb, the blood of Jesus sets his people free from bondage to their sins.[3] When Jesus sets people free from slavery to their sins, he simultaneously sets them apart to become priestly servants of God under the new covenant. Revelation 1:6a provides initial evidence for this transition from slavery to priestly service. It says, "And made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father." Revelation 1:6a contributes to the Exodus typology of Revelation 1:5-6 through its allusion to Exodus 19:6. In Exodus 19:1-24:11, God enters into a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai just after the Exodus from Egypt. In Exodus 19:6, God says that his people will be his "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." What does the title "priests" indicate about Israel? It probably indicates that when Israel enters into covenant with God, she becomes God's holy servants rather than servants of Pharaoh.[4] Revelation 1:6 picks up the combination of "kingdom" and "priests" from Exodus 19:6. In continuity with Israel, the new covenant people of God are

his priestly servants who have also been freed from slavery. However, it is the blood of the Lamb that has secured their freedom (Rev 1:5).

In Revelation 5:10, "priests" occurs along with "kingdom" for a second time. Once again, "priests" and "kingdom" occur right after another significant Exodus allusion. Revelation 5:9b says, "Because you were slain and purchased people for God with your blood from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation." The slaying of the Lamb to purchase people for God presents him as the fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice. These words recall the Passover and the Exodus, when God purchased or redeemed Israel (Exod 15:16; Ps 74:2). God redeemed them so they might be his "kingdom of priests," that is, his servants (Exod 19:6). At the first Passover, God delivered all of the firstborn sons from death through the Passover sacrifice. As a result, the lives of the firstborn sons belong to God and his service (Exod 13:2, 11-16; 22:28). In other words, the Passover sacrifice sanctified the firstborn sons, that is, it set them apart for God's service (Num 8:17). It is important to remember that the firstborn sons represent the nation of Israel as a whole. Back in Exodus 4:22-23, God indicates that Israel, his people, is his firstborn son and that he wants his son to be free in order to serve him. If Israel as a whole is God's firstborn son, then the sanctification of the firstborn sons at Passover time is an event that anticipates or foreshadows the sanctification of Israel for God's service at Mount Sinai. At that place, Israel gathered before him and God sanctified his people for his service with the "blood of the covenant" (Exod 19:6; 24:3-8). As a result, they belong to God. They are his "kingdom of priests" and "holy nation" (Exod 19:6). Evidently, then, one aspect of God's grand design for the Passover is to redeem, or purchase, servants for himself. Initially, he purchases the firstborn sons, but his fuller plan is to purchase Israel, his firstborn son, for his service.[5]

When the Lamb purchased a people for God with his blood, he simultaneously set them apart to become priestly servants of God. The close connection between Revelation 5:9 and 5:10 supports this claim. Revelation 5:10 says, "And you have made them a kingdom and priests for our God, and they will reign upon the earth." In fulfillment of the Passover sacrifice, the Lamb purchases servants for God (5:9) and sanctifies them for God's service (5:10). Revelation 5:10 gives two titles for God's servants, namely, "kingdom" and "priests." One aspect of their service to God involves reigning with him (5:9; 20:6; 22:5). In the OT, God's priests are his privileged

servants, that is, they are special servants of God in the midst of Israel. They are sanctified, or set apart, for this special service. In Revelation, as in the NT generally, all of the people of God are elevated to the role of priests for God. By the blood of the Lamb, the entire people of God become priests who ultimately fulfill God's desire for his covenant people to be his "kingdom of priests" and a "holy nation" (Exod 19:6).

The people of God become his priests when they receive the benefits of the blood of the Lamb, but important aspects of their service to God relate to the future. The final mention of priests in Revelation occurs in Revelation 20:6. After rising from the dead, the people of God "will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years" (20:6). During the millennium, the "priests of God and of Christ" begin their reign with God, and it will continue into eternity (22:5). Taken as a whole, the book of Revelation gives more explicit attention to the future of the people of God as his priests than to their priestly service in the present. Therefore, it seems best to look at the priesthood of the people of God in the future before looking at their priesthood in the present. Their future priesthood will shed light upon their priestly service in the present.

The Future Service of the Priests of God

It should not be surprising that the future service of God's priests is a prominent aspect of Revelation's priesthood theme. One common aspect of Revelation is a tendency to direct the attention of the people of God to the future and to the rewards of those who remain faithful to God in the present. God and the Lamb promise their faithful people an eternal inheritance that far outstrips anything that the people of the Devil and the Beast will inherit. For example, each one of the seven letters to the seven churches contains a promise to the faithful people of God concerning their future in the New Jerusalem. Part of the inheritance of the people of God is the privilege of serving him as his priests in the New Jerusalem. Revelation 7 and 14 contain previews of the priestly service of God's people in the New Jerusalem. The final portrayal of the future service and privileges of God's priests occurs in Revelation 22:1-4. Therefore, I will look at aspects of Revelation 7, 14, and 22 to construct an overview of the future of the priests of God.

Revelation 7

Revelation 7:14-15 is located within Revelation 7:9-17, which is a passage that provides an extended preview of the glorious future of the people of God. Just prior to Revelation 7:9-17, Revelation 7:1-8 portrays the placing of a seal upon the forehead of the servants of God so that they might be kept safe from God's twenty-one judgments. The seal upon the forehead has significant priestly connections, which we will consider below. While the sealing precedes God's judgment, the scene portrayed in Revelation 7:9-17 occurs on the other side of God's judgment, after Jesus conquers the Beast (19:11-21). The people of God wear white robes and celebrate the coming of God's salvation (7:9-10). In Revelation 7:13, one of the elders asks John about the figures in the white robes before telling John about them in Revelation 7:14-15.

Revelation 7:14 says, "These are the ones who come from the great tribulation and they have washed their robes and they have made them white with the blood of the Lamb." These words begin the portrayal of God's people as his priests, a portrayal that carries over into Revelation 7:15.[6] In the OT, priests are privileged to be servants of God who are able to serve him in his tabernacle and, later on, in his temple. Before Aaron and his sons can enter the tabernacle and perform their priestly service there, they, and their robes, must be sanctified (or made holy) by means of a sacrifice (Exod 29; Lev 8). Through a special ritual of sanctification, they and their robes are transferred from a state of unholiness into a state of holiness. At the same moment and through the same ritual, they and their robes are cleansed from uncleanness or impurity because holy things must also be clean or pure.[7] Revelation 7:14 probably alludes to Exodus 29:21 and Leviticus 8:30.[8] Both of these verses speak about the sanctification of the robes of the priests by means of the blood of a sacrifice. Consequently, in light of the allusion to Exodus 29:21 and Leviticus 8:30, the saints wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb in preparation for approaching God's throne and serving him (Rev 7:14-15).[9] They wash their robes by believing in Jesus and receiving the benefits of his sacrificial death. Only the blood of the Lamb can perfectly cleanse them from sin so that they can approach God's throne (7:15). Perfect cleansing is available only to those who both believe in Jesus and persevere in faith and obedience to God's commands (14:12). In the Sardis letter, Jesus promises the faithful conquerors that they will be clothed in white garments (3:4-5).

