

“They Will Hear My Voice”: A Biblical Theology of the Necessity and Sufficiency of Scripture

NICHOLAS G. PIOTROWSKI WITH BRADY NEW

Nicholas G. Piotrowski is the President of Indianapolis Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana. He earned his PhD from Wheaton College in Biblical Theology with a New Testament focus. His published works include *Matthew's New David at the End of Exile* (NovTSup 170: Brill, 2016) and *In All the Scriptures: The Three Contexts of Biblical Hermeneutics* (IVP Academic, 2021).

Brady New is the Pastor of First Baptist Church of Edwardsport, Indiana. He earned his MDiv from Indianapolis Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana.

“I heard thee in the Garden, and, of thy voice
Afraid...”

“My voice thou oft has heard, and has not feared,
But still rejoiced; how is it now become
So dreadful to thee?...”

John Milton, *Paradise Lost* X.116–121

Rightly have biblical theologians underscored Genesis 3:15. It is the first word of redemption.¹ It is the promise that a descendent of Eve will reverse the effects of the serpent’s deception. In no small part that means restoring humanity to the place of rest, to the arboreal temple that was the Garden of Eden.² Jared M. August summarizes the shape of this redemption well as a retrieval of Edenic life in three ways: (1) the destruction of evil, (2) the restoration of creation, and (3) the renewal of God’s presence among humanity.³ This article seeks to add a fourth element: the expectation that

the serpent-crushing “Seed of the Woman” will renew humanity’s ability to *hear* the *voice* of the LORD. Just as the fall was precipitated by not heeding God’s word, obeying God’s word will serve as both the means and the end of salvation.

To make this case, we begin with Genesis 3 and track the biblical-theological theme of the Old Covenant office of the prophet, particularly through the combination of the words “hear” (שמע; *šāmaʿ*) and “voice” (קול; *qōl*) across the Old Testament (OT), to the end of understanding the summative nature of Jesus Christ’s calling as *the* prophet par excellence.⁴ We conclude in John 13-16 to understand Jesus’ *ongoing* prophetic ministry through the Spirit’s unique work among the apostles. The Creator has climactically spoken to humanity by his Son, who then gives his Spirit *in an exclusive capacity* to his hand-picked apostles, through whom the Son continues to speak that same climactic, full and final message within his apostles’ writings.

The result of this biblical-theological study will bring us to what are typically points of systematic theology: the necessity and sufficiency of Scripture.⁵ And we will equally argue for what we call “Fulfillmentism,” leading to “the Exclusivity of Scripture.”

IN THE BEGINNING MAN HEARD THE CREATOR’S VOICE

To “hear” (שמע; *šāmaʿ*) the “voice” (קול; *qōl*) of the LORD is no small matter throughout the OT. The two words are intervolved, appearing at high frequency together, often at watershed moments in redemptive-history. In short, to *hear* the *voice* of the LORD brings blessing and life. Conversely, failing to *hear* the *voice* of the LORD results in curse and calamity.⁶ Such themes first emerge right in the beginning.

The LORD’s first words to Adam after the fall are “Because you *heard* the *voice* of your wife...” (Gen 3:17; כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתְּךָ).⁷ The sense is not just auditory recognition, but *heeding* and *obeying*. Such is commonly the sense of שמע throughout the OT (see e.g., Exod 6:12; Josh 24:24; 2 Chr 28:11). Yet the problem in Genesis 3:17 is not that Adam listened to his wife per se, but that he *heard* the *voice* of *someone other than the LORD*. Adam was charged by the Creator not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17). But once he did (Gen 3:6) he immediately became afraid when he *heard* the *voice* of the LORD in the garden (Gen 3:8).

Genesis 3:8 is typically rendered “they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden,” and Genesis 3:10 as “I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid.” These are, of course, good translations. But in both of these verses, as in 3:17, the words “hear” (שמע; *šāmaʿ*) and “voice” (קול; *qôl*) are used. Thus, by opting for “sound” instead of “voice” for קול (*qôl*) translations mute the critical leitmotif of these chapters. To keep this leitmotif in view, therefore, Genesis 3:8 should be read as “they *heard* (שמע; *šāmaʿ*) the *voice* (קול; *qôl*) of the LORD God walking in the garden,” and 3:10 as “I *heard* (שמע; *šāmaʿ*) your *voice* (קול; *qôl*) in the garden and I was afraid.”⁸ It is the *voice* of the LORD they *heard*, not just rustling or something like that.

The LORD’s first words to his image bearers were a “blessing” in Genesis 1:28. But after their disobedience the *hearing* of his *voice* becomes dreadful. Thus, *sin has changed the human reaction to hearing the LORD’s voice from the experience of blessing to one of fear*. If God’s purpose in sending the serpent-crusher is to restore the conditions of Eden (Gen 3:15), then *such redemption must entail a renewed capacity to hear again the voice of the LORD, specifically without fear and as a “blessing.”* The conflict between the two seeds began with an assault on the word of the LORD: “Is that what God said...?” (that is the sense of אף פִּי־אָמַר אֱלֹהִים). Salvation, therefore, can mean nothing less than restoring the Creator’s original intent in giving his *voice*: that his creatures would *hear* it as a blessing.⁹ The rest of the OT bears this out as *voice-hearing* emerges as a pervasive theme.

Hearing the Lord’s Voice in the Prophet

Deuteronomy 18 crystalizes several redemptive-historical emphases within the office of the prophet, which becomes a typological institution that anticipates one eschatological prophet. He will restore faithful *voice-hearing* within the Creator’s world. But there is significant build up to Deuteronomy 18 that we must consider first.

It starts with Abraham. Genesis 12:1-9 certainly furthers the Genesis 3:15 program through Abram in whose “seed” all the nations will be “blessed.”¹⁰ This means, in part, they will again *hear* the *voice* of the LORD when Abram gives the world the One Seed. This becomes overt in Genesis 22:18 where Abraham is told, “In your seed (בְּיָרְעָךָ) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed (וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ), *because you have heard* (שָׁמַעְתָּ) *my voice* (בְּקוֹלִי).” Thus, in this key verse we see these themes converge: the seed (Gen 3:15) brings a

blessing (Gen 1:28) to the nations (Gen 12:3) because someone has *heard* the *voice* of the LORD (Gen 3:8, 10, 17).

In Genesis 26:3-5 Isaac is reminded of his father’s *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD and the subsequent land- and Seed-promises. In this we again see how critical the reestablishment of *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD is bound up with the plan of redemption through the “Seed of the Woman.” Abraham and Isaac, therefore, are types of the “Seed of the Woman” because they *hear* the *voice* of the LORD, and so channel the “blessing” to subsequent generations.¹¹

Along this developing trajectory, in Exodus 3:18 the LORD tells Moses that the people of Israel will *hear* the latter’s *voice*. This is an extension of *hearing* the LORD’s *voice* because Moses is the LORD’s mouthpiece (4:12, 15). The key to Israel believing the LORD in Exodus 4:5 is giving them signs to convince them to *hear* Moses’ *voice* (4:8-9). Literally, they are to *hear* the *voice* “of the sign” (יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקוֹל הַאֵת). The whole point is to establish Moses as one whose *voice* is to be *heard* as a demonstration of their belief in the LORD. Thus, Moses’ speech constitutes the *voice* of the LORD to the people of Israel and to Pharaoh (Exod 4:10-16).

After the final plague and crossing the Red Sea, the nation is called to fulfill their vocation as a kingdom of priests (Exod 19:5-6) in which they are now charged to *hear* the *voice* of the LORD. It is the *first* thing the LORD says to them:

“You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and I carried you on wings of eagles, and I brought you to myself. And now *if you will most certainly hear my voice...*” (Exod 19:4-5).