These are the true people of God who wash their robes and make them white in the Lamb's blood.[10]

Revelation 7:14-15 is near the beginning of a section that has important parallels to the story of Israel (7:13-17). Israel leaves Egypt by means of the Exodus and, in the wilderness, her priests begin to serve God in the tabernacle. At the time of the Exodus, God sends Moses to deliver Israel from their "affliction" or "tribulation" in Egypt (Exod 3:7-8, 17; 4:31). In his conflict with Pharaoh, God repeatedly commands Pharaoh to let his people go so that they might serve him (for example, Exod 4:23; 8:1). As several verses make clear, their service to God is to begin in the wilderness with celebrating a festival to God and offering sacrifices (Exod 5:1-3; 8:25-29). This is the type of service to God that one would expect from a people who are to become God's "kingdom of priests" and his "holy nation" at Mount Sinai (Exod 19:6). Due to Pharaoh's resistance to letting them go, the people offer Passover sacrifices and celebrate their first festival to God while they are still in Egypt. Through the first Passover, God delivers his people from death and from slavery to Pharaoh. After their deliverance, they praise God in the wilderness (Exod 15) and later construct a tabernacle, where God dwells with them and his priests serve him (Exod 29:44-46). With the blood of a sacrifice, God sanctifies Aaron and his sons to serve him as his priests (Exod 29:1-37, 44). In the midst of Israel, the priests are God's special servants who can draw near to him in his tabernacle and serve him there.

Revelation 7:14 contains two parallels to the story of Israel summarized above. First, the people of God have just come out of "the great tribulation," which corresponds to the "affliction" or "tribulation" of Israel in Egypt.[11] One might refer to their experience as a new Exodus. Second, having escaped from tribulation, the people of God have washed their robes in the Lamb's blood, which prepares them to serve God as his priests. Next, the first part of Revelation 7:15 speaks about their priestly service to God. It says, "On account of this, they are before the throne of God and are serving him day and night in his temple, and the one who sits on the throne will place his tabernacle over them" (7:15). When the speaker says that the saints are before God's throne and "serving" (*latreuō*) God "in his temple," he is portraying the saints in the role of priests.[12] In the OT, priests approach God in his tabernacle or temple to serve him there (Exod 29:1, 44; Heb 9:6). God's temple is the place where his throne is (Ezek 43:7). Revelation 7:15

is a reference to the service of the people of God in the New Jerusalem.[13] That is where the people of God will ultimately serve him before his throne, according to Revelation 22:1-4.

Revelation 14

After Revelation 7, the next preview of the future of God's priests occurs in Revelation 14:1-5. These verses contain significant links to Revelation 5:9-10 and to Revelation 7. As in Revelation 5:9, the people of God are those whom God has purchased (14:3-4). These whom God has purchased are worshiping him on Mount Zion (14:1-3). In this instance, Mount Zion is probably a unique reference to the location of the New Jerusalem, which fulfills the roles of both the Jerusalem temple and of Jerusalem itself.[14] Like the 144,000 servants of God in Revelation 7:3-8, the number of the people of God in Revelation 14:1 is 144,000. The number 144,000 probably refers to the people of God in all of its fullness.[15] In Revelation 7:1-8, their foreheads are marked with a seal. In Revelation 14:1, they have the name of the Lamb and of "his Father" upon their foreheads. The seal and the names upon their foreheads are probably identical. Both are probably related to priesthood and especially to the high priests, as we will see below.

Revelation 14:1 introduces the names on the foreheads by saying, "And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with him were 144,000, who were having his name and the name of his Father written upon their foreheads." The names of the Lamb and the Father are a mark of ownership. These people belong to God, that is, they are his special possession and his servants. As Revelation 7:13-17 already made plain, the people of God are his priestly servants. They are the fulfillment of God's description of his people as his "kingdom of priests and holy nation" in Exodus 19:6. Exodus 19:5 expresses a related idea, when God refers to his people as his "possession." God's servants belong exclusively to him and they are not to serve any other gods. The OT is very clear about this (e.g., Deut 6:13-15). God's exclusive claims over his servants would appear to be related to the plaque that the high priest wears on his forehead in the OT. The only time that the OT speaks about God's name on someone's forehead occurs in Moses' description of the high priest's special clothing. Over his forehead, he wears a plaque with a "seal" on it that says, "Holy to the Lord" (Exod 28:36).[16] These words proclaim that the high priest is uniquely holy.

In other words, in the midst of Israel, God's holy nation (Exod 19:6), the high priest is uniquely set apart to the Lord and his service. He belongs to the Lord in a special way.[17] At the same time, he is the holy representative of the twelve tribes, whose names he wears (Exod 28:12, 29). He serves the Lord on their behalf so that they and their offerings might "find favor" with the Lord (Exod 28:38).[18] The high priest represents the ideal with respect to being a servant of the Lord. As one who is uniquely "holy to the Lord," he has the privilege of approaching the Lord in his tabernacle, even of entering into the Holy of Holies (Lev 16; Heb 9:7).

Revelation's portrayal of the people of God suggests that God elevates all of the people of the New Jerusalem to a point where they attain to and surpass the ideal represented by the high priest.[19] Like the high priest, they have robes sanctified by blood, but their robes have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, rather than in the blood of a sacrificial animal (7:14). In the New Jerusalem, they have access to God's true throne rather than to the tabernacle's Holy of Holies (22:1-4). Thus, one can see why it would be appropriate to relate God's name (or seal) on their forehead (7:2-3; 14:1; 22:4) to the name (or seal) on the forehead of the high priest.[20] This is an aspect of Revelation's typology of priesthood. They are truly "holy to the Lord" in a way that surpasses even the high priests who served in the tabernacle and the temple.[21]

Revelation 22

Revelation 7 and Revelation 14:1-5 anticipate the final description of the priestly people of God in Revelation 22:1-5. According to Revelation 22:1-2, the New Jerusalem contains God's throne, which is not housed within a temple building as it was in the OT. Instead, the entire city is God's temple.[22] In addition, the cubic dimensions of the city suggest that the entire city is the new Holy of Holies, where God dwells.[23] Revelation 22:3-4 are important verses with respect to the future service and privileges of God's priests.

Concerning the New Jerusalem, Revelation 22:3 says, "And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will serve him." The phrase "his servants will serve him" provides one of the few indications about what the people of God will be doing in the New Jerusalem (22:3). "Servants of God" is a common way to refer to the people of God in the OT.[24] God's people are supposed to serve him and him only (Exod 20:3-5; Deut

6:13). The people of the New Jerusalem offer to God what he has always wanted from his people, that is, their faithful, devoted service. Never again will anyone who claims to be a servant of God play the harlot by serving other gods or idols, as some in the seven churches were still doing (Rev 2:14; 3:20). The verb translated "serve" (*latreuō*) in Revelation 22:3 is reserved in the Septuagint and in the NT for religious service to either God or to false gods. Because of this, it is often translated "worship."[25]

"His servants will serve him" is a reiteration of Revelation 7:15. As noted above, the future service of the people of God is related to the fulfillment of the Exodus and to their role as God's priests. Similarly, in Revelation 22:3, God's people are finally able to serve God freely and joyfully in the New Jerusalem because God has delivered them from the oppression of the Dragon and the Beast. Their service to God before his throne in the New Jerusalem is the priestly service that Revelation 7:15 already spoke about. In Revelation 7:14-15, God's "servants" (7:3) are "before the throne of God and are serving him day and night in his temple" (7:15). Serving God before his throne and in his temple is clearly priestly service.[26] The New Jerusalem of Revelation 21-22 contains God's throne; it is the "temple" that Revelation 7:15 anticipates. Therefore, to be God's servants is also to be his priests. These are both terms for the people of God in Revelation and it appears that they are related terms.[27] The people of God are all his priestly servants. This is quite an honor for both Gentiles and those Jews who are not from the tribe of Levi. It is an honor that goes beyond OT expectations, although Isaiah does appear to foresee a place for Gentiles to serve as priests and Levites.[28]

The honor of serving God before his throne is the first honor for the people of the New Jerusalem. Further honors occur in Revelation 22:4. Revelation 22:4 says, "And they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads." Seeing God's face is perhaps the greatest and most anticipated honor for the people of the New Jerusalem. Throughout the Bible, some of God's greatest servants have been privileged with partial visions of God's glory. One thinks immediately of Moses in Exodus 33:18-23, where God promises Moses a glimpse of his glory. Yet God tells Moses that he cannot see his face because the one who sees God will die (Exod 33:20, 23). Moses' vision of God was so partial that John can confidently say, "No one has ever seen God" (John 1:18). Both parts of Revelation 22:4 probably relate to the fulfillment of the priesthood. The first part indicates a contrast with the high priest of the OT.

He entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement. When he did so, he had to do so with a cloud of incense that covered the mercy seat of the ark, or risk death (Lev 16:13). His death would presumably be the result of seeing God too directly.[29] The ark's mercy seat is the place of God's throne in the temple (2 Kgs 19:15). As the antitype to the OT priests, the priestly servants of the New Jerusalem can approach God's true throne and see God's face. The high priest was a unique servant of God with unique access to the Holy of Holies. In the New Jerusalem, all of God's people are privileged servants of God with access to God's throne that surpasses even that of the high priest.[30] They also wear the name of God on their foreheads (Rev 22:4), which was unique to the high priest in the OT (Exod 28:36-38).

Taken together, Revelation 7, 14, and 22 portray significant aspects of the priesthood of the people of God in the New Jerusalem. Having been delivered from "great tribulation," the people of God will be his priests with holy robes that they have washed in the blood of the Lamb (7:14). All of God's people enjoy the privilege of serving God as his priests in the New Jerusalem.[31] In doing so, they experience the fullness of God's design for his people to be his "kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:6).[32] As his priests, they will serve him before his throne (7:15; 22:3). They have privileges that resemble and even surpass the privileges of the high priests of the OT. They wear God's name as a seal upon their foreheads (14:1; 22:4). As they serve God, they have the great privilege of seeing his face without fear because they are perfectly holy (22:4). The great privileges of the priests of the New Jerusalem are supposed to create a sense of expectation and anticipation in the hearts of the people of God. This reward is not for everyone. God reserves this reward for those who live as his priestly servants in the here and now. What do God's priestly servants look like prior to the New Jerusalem?

The Priests of God in the Present Time

At several points, Revelation points to a priesthood for the people of God that begins now. The nature of that priesthood is not well-developed, but John gives some indications about what God desires from his priests in the present time. Like their future, their present should be devoted to service to God. The primary component of their service to God is obedience to his commandments. On the basis of Revelation 11, one could also add that his

priestly servants are his worshipers and his witnesses.

It will be helpful to begin with a few of Revelation's pointers to the idea that God's people are already his priests. According to Revelation 1:6 and 5:10, the Lamb is responsible for establishing a people for God who are both his kingdom and his priests. There is no indication that this kingdom or priesthood is limited to the future. His purchase of people for God is related to the cross (1:5; 5:9). Presumably, then, the people of the Lamb become God's priests when they receive the benefits of his blood, that is, his sacrificial death. The timing for the sealing of the servants of God provides support for this point because the sealing of Revelation 7:3 takes place after the death of the Lamb, but before the twenty-one plagues, from which the seal protects God's people. The sealing takes place after the death of the Lamb because the people of the Lamb are the ones who have been purchased with his blood in order to become his priests (5:9-10). They are the 144,000 servants of God who receive his seal in Revelation 7:3. As indicated above, the seal on their foreheads is the names of God and the Lamb (14:1; 22:4). The twenty-one plagues begin with the plagues of the seven seals. The plagues of the first four seals are unique in the midst of the twenty-one plagues because they appear to begin shortly after the exaltation of Jesus and continue until the time right before Jesus comes back.[33] If so, then the sealing of Revelation 7:3 belongs to the past and the present rather than to the future.[34] The people of God already carry a seal upon their foreheads, which marks them as God's priests and protects them from his plagues.

Due to the blood of the Lamb, the people of God are already his holy ones and his priests prior to their entry into the New Jerusalem (Rev 5:10; 13:7; 17:6).[35] Yet their current holiness is incomplete, as the seven letters to the seven churches show (Rev 2-3). We will look briefly at the Sardis letter, since it appears to relate to the priestly nature of God's people in the present time. In contrast to the sinners at Sardis, Revelation 3:4 refers to the few people at Sardis "who have not defiled their garments." These are the faithful, obedient servants of Jesus at Sardis. When Jesus sees them, he sees spiritual garments that are pure. They will be rewarded when Jesus comes back, for "they are worthy" (3:4). Their reward will be to "walk with me in white garments" (3:4). This promise of being with Christ and having white garments anticipates Revelation 7:14-15, where all of the faithful servants of the Lamb will one day dwell with him and serve him as his priests. Like

the robes of the OT priests, they will have robes cleansed with the blood of a sacrifice. Their robes will one day be perfectly white and clean because they have received the benefits of the blood of the perfect sacrifice, the Lamb of God. Therefore, the faithful ones at Sardis will one day join all of the Lamb's faithful conquerors in perfectly white robes that have been washed in the Lamb's blood (7:14).[36]

The Sardis letter provides an important clue regarding the nature of the priestly service of the people of God in the present time. Those who "have not defiled their garments" are maintaining their purity by their perseverance in obedience to God's commandments (3:4). Due to their obedience, they are maintaining a purity of life that is worthy of reward in the future. Their service to God in the present time takes the form of obedience to God's commandments. This is true for the seven letters of Revelation 2-3 as a whole. Jesus' words to the churches confirm that he is calling the churches to be obedient to God's commandments.[37] Similarly, Revelation 14:12 makes an important ethical statement that characterizes the ethics of the book of Revelation. It shows what God desires from his priests, his servants, in the present time. Revelation 14:12 says, "Here is the perseverance of the saints, who are keeping the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus." Notice that faith and obedience belong together. God's commandments show his people how to love and serve him. Those who truly have faith in Jesus demonstrate that they are the people of God through their obedience.[38]

In addition to obedience to God's commandments, Revelation 11 suggests two additional elements to the current priesthood of believers. Revelation 11:1 introduces a temple of God that John is told to measure. Interestingly, John is instructed to measure the worshipers in the temple along with the temple building. The measuring of the worshipers is without precedent in the OT parallels. The measuring of the worshipers indicates that they enjoy the security of the measured area, that is, the temple of God. They are secure in God's sanctuary. These worshipers are the people of God, who are already approaching God in his temple and worshipping him. Unfortunately, the people of God are also citizens of the "holy city" of Revelation 11:2. This city is being oppressed by the nations for forty-two months, which refers to Revelation's period of persecution that actually extends from the exaltation of Jesus (12:5) to his second coming

(19:11-21).[39] The paradox of Revelation 11:1-2 is that God's people are both secure with God and vulnerable to persecution and death, because they are simultaneously worshipers in God's temple and the people of his holy city.[40] As worshipers in God's temple, they are currently serving him as his priests. As his witnesses in the world, they are vulnerable to persecution and death (11:3-10). Their security is actually much more significant than their vulnerability. The worst that the Dragon and the Beast can do to them is take their lives (11:7). In truth, they are secure with God, whom they worship, as Revelation 11:11-12 will show.