With a qal infinitive absolute followed by an imperfect verb, שְׁמַעוּ תִּשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל, the stress is given to שְׁמַעוּ: to listen, to hear, to heed, to obey. Again, it must be emphasized that these are the LORD’s *first direct words to the nation of Israel as a whole*. The charge to *hear* his *voice*, therefore, is primary to Israel’s calling.

Israel immediately then meets the LORD at Mount Sinai who summarizes his salvific work (Exod 20:2) and gives the Decalogue (Exod 20:3-17). As the historical manifestation of the Seed of the Woman, it comes as no surprise that Israel is expected to *hear* the *voice* of the LORD.¹² But like Adam and Eve after their sin, Israel’s response is that of fear (Exod 20:18).¹³ This echo of

Genesis 3 is powerful. In Exodus 20:19b Israel does not want God to speak to them “lest [they] die” (פָּן־נָמוּת), whereas in Genesis 3:3 Eve repeats (sort of) the LORD’s command, “You shall not eat it ... lest you die” (פָּן־תָּמָתוּן). Ironically, *hearing* the LORD’s *voice* in Genesis 3 would have kept Eve from death. Now Israel thinks *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD will kill them, wherein the truth is if they *hear* (i.e., obey) the *voice* of the LORD they will live. The effect is to reemphasize humanity’s relationship to the *voice* of the LORD inside and outside the Garden of Eden.

Yet it is redemptively imperative that the voice of the LORD go forth to and through the Seed. Therefore Moses is told in Exodus 20:19a, “You speak to us, and we will *hear* (שָׁמַע).” Moses, as the mouthpiece of God (Exod 4:11–16), becomes the means through which *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD without fear can happen among God’s people.

Even still, Moses is transitional and anticipatory like Abraham and Isaac were. Therefore, when Moses is preparing Israel to take the Holy Land without him (Deut 3:27–28) he gives instruction in Deuteronomy 18:9–22 as to how the *voice* of the LORD will continue. He begins by prohibiting pagan forms of revelation (Deut 18:9–14).¹⁴ Israel is to be different because a prophet like Moses will arise among them (Deut 18:15). Moses’ instruction for how to respond to such a prophet is simple: “You must *hear* him” (Deut 18:15; אֲלֵיו תִּשְׁמָעוּן). At that point Moses recalls the inaugural event that made him a prophet: Israel’s *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD at Mount Sinai (Deut 18:16). This too recalls Genesis 3:8, 10, 17—only now with more volume—for Deuteronomy 18:16 specifically says Israel feared “to *hear* the *voice* of the Lord” (קוֹל יְהוָה לְשָׁמַע אֶת־).¹⁵

From the above we conclude that *the institution of the prophet in Israel’s history* is not only a means by which the LORD communicates his will, but *is a distinctive hallmark of redemption, and an indispensable emblem of Eden*. It is a development of Exodus 19:5; 20:18-19 and a direct response to Genesis 3:17. Those who *hear* the *voice* of the LORD are “blessed” and become the means through which others will also *hear* the *voice* of the LORD and join the blessed community in a renewed Edenic experience of God’s word.

Yet Deuteronomy 18:9-22 is also typological in so far as Moses also expects a *singular climactic* prophet.¹⁶ This is seen in the singular noun, and subsequent singular masculine pronouns.¹⁷ In v. 15 Moses says *a* prophet will arise from among Israel (וְנָבִיא מִקִּרְבְּךָ מֵאַחֵיךָ; cf. v. 18 too) and instructs Israel to *hear*

him (אֵלָיו תִּשְׁמָעוּן).¹⁸ Verses 18–19 speak of *his* mouth, what *he* speaks, and what the LORD commands *him*. He is the one through whom *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD will again be achieved without fear. Israel will recognize him because he will be “like Moses” (v. 15). All this makes Israel’s prophets anticipatory of the one most definitively *like Moses*.¹⁹

Specifically, this singular prophet will be an eschatological figure. Deuteronomy 4:30 states that “in the latter days [Israel] will return to the LORD [their] God and *hear his voice*.” This phrase “in the latter day(s)” (בְּאַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים) is a technical term in the OT that indicates a decisive “‘final’ point of history.”²⁰ In so far as Israel will *hear* the *voice* of the LORD “in the latter days,” this singular prophet appears to be an eschatological figure. The final line of Deuteronomy supplements this. In 34:10 we read that “still no prophet has arisen in Israel like Moses” (וְלֹא-קָם). Regardless of who wrote these words or when they may have been redacted, canonically it points beyond the old covenant line of prophets to an eschatological figure who alone will be “like Moses.”²¹

In this way, the office of the prophet serves two purposes. (1) The class of prophets fulfills Deuteronomy 18:15-21. As a whole, the collection of prophets mediates the word of the LORD to the covenant people, and at times to others. They provide, therefore, that crucial experience of redemption—*hearing* the *voice* of the LORD—and equally continue to hold out the hope that such redemption will someday reach to all peoples of the earth à la Genesis 12:3, and in turn fulfill Genesis 3:15. Relatedly, (2) the prophetic institution typologically anticipates that *One* prophet who will uniquely be like Moses. As an eschatological figure, *he* will mediate the *voice* of the LORD for his people to *hear* in such a way that sums up and completes the aforementioned purpose for prophets.

Hearing the Lord’s Voice Across Redemptive-History

Before turning to the New Testament (NT) we must linger longer over the combination of שָׁמַע and קוֹל in the OT.²² The hendiadys simply haunts the OT. By our count there are 235 verses with the lexical combination. Routinely going together, the terms invoke the afore iterated Genesis-Exodus-Deuteronomy theology, particularly at critical moments in redemptive-history.²³

Only a few examples will have to suffice. As stated above, Moses’ calling in Exodus 4 is the dawn of all public *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD.²⁴ In Exodus

5:2 the plagues are ignited when Pharaoh refuses to *hear* the LORD's *voice*. It is worth repeating that Israel's commission in Exodus 19-20 begins with the injunction to *hear* the LORD's *voice* (Exod 19:5). In Numbers 14:20-23 it is because that generation did not *hear* the LORD's *voice* that they could not enter the land (Josh 5:6 and Ps 95:7-11 further emphasize this). In Joshua 24:24 the people of Israel respond to the words of covenant renewal with the promise that they will serve and *hear* the *voice* of the LORD only. In Deuteronomy 28:1, 2 the blessings that Israel will experience in the land (Deut 28:1-14) is precluded with, "And if you faithfully *hear* the *voice* (שָׁמַעְתֶּם אֶת־קוֹלֵי הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם) of the LORD your God..."²⁵ Conversely, in Deuteronomy 28:15 the curses in the land (Deut 28:15-68) are also introduced with, "If you will not *hear* the *voice* of the LORD your God" (cf. also Deut 28:45, 62).²⁶ In 1 Samuel *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD surrounds the transition from Saul to David (1 Sam 8:7, 9, 19, 22; 12:14-15; 15:1, 14, 19, 22, 24; 28:18).²⁷ In Jeremiah 11:4, 7, when the people break the covenant, Jeremiah pronounces a curse at the dawn of exile and reminds them how they were called to *hear* the LORD's *voice* (cf. also 2 Kgs 18:11-12). In Deuteronomy 30:2, 8, 10, Moses tells them that when Israel *hears* the *voice* of the LORD he will end their exile. In Haggai 1:12, the people respond to Haggai's call to rebuild the temple by *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD. And in Deuteronomy 4:29-30 Moses foresees those scattered returning to the LORD "in the latter days" when they will again *hear* his *voice*.²⁸

Each of these verses places *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD at major turning points of redemptive-history, *noticeably at times of coming into or going out from the presence of the LORD*: the beginning of the exodus, before building the tabernacle, prevention from entering the land, the subsequent taking of the land and receiving of the inheritance, the rise of the temple-building dynasty, the reason for exile from the land, the return to the land, rebuilding the temple, and a vision of the eschaton.²⁹ In this way each one both recalls the expulsion from Eden for not *hearing* the LORD's *voice*,³⁰ and anticipates an eschatological people who do *hear* the LORD's *voice* through the ministry of the One prophet.³¹ In some way all this will be connected to the One Seed of the Woman.

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL PROPHET

It takes very little effort to see that the NT presents Jesus of Nazareth as the long-awaited prophet of Deuteronomy 18.³² We will give our attention particularly to John’s Gospel for three reasons. (1) John has the clearest and most thorough presentation of Jesus as the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18. (2) John specifically employs the language of *hearing* (ἀκούω) the Lord’s/ Jesus’ *voice* (φωνή). And (3) John most clearly approaches an answer to *what happens after Jesus, the great high prophet, is gone*. What are the people of God to do once, after having waited millennia, the Deuteronomy 18 prophet comes and goes from the stage of history? If prophets are so critical according to Exodus 19:5, 19–20; Deuteronomy 18:15–22 to redress Genesis 3:17, how do the people of God continue to *hear* the LORD’s *voice* once that redemptive-historical institution is brought to completion in the One? We will contend that the continuation of prophecy *must be an extension of Jesus’ prophetic work*, which is accomplished by the Spirit *uniquely among the apostles*. Their teaching ministry constitutes the exclusive ongoing prophetic work of the one and only eschatological prophet.³³

The Climactic Role of Jesus

To begin, it is clear right from the beginning of John that a particular emphasis on revelation is in view. For Jesus is *the Word* become flesh (John 1:1, 14), the “truth light” (1:6). Everything to which the apostle witnesses—for that is his stated goal in 21:24—is therefore a witness to God’s unique revelation in and through Jesus (cf. esp. 12:49–56; 14:9–10). As Andreas Köstenberger comments, John’s introduction “encompasses Jesus’ entire ministry, placing all of Jesus’ works and words within the framework of both his eternal being ... and God’s self-revelation in salvation history.”³⁴ The prologue frames all that Jesus will do and speak in his revelatory ministry.³⁵

The specific emphasis on presenting Jesus as the prophet of Deuteronomy 18 gains momentum throughout John’s story.³⁶ The first indication comes when the people ask if John the Baptist is *the* prophet (1:21; note the singular article in ὁ προφήτης εἶ σύ;). John says no, but Philip tells Nathaniel that in Jesus they have found “the one of whom Moses wrote in the law” (1:45). The woman at the well keeps the issue front and center when she speculates, “I perceive that you are a prophet” (4:19).³⁷ The emphasis then becomes

most acute in 6:1-14 where Jesus looks particularly *like Moses*—feeding a multitude, on a mountain, by a sea, at the time of Passover (vv. 1–4)—as the evangelist shades in the pericope with exodus vernacular (“about five thousand” eating “as much as they wanted” until all had “their fill”; cf. Exod 12:37; Ps 78:29; 105:40). All this causes the people to conclude in v. 14, “This is truly the prophet who is coming into the world” (again, note the singular article—οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον). Identifying Jesus as *the* prophet, and not *a* prophet or *another* prophet, on the heels of such a miracle brings Deuteronomy 18 sharply into focus.³⁸ Equally, in 7:38–40 Jesus promises living water like Moses (Exod 17:6; Numb 20:11), and the people again respond, “This is truly the prophet.”³⁹ There have been many prophets, but Jesus’ Moses-like behavior positions him uniquely to fulfill the expectation of the one and only eschatological prophet of Deuteronomy 18.

Additionally, the combination of “hear” (ἀκούω; *akouō*) and “voice” (φωνή; *phōnē*) is all over John. In 5:25, 28 the dead come to life when they *hear* the *voice* of the Son of God (cf. also 11:43). In 10:3 the sheep *hear* the *voice* of the good shepherd who came to give them life (10:10). In 10:16 Jesus is confident that all his sheep will *hear* his *voice*. In 10:26–27 believers are marked by a specific ability to *hear* Jesus’ *voice* (cf. also 5:37–38). And finally, in the climactic 18:37 Jesus says to Pilate, “All those of the truth *hear* my *voice*.”⁴⁰

These observations bring *hearing* Jesus’ *voice* together with *life, truth and belief*, all major Johannine themes.⁴¹ Along the biblical-theological trajectory we have been tracing, therefore, we draw the conclusion that *hearing* Jesus’ *voice* leads to the restoration of Edenic life. This fits hand in glove with John’s larger New Creation theology.⁴² The path back to the new Eden is through *hearing* Jesus’ *voice*. This is precisely the critical role the prophets played throughout God’s redemptive plan, as argued above. And that is the point of John 5:25, 28—once the dead *hear* Jesus’ *voice* they come to life. Equally, *hearing* Jesus’ *voice* is the mark of those who have come alive—the sheep are able to *hear* the shepherd’s *voice* in 10:3, 16, 27 (cf. also 8:47). Anticipation has now given way to climax, therefore, and *hearing* Jesus’ *voice* is the means and mark of the restoration of Edenic life at the dawn of New Creation.

The Unique Promise to the Spirit-Inspired Apostles

A critical development then occurs in the Farewell Discourse, John 13-16. John introduces the section like this: “[W]hen Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father...” (13:1). The context for the *entire* discourse is, therefore, Jesus’ departure. In this upper room, Jesus speaks to his disciples alone to prepare them for what is next.

This focus on Jesus’ departure, in turn, raises a major question: *How will revelation continue once the great high prophet is gone?* The LORD’s solution to humanity’s disobedience has been to restore the ability to *hear his voice* by giving prophets to Israel in anticipation of the great eschatological prophet. Now that he has come what will be the locus of revelatory authority once he leaves? Jesus addresses this situation in at least two parts of the Farewell Discourse, all revolving around this: “It is advantageous to you that I depart; for if I do not depart, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (16:7).⁴³ Jesus departs so that the Paraclete can come, and that is to everyone’s *advantage*. Why?

First, in John 14:25-26 Jesus says,

“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things, and he will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

To begin, we note that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit, and we note again the need for ongoing revelation after Jesus’ earthly ministry.⁴⁴ There are things Jesus spoke “while [he] was still with [them],” but the Holy Spirit will teach them “all things” after Jesus departs. Thus, Jesus’ first answer to the question—what happens to revelation after the great high prophet is gone—is that the Spirit who comes *in his name* will take up the task.

It is critical to observe this detail, that the Spirit comes from the Father *in Jesus’ name*. So tightly related are Jesus and the Spirit that he even calls the Spirit “another” Paraclete in 14:16, and then immediately teaches about his own return (14:18–20). The point is that the Spirit will mediate Jesus’ presence.⁴⁵ The upshot for this study is to stress that the Holy Spirit does not speak (or do anything else for that matter) independently of Jesus.⁴⁶ But his revelatory work is an extension of Jesus’ prophetic ministry. *The revelatory work of the Spirit, therefore, is directly tied to the prophetic tradition*

of *Deuteronomy 18*. The great high prophet is not done revealing just because he has ascended to the Father. Rather, the Spirit's revelatory work bears the authoritative seal of the one prophet as his ongoing emissary.⁴⁷ The Spirit is the means by which the "absent" Son can *continue* to fulfill the critical redemptive-historical office of the eschatological *Deuteronomy 18* prophet.