The witnesses of Revelation 11:3-12 may also have a priestly connection due to an allusion to Zechariah 4. In Revelation 11:4, the two witnesses are introduced as "the two olive trees and the two lampstands who stand before the Lord of the earth." The two olive trees and two lampstands standing before the Lord is an allusion to Zechariah's vision of a lampstand and two olive trees "who stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zech 4:11-14). In Zechariah's vision, the two olive trees are God's two special servants, the ruler from David's line (Zerubbabel) and the high priest (Joshua). Zerubbabel will accomplish God's work of building the temple by the power of the Spirit (4:6). In the temple, Joshua will perform his service to the Lord (3:7). In Revelation 11:4, the two olive trees are God's servants, his witnesses, who are empowered by the Spirit to do his work. By describing them as "the two lampstands," John connects them to the people of God, because the seven lampstands are the seven churches in John's earlier vision (Rev 2:20).[41] Revelation 11:4's allusion to Zechariah 4 would appear to suggest a relationship between God's witnesses and his two anointed servants, namely, the Davidic ruler and the high priest. The justification for this relationship could arise from Revelation's presentation of the people of God. They are rulers, who will rule with God (5:10; 22:5) and his priests, who serve him (5:10; 22:3). If so, then, the witnesses of Revelation 11:3-10 are serving God as his priests by carrying out their work of prophesying and testifying to the nations (11:3, 7).

In conclusion, one of the significant themes of Revelation is the obedience of the people of God to his commandments. Revelation 14:12 provides one example of this emphasis. One of the major ways that God's priests serve him in the present time is by keeping his commandments. God's commandments instruct the people of God in how to serve him. The Lamb promises glorious

rewards to the faithful servants of God in his seven letters to the churches. In addition, Revelation 7:14-15 and 22:3 promise that part of their reward will be the privilege of serving God as his priests in the New Jerusalem. Those who serve God faithfully in the present will experience the joys of serving God forevermore. According to the interpretation of Revelation 11:1-12 given above, God's worshipers and witnesses are also priestly servants of God, who are currently serving God by their worship and by their testifying.

The People of God in Relationship to Other Priestly Figures in Revelation

The people of God are not the only figures who have priestly characteristics and functions in Revelation. Two other priestly figures are Jesus, the Son of Man of Revelation 1-3, and the angels of God who bring about God's plagues by burning incense (8:3-5), blowing seven trumpets (8:1-11:19), and pouring out seven bowls (15:1-16:21). In Revelation 1:9-20, Jesus is a priestly figure due to his robe and golden sash and his location in the midst of the lampstands (1:13). Revelation 1:13 would appear to present Jesus in the role of the high priest. The symbolism is fitting, since it appears that Jesus is like the high priest in that he is tending to the seven lampstands.[42] The seven lampstands are the seven churches of Revelation 2-3. The angel of Revelation 8:3-5 is clearly a priestly figure, since he burns incense at God's incense altar in his temple. He then casts his censer down to the earth (8:5). The angels with the seven trumpets are priestly figures because they are like the seven priests who sounded their trumpets at the fall of Jericho (Josh 6:4, 20). Finally, the angels who pour out the seven bowls are priestly figures due to their clothing (15:6) and the role that they play. They come out of God's temple and receive golden bowls, which priests normally use to pour out drink offerings (Exod 25:29). Their golden bowls are full of the wrath of God, which is related to wine in Revelation 14:18-20.[43] These priestly figures all have something in common. They are all performing priestly service. This observation is not all that profound, but it is significant. The people of God are his priests who carry out their priestly service to God in the present and in the New Jerusalem. In doing so, they have the privilege of sharing in the work of God, along with such esteemed servants of God as Jesus himself and the angels of God. It is

truly an honor to be in God's service as his priests.

Synthesis and Conclusion

The priesthood theme of Revelation is a theme with significant and exciting implications for the people of God. The people of God are his priestly servants whom he has purchased for his service (Rev 1:6; 5:10). Their role as his priests will reach its culmination in the New Jerusalem, where they will serve God and see his face (7:14-15; 22:3-4). The faithful people of God can anticipate the glorious honor of a type of service to God with benefits that surpass those enjoyed by the high priests of the tabernacle and the temple. Their future priesthood is related to their present service. They begin to offer their priestly service to God in the present by obeying his commandments, worshipping God alone, and being his witnesses. God's priestly servants already bear the name of God and of the Lamb on their foreheads (7:1-8). They show by their faithful service to God that they are servants of God rather than servants of the Devil and the Beast. The Lamb promises to reward his faithful servants with the white garments of the priests of the New Jerusalem (3:5; 7:14). As seen in Revelation 14:12, faith and obedience belong together. Those who truly believe in Jesus will serve God by obeying God's commandments. These are the true servants of God who serve him both now and forever.

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1 This essay on priesthood in Revelation is essentially an attempt to compile, distill, and develop insights from my commentary on Revelation. See Paul M. Hoskins, *The Book of Revelation: A Theological and Exegetical Commentary* (Charleston: Christodoulos, 2017). The most thorough treatment of priesthood in Revelation is Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's *Priester für Gott: Studien zum Herrschafts- und Priestermotiv in der Apokalypse* (NTAbh 7; Münster: Aschendorff, 1972). I have consulted her work extensively and I have found it to be a useful starting point for my own work on Revelation's priesthood theme.

2 Notice that all three of these events are related to a sacrifice.

3 Austin Farrer, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 62; Pierre Prigent, *Commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John* (trans. Wendy Pradels; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 119; Schüssler Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott*, 281-2; Stephen S. Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 35. See John 8:34, where Jesus says, "The one who practices sin is a slave to sin." Jesus, the Lamb of God, came to set people free (John 1:29; 8:32, 36).

4 Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (trans. Israel Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), 227; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty* (NSBT 15; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 101; Schüssler Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott*, 142.

5 This paragraph summarizes points that I make in *That Scripture Might Be Fulfilled: Typology and the Death of Christ* (Longwood, FL: Xulon, 2009), 86-97. Essentially the same summary appears in my commentary

(Hoskins, *Revelation*, 267). The purchasing language occurs again in Rev 14:4.

6 The comments on Rev 7:14-15 below are an edited version of my comments on these verses in Hoskins, *Revelation*, 157-60.

7 See Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 19, 26.

8 In terms of unique verbal connections, Rev 7:14 shares "blood" and the same word for "robes" with Exod 29:21 and Lev 8:30. Also, Exod 29:21 and Lev 8:30 are the only OT verses that speak about the sanctification of the priests' robes. One might object that sanctification is different from washing one's robes with blood. However, closer examination shows that cleansing with blood and sanctifying (or making holy) with blood are closely related concepts in the Bible's theology of sacrifice (see Lev 8:15, 16:19; Heb 9:13; Hoskins, *That Scripture Might Be Fulfilled*, 70, 125). On Lev 8:30, see Wenham, *Leviticus*, 143. It is interesting that Beale is one of the few interpreters to suggest a connection between Rev 7:14 and Exod 29:21/Lev 8:30 (G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 440; see also David Aune's more general comments in *Revelation* 6-16 [WBC 52B; Nashville: Nelson, 1998], 475; and Smalley, *Revelation*, 197). This oversight is probably due to a tendency to neglect (or undervalue) the relevance of the OT theology of sacrifice for Revelation and for NT theology in general. Schüssler Fiorenza notes the relevance of Exod 29:4 (washing Aaron and his sons with water) for Rev 7:14 (*Priester für Gott*, 395). Exodus connections are also present in Rev 7:10.

9 Beale later returns to the priestly connotations of the saints' robes (*Revelation*, 961). It may also be relevant to note that God instructed Moses to have the people wash their garments before they met with the Lord at Mount Sinai (Exod 19:10) (Beale, *Revelation*, 439-440).