At this point, it is important to emphasize that these words are uniquely spoken *to the men in that room that night*.⁴⁸ The audience for the Farewell Discourse is not all Christians everywhere. This is no generic religious speech with esoteric maxims. It is a specific address with concrete application. It would make no sense to tell anyone that the Spirit will "bring to your remembrance" events and sayings for which one was not originally present. Rather, the promise to "bring to your remembrance" can only make sense to those who witnessed something. This is reinforced when Jesus tells his disciples that the Spirit will bear witness through them "because [they] were with [him] from the beginning" in 15:26–27.⁴⁹ Only those handpicked by Jesus from his first days of ministry are here promised *this* work of the Spirit. Of course, this does not negate the teaching in the rest of the NT that all believers enjoy the gift of the Holy Spirit (one needs to note only Acts 2:28).⁵⁰ Rather, this reading emphasizes that *this specific promise of what the Spirit will do* is unique to the apostles: he will help them "remember" the words and actions of Jesus "from the beginning."⁵¹ The apostles alone are promised by the *Deuteronomy 18* prophet himself that he will ensure their ability both to remember the past and to learn "all things" in the future.⁵²

One last comment regarding John 14:25–26 regards the weight of Jesus' words, "all things." This work of the Spirit has a finality to it. Once "all things" are taught, there is no more to say. Such a promise serves well the eschatological nature of Jesus's prophetic role. He is the one to whom all other prophets prophesied in anticipation; now that he has come there is no higher point to the LORD's revelatory purposes. "All things" the LORD wants humanity to hear, Jesus delivers through the Holy Spirit's guidance of the apostles.

Thus, we gather so far from Jesus' Farewell Discourse (principally John 13:1; 14:25–26; 15:26–27; 16:7) that the Holy Spirit is sent *by Jesus* and comes *in Jesus'* name as "another" Paraclete. He is promised to teach "all things" to the apostles, and only to the apostles, specifically guiding them to remember teachings and events from the beginning of Jesus' ministry. *This is all an exclusive Spirit-mediated extension of Jesus' unique eschatological*

vocation as the final Deuteronomy 18 prophet.

Jesus’ second answer to the question of what happens to the LORD’s prophetic program after he departs is in John 16:12–15. There Jesus says,

“I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you in all the truth/the whole truth;⁵³ for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

Here Jesus says even though he is departing *he still has “many things” more to say.*⁵⁴ How so? Again, the Spirit will guide the apostles into these “many things.” The emphasis that the Spirit’s revelatory work is not some new thing, but directly attached to (indeed the continuation of) Jesus’ teaching ministry is again foregrounded.⁵⁵ As D. A. Carson puts it, “Jesus is the nodal point of revelation.”⁵⁶ Thus the Spirit speaks *on Jesus’ authority*. He delivers only what *he hears Jesus say*. And in this he *glorifies Jesus*. We can say, therefore, that the Spirit’s revelatory work originates in Jesus and finds its *telos* in Jesus. Again, the value of these observations is to point out that *the revelatory work of the Spirit is part and parcel of the original Deuteronomy 18 vision because he effects the ongoing work of the great eschatological prophet*. The Spirit’s work is not some new or disconnected activity, but “doing little more than fleshing out the implications of God’s triumphant self-disclosure in the person and work of his Son.”⁵⁷

Additionally, as the Spirit of *truth* he guides the apostles into *all the truth* (v. 13).⁵⁸ This has three implications. (1) In calling him the Spirit of *truth*, coming as soon as it does on the heels of Jesus calling *himself* “the truth” in 14:6, this is another link between Jesus’ prophetic calling and the ongoing work of the Spirit.⁵⁹ (2) What the Spirit “guides” the apostles into (what he teaches) *is true*. There is neither lie nor error in anything the Spirit teaches the apostles. And (3) what the Spirit teaches the apostles *is the only truth*. As we saw with Jesus’ promise that the Spirit will teach “all things” (14:26) here we observe that the Spirit’s teaching comprises “all the truth.” That is, *all the truth that Jesus wants his people to hear will come through the Spirit’s guidance of the apostles*. This program through the Spirit and the apostles

is the only program the eschatological prophet has set up, and therefore consists of the totality of his message. As Carson writes, “There is no other locus of truth; this is *all truth*.”⁶⁰ Verse 15 doubles down on this: “*all the Father has*” belongs to Jesus (πάντα ὅσα ἔχει ὁ πατήρ ἐμὰ ἐστίν) and all of that is declared through the Spirit. Judging by the context, this “all” refers to all knowledge.⁶¹ Thus, this revelatory work of the Spirit constitutes *all* things the Father wants to reveal. Everything the Father wills his people to hear he has handed over to Jesus, who deploys the Spirit to work through the apostles. The apostles are, therefore, the end of the communicative line of the larger Deuteronomy 18 vision.⁶²

In summary, the apostles were an exclusively designated group who were witness to Jesus’ ministry and resurrection, and commissioned by Jesus himself to execute his will on earth.⁶³ In them, “Christ established a formal authority structure to be the source and standard for all future preaching of the gospel.”⁶⁴ In John 13-16 they are uniquely promised that the Holy Spirit will guide their memories of Jesus, teach them “all things,” and guarantee their learning will be “all the truth.” In short, “Christ’s teaching is constituted in theirs.”⁶⁵ In all, this amounts to an extension of Jesus’ revelatory authority to the end that the eschatological Deuteronomy 18 prophet can continue speaking as part and parcel of the Creator’s salvific designs.

The Unique Testimony of the Spirit-Inspired Apostles

The question that arises, then, is what application is there for the people of God down the ages? The answer comes in John 17:17–21 where Jesus prays for his apostles to be sanctified in the very truth he just promised them (v. 17), *and then sends them into the world* (v. 18). At that moment Jesus pivots to pray also for “those who believe in [him] through their word” (v. 20). And therein lies the application to the church. The spiritual connection between Jesus and the apostles *assures* God’s people that the apostles’ witness is *true*, *total*, and *final*.⁶⁶ Their testimony is the ripest fruit of Israel’s prophetic tradition. It is through the apostles’ word-ministry that countless generations have come to faith in Jesus Christ. They preached authoritatively in their own day, and then passed their words on to subsequent generations *in their writings*.⁶⁷ The NT is the testimony of the apostles that bear all the marks of the aforementioned guarantees of the Spirit.⁶⁸ The NT is, therefore, “all the truth” given by Jesus himself, the eschatological Deuteronomy 18 prophet.

Equally, we are brought to say the same thing about the OT for two reasons. (1) It is verified and validated by Jesus’ and the apostles’ affirmation that it is the word of God.⁶⁹ Such a view of the OT is part of “all the truth” in the NT. And (2) it is written by the very prophets that typologically anticipate Jesus’ prophetic ministry. Their writings are, therefore, part and parcel of God’s program for speaking his voice into creation, first in anticipation of the One prophet, and then climactically and finally in Jesus. Thus, as the collection of texts leading up to and deriving from Jesus, the OT and the NT together comprise the *voice* of the LORD that must be *heard*. We can therefore “regard the Scripture itself as an aspect of the prophetic ministry of Christ.”⁷⁰

Therefore, as the only lasting testimony of the apostles, *the Christian Scriptures are the exclusive conduit of Jesus’ ongoing prophetic ministry, the eschatological telos of Deuteronomy 18*. They consist of the *voice* of the LORD that must be *heard* to experience salvation and to reestablish Edenic life in an inaugurated New Creation, where sinners are again blessed with a genuine experience of God’s presence.⁷¹ This is a critical component of the Seed of the Woman’s work.

SYSTEMATIC-THEOLOGICAL RESULTS

In light of the biblical-theological survey above—the necessity of prophets in redemptive-history, the climactic revelation in Jesus, and the extension of his revelatory work through the Spirit-empowered witness of the apostles—we conclude that the Christian Scriptures are the *necessary, sufficient* and *exclusive* revelation of God, and in them believers have confidence that they are *hearing* the *voice* of Jesus himself.

First, the principal conclusion drawn from the above is that the Christian Scriptures are the product of the prophetic work of *Jesus himself*.⁷² Though Jesus never put pen to paper (or stylus to papyrus) we can nonetheless truly say that Jesus authored the NT.⁷³ The Spirit that came *in his name* (John 14:26) has declared what he heard *from Jesus himself* (John 16:13-14) to Jesus’ *personally chosen apostles* (John 15:16) who in turn gave their witness to the world (John 15:26–27; 17:20).⁷⁴ And, as stated above, the apostles’ verification of the OT—as well as its own christotelic nature—demonstrates that that corpus equally has Jesus’ prophetic sanction.⁷⁵ The Bible is therefore *Jesus’ literary achievement*.

It also follows that the Christian Scriptures are *necessary*. If expulsion from the presence of God was precipitated by not *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD, then *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD is both a means and result of salvation. To accomplish this aspect of redemption the LORD installed prophets in preparation for the One eschatological prophet, the prophet who delivers the final word of God, the prophet par excellence. That prophet being Jesus, he has distilled his message in the Christians Scripture through his exclusive spiritual work among the apostles. The Christian Scriptures, therefore, constitute the *voice* of the LORD that *must be heard* for salvation. There is no salvation without it. And the ability to *hear* the *voice* of the LORD in the Scriptures is a mark of that salvation. Without the Christian Scriptures humanity is permanently lost. With them the pathway back to the presence of God is opened. They are, therefore, necessary.⁷⁶

It likewise follows that the Christians Scriptures are *sufficient*. There are two reasons for this. (1) The whole point of an eschatological figure is the climactic and unrepeatable nature of his ministry. And (2) Jesus promised that the Spirit would teach the apostles “all things” (John 14:26), and guide them into “all the truth” (John 16:13).⁷⁷ The ministry of the apostles, now distilled in their writings, therefore constitutes the full revelation of God. Indeed “all the Father has” (John 16:15)—specifically, has *to say*—had been delivered to Jesus and, through the Spirit, “declared” to the apostles. The Christian Scriptures are therefore, by the sovereign will and wisdom of God Almighty, everything necessary for his people. They are sufficient for the goals for which they were delivered: the locus for where sinners can *hear* the *voice* of the Creator God to the end of restoring humanity to Edenic fellowship with him. Beyond his ongoing voice in the Scriptures, the great eschatological prophet has nothing more to say. He has said it all.⁷⁸ He now repeats through the Scriptures his ongoing message, world without end.⁷⁹

We draw the conclusion, therefore, that there are no more prophets and there are no more apostles.⁸⁰ There is no sense that this specific revelatory work of the Spirit will be passed on to others, collectively or individually, or that the guarantee of “all the truth” will mark anyone else’s ministry.⁸¹ Rather, the two NT passages that most explicitly highlight the unique authority of the Scriptures—2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:19-21—are in contexts where the apostles foretell their upcoming deaths. When Peter and Paul thought about their own departure (2 Tim 4:6; 2 Pet 1:14) they did not pass their

apostolic authority on to others or promise an ongoing ecstatic work of the Spirit, but *they pointed to the abiding authority of the Scriptures*.⁸²

From this reading, therefore, we would like to propose a new sub-locus of the Doctrine of Scripture: *the Exclusivity of Scripture*.⁸³ This is far from an exhaustive study of the character of God’s word, but we believe a sufficiently thorough study of the exclusive nature of the prophetic office in Israel, and its terminus on Jesus the great eschatological prophet. This places the apostles’ Jesus-authorized-Spirit-inspired writings in a category by themselves: the *only* telos of Israel’s prophetic tradition. Jesus’ uninterrupted prophetic work through the apostles in the paracletic empowerment of the Holy Spirit makes their work *the only* locus of prophetic authority. Jesus is the *only* eschatological prophet, and it is only through the apostles that Jesus has ordained his Spirit to work in this capacity.⁸⁴ There is no other explicitly articulated means of prophetic continuation; we have no reason to believe the voice of the LORD can be found anywhere else. “We are offered Christ clothed with the apostolic gospel. That is the way God intended and executed it. No other option is given us.”⁸⁵

In light of these comments some might identify our position as “Cessationism.” We demur that term, however. We are not arguing that the LORD has *stopped* speaking, as though that is something he used to do but does not anymore. Rather, we are identifying *specifically where* the true *voice* of the LORD can be *heard* with confidence. We are contending that the LORD indeed does still speak, and by his wonderful mercy he has made it clear to all subsequent generations (for whom Jesus prayed in John 17:20ff) specifically where to *hear* that *voice*: in the written testimony of the men to who the Spirit of truth was uniquely given by the eschatological prophet in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18 as the means to redress the fallen condition indicated in Genesis 3:17. The *Christian Scriptures* alone are therefore the *fulfillment* of God’s speaking-purposes since the dawn of time. That we contend there are no more prophets or apostles with the capacity of speaking new revelation should therefore be termed “Fulfillmentism.” Or a little less cumbersome: “Pleroisim,” from the Greek word πληρώω, meaning to fulfill. Is it not the case that revelation has *ceased*. Rather, revelation has reached its *intended fulfillment* whereby the final product is the full, sufficient, exclusive storehouse of all God is still saying.⁸⁶ As the Reformers saw it, “the Scripture the Holy Spirit authored in the past receives its authority in the present from

the fact that God the Holy Spirit continues to speak in it and through it the same message he once uttered.”⁸⁷ Thus, the Creator still speaks. And praise his name; he has told us *specifically where to hear that ongoing voice*.

All this means that any so-called word from the Spirit outside the auspices of the apostles *cannot be guaranteed to be true*. And it cannot be claimed to be a part of the revelatory purposes of God in any way like that of Moses, the coming Deuteronomy 18 prophet, the historic prophets of Israel, Jesus himself, or the uniquely Spirit-inspired apostles. Namely, it would not be a constituent part of God’s purposes of *redemption* and therefore not essential to *hear*. For Moses, the prophets of Israel, Jesus, and the apostles alone fulfill the purposes of restoring the *voice* of God on the earth that everyone must *hear*.⁸⁸ To listen, then, to the self-claimed “revelation” of others after the class of apostles has departed the stage of history is to distract from, and inject confusion into, the arena where we can *hear the voice* of God *with confidence*.

To say that someone has more revelation is also to say that Jesus did not finish the job! Anyone who claims to have another word from God needs to consider that they are implicitly claiming that Jesus indeed did *not* make good on his promise to deliver “all things” and “all the truth.” Would we ever say such a thing of Jesus’ priestly work? Would we ever limit his kingly domain? No more so should we say that Jesus came up short in his prophetic calling. Adding revelation to what *Christ* has laid down in his prophet ministry (both in the message that is about him and his giving the Spirit to the apostles in this unique role) would be a theological mistake on the same level adding to his atonement! Both are once and for all. Both are redemptive-historically climactic.

The foregoing biblical-theological reading of the leitmotif of *hearing the voice* of the LORD has resulted in a redemptive-historical grounding for the necessity and sufficiency of Scripture. The eschatological Deuteronomy 18 prophet restores the ability to *hear the voice* of the LORD as part and parcel of the Seed of the Woman’s redemptive vocation. As such, Jesus gives eternal life in an inaugurated New Creation as he continues to speak through his uniquely Spirit-inspired apostles’ writings. The Christian Scriptures are therefore *necessary for redemption*. As the final product of the last prophet, the Scriptures are also *sufficient for redemption*. By extension, as well, they are the *exclusive locus for hearing the voice* of the Creator God.

CONCLUSION

We *need* the Bible. And the Bible is *all* we need. For in the Bible the great eschatological prophet, the risen Lord Jesus, continues to speak. And what other *voice* do we need to *hear*? The great predicament of humanity is that we have been ejected from the glorious Edenic presence of God because of our refusal to *hear* his *voice*. To restore humanity and achieve his purposes in creation, the merciful Creator gave prophets to Israel who comprised an anticipatory, typological institution that climactically reached its telos in the eschatological prophet, Jesus Christ. His *ongoing* voice is now heard through the uniquely Spirit-inspired apostles who wrote the NT and verified the OT. The Bible is, therefore, the necessary, sufficient and exclusive means of *hearing* the LORD’s *voice* so that humanity can be redeemed in an inaugurated New Creation. In this way, the Seed of the Woman is bringing his people back into the presence of God.