10 For more on the saints' washing of their robes, see my comments on Rev 22:14 in Hoskins, *Revelation*. See also Beale, *Revelation*, 436, 438; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 147; Philip E. Hughes, *The Book of the Revelation: A Commentary* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 98; Gerhard Maier, *Die Offenbarung Des Johannes Kapitel 1-11* (HTA; Witten: SCM R. Brockhaus, 2009), 369.

11 In the LXX of Exod 4:31, the translator uses *thlipsis* ("tribulation"), which one also finds in Rev 7:14. See Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation: Visionary Antecedents and Their Developments* (JSNTSup 93; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 167.

12 The Greek word *latreuō* ("serve" or "worship") is associated with worshipping God in the NT (see esp. Luke 2:37) and with the service of priests in Heb 8:5; 13:10. It is also the verb that the LXX uses in Exodus when God says that he desires for his people to serve him (see above and Exod 4:23). Thus, in biblical Greek, the word is reserved for service to God (or for serving other gods as in Deut 4:19), which is why it is often translated as "worship." For further comments on this important verb, see my comments on Rev 22:3 below.

13 For the New Jerusalem as the fulfillment of the temple, see my comments on Rev 21-22 in Hoskins, *Revelation*.

14 Hoskins, *Revelation*, 262. The allusion to Ezek 20:40 in Rev 14:1-5 helps to explain the mention of Mount Zion (ibid., 263).

15 The 144,000 here are the same 144,000 that John introduced in Rev 7:4-8. On the number 144,000 with reference to the people of God, see Hoskins, *Revelation*, 151-2.

16 Interpreters note that Philo and Josephus generally refer to God's name ("Lord") on the high priest's forehead and leave out any mention of "Holy to the" before it (for examples, see Josephus, *Antiquities* 3.178; Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.132; William Propp, *Exodus 19-40: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB; New York: Doubleday, 2006], 448). See the exception to this in Philo, *Migration of Abraham* 1.103.

17 Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 516-7; Propp, *Exodus 19-40*, 448. See also Cassuto, *Exodus*, 385.

18 Cassuto, *Exodus*, 384-5.

19 See Beale, *Revelation*, 1114; also, Schüssler Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott*, 384-9.

20 In the LXX of Exod 28:36, the Greek refers to the words engraved on the high priest's gold plaque as a "seal" (*sphragis*). The same word is used for God's seal in Rev. 7:2.

21 These comments on Rev 14:1 are an edited version of Hoskins, *Revelation*, 259-261.

22 See Hoskins, *Revelation*, 430. I make this point several times in my treatment of Rev 21-22.

23 See 1 Kgs 6:20 and Hoskins, *Revelation*, 445.

24 This is true across the OT, for examples, see Lev 25:55; Deut 32:36; Ezra 5:11; Neh 1:6; Ps 79:2; Isa 65:9. It is also important to note that important figures in the OT, like Abraham, Moses, and David are called God's servant.

25 See BDAG, s.v. *latreuō* and Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 773.

26 The word *latreuō* ("serve") occurs in Rev. 7:15 and 22:3. Some interpreters, like Schüssler Fiorenza, point

out that *latreuō* is not the verb associated with the service of priests in the LXX (*Priester für Gott*, 379-80; Henry B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John: The Greek Text with Introduction Notes and Indices* [3rd ed.; London: Macmillan, 1908], 103-4). It normally reserves the verb *leitourgeō* ("serve" or "minister") for the service of priests in the temple. However, this distinction does not hold in the NT. While *leitourgeō* refers to the service of OT priests in Heb 10:11, *latreuō* is also used for the service of priests in Heb 8:5 and 13:10. For further discussion of the use of *latreuō* (and related words) for priestly service in the NT, see H. Strathmann's article on "*latreuō, latreia*" in Kittel's *TDNT* (vol. 4, p. 63).

27 God's people are his priests in Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6 and his servants (or slaves) in Rev 1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 19:2, 5; 22:3. See Schüssler Fiorenza, *Priester für Gott*, 379; Osborne, *Revelation*, 773.

28 See Swete, *Apocalypse*, 104. Also, see Isa 66:21 (along with 56:6 and 61:6) and John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40-66* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 690, 460. Oswalt notes that the OT priesthood is fundamentally a calling to be a servant of God (p. 460). David Mathewson relates Isa 66:21 to Rev 22:5b, but his comments would apply to Rev 22:3 as well (*A New Heaven and a New Earth: The Meaning and Function of the Old Testament in Revelation 21.1-22.5* [JSNTSup; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003], 213-4.).

29 Wenham, *Leviticus*, 231. See also Heb 9:7-8.

30 See also Smalley, *Revelation*, 565. My treatment of Revelation 22:3-4 is an edited and condensed version of the comments found in Hoskins, *Revelation*, 460-3.

31 Notice that Rev 7:3 and 22:3 refer to the people of God as his servants. The priestly role of God's people involves service to God. This is consistent with the OT's teaching concerning both priesthood and what it means to be the true people of God (they are God's servants). See Cassuto, *Exodus*, 227 (on Exod 19:6).

32 It is important to recall that Exod 19:6 occurs in the context of God meeting with Israel at Mount Sinai and entering into a covenant with them (Exod 19-24). See also Ezek 20:40.

33 See Hoskins, *Revelation*, 138-42.

34 Although Rev 7:3 is describing a sealing that took place in the past, the theology of Revelation would tend to suggest that this sealing anticipates the ongoing sealing of God's people, which continues until the present time. Whenever people receive the saving benefits of the blood of Jesus, they become people of the Lamb who are sealed with his name. As a result, they clearly belong to the Lamb rather than to the Beast, whose people bear his name on their foreheads (13:16-17).

35 See Heb 9:7-14; 10:19-22.

36 See comments on Rev 7:14-15 above and see Rev 22:14 (and 3:18). On Revelation 3:4, see Hughes, *Revelation*, 55-57; Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (New York: MacMillan, 1919), 475. My comments on Rev 3:4 come from Hoskins, *Revelation*, 104.

37 See, for example, Rev 2:4-5 and 2:20.

38 In 1 John, one finds several cases where John closely links faith (or believing in Jesus) to keeping God's commandments (3:23-24; 5:1-5). See also James 2:14-26.

39 See Hoskins, *Revelation*, 191-3.

40 See ibid., 187-90.

41 This interpretation of Revelation 11:4 comes from Hoskins, *Revelation*, 196. See also Beckwith, *Apocalypse*, 593; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 218; Smalley, *Revelation*, 277. John is not bound by his source in Zech 4, where the single lampstand appears to represent the Jerusalem Temple. Rev 11:4 has only two lampstands because there are two witnesses who represent the church as a whole. The relationship between Zechariah's two olive trees and John's two olive trees appears to be a typological relationship.

42 See Hoskins, *Revelation*, 60-61.

43 Ibid., 492-3.

Book Reviews

Bruce K. Waltke, James M. Houston and Erika Moore, *The Psalms as Christian Lament: A Historical Commentary,* Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan 2014; ISBN 978-0-8028-6809-1; pb. 312 pp., price $28.00

The Book of Psalms has a special place in the Bible. It has more than once been called a Bible in miniature. All the great themes of the Old Testament (OT) have their place in the Psalms: creation and redemption, the expectation of the coming Messiah, the longing for Zion, the desire that Zion will be rebuilt. In the Psalms, we find laments, confessions of guilt, but also thanksgivings and praises. The Psalms are given us by God both as a directory of worship and as a prayer book. When we worship God, we ought to give a special place to the Psalms in both individual and corporate worship. Our prayers ought to be full of the words and phrases of the Psalms.