For those convinced of the value of biblical-theological methods, this study raises our confidence in the Bible. Our confidence goes up that *in the Bible* we are genuinely hearing from *Jesus himself*. Our confidence goes up that *in the Bible* we are receiving “all the truth,” mixed with no error. Our confidence goes up that *in the Bible* we are being led back to the presence of God. Our confidence goes up that *in the Bible* we are again *hearing* the *voice* of the Creator God Almighty.⁸⁹ Consequently, with this confidence in the Jesus-authored, fully true, sufficient and exclusive Scriptures we are liberated from the need to look elsewhere for revelation, or to fear that we are missing out on some special experience with the LORD.⁹⁰ But to the contrary, it allows us to stay *focused on the Bible* because of our high confidence in its veracity and exclusivity. To neglect these truths results in an erosion of our confidence in the Scriptures to the end that we therefore neglect them. It is common to human nature that we neglect things in which we lack confidence. We are missing out, therefore, on the one sure and reliable source where we can *hear* the *voice* of the LORD when we put our efforts toward looking in other places. And that is sad.

This is doubly true for the Christian minister. If the risen Lord shepherds his sheep through this word, if the Creator God speaks through the Scriptures, how critical are our teaching ministries? It is important to understand that the LORD’s speaking in the Bible is not merely the necessary pragmatics of

a larger plan of redemption, as though salvation is really about something else entirely, and the LORD has to get some ideas across somehow. Speaking to and through prophets is not just a matter of efficiency. Rather, *hearing* the *voice* of the LORD is part and parcel of that very redemption. Teaching the Scriptures, therefore, is to participate with the LORD in bringing redemption to the creation (as in the sense of 2 Cor 5:20). Thus, word-teaching to any local congregation is the sine qua none of pastoral ministry. But that is abandoned in favor of pragmatism when we do not understanding the great need to *hear* the *voice* of God, or we lack the confidence that such *voice-hearing* occurs in the faithful teaching/preaching of the Bible, or if we think *hearing* his *voice* can be accomplished outside of the Bible. Ministers of the gospel can do no better, therefore, than to labor over the Word and give their people the *voice* of the LORD to *hear* from the Scriptures.

The eschatological prophet has come in Jesus Christ who has superintended the apostles' writings through his Spirit. Subsequently, having delivered his final message, God has nothing *more* to say, but continues to repeat the truth once and for all delivered to the saints. The practical result of this is a deep appreciation that the ability to *hear* the *voice* of the Good Shepherd calling from the Scriptures, and to distinguish that voice from hirelings and thieves who pretend to speak for the LORD. The ability to *hear* the *voice* of God in his Word is an indispensable aspect of redemption itself, a principal hallmark of the people of God.

In short, we *need* the Bible—and *all* we need is the Bible.

¹ For the multidimensional nature and function of Gen 3:15 see T. D. Alexander, "Seed," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology: Exploring the Unity & Diversity of Scripture* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 769–74; James Hamilton, "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *SBJT* 10.2 (2006): 30–54; Jared M. August, "The Messianic Hope of Genesis: The Protoevangelium and Patriarchal Promises," *Themelios* 42.1 (2017): 46–62.

² G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (NSBT 17; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2004), 66–80; T. Desmond Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008), 13–31.

³ August, "Messianic Hope," 56–62.

⁴ There are, of course, a lot of terms and concepts that contribute to a full biblical-theological understanding of revelation. See for example Matthew Barrett, *God's Word Alone: The Authority of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 165–220. This piece will not try to canvas everything, but the intriguing combination of *שָׁמַע* and *קוּל* because of their critical use in Genesis 3 and their frequent recurrence at watershed moments in redemptive-history, especially in Exodus 4, Deuteronomy 18, and the Gospel of John.

- 5 The classic expression of this is Herman N. Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures* (trans. H. De Jongste; Phillipsburg: P&R, 1963). Ridderbos argues that the qualitative and material authority of the canon is grounded in redemptive-history, not in church history. See as well C. E. Hill, “God’s Speech in These Last Days: The New Testament Canon as an Eschatological Phenomenon,” in *Resurrection and Eschatology: Theology in Service of the Church; Essays in Honor of Richard B. Gaffin Jr.* (ed. Lane G. Tipton and Jeffrey C. Waddington; Phillipsburg: P&R, 2008), 203–54. Recent works that bring these issues to bear along covenantal lines include Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009) and Matthew Barrett, *Canon, Covenant and Christology: Rethinking Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel* (NSBT 51; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2020).
- 6 Throughout this essay wherever we use the terms *hear* and *voice* in italics we mean to indicate the specific use of שָׁמַע (*šama’*) and קוֹל (*qol*) in the OT, and forms of ἀκούω (*akouō*) and φωνή (*phōnē*) in the NT.
- 7 All translations are our own.
- 8 Older translations do take קוֹל as “voice” in these two verses. The KJV renders Gen 3:8 as “they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden” and 3:10 as “I heard thy voice in the garden.” Similarly the Lutherbibel translates Gen 3:8 as “sie hörten die stimme Gottes des HERRN, der im Garten gieng” and Gen 3:10 as “Ich hörte deine stimme im Garten.” And the Vulgate takes Gen 3:8 as “cum audissent vocem Domini Dei deambulant in paradiso” and Gen 3:10 as “vocem tuam audivi in paradiso.”
- 9 See Nicholas G. Piotrowski, “Saul is Esau,” Themes from Genesis 3 and Deuteronomy 18 in 1 Samuel,” *WTJ* 81.2 (2019): 212–13. The first half of this essay is a development of what I (Nicholas) suggest in fn. 39 of that article.
- 10 T. Desmond Alexander, “From Adam to Judah: The Significance of the Family Tree in Genesis,” *EvQ* 61.1 (1989): 5–19; idem, “Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis,” *TynBul* 44.2 (1993): 255–70; Beale, *New Testament*, 30–31, 46–48; August, “Messianic Hope,” 56–59
- 11 Piotrowski, “Saul is Esau,” 210–13.
- 12 The use of קוֹל and שָׁמַע in Exod 20:5–6 echoes the command to Adam in Gen 2:15. See also John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus* (2 vols.; Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2000), 1:17–21, 41–57; Beale, *New Testament*, 52–57.
- 13 Israel hears the קוֹל of the trumpet and fears, as Adam and Eve heard the קוֹל of LORD and feared; both Gen 3:10 and Exod 20:20 also use forms of שָׁמַע.
- 14 See Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy* (NIBC; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson/Paternoster, 1996), 216–17; J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy* (AOTC 5; Leicester: Apollos/Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 300–302. See as well Piotrowski, “Saul is Esau,” 212–14.
- 15 Edward J. Young, *My Servants the Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 9–22.
- 16 This can also be deduced from the general typological nature of all of Israel’s institutions. See i.e. Francis Foulkes, “The Acts of God: A Study of the Basis of Typology in the Old Testament,” in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Text?: Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (ed. G. K. Beale; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 342–71.
- 17 The primary placement of שָׁמַע at the beginning of the sentence also highlights the unique nature of this one prophet.
- 18 Thus, we take שָׁמַע in Deut 18:15, 18 as collective and individual, and more precisely collective leading to an individual. “Prophets in the life of Israel ... comprise a significant institution whose very existence both remembers the original disobedience of Adam and points forward to the coming one prophet” (Piotrowski, “Saul is Esau,” 213).
- 19 G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 88–116, quote from 94.
- 20 See John H. Sailhamer, “The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible,” *JETS* 44.1 (2001): 1–18.
- 21 This is necessary in such a study so as not to race off prematurely to the NT application once the interpreter has it in sight, and so flatten out the OT terrain. See Nicholas G. Piotrowski, *In All the Scriptures: The Three Contexts of Biblical Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2021), 165–68, 184–89.
- 22 We could say that Genesis 2–3 selects a «hear the voice» frame that is then “actualized” at other moments in the canon when those lemmas שָׁמַע (*šama’*) and קוֹל (*qol*) are again used together. See Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (ASem; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 7–8, 20–27. When the terms are used in the mundane details of a story (as in Exod 18:19, 24) the context tells the reader to “narcotize” the frame. Or, as in the Psalms, it is the LORD who hears the prayer’s voice and the frame is intriguingly inverted.
- 24 Again, when we italicize *hear* and *voice* in this essay we are making reference to the specific lemmas שָׁמַע

(šāmaʿ) and שָׁמַע (qôl) in the OT, and ἀκούω (akouō) and φωνή (phōnē) in the NT.