As well as having a special place in the Bible itself, the Book of Psalms has also had a special place in the life of the church over the centuries. As Protestant Christians, we reject the phenomenon of monasticism, but we cannot object to the custom that in the monasteries the Psalms were prayed daily; praying through the whole book of Psalms just in a week or a month. Psalm 51 was prayed daily. Luther, the great sixteenth-century Reformer, was originally an Augustinian friar. Towards the end of his life, it was his habit, just as he had done when he was a friar, to pray the Psalms daily.

Many commentaries have been written on the Psalms over the centuries. It can only be to our spiritual disadvantage if we neglect the great treasures to be found in commentaries, tractates and sermons penned in former ages. Even leaving aside other aspects, it is theologically that the old material very often surpasses contemporary commentaries. In particular, when commenting on psalm, the depth or shallowness of one's own Christian experience will influence the way in which he interprets the psalm. More than once, the contemporary Christian reader will find cause enough for lament over his own shallowness when comparing his own theological insight on a psalm with that of a commentator from the past.

In the postmodern era, the notion has arisen that each biblical scholar

and exegete reads Scripture by operating from the perspective of a certain tradition. This has denied the stance of the Enlightenment that one can read the Bible in a purely neutral way: even what has heretofore been regarded as neutral study of the Scripture must now, it is asserted, be seen as standing within a given tradition. In this climate, fresh attention has been paid to commentary given in past centuries upon the text of the Bible. We can see this as gain. Chronological snobbery, as C. S. Lewis called it, must actually be considered a very serious shortcoming; certainly from a Christian perspective but also from an academic one.

Our great reservation on postmodernism must be regarding its denial that the Scriptures have any fixed or objective meaning. The assertion of such meaning must be something we hold to firmly, while acknowledging that we can never fully grasp it. Nevertheless, it is also true that each exegete has his own limitations and interests. This makes it especially useful for us to listen to voices from other ages. But how can the Christian easily find the most relevant insights of former ages? In 2010, Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston wrote *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010). In 2014, the same authors, together with Erika Moore, wrote *The Psalms as Christian Lament: A Historical Commentary*. This volume has the same format as the former one, but now the authors concentrate on the Psalms of Lament, as the title indicates.

There are four rubrics or templates applied to each selected Psalm. In the first rubric, we hear the voice of the church. This rubric is authored by James M. Houston, Professor Emeritus of spiritual Theology at Regent College, Vancouver. Then follows the translation, one which does full justice to the character of Hebrew poetry. The third rubric is the commentary proper. Apart from the exegetical portion on Psalm 39, which was written by Erika Moore, Professor of OT at Trinity School for Ministry in Ambrige, Pennsylvania, this central part of the treatment is written by Bruce K. Waltke, Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at Regent College. Full attention is given not only to actual content but also to the literary structure of each selected psalm. In the final rubric, conclusions are given and remarks are made with regard to the abiding relevance of the psalm surpassing the original context. In the fourth rubric to Psalm 130, it is stated that this song, placed within the canon of Scripture, is based on the New Testament (NT) as enacted through the suffering and blood of Jesus Christ. In this context, a line from a hymn of Edward Mote (*My Hope is Built on Nothing*

Less) is quoted: 'His oath, His covenant, His blood, Support me in the whelming flood. When all around my soul gives way, He then is all my Hope and Stay.'

I regard *The Psalms as Christian Lament: A Historical Commentary*, just as its predecessor *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary*, as a useful introduction to help the reader see the profit of combining exegesis with all our contemporary exegetical tools and with exegesis from the past.

The Psalms as Christian Lament starts with an introduction on the place and importance of lament in the OT and especially in the Psalms. Following Calvin, the authors rightly remark that the Psalms are the mirror of the soul. More than one third of the Psalter consists of lament psalms. The predominance given to lament at the heart of Israel's prayers shows us that there is nothing marginal about lament for the OT believer. Lament and confession are not central features of Christianity in Western society, but they were in the history of the church. In the introduction, the authors point to the penitential psalms having been selected from among the psalms of lament, even as early as by the church fathers.

I think it a shortcoming that the authors do not explicitly address in the introduction the objection not seldom heard that the Psalms can only to a limited extent express the experience of a believer living under the NT dispensation. Even without giving attention to all aspects of this question, they could have pointed to Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. When we as NT believers are filled by the Holy Spirit and the word of Christ dwells richly in us, we sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and address one another with them. We find the three Greek words used in these verses as category titles given to individual OT psalms in the Septuagint.

Without seeking to assert that Paul excluded the legitimacy of contemporary compositions of praise, since he wrote some of these partly himself in his letters, I would point out that he certainly gave a place of honor here to the OT canonical Psalms. NT compositions of praise, as we find them in the Magnificat and Benedictus (Song of Zechariah), are full of the language of the OT. We may say that the NT dispensation, even more than the Old, is a dispensation of suffering, and surely the Psalms are very apt sources for Christians to find words to express our lament when we suffer.

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Intermediate Greek Grammar: Syntax for Students of the New Testament. By David L. Mathewson and Elodie Ballantine Emig. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. 336 pp. $ 34.99 hardcover

David Mathewson and Elodie Emig are both professors of New Testament at Denver Seminary. Their new *Intermediate Greek Grammar* aims to provide up-to-date discussions of grammar debates while providing a helpful guide for students. Mathewson and Emig have written an easy-to-read grammar with many helpful points, although a couple terminological and methodological flaws limit the book's usefulness.

Mathewson and Emig follow the traditional layout for an intermediate Greek grammar. However, their approach differs in some ways from other grammars. On the whole, they follow Porter's *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* closely (xv). The authors are versed in recent linguistic studies, which they employ throughout their grammar. The authors draw on a minimalist approach to grammar. Instead of expanding the number of categories to cover each possible use of a grammatical feature, they explain the core idea(s) of a given feature (xvi). They claim this approach as the more natural way of learning a language, whether living or dead. Thus, these authors do not claim theirs is an exegetical grammar (xvi).

It would be superfluous to detail every feature of this grammar. However, it is worth noting some key features. First, Mathewson and Emig discuss tense and aspect at length (111–118). They define aspect as "the *author's perspective* on an action (112, italics original)." They deny that Greek verbs indicate time and kind of action in themselves (113). They distinguish aspect and *Aktionsart* on p. 114, explaining that aspect is subjective, referring to the author's portrayal of an action, whereas *Aktionsart* describes the nature of the action more objectively. The authors provide a chart comparing the traditional and aspectual views at the end of the chapter (139).

Second, the authors discuss the deponency debate at length (151–152). They summarize the history of the concept of deponency in Greek grammars, while they demonstrate that grammarians such as A. T. Robertson found deponency to be unsatisfactory. The authors conclude that the concept of deponency should be laid aside and that we should analyze middle-only verbs as true middles (152).

Finally, Mathewson and Emig include a section on discourse analysis.

They define discourse analysis as "nothing less than the recognition that texts are the record of an act of communication in a given context (271)." They proceed to discuss four common features of discourse analysis: cohesion, boundaries, prominence, and participants. The term *cohesion* describes the way an author uses language to bind a text together (272). The term *boundaries* describes how a language marks the end of one unit of thought and the beginning of another (275). The term *prominence* describes the way language marks more important portions of a text (277). The term *participants* refers to the agent(s) or actor(s) of a story: how they are described normally indicates what importance they have (285). Throughout this section, the authors provide New Testament examples of each discourse feature, illustrating the value of discourse grammar for reading and understanding the New Testament.

In many ways, this grammar contributes to the study of Greek. The authors' minimalist view of language provides a helpful corrective to the multiplication of categories evident in some other intermediate grammars (e.g. Wallace). The present author found linguistic minimalism especially helpful when discussing the genitive case. The genitive case essentially restricts the meaning of its head noun (11). Following Silva, Mathewson and Emig demonstrate that the genitive relationship in Greek is similar to the English phenomenon where two nouns are placed together, the first limiting the second (e.g. research paper). By adducing several examples of this kind, the authors de-mystify the various uses of the genitive, showing that it simply restricts the referent of another noun. When we understand this point, the various nuances of the genitive become clearer in their respective contexts.

This discussion of the genitive is one example of the way the authors approach language. They do not seek to force meaning out of specific grammatical constructions as though language is an algebraic equation to be solved. Instead, they seek to understand semantics of each grammatical feature, leaving pragmatic considerations for the broader context. They warn against forcing too much precision on the language, as though language always functions in a purely logical manner. Although the present author believes that Mathewson and Emig overstate the value of minimalism (see below), they provide an admirable rejoinder to overly precise analyses of Greek grammar.

While other intermediate grammars may double as ready reference tools, this grammar maintains a pedagogical focus. Each section concludes with

practice exercises derived from the New Testament so the student may practice identifying the features just studied. Such immediate practice cements the concepts for students, enabling them to grasp and retain the material. Mathewson and Emig also include comparisons of competing views, especially regarding the verbal system (139). By including these comparisons, the authors initiate the student into the current debates. Additionally, these comparisons make older grammars accessible to the student. The authors teach their readers what terms the older grammars used and how those terms relate to current discussions, thereby allowing the student to track previous discussions of the same grammatical phenomena.

Mathewson and Emig also provide up-to-date discussions of some of the most debated features of the Greek language. They summarize the debates concerning deponency, aspect, and discourse grammar (see above). Their summaries are clear and helpful, illuminating these debates for both teachers and students.

Despite the strengths of this grammar, it falls short in a number of areas. First, the authors contradict their claim that their grammar is not an exegetical grammar (xvi) when they limit their examples to those directly helpful to New Testament exegesis (91). By limiting examples to the New Testament, the authors 1) cut themselves off from other clear examples in either the Septuagint or the Apostolic Fathers and 2) isolate New Testament Greek from its broader Hellenistic *milieu*. As a result, their conclusions rest on a less stable foundation than they otherwise could.

The authors also perpetuate certain category confusions common among Greek grammars. This flaw stands out because the authors seek to provide an up-to-date grammar that corrects previous errors. For instance, the authors maintain a category of "aoristic perfect" (135), although such a category combines two tenses into one. Instead, the authors could have stated that the Greek perfect and aorist began to collapse on to each other, possibly influenced by the Latin perfect.[1] This statement would explain why the Greek perfect can sometimes convey the same sense as the aorist, and it would avoid a needless category confusion. In another case, the authors posit an "imperatival infinitive" (202). Such a category needlessly combines two "moods" into one. Not only this, but an imperative has person and number,

1 Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2014), 131–132.

while an infinitive does not. Therefore, such a category confusion cannot be maintained even on the most basic grammatical grounds. The authors could instead say that 1) infinitives may stand for full sentences in indirect discourse, thus requiring an imperative *translation*, or 2) some infinitives are simply frozen forms due to the omission of the remainder of the sentence (e.g. "*Guten Tag*" in German, which is an accusative although it is the only part of a sentence which is uttered). In both of these instances, the authors default to the requirements of English translation to explain these categories, rather than maintaining a Greek perspective as they do through most of the rest of the grammar (e.g. 260ff).

In the present author's view, the influence of Stanley Porter's work hinders the discussions of verbal tense and aspect in this grammar. Porter's a-temporal notion of tense and aspect dominates the discussion of the verb (113). The shortcomings of Porter's view become clear when Mathewson and Emig discuss the future. They are forced to say that the future does encode time, but that it functions differently than the rest of the verbal system (137). This seems to be a case of special pleading. If the verbal system does not encode time by the tense system, then we have no explanation for a temporal notion suddenly appearing in such a common tense. Since the theory does not have full explanatory power, it should be modified or rejected. Recently, a collection of essays was published that interacts at length with Porter's theory, and the essays therein address these problems in more detail.[2]

Finally, the authors state conflicting interpretive methodologies in the course of their work. They argue for exegetical minimalism, which has already been described in the course of this review. However, they also follow the linguistic principle that choice implies meaning. One must ask if these approaches are compatible. In other words, if choice implies meaning, does a minimalist approach work? While the authors are to be commended for not putting too much weight on non-formal category distinctions (e.g. the genitive), it does seem that the minimalist approach cannot be pressed too far. If the author can use either a genitive or dative to show possession, the author's choice must signify a different intent. On the one hand, the authors cannot be blamed too severely for this conflict: they subscribe to a thoroughly linguistic approach to grammar, and both methods (minimalism

2 Steven E. Runge & Christopher J. Fresch, eds., *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

and "choice implies meaning") are present in this approach. On the other hand, the authors should have done more to synthesize these approaches. This oversight stands out because of the careful pedagogical approach that characterizes so much of the rest of the grammar.

Despite its flaws, this grammar would be a helpful supplement to an intermediate Greek course at the graduate level. Its up-to-date discussions provide its readers with a helpful starting point for research projects and some of the grammatical discussions truly illuminate points of Greek grammar. The exercises in each section provide helpful entry points for students moving from beginning Greek to reading and exegesis. However, this grammar's flaws keep the present author from recommending it as the primary text for a course.

Matthew Miller

A Guide To Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works. By John F. Evans. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. 469pp. $24.99 paperback

The amount of literature published in the last ten years on the topic of Biblical studies is unparalleled throughout history. Between 2011–2014 over 554 million dollars in revenue were created through the sale of religious books (www.statista.com/statistics/251467/religious-books-sales-revenue-in-the-us/ accessed on 9/30/16). This statistic alone is indicative of the need for guidance through such a large amount of literature. John F. Evans provides this needed guidance in a book entitled, *A Guide To Biblical Commentaries and Reference Works.*

Evans earned two graduate degrees in Biblical studies. Further, he has a Doctorate of Theology from the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa as well as two years of post-doctoral studies at the University of Cambridge. Moreover, Evans has served as both a pastor in the United States as well as a professor of Theology in various parts of Africa. Thus, the uniqueness of Evans's experience as well as the extent of his education particularly qualifies him to write such a book.

The structure of the book is well suited for the pastor who desires to quickly scan through various commentaries on every book of the bible. Evans provides keen insight regarding the particular value of each

commentary. For instance, in his section on Deuteronomy he makes the following comment concerning Daniel Block's commentary, "My advice to preachers is to make Block their first-choice, though I don't follow him in viewing Moses's chief role as "pastor" to the nation and not seeing in 18:15, ultimately at least, an anticipation of Christ (c.f. Acts 3:22) (97). Furthermore, Evans's work is also helpful for the theological student and to a limited capacity even for theological professors. In addition to his discussions on commentaries, Evans gives a thorough introduction in which he provides, a methodology for his evaluation of the literature, a list of other bibliographies, as well as suggestions for background and foreign language works. In addition to this, before each section of scripture (e.g. Pentateuch, The Writings, Prophets, Gospels, Paul, etc.), he lists and interacts with key secondary sources on that particular area of biblical studies. Finally, Evans's work is noteworthy because it provides more thorough interaction with both commentaries on the Bible and secondary literature about particular issues within biblical studies.