- 25 With another *qal* infinitive absolute followed by an imperfect verb the stress is made on the importance of listening, hearing, heeding, obeying as in Exod 19:5.
- 26 See the same language of *hearing* the LORD's voice in Deut 27:10 as introduction to the curses in Deut 27:11–26 as well.
- 27 See Piotrowski, "Saul is Esau," 214–18.
- 28 This great return "in the latter days" then leads to an exultation in the LORD because he alone among all the gods gives his voice to be heard by his people (Deut 4:33, 36), which at the same time is wrapped up in his works of redemption (Deut 4:32–40). This interweaving of monotheism, redemption and *hearing* his voice is then repeated in Deut 5:22–27.
- 29 A few other verses worth pointing out that also combine significant redemptive-historical themes with *hearing* the LORD's voice are Exod 23:20–22 (the proper response to the angel who prepares the way in the wilderness leading to the "place" of worship); Num 7:89 (what happens when Moses enters the tabernacle); Deut 4:11–13, 29–36; 5:22–27 (the mark of monotheism and redemption); 13:1–5 (the function of prophets); 30:19–20 (the concluding word of the covenant reaffirmation); Judg 2:2, 20 (why the cycle in Judges).
- 30 Equally, there are all sorts of episodes where characters refuse to *hear* the voice of the LORD as acts of defiance, Exod 5:2 the quintessential example. This commonly brings immediate judgement as it did in Eden. Additionally, the enemies of God will sometimes take the phrase upon their lips in irreverent subversion of the LORD's purposes, as with Lamech in Gen 4:23. Or, even the faithful sometimes do not *hear* the voice of the LORD to negative consequences. For example, Abraham—as with Adam—hears the voice of this wife in taking Hagar to bear him a son (Gen 16:1–2). Yet, *hearing* her voice is commended when her instruction represents the redemptive purposes of God, as in Gen 21:12. Similarly, Rebekah and Isaac's scheming invokes this language, while skirting around blessings and curses (27:8, 12–13, 43).
- 31 See fn. 23 above re. how the lexical combination selects a «hear the voice» frame.
- 32 For starters, Jesus' life is "like Moses" from the outset. He escapes a similar fate in his childhood in Matt 2:13–21 (see Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013; repr., Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 140–65). Then after passing through water at his baptism in Matt 3:16–17, and enduring a testing in the wilderness for 40 days in Matt 4:1–11, Jesus gives instruction on the mountain in Matt 5:1–2, specifically focusing on the law in Matt 5:17–48 (see Joel Kennedy, *The Recapitulation of Israel* [WUNT 2/257; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 153–215). In the transfiguration, Moses is one of the figures present. Most significantly, in Matt 17:5 the voice from the cloud instructs the disciples to "hear him" (ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ), a clear echo of Deut 18:15, 18 (see W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* [3 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988–1997], 2:686, 702–703). This, of course, has synoptic parallels in Mark 9:7 and Luke 9:35, and further explication in Acts 3:22–26. For pithy summaries, see Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 21, 91–95; Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 173–79; Barrett, *Canon*, 86–96.
- 33 It should be obvious to the reader that by "prophecy" we do not mean future-telling, but we mean it as a synonym for *revelation*.
- 34 Andreas Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters* (BTNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 338.
- 35 See esp. Stan Harstine, *Reading John through Johannine Lenses* (Lanham: Lexington/Fortress Academic, 2022).
- 36 J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 351–52.
- 37 Though she does not use the article, προφήτης εἶ εἶ, the similar language to 1:21 keeps the specific ideas of Deuteronomy 18 in view for the reader, as does the comment in v. 25 that the Messiah "will show us all things" (Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* [trans. John Vriend; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 164–65).
- 38 So too D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 271. If John 6:14 is an interrogative, "Is this truly the prophet who is coming into the world?", the force remains the same: the people are brought to ask this question because Jesus looks like Moses in effecting this miracle.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 329.
- 40 Additionally, the use of just one of these words at a time, either Jesus' "voice" or "hearing" Jesus/God, is equally pervasive. See John 3:29; 6:60; 10:4–5; 11:43.
- 41 Indeed, the attaining of *life* through *belief* in the *truth* is the specific goal for which John writes this story about "the Word" become flesh (20:30–31; 21:24). It is by *hearing* Jesus' voice that *truth* is known and *believed* to the end of eternal *life*. Such connections elevate the role of *hearing* Jesus' voice in the Johannine

thought-world, and thereby foreground the significance of Jesus’ fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18, as well as the related OT themes laid out above.

- 42 See esp. Jeannine K. Brown, “Creation’s Renewal in the Gospel of John,” *CBQ* 72.2 (2010): 275–90.
- 43 We have chosen to retain the transliteration, “Paraclete,” because the typical English translations, Counsellor or Helper or Advocate, all capture too little and imply too much (see Kenneth Grayston, “The Meaning of *paraklētos*,” *JNTS* 13 [1981]: 67–82; Carson, *John*, 499; Ridderbos, *John*, 500–504). The meaning must be discerned from its use in John.
- 44 Ridderbos, *John*, 510.
- 45 Says Köstenberger, “[I]t will be as if Jesus himself were taking up residence in them” (*John’s Gospel and Letters*, 395–97; quote from 396). To be clear, however, this does not mean that Jesus and the Spirit are to be equated. Ridderbos navigates this issue well when he writes, “He is the ‘other Paraclete’ besides Jesus. This proves that Jesus does not equate himself with the Spirit ... Highly characteristic for the Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, is how closely the work of the Spirit as Paraclete of the church in the interim is bound up with that of Jesus himself and must be understood completely in its light” (*John*, 504). See as well Peter C. Orr, *Exalted Above the Heavens: The Risen and Ascended Christ* (NSBT 47; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 54–61.
- 46 Says Ridderbos, “The work that the Spirit is sent out to do as the other Paraclete remains the work of Jesus ... [who] remains the great sponsor of that work” (*John*, 510).
- 47 Carson is right to call the Spirit Jesus’ “emissary,” not his “substitute” as others have done and therefore missed this critical point (*John*, 505). “The Spirit’s ministry in this respect was not to bring qualitatively new revelation, but to complete, to fill out, the revelation brought by Jesus himself” (*ibid.*; similarly Michaels, *John*, 825).
- 48 So too Carson, *John*, 505, 529–30, 541–42; Ridderbos, *John*, 511, 527, 536–37; cf. also Barrett, *Canon*, 280–83.
- 49 This emphasis on memory in John 14:26 together with John 15:27’s comment on those with Jesus from the beginning must “rule out later disciples” (Carson, *John*, 541). So too Köstenberger, *John’s Gospel and Letters*, 397; see also Ridderbos, *Redemptive History*, 28–30.
- 50 This should come as no surprise, for the rest of the NT indeed teaches all believers enjoy the gift of the Holy Spirit, but equally that the Spirit works in different ways through different people (see 1 Cor 12:4–11). The diverse manifestations of the same one Spirit are given to Christians “as he wills” (1 Cor 12:11). See Ridderbos (*Redemptive History*, 12–30) for a survey of the rest of the NT that combines the unique work of the Spirit and the apostolate.
- 51 Of course Paul is not in the room that night nor was he with Jesus “from the beginning.” But Jesus’ words do not exclude the possibility of extending the same operation of the Spirit to him later. Indeed, *Jesus himself* picks out Paul (Acts 9:15; 26:16; Gal 1:11–12), makes him a witness to the resurrection (Acts 9:17; 22:14–15; 1 Cor 15:8), and adds him to the number of the apostles (Gal 2:1–10; 1 Cor 15:9–10), which is of course the risen Lord’s prerogative to do.
- 52 This interpretation allows us to avoid strained explanations of how to harmonize John 20:22 with Acts 2. John 20:22 ties off this critical narratological loose end: the giving of the Spirit to the apostles to the end of their unique calling laid out in John 13–16. Acts 2 comprises the coming of the Spirit in the manner of Joel 2; the same Spirit but different role among the people of God.
- 53 Following Bruce M. Metzger, *ἐν* is the preferred reading over *εἰς* (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* [2d ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994], 210).
- 54 Andreas Köstenberger’s reading on “the things that are to come” is the most coherent within the rest of the Gospel. He writes that this is not a comment on the cross and resurrection (for those events will have already occurred by the time the Spirit is given), nor is it a comment on the *parousia*. Rather, this element of the Spirit’s work is for “helping the believing community understand their present situation in light of Jesus’ by-then-past revelation of God” (*John* [ECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004], 101–102). So too Ridderbos, *John*, 535–36 (following Bultmann).
- 55 Carson, *John*, 539. Carson goes on, “All antecedent revelation has pointed toward him, and reaches its climax in him. That does not mean he himself provides all the details his followers will need; it does mean that ‘extra’ bits the Holy Spirit provides after he is sent by Christ Jesus, consequent upon Jesus’ death/exaltation, are nothing more than the filling out of the revelation nodally present in Jesus himself” (*ibid.*).
- 57 *Ibid.*, 541.
- 58 It is unlikely that John is here using the phrase “spirit of truth” in similar fashion to the Dead Sea Scrolls; John has his own unique meaning. See Richard Bauckham, “The Qumran Community and the Gospel of

John,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Fifty Years after Their Discovery* (ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, et al.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000), 105–15.

59 See Carson, *John*, 500.

60 *Ibid.*, 540.

61 So too Ridderbos, *John*, 536.

62 This is where we slightly depart from Carson when he writes, “The question of the possibility of continued ‘revelation’ amongst Jesus’ disciples after the eyewitnesses have passed from the scene is not here directly addressed” (*John*, 542). It is directly addressed if John is read as the crest of the prophetic biblical-theological wave that took on formal articulation in Deuteronomy 18, as we are trying to demonstrate. Carons is nonetheless right to comment, “Because of this theme of the finality of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the church has always been rightly suspicious of claims of still further definitive revelation that is binding on the consciences of all Christians” (*ibid.*, 539).

63 See John W. Wenham, *Christ & the Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1972), 109–23; Letham, *Work of Christ*, 95–100.

64 Ridderbos, *Redemptive History*, 13 (italics original).

65 Letham, *Work of Christ*, 97.

66 Carson puts it this way: “John’s purpose in including this theme and this verse [14:26] is not to explain how readers at the end of the first century may be taught by the Spirit, but to explain to readers at the end of the first century how the first witnesses, the first disciples, came to an accurate and full understanding of the truth of Jesus Christ” (*John*, 505).

67 As Köstenberger writes, “The Spirit thus ensures continuity between Jesus’ pre- and post-glorification ministry.... Historically, this included the formation of the NT canon as apostolic testimony to Jesus” (*John’s Gospel and Letters*, 397; so too Carson, *John*, 541; Ridderbos, *John*, 511, 536). For arguments that the written word of God was inevitable, see Hill’s “God’s Speech” and Ward’s *Words of Life* in fn. 5 above.

68 Books like Hebrews, Mark and Luke are, of course, included in this because the early church never doubted their “apostolicity” in so far as they were written under the auspices of the apostles (see Peter Balla, *Challenges to New Testament Theology* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998; repr. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997], 116–29; Michael J. Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2012], 174–84).

69 See Wenham’s first chapter in *Christ & the Bible*.

70 Letham, *Work of Christ*, 100.

71 Equally, we would conclude that it is meaningless to speak of God’s presence without hearing his voice in the Scriptures.

72 “Scripture as the word of God is consequently the word of Christ” (Letham, *Work of Christ*, 101).

73 Wenham says, “Jesus in principle authenticated the New Testament” (*Christ & the Bible*, 109).

74 As Letham puts it, “[T]he apostles’ teaching was to be derived from the Holy Spirit and, in consequence, from Christ himself” (*Work of Christ*, 97). He goes on, “[B]oth the written and oral testimony of the apostles carried Christ’s full personal authority” (*ibid.*, 99).

75 By “christotelic” we mean the overall nature of the OT that, in and of itself, leans forward to fulfillment in Christ, not merely a NT retrospect (see Piotrowski, *In All the Scriptures*, 155–57).

76 For another piece that makes the case that the NT is an eschatological necessity, see Hill, “God’s Speech,” 203–54.

77 If space permitted we could also explore why “all the truth” must also be fully inerrant.

78 Such sufficiency also means that the Christian Scriptures are a closed canon. Says Ridderbos, “The closed nature of the canon thus rests ultimately on the once-and-for-all significance of the New Testament history of redemption itself, as that history is presented by the apostolic witness” (*Redemptive History*, 25).

79 For some helpful insights on the necessity and sufficiency of Scripture, see Ward, *Words of Life*, 98–115.

80 On the matter of other prophets in the NT, they operated under the auspices of the apostles; Paul’s injunctions to them in 1 Corinthians demonstrate this.

81 As Hill concludes from his redemptive-historical survey, principally considering Isaiah and Luke-Acts, “Jesus appointed a limited number of apostles to be his representatives, such that it is Jesus who is making his appeal through them in a unique and non-repeatable way” (“God’s Speech,” 217).

82 Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. also argues for the foundational role of the NT writings based on the death of the apostles without succession (*Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* [Phillipsburg: P&R, 1979], 89–102).

83 Ridderbos too concludes that because Jesus gave witnessing authority only to his apostles there must

be a closed canon that is “naturally unrepeatably and exclusive in character” (*Redemptive History*, 24–25; quote from 25).

⁸⁴ Moreover, such paracletic spiritual work is the sum of “*all the truth*” (John 16:134), an equally exclusive claim.

⁸⁵ Letham, *Work of Christ*, 99.

⁸⁶ This idea of OT prophecy “arriving at its goal” is also the way O. Palmer Robertson describes it (*The Final Word: A Biblical Response to the Case for Tongues and Prophecy Today* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1993], 52–60.

⁸⁷ Ward, *Words of Life*, 110.

⁸⁸ This makes no comment on healings. Usually the topic of ongoing revelatory speech (be it in so-called “tongues” or not) is intertwined with physical healings. That need to be so; and we make no comment here on the potential continuation of the latter.

⁸⁹ Peter Adam’s *Hearing God’s Words: Exploring Biblical Spirituality* (NSBT 16; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004) is a wonderful resource on the sanctifying effects of this sort of attention and confidence in the Bible. This is an emphasis as well in John Webster’s *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁹⁰ On this, we point the reader to the especially convicting piece by John Piper called “The Morning I Heard the Voice of God” (<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-morning-i-heard-the-voice-of-god>). Special thanks to Nathan Lugbill for pointing us to this.