Evans provides a great resource for pastors, students, and professors alike. His attention to detail, careful analysis, theological insight, and pastoral application make this book an invaluable resource. I highly recommend it to all who desire to read and study the Bible.

Michael T. Graham Jr.

Advances in The Study of Greek. By Constantine R. Campbell. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 253 pp. $34.99, paperback.

In *Advances in The Study of Greek* Constantine Campbell masterfully covers a plethora of the most relevant issues related to Greek studies. Campbell is the author of multiple books and articles and he has distinguished himself as one of the leading Greek scholars in the world today. Some of the works he has published include the following: *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the News Testament*; *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs*; *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek*; *Keep Your Greek: Strategies for Busy People*; *Reading Biblical Greek: A Grammar for Students*. Campbell earned his Ph.D. at Macquarie University in Australia under the

guidance of T.V. Evans. His dissertation, entitled *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament*, examined the function of the indicative mood within narrative in light of current aspect studies. He now serves as associate professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deer Field, Illinois. In the book Advances in the Study of Greek, Campbell seeks to accomplish two things: (1) provide an accessible introduction to the current issues of interest in Greek studies and (2) and clearly communicate why these issues matter (22). In this review, I will briefly summarize each chapter and then more thoroughly interact with select chapters within the monograph.

In chapter one Campbell provides a brief history of Greek studies from the beginning of the 19th century to present, giving general attention to the study of Ancient Greek, and particular attention to Biblical or Koine Greek and the rise linguistics (39–50). His primary objective of this chapter is to provide the context and background for the rest of the book (29). In chapter two Campbell discusses linguistic theories, providing a brief overview of modern linguistics, and giving special attention to generative and functional linguistics, two important linguistic schools within Greek studies (51–71). Campbell addresses lexical semantics and lexicography in the third chapter. Specifically, he seeks to highlight problems within the current system of lexicography, and to show how these tools can properly be used. Furthermore, he argues in this chapter that a better understanding of the theory of lexemes can prevent many exegetical mistakes and fallacies (72–90). The fourth chapter of Campbell's book concerns the issue of deponency and the middle voice (91–104). His goal for this chapter is to provide the reader with a history of research so that the issue may be evaluated and the ideas assessed (91). In chapter five Campbell discusses the topic of verbal aspect and *Aktionsart* (105-133). His purpose for the chapter is to provide a brief overview of these topics and to highlight particular areas of development since the publication of his book, *Basics of Verbal Aspect in Biblical Greek* (105-106).

Chapter six of *Advances in The Study of Greek* examines the topic of idiolect, genre and register (134–147). In this chapter Campbell argues that the way Greek differs according to genre and text type is important for exegesis (134). Moreover, he seeks to explore how idiolect, genre, and register can impact exegesis by helping scholars better understand verb usage throughout

the New Testament, particularly in reference to aspect (145–146). Chapters seven and eight survey the two most significant linguistic schools for the study of Greek in the New Testament (148–191). In chapter seven Campbell begins by briefly mentioning the four major schools of linguistics and then he focuses on the Hallidayan Approaches (150–152). Similarly, in chapter eight he briefly mentions SIL and then focuses on the two most influential proponents of this school, Steven Levinsohn and Steven Runge. Finally, chapters nine and ten addresses non-grammatical topics. In chapter nine Campbell interacts with the question of how Koine Greek was pronounced, and in chapter ten he interacts with questions related to teaching and learning Greek (192–223). He argues in chapter nine that Koine Greek was pronounced very similarly to modern Greek pronunciation (208), and in chapter ten he makes the case that immersion is the best way for students to learn and retain Greek, but if this is not possible teachers should instill in students, habits that will enable long-term retention (222).

Having briefly surveyed each chapter, I will now focus on select chapters in order to provide some semblance of the breadth of this work. In chapter 1, Campbell's stated goal is to provide a survey of key figures within the history of Greek studies which are instrumental for the discussions provided throughout the remainder of the book (30). Campbell identifies four key shifts in Greek studies: The pre-*Winer* period, the early Twentieth century, the rise of modern linguistics, and the Modern Era. The pre-*Winer* period is marked by weak methodology, a faulty understanding of the nature of language, and self-contradiction (30). Campbell shows that beginning with *Winer* and ending with Friedrich Blass and Ernest de Witt Burton Greek scholarship saw significant advancement in methodology, philology, verbal aspect theory, comparative grammar, and a proto awareness of the distinction between historical and synchronic analyses of language, and the importance of what would later be referred to as *Aktionsart* (30-32).

Another chapter that will be given special attention is the second chapter of Campbell's book. In this chapter, he surveys the various linguistic theories, but as stated above, he focuses on generative and functional linguistics (51-71). Moreover, he gives special attention to *Systemic Functional Linguistics* since it has become very influential among modern Greek scholars (51). Campbell purports that it is essential that one know the linguistic presuppositions and methodologies of a grammarian before simply relying on his or

her conclusions, since, according to Campbell, many New Testament Greek grammarians are at best linguistically misinformed and at worst oblivious to linguistics (55).

He states that Generative linguistics is based upon the rule that there are universal grammatical and linguistic structures. Further, he maintains that the goal of the generative linguist is to understand how the unique surface level components of a language encode the shared "deep structure" features that are universal to all languages (58-59). Campbell points out that Functional linguistics is not based upon the principle that there are universal grammatical and linguistic structures; rather, it seeks to understand each language on its own terms (60). However, he states that it does not deny that there are some features that are common throughout languages (60). Moreover, he identifies this feature as functional typology, and says that it is heavily based upon the assumption that the common features between languages can be traced to the shared social elements of language (60-61). Finally, as stated above, Campbell interacts most extensively with *Systemic Functional Linguistics*. He provides two reasons for this extended interaction. First, he believes functional linguistics has the most to offer for the study of Biblical Greek (62). Second, systemic linguistics has had the most influence on the study of Biblical Greek out of all the functional linguistic schools (62). He explains that systemic linguistics seeks to determine the relationship between semantics (meaning) and grammar (wordings). Moreover, he says that systemic functional linguists hold that this relationship between semantics and grammar is "realization." That is, systemic linguists purport that the wording "realizes," namely, encodes the meaning (66).

The final chapter that I will highlight from Campbell's monograph is the fifth chapter. This chapter focuses on the topic of verbal aspect and *Aktionsart* (105-133). In addition to Campbell's helpful discussion on the meaning of aspect, the distinctions between tense, *Aktionsart*, and aspect, and an overview of recent works on the topic of verbal aspect, one noteworthy contribution of this chapter is Campbell's comment that debate about whether the Greek indicative verbs semantically encode time is not the most important issue within verbal aspect studies (116). Rather, Campbell points to debates about the aspect of the Perfect verb form and questions concerning the function of aspect in the structure of narrative texts as areas of needed attention in verbal aspect studies (117–130).

In Constantine R. Campbell's *Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading The New Testament*, Campbell does what few scholars are able to do. Namely, he writes in such a way that students, pastors, and even scholars can benefit. That is, in this book Campbell copiously surveys a host of issues and questions that will inform both students and pastors. Further, his interaction with these issues and questions, in which he provided extensive references for further study, is a tremendous resource for scholars, particularly those who have not specialized in issues related linguistics and Greek grammar. For these reasons, I dare to say that Campbell's *Advances in the Study of Greek* is a must read for anyone who desires to understand the questions and issues that impact how Biblical Greek is taught, studied, and interpreted for the next generation.

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ST-473-2